APPENDIX C – National and Oxfordshire Context

NATIONAL CONTEXT

The issues of rising house prices, housing supply and the increasing demand for suitable and affordable accommodation continue to remain a national problem. In writing this strategy, Oxford City Council has had particular regard to legislation and associated draft guidance, as well as national and local policies.

Impact of the Housing White Paper (Fixing our broken housing market)

The Government introduced the Housing White Paper (‘Fixing our broken housing market’- February 2017), recognising these issues and the need to assist people now who are unable to access accommodation to meet their needs. The White Paper states that the Government is committed to supporting local authorities to have up to date plans in place to build more of the right kind of homes in the right place and at a faster pace.

The Housing White Paper consultation programme highlights the key issues below:

- Planning for the ‘right homes in the right places’
- Building homes faster
- Diversifying the market
- Helping people now

The Paper supports that “all local authorities should develop an up-to-date plan with their communities that meets their housing requirements (or, if that is not possible, to work with neighbouring authorities to ensure that it is met), decide applications for development promptly and ensure that the homes they have planned for are built out on time.” The issue for Oxford City is that without agreement with its neighbouring Oxfordshire district councils under the ‘Duty to Cooperate’, it has limited scope of useable building land to meet the needs of its increasing population.

In addition, the Paper proposes to introduce a standard methodology of calculating ‘Objectively Assessed Need’ for housing, therefore this could potentially impact upon the development of the City Council’s Local Plan review 2016-36 (and the Local Plans of neighbouring district authorities in Oxfordshire) where there has been reliance upon evidence such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 to calculate housing needs.
The Government has introduced further legislation and amendments as outlined below:-

**Impact of the Housing & Planning Act 2016**

The key points introduced in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 are:-

- Introduction of Starter Homes (new build homes available exclusively for first time buyers aged over 23 and under 40 and will be sold at 20 per cent below normal market prices)
- Promotion of self-build and custom house building placing a duty on local authorities to ensure they have enough plots of land available for self-build to meet local demand.
- Measures to help tackle rogue landlords in the private rented sector, including:
  - allowing local authorities to apply for a banning order to prevent a particular landlord/letting agent from continuing to operate where they have committed certain housing offences,
  - creating a national database of rogue landlords/letting agents,
  - allowing tenants or local authorities to apply for a rent repayment order where a landlord has committed certain offences
- Allowing private landlords to recover abandoned premises in England without a court order
- Estate Agents fees and rent charges
- Improved powers for local authorities to Compulsory Purchase land/property to assist development.
- Social Housing, including:
  - Introduction of voluntary Right to Buy for Housing Association properties
  - Levy on sale of vacant higher value local authority housing
  - Rents for high income social tenants (‘pay to stay’ – see below)
  - Reducing regulation of social housing
  - Insolvency of Registered Providers of social housing
  - Mandatory use of fixed term tenancies – Secure/Lifetime tenancies no longer to be awarded by Local Authorities.

When taking action to address the challenges set by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, Oxford City Council will need to take into consideration local affordability and accessibility, and the financial resources available.

Rents for high income social tenants otherwise known as “Pay to stay” was a proposal within the Housing and Planning Act 2016 however, the Government decided in November 2016 to abandon the mandatory scheme. Local authorities and housing associations will continue to have the discretion to implement a ‘Pay to Stay’ policy for tenants with incomes over £60,000. Oxford City Council has decided not to pursue this at present due to the unaffordability of finding alternative accommodation in Oxford.

If Starter Homes are to be considered as a form of affordable housing in the future, this will affect the Council’s current position of what it can require from housebuilders to provide as the affordable housing contribution on large scale developments. Starter
Homes are a market product with no requirement to be affordable in perpetuity. In addition, there are no requirements for these units to meet a local need (e.g., purchasers to have a local connection to Oxford) and the City Council would not have nomination rights to approve purchasers as being in need of such housing locally. Provision of Starter Homes may not be a viable option for housebuilders to provide in some areas of Oxford and, given local house prices and capital deposits required for purchase, Starter Homes may still be unaffordable for many people receiving an average household income. With this in mind, it is not clear if local housing needs would be met by provision of this tenure. Further guidance on the introduction of Starter Homes will be required.

Guidance on the introduction of Right to Buy for Housing Association tenants and the levy on sales of high value void council properties has still to be published, but the concern remains that the revenue generated from higher value sales is unlikely to be enough to both compensate housing associations for the cost of right to buy discounts and to fund replacement affordable housing units in Oxford. Limited development opportunities, high land and build costs, and loss of revenue funding from rents of high value properties could mean that the opportunity to replace social rented housing with a like for like tenure could be cost prohibitive.

Social rented tenure is the most affordable tenure for the majority of households on the Council’s housing register. Until now, social rented accommodation has been let with a secure tenancy however this position will need to be revised in light of Housing and Planning Act 2016 emerging guidance in relation to secure tenancies and mandatory use of fixed term/flexible tenancies for new tenants. Given this, the workload of the Landlord Services Team is likely to increase where there are more tenancy reviews to be undertaken in managing and letting fixed term tenancies within our Council-owned stock.

Impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

The Act introduced new responsibilities that will impact upon the service that Oxford City Council and its partner agencies provide to tackle and prevent homelessness. The Act primarily focusses on early intervention to prevent homelessness and reducing homelessness before crisis point. It is likely that caseloads and the need for resources will increase and therefore it will be a priority for the City Council to amend its housing service delivery model and housing/homelessness prevention budgets in order to support the implementation of new duties introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The new duties for local authorities are to commence in 2018/19 and the main changes introduced by the Act are set out as follows:
A new duty on local authorities to help prevent the homelessness of all families and single people, regardless of priority need, who are eligible for assistance and threatened with homelessness.

An extension of the period during which an authority should treat someone as threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days, and what action should be taken to assist e.g. housing plans, debt advice, further support to help them stay in their accommodation or find alternative secure accommodation etc. Early intervention being the main point rather than support provided at crisis point.

A new duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants, regardless of priority need. This help could be, for example, the provision of a rent deposit or debt advice. Those who have a priority need will be provided with interim accommodation whilst the Local Housing Authority carries out the reasonable steps.

A new duty on public services to notify a local authority if they come into contact with someone they think may be homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This should ensure that a person’s housing situation is considered when they come into contact with wider public services.

The council’s duty to accommodate can be discharged by offering a 6 month Assured Short hold Tenancy.

Care leavers qualify for a local connection if they have been in local housing authority district for a minimum of 2 years if some or all of it attained at the age of 16.

Additional opportunities for customers to request a review of decisions made in respect of their homelessness application.

Impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012

The Act introduced changes to housing, council tax and welfare benefits that resulted in benefit caps being applied to households depending on their circumstances. Benefit caps, Local Housing Allowance, bedroom subsidy for under occupancy and the introduction of Universal Credit are making it difficult for low income households to remain in high value housing market areas such as Oxford.

- From 12th December, 2016 the Department for Work and Pensions reduced the benefit cap further for families and couples to £385 per week and £258 per week for single people without children.
- From 6th April, 2017 personal allowances that can be included will be restricted to two dependent children.
- From 1st April, 2017 unless there is an exemption, 18 to 21 year olds will not be eligible for the housing element of Universal Credit.

The impact will be significant for young people who will no longer be able to claim help with housing costs and live independently at an affordable level. Larger families with more than two children may experience difficulty paying their household costs where
their benefits are limited as a result of reduced personal allowance rates. The City Council’s Welfare Reform Team has been in contact with those households who have been identified as being potentially impacted by these changes. The Team is working with customers to maximise their income, manage debt and help them improve their work prospects. The Housing Needs Team is also working with these customers to prevent loss of accommodation however, the impact of the changes in relation to homelessness are still to be seen over the longer term.

More detail about Welfare Reform changes can be found in Appendix C and D. Overall, the financial impact of Welfare Reform can be demonstrated by the following charts:

Source of information below: The Uneven Impact of Welfare Reform (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, March 2016).
Impact of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016

The Act requires local authorities and registered providers of social housing in England to reduce social housing rents by 1% a year for 4 years from a frozen 2015 to 2016 baseline and to comply with maximum rent requirements for new tenancies. Oxford City Council’s 2015/16 budget detailed an ambitious Housing Revenue Account capital programme over the next ten years exceeding £264m. However, the Government’s 2015 summer budget introduced rent reductions, disposal of void housing stock to pay a levy to finance the extension of Right to Buy to Registered Providers’ tenants, and Pay to Stay (not a mandatory requirement). To accommodate these changes, the Council has had to reduce the level of its planned investment. Some of the original programme is now being delivered via the Council’s wholly owned Housing Company but the 1% rent reduction will mean a reduction in rental resources to the Council of £1.7m over the 4 year period. This figure, when compounded over the 30 year timeframe for the Council’s business plan, runs into tens of millions of lost resources that clearly prevent the Council from delivering many new dwellings as originally planned.

OXFORDSHIRE CONTEXT

Strategic Economic Plan

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) combines education establishments, business, research facilities and local authorities to produce a holistic approach to the county’s economic output. Oxfordshire is considered to have one of the most innovative business cultures in England and has made a significant contribution to the country’s exports. It is world renowned for its academic excellence and scientific research.

The City Council requires that the majority of affordable housing be provided as social rented tenure, however provision of suitable housing that includes a range of social, intermediate and home ownership tenure options will be important to attract a skilled workforce and support the continued economic growth of Oxford.

OxLEP Priorities are:

![OxLEP Priorities](http://www.oxfordshirelep.org.uk/content/lep-priorities)
Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal

Continuing work with the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal aims to further develop innovation-led growth by maximising the area’s world-class assets, such as the universities of Oxford and Oxford Brookes, and ‘big science’ facilities such as those at the Harwell Oxford Campus and Innovation Campus. The deal focuses on the following areas:

- Invest in an ambitious network of new innovation and incubation centres which will nurture small businesses.
- Invest in Growth Hub to help small and medium enterprises to grow through better business support – with a particular focus on supporting innovation.
- In conjunction with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) deliver 7,500 homes across the county by 2036, and recognise that the provision of quality housing will be fundamental to the delivery of innovation-led growth. This includes looking at ways to lift the Housing Revenue debt cap to help focus delivery on Oxpens and the Northern Gateway and other strategic sites included in the 30 year HRA Business Plan.
- Deliver over 500 new Apprenticeships for young people.
- Further investment provision from local and national public sector and housing providers.
- Further private sector investment through site development, transport infrastructure, skills schemes; and business support services and innovation centres; and
- Continuation of the new employment programme including 18,600 new jobs and a further 31,400 jobs during the construction phase.

Whilst a number of these actions are well under way or have been delivered, the principles and aims continue. Housing development has been limited and so the work towards the housing offer will continue to focus on strategic sites at Oxpens and Northern Gateway and will also look at ways we can maximize Housing Revenue Account borrowing to facilitate delivery of more homes by the City Council. The City Council has now set up a Housing Company to help deliver housing in the City going forward.

Over 55% of the total housing delivered in the next few years will be within the ‘knowledge spine’ of the City Deal, of which Oxford is a central part.
Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 ¹

The SHMA is a technical study intended to help the Oxfordshire local planning authorities understand how many homes will be needed in the period 2011 - 2031. The SHMA estimates that around 2,887 additional homes will be needed each year to 2031 across Oxfordshire to accommodate the growing population and to meet the backlog of housing need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Households 2011</th>
<th>Households 2031</th>
<th>Change in households</th>
<th>% change from 2011</th>
<th>Housing Requirement</th>
<th>Housing Requirement (per annum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherwell</td>
<td>56,882</td>
<td>69,219</td>
<td>12,336</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>12,830</td>
<td>641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>54,999</td>
<td>69,523</td>
<td>14,524</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>15,105</td>
<td>755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Oxfordshire</td>
<td>54,391</td>
<td>63,810</td>
<td>9,219</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>9,634</td>
<td>482</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vale of White Horse</td>
<td>49,781</td>
<td>58,856</td>
<td>9,074</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>9,365</td>
<td>468</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Oxfordshire</td>
<td>43,509</td>
<td>53,769</td>
<td>10,260</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>10,815</td>
<td>541</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
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<td>314,996</td>
<td>55,434</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>57,748</td>
<td>2,867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of Table above: Oxfordshire SHMA 2014

Local Context - Oxford

Delivering the activities outlined in the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21, is further supported by the City Council’s strategic vision and corporate commitment. The following documents provide a clear strategy and foundation on which to base future decisions to deliver the Council’s vision to ‘build a world class city for everyone by creating successful places in which to live and work, and by supporting people to reach their potential. Working in partnership, we will create a strong local economy and a city in which all our residents can thrive’.

Oxford 2050: A vision for a successful and sustainable city for everyone

The City Council is working on development of a future vision for the City: Oxford 2050, to guide future corporate plans and investment plans for the City. It provides an overarching strategic long-term vision to bring together economy, society and environment in a joined up way. The vision set out in ‘Oxford 2050’ has influenced the development of this Housing and Homelessness Strategy and the actions that stem from it.

Oxford City Council Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020

The Corporate Plan is Oxford City Council’s key strategic document, setting out its corporate commitment and strategic direction over a five year period, and highlighting key areas of new investment. There are currently five priorities under the Corporate Plan:

- Vibrant, Sustainable Economy
- Meeting Housing Needs
- Strong and Active Communities
- Clean and Green Oxford
- An Efficient and Effective Council

Delivery of this Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21 will impact on the delivery of all of these priorities but will mainly contribute towards the priority of ‘Meeting Housing Needs’.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 – Oxford

As mentioned earlier, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2014 identifies that Oxford needs between 24,000 and 32,000 new homes over the period 2011 to 2031 to meet the City’s growing need for housing. Given the affordability pressures within Oxford, the SHMA estimates that around 1,029 affordable homes would need to be delivered each year within the same period to meet the backlog and future affordable housing need. Delivery of housing is discussed further in Chapter 4 of this strategy.

Local Plan 2026 (and Local Plan Review 2036)

The Local Plan is important because it sets out the planning policies that are used to determine how the City Council wants our city to look and feel, guiding new developments to the right locations, whilst protecting and improving the environment and people's quality of life. Once finalised, the Local Plan 2036 review will set new policies in place to ensure the City’s housing, environment and economy is developed and delivered in a sustainable way in the future to meet the longer-term needs of Oxford.
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Oxford

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) demonstrate the potential availability of housing sites to deliver the housing needed in the City. The report for Oxford can be found on the City Council’s website.2

Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) Oxford

Like every local planning authority in Oxfordshire, the City Council must produce a housing and employment land availability assessment to show the potential availability of sites in our area. This is known as a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA). Previously the City Council was only required to produce a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), which only needed to consider housing sites (not employment)3. The main issue arising from both the SHLAA and the HELAA reports is that there is a limited capacity within the city to develop sufficient housing numbers to meet the identified need in the SHMA 2014. Chapter 4 of this strategy includes more detail about the capacity to build within the City boundary.

Oxfordshire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2015-19

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-19 identified priorities for health on a countywide basis and how housing can contribute towards improving the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) provides data on the health and lifestyle trends in Oxfordshire. It also looks at the estimated changes in the county’s demographics and employment. The local context is provided by the JSNA Oxford report for March 2017. Findings of the JSNA help to influence the development of housing and homelessness prevention services going forward to ensure that the opportunity for inequality (particularly around health inequality) is reduced.

The Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy covers the following priority areas:

Children’s Trust
Priority 1: All children have a healthy start in life and stay healthy into adulthood
Priority 2: Narrowing the gap for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups
Priority 3: Keeping all children and young people safe
Priority 4: Raising achievement for all children and young people


Joint Management Groups
Priority 5: Living and working well: Adults with long-term conditions, physical disabilities, learning disabilities or mental health problems living independently and achieving their full potential.
Priority 6: Support older people to live independently with dignity whilst reducing the need for care and support.
Priority 7: Working together to improve quality and value for money in the Health and Social Care System.

Health Improvement Board
Priority 8: Preventing early death and improving quality of life in later years
Priority 9: Preventing chronic disease through tackling obesity
Priority 10: Tackling the broader determinants of health through better housing and preventing homelessness
Priority 11: Preventing infectious disease through immunisation

In relation to this Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21, priorities 2, 3, 5, 6 and 10 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy will influence the delivery of housing and homelessness services.

Health Inequalities Commission Report 2016

Housing has a substantial impact upon individual’s quality of health. The Independent Health Inequalities Commission was convened to gather and review the evidence on inequalities in health in Oxfordshire and, as a contribution to the development of the local strategy for health improvement, to identify areas for policy development likely to reduce these inequalities. The review was undertaken in 2016 and a report was produced with 60 recommendations for action set out under the themes:
• Five Common Principles
• Cross cutting themes of access to services, housing and homelessness, rurality
• Promoting Healthy Lifestyles
• Life course approach, focussing on Beginning Well, Living Well and Ageing Well.

Recommendations within the report included:
Public agencies, universities and health partners to work together to:
• develop new models of funding and delivery of affordable homes with a range of tenures to meet the needs of vulnerable people and key workers
• maximise the potential to deliver affordable homes on public sector land, including provision of key worker housing and extra care and specialist housing
• undertake a strategic review of public assets underutilized or lying vacant
• support Rough Sleepers into settled accommodation
• maintain and adequately resource homelessness pathways
• take action to reduce fuel poverty
• ensure that all policies have an equality impact assessment, and ensure that consideration is given to the health needs of particular groups or locations to

reduce inequality in provision and improve access to health services/support across the county.

The relevant recommendations have been taken into account in developing this Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21.


The JSNA provides an Oxfordshire context to estimated changes in demographics, employment trends, health and lifestyle data. The local context is provided by the March 2017, JSNA District report for Oxford which highlights the following:

- As of mid-2015, the estimated population of Oxford was 162,100 residents\(^5\) and by 2030, the County Council projections estimate an increase in population by more than 11%.
- The population aged 85 and over is expected to increase by 50% to 4,200 by 2030 – this is almost half of the increase estimated for other Oxfordshire districts (see JSNA Districts reports march 2017).
- Over half of births in Oxford in 2015 were to mothers born outside the UK, the highest proportion of which was to mothers born in Europe.

![Chart shows Oxfordshire County Council population change estimate which uses the Office for National Statistics 2015 SPD_v2 in preference to the mid-year estimates. The ONS mid-year estimates appear to incorrectly model student flows.](image)

**JSNA Wider Determinants**

- Between December 2015 and December 2016 the number of claimants of Job Seeker Allowance and Universal Credit in Oxford increased from 920 to 985 (+7%). In December 2016, Northfield Brook and Blackbird Leys were 2 of the 3 wards in Oxfordshire with the highest number of claimants.

\(^5\) Source: Oxfordshire County Council
• In 2015, the IMD supplementary indices estimated 5,125 children in Oxford were affected by income deprivation. 3,270 older people in Oxford were affected by income deprivation.

Health

• In 2011 Oxford had double the national average of young carers (aged under 16). The number of carers in this age group in Oxford was 90, of which half (45) were residents in the wards of Cowley Marsh, Northfield Brook, Lye Valley, Blackbird Leys and Hinksey Park. Oxford was also above the South East average on the proportion of working age carers aged 35 to 49.
• Trend data shows an increase in the percentage of patients with a recorded diagnosis of a severe and enduring mental health problem in the GP registered population in Oxford city.
• There were 3 wards in Oxford with a significantly higher mortality ratio for cancers than England (2010-14): Headington Hill & Northway, Blackbird Leys and Cowley.
• Northfield Brook in Oxford has a significantly higher rate of emergency hospital admissions for coronary heart disease than England (2010-11 to 2014-15).
• Cowley in Oxford has a significantly higher mortality ratio from stroke than England (2010-14).

Lifestyles

• 52% of people aged 16 or over in Oxford are classified as overweight or obese, this was below the county, regional and national averages.
• In Oxford, obesity in reception aged children (aged 4 or 5) and Year 6 children (aged 10 or 11) have each increased.
• Admission episodes for alcohol-related conditions in Oxford increased between 2013-14 and 2014-15, remaining significantly above the national and regional averages.
• 7 wards in Oxford had a significantly higher rate of hospital admissions linked to alcohol.
• The rate of deaths from drug misuse (not including alcohol and tobacco) was statistically above the national average in Oxford.
• In 2016 there were around 3,300 police recorded victims of domestic abuse (crime and incidents) in Oxford, up by 3% from the previous year.
• Between 2015 and 2016, the number of police recorded victims of Honour Based Violence, Child Sexual Exploitation and Modern Slavery each increased in Oxford.
• The rate of emergency admissions for injuries due to falls in males and females aged 80+ in Oxford was significantly higher than the England rate.

Findings of the JSNA report on Oxford, will influence the development of housing and homelessness prevention services going forward to ensure that the opportunity for inequality is reduced.