

Appendix 1: Cherwell District Council's Housing Strategy 2019-24, progress made towards delivery of the Annual Action Plan 2019-20.

Priority 1: Increase the supply and diversity of affordable housing to ensure the right types of homes available in the right places					
Action	Target	Responsibility	Deadline	RAG	Comments & Update
1.1.1 Ensure new affordable housing is in line with local needs	Complete research and prepare a report on the affordability of rented housing defined as 'affordable'.	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Jun-19		Not completed. However, some work has been done via Build! and by Cherwell Strategic Housing Officers to test affordability based on local incomes and earnings in order to inform conversations with developers about the need for Social Rent properties and also the development of a countywide Accommodation Guide for Workers in Oxfordshire. This Guide can now be found on the CDC website and websites of the other Oxfordshire councils. Work on local affordability will continue in order to inform the development of Cherwell Local Plan Affordable Housing Policies and an updated Tenancy Strategy which is planned for 2021.
	Complete 4 parish level housing needs surveys	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		Officers have been in contact with a number of parish councils over the last year. One Parish Housing Needs Survey was completed in June 2019 and proposals to develop 3 new affordable homes in that parish are currently being considered by Cherwell DC Planning Team. Another Parish Housing Needs Survey is being planned for February 2020. During the Parish Liaison meeting in June 2019, Officers presented the opportunity to undertake parish surveys however there was no take-up. It has not been possible to secure the remaining two surveys in 2019/20 due to the number of new housing developments already underway in rural areas which could meet a housing need; Neighbourhood Plans which have included extensive public consultation; and planning appeals. There is a continued focus on rural affordable housing provision and work to complete a further two housing need surveys in 2020 will continue. We continue to work with Hook Norton Low Carbon to facilitate the development of a community led affordable housing scheme in the village.
	Identify and deliver actions to help inform and deliver Oxfordshire's housing related strategies, including :- 1) Strategy for Delivering an Increased Supply of Housing for Adults with Care and Support Needs 2) Housing and Homeless Needs Analysis for Vulnerable Young People and Families 2019-2024 3) Extra Care Housing (ECH) Market Position Statement	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Jun-19		Work has started and is ongoing with County Council colleagues to identify the housing needs of adults with care and support needs, vulnerable young people and families. The work, which will be ongoing through 2020-2022, is linked with recommissioning programmes of supported accommodation. The evidence will also inform the design and number of new build properties to meet specific needs. The Extra Care Housing (ECH) Market Position Statement was updated in summer 2019 by the County Council with input from District Council officers. The Supplement document identified that Cherwell has a good level of existing ECH provision and an indicative pipeline in place up to 2031 to deliver more homes to meet identified needs. An ECH Provider event was held at Cherwell DC offices in November 2019. This was a successful event, highlighting the best practice in ECH and lessons learned from ECH scheme delivery across the county. This will be used to inform future ECH and supported accommodation.
	Recommission Supported Housing for homeless households in Cherwell	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Sep-19		In 2018/19 and 2019/20, the Council has been awarded a total of £36k Cold Weather Funding from MHCLG which has been used to provide 5 additional beds and support for people rough sleeping during the winter months. In addition, a successful bid for £136k Rough Sleeper Initiative Funding has enabled the Council to commission further floating support for people sleeping rough, support for 6 additional Housing First units for rough sleepers and a full time Countywide Strategic Co-ordinator whose role is to look at the Homeless Pathway and provision of accommodation and support across the county, and is looking to identify improved working and commissioning of services ready for the expiry of the Single Homeless Pathway in 2022. (Also, see below). We have recently also been successful in a joint bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative 3 funding which will draw down over £200k in 2020/21 to Cherwell.
	Re-commission the Young People's Pathway and Adult Homeless pathway	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		Cherwell DC Executive agreed in July 2019 to CDC remaining a partner of the Countywide Adult Homeless Pathway with an increased financial contribution of £83,930 PA (an increase of £21,230) until end of March 2022. This was done in agreement with all other Oxfordshire District Councils, OCC and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, and ensures that Cherwell DC continues to have access to 24 bed spaces for rough sleepers (11 beds @ O'Hanlon House, Oxford, providing complex needs support 24/7 and 13 dispersed beds within Cherwell providing a lower level of support for rough sleepers with lower support needs). The Adult Homeless Pathway and the Young People's Pathway are in the process of being reviewed and Cherwell DC will be part of the recommissioning process (Review to complete October 2020). From October 2020 CDC will make a contribution of £119k to the Young People's Accommodation Services as will the other Districts and City Council (pro rata).
	Update the State of the District's Housing Report	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Dec-19		The report has been updated. Once the report meets accessibility requirements it will be published on the Council's website.
	1.1.2 Increase data collection using the Council's and partner's internal databases	Review Housing Register application form to capture strategic information on housing need to inform the new build affordable housing programme	Housing Options Team	Apr-19	

1.2.1 Broaden the range of new affordable housing delivered	Deliver at least 407 new affordable homes including 10 social rented units	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20	Amber	Since April 2019, there have been 338 affordable homes developed in Cherwell. The completion figures for Quarter 4 of 2019/20 will not be finalised until early April 2020, but the forecast for delivery indicates that the 407 target is likely to be achieved (subject to no changes in the housing market). A Social Rent Working Group of officers and Councillors was set up in June 2019 to support the delivery of more social rent units in the district. Most of the affordable housing that has been secured through S.106 Agreements involve Affordable Rent. Therefore the conversion of tenure from Affordable to Social Rent would be the only way to achieve the target number of units in the short term. However, this will require some grant funding from the Council and discussions are ongoing to ensure value for money can be demonstrated. Although it may be possible to secure the delivery of 10 social rent units by March 2020, it is unlikely that they will actually be delivered by that point (hence amber rating on progress). To secure Social Rent tenure in future, Officers have updated working practices to ensure that discussions with developers and RPs include promotion of social rent tenure. Consultation feedback provided by strategic housing officers on planning applications, also includes a focus in SR tenure (supported by evidence of need). If SR can be agreed on new developments, then the units will be developed over the next 2-3 years approx.
	Develop a proposal for a "Living Rent" housing product	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Jun-19	Red	Little progress on this due to limited resources. Some work has been undertaken by Strategic Housing Officers in July 2019 to establish the affordability of 1-bed flats for workers receiving the national minimum wage; the national 'Living' wage, and the annual earnings of care workers and some nurses. This revealed that a single person/single income household would not be able to afford to rent a property on the private rental market and could only afford social rent tenure. Our Build! team have also undertaken some exploratory work on housing solutions for households on minimum wage. This work is ongoing but has been delayed due to the other priority work programmes.
	Start on Site at Admiral Holland to build 14 affordable homes (7 affordable rent & 6 shared ownership)	Build Team	Apr-19	Green	Contractual start on site achieved March 2019 (to meet Growth Deal Funding). Development progressing and completion of the units is anticipated by July 2020.
	Establish a formal commissioner/delivery vehicle relationship between CDC as strategic housing authority and Graven Hill Development Company	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Ongoing	Green	Commissioner/delivery arrangements with Graven Hill are already agreed with the District Council. The housing is being developed and a partnership is already established between Graven Hill Development and an RP in relation to handover and subsequent letting and managing of the new-build affordable homes on site. Work is ongoing, particularly in relation to the delivery of Extra Care Housing on the site and there is some developer interest.
1.2.2 Work with other Oxfordshire local authorities to deliver housing to meet Oxford's unmet need	Work with Planning Policy Team to review effectiveness of planning policies to deliver community facilities to meet the needs of Kidlington	Planning Policy Team	Mar-20	Green	The preparation of the emerging Partial Review of the Cherwell Local Plan - Oxford's Unmet Housing Need is now well advanced. The Plan contains policies which seek to ensure the delivery of community facilities to meet the needs of the proposed increase in population in the wider Kidlington area. In addition, the Council has adopted both a Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports Facilities Strategy for the District.
	Prepare proposals for the allocation of affordable housing on sites designated to meet Oxford's unmet need	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Jun-19	Green	The arrangements for allocating the affordable homes developed on sites will be presented in a report to CEDR in January and to Executive in March 2020 (due to a busy Executive agenda in January and February 2020). The original target date for this objective should have been February 2020 in line with the agreed Statement of Common Ground dated February 2019.
1.2.3 Increase the delivery of rural exception sites to enhance the affordable housing choice within rural areas	Prepare a business case for development capacity to take forward Growth Deal delivery and rural development potential	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Apr-19	Green	Complete. Recruitment commenced April 2019 and the Site Development Officer was in post in June 2019.
	Start on Site at Ardley to build 13 affordable homes on a rural exceptions site (7 affordable rent & 6 shared ownership)	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Apr-19	Green	Contractual Start on site achieved March 2019. Completion of the homes is anticipated to be in Oct/Nov 2020.
1.3.1 Use council assets for the delivery of affordable housing where appropriate	Complete a review of council-owned land in the district to establish which sites have potential for housing delivery to meet local housing needs	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Jun-19	Green	Review of sites undertaken and progress now being made to explore how the developable land/sites can be delivered and at what cost. There are only a small number of opportunities which would involve either the sale of CDC land or CDC purchasing other land in order to achieve suitable access. Two sites have planning applications under consideration.
1.3.2 Play an active and lead role on the Growth Board and in partnership with Homes England to maximise funding for affordable homes	Deliver Cherwell affordable housing commitments and work with the partnership to meet county wide targets, linking with wider Growth Deal delivery (productivity, infrastructure, wider housing and the JSSP).	Assistant Director Housing & Social Care Commissioning	Mar-20	Amber	Cherwell DC has a proactive internal Growth Deal Board which provides project steer and governance arrangements. Officers regularly attend the Locality Meetings; countywide Affordable Housing Project Group; Executive Officers Group and the Portfolio Holder for Housing also attends the countywide Housing Advisory Sub Group (Councillors). This provides a robust mechanism for monitoring delivery of Cherwell's commitments to the Oxfordshire Growth Deal. The affordable housing delivery is dependent on a number of housing market factors as well as funding, planning approvals and partner agencies. The original estimated number of additional affordable housing that is to be developed through the Growth Deal is reducing. However, conversations with developers and partners are continuing in order to establish an increase of units overall. Work is ongoing.
1.4.1 Support community led development	Work with HNLC to assess the viability and social value of a community led development in Hook Norton	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20	Green	Work to assess the viability and social value of a community-led development in Hook Norton has to a large extent been completed. However, this project will continue into 2020/21 as work continues to establish a suitable development scheme that will meet planning requirements and local housing need, and an allocations scheme will also need to be agreed. Officers will continue to work with HNLC.

1.4.2 Develop closer joint working between Planning and Housing to facilitate planning consents and accelerate affordable housing delivery	Streamlined and digitally enabled planning processes, agreed mechanism for consultation with Housing	Housing Strategy and Development Team & Planning	Ongoing		A new planning software system was introduced in June 2019 and this has helped to streamline the planning application and consultation processes. As a statutory consultee, Strategic Housing Officers will provide timely comments back to the planning offer on any application involving affordable housing. There is a mechanism in place to do this via an email 'in-box'. Strategic Housing Officers have revised the process for providing consultation responses on Planning Applications and the quality of feedback provided. Improvements have been implemented and officers will continue to monitor the impact of this. A presentation by Housing Officers has been arranged for January 2020 on Extra Care Housing. This is to share knowledge with planning teams and to establish a way of working that will facilitate timely decision making.
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Priority 2: Improve the quality and sustainability of our homes and build thriving, healthy communities					
Action	Target	Responsibility	Deadline	RAG	Comments & Update
2.1.1 Increase awareness of council services and initiatives in relation to warm homes, energy efficiency and retro-fit technologies	Work with the National Energy Foundation to promote awareness of grants and help available to make homes more energy efficient and tackle fuel poverty	Private Sector Housing Team	Jun-19		Cherwell DC is a member of the Affordable Warmth Network which has collectively commissioned the National Energy Foundation to deliver affordable warmth and energy efficiency services under the Better Housing, Better Health initiative. Website pages have been updated to improve information to Oxfordshire residents. Work is ongoing to promote the service available to eligible households. Work is ongoing and we are part of Public Health's recent 'hedgehog' campaign to enable households to access help through the appropriate channels .
	Ensure that every contact with vulnerable households is used to assess fuel poverty and energy efficiency issues	Private Sector Housing Team	Jun-19		As part of discussions with customers, Officers will explore the potential of a household to fall into fuel poverty, and will offer appropriate advice and information. The Better Housing Better Health service, jointly funded by the Council, is able to facilitate fuel switching and Citizens Advice can assist with maximising benefit income. The Council can help to improve cold premises by enforcement action and in 2020 will be starting enforcement of new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards regulations in private rented homes. There have been 8 CHEEP grants for landlords since April 2019. The Council has revised and increased maximum funding available for this initiative in 2019/20. A Fuel Poverty Grant has been introduced in 2019/20 which provides a top-up to ensure that residents who are eligible for any other grants or discounts through Better Housing Better Health, are not disadvantaged by small funding gaps. The Small Repairs Service is also issuing information to clients about cold homes and the assistance available.
	Reshape the council's service specification for the debt and money advice contract to include signposting and referrals to the Private Sector Housing Team, Better Housing, Better Health and advice on switching utility companies	Assistant Director, Housing & Social Care Commissioning	Sep-19		The existing Debt & Money Advice contract has been extended to end 31st October 2020, therefore the deadline date for this project is now November 2020. CEDR agreed to explore options for commissioning services jointly with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Officers are working with OCC colleagues to identify and where possible, align requirements. A timetable has been agreed for implementation of this project. Services are to be commissioned and in place by November 2020 as Cherwell DC current contract cannot be extended beyond October 2020. Although it is already part of the existing service provision, the recommissioning of the service will ensure that reference is made to making referrals to the Private Sector Housing Team, Better Housing, Better Health and providing advice on switching utility companies.
	Support the Low Carbon Hub and National Energy Foundation to continue developing the Oxfordshire Retro-fit project	Private Sector Housing Team	Ongoing		See above regarding working collaboratively with the National Energy Foundation.
2.2.1 Continue to support and meet the demand for adaptations to assist older and disabled people to remain living independently in their own homes	Complete at least:- 160 Disabled Facility Grants 140 Minor Works Adaptations Provide Small Repairs assistance to 250 qualifying vulnerable households	Private Sector Housing Team	Mar-20		In order to improve services we have increased the range and flexibility of the grants we have available. This means that we can now provide certain adaptation works more quickly. We also use different routes/grants to provide smaller works, all of which are provided through our Home Improvement Agency. Between April and December 2019, we have provided assistance to 128 households by means of disabled adaptations grants (larger jobs) and 319 through smaller works. Our annual target is a total of 540.

2.2.2 Support the delivery of new build adapted properties	Complete a review of the use of DFG finance to fund new build adapted properties	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Jun-19		A review of the Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants has been undertaken in 2019 and the policy has been updated. One of the changes in the revised policy is the inclusion of a new provision to assist social tenants with relocation to a more suitable social housing property that is already adapted or can more easily be adapted to meet current and changing needs. As part of the review of current Cherwell DC policies in relation to securing accessible and adapted properties (see commentary on the 'Cherwell Adapted Standard' action point below), it was established that in the majority of cases the cost of providing adaptations in new build properties (or at least improved build standards to support future adaptations) was less expensive than the cost of installing adaptations as part of a DFG. Further to this, officers have been working with developers and Registered Providers to highlight the need to improve the quality of new build homes and install level access showers and ramps etc. in certain property types and where there is an obligation to provide wheelchair accessible standards. Officers are also highlighting this in Planning Application consultation responses. As DFGs are to meet specific household circumstances, work will be undertaken to identify the DFG expenditure on adaptations to new-build social housing properties that could have been avoided or reduced by improving build quality. This will develop an evidence base to support policy changes in future.
	Complete a review of lifetime homes delivery and usage.	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Sep-19		A review has not been undertaken as Lifetime Home Standards have in the main, been replaced by updated Building Regulations Part M4(2) (2) and M4(2) (3). Lifetime Homes and development standards are secured via S.106 Agreements. Delivery of properties to the required standards is largely monitored through Building Control (Building Regs), Planning Conditions and through Registered Providers who purchase the completed affordable homes from the builder. Therefore is not always possible to effectively monitor delivery through a single mechanism. The use of properties built to mobility and wheelchair accessibility standard is monitored via the affordable housing Allocations process in partnership with Registered Providers. Work is ongoing to establish the most effective method of monitoring the delivery and use of properties to Lifetime Homes and current Building Regs.
	Develop a proposal for a Cherwell Adapted Standard	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Sep-19		A review of the current policy requirements for accessible and adapted properties that are delivered via planning obligations and the Disabled Adaptations Policy has been completed in September 2019. This has highlighted the need to include specific requirements in new planning policies that are to be developed through the Local Plan review. In addition, training on accessibility standards is being arranged for staff. Changes have been made to procedures when providing planning consultation responses. Work to embed the outcomes from the review will be ongoing.
2.2.3 Provide supported housing as identified through the Oxfordshire County Council's commissioning plans for Adult & Children's Services	Support OCC to decommission shared accommodation for people with learning disabilities and work in partnership with Sanctuary Housing to provide 6 units of self-contained supported housing for people with learning disabilities	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		Commissioning of services for people with support needs will be considered as part of the review of the Adult Homeless Pathway and proposals for the Young People's Pathway. The reviews are in progress and will complete in October 2020. Cherwell DC will be part of any recommissioning and change process. The County Council is in the process of assessing the current and future accommodation and support needs of people with learning (and physical) disabilities. Once the evidence has been finalised, this can be used to inform future plans for the provision of suitable accommodation, including new build properties that may need to be bespoke to meet identified needs. In 2017, six units of accommodation specifically for people with learning disabilities were completed by Build! in Bicester and a further six units provided in Banbury in 2018.
2.2.4 Support the government's Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme	Resettle a further 6 Syrian refugee households	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		Four of six families are resettled in Cherwell and we are on track to house all 6 families before end March 2020. A property for the fifth family has been sourced and details have been sent to the Home Office to support the resettlement arrangements. Property for the sixth family has been sourced and will be ready for occupation in Feb 2020. A total of 12 families will be accommodated under VPRS since April 2018. CDC has agreed to participate in the new Global Resettlement Scheme which starts in April 2020 and we will resettle a further six families. The first property for this scheme has already been identified.
2.3.1 Reduce the number of empty homes in the district	Take informal and formal action to bring at least 10 long-term empty homes back into use	Private Sector Housing Team	Mar-20		Up to 31/12/19, nine empty homes have been brought back into use through intervention in 2019/20. There are a number of other properties expected to be brought back into use once works to the properties have been completed.
	Deliver at least 4 new units of housing in the town centre by converting commercial space to residential and/or refurbishing flats above shops and explore the scope for more conversions	Build Team	Mar-20		Work has been carried out to investigate the potential to develop at least 4 new units of housing through conversion of buildings however this has not been achieved due to sales of properties through the market, and limited internal resources to be able to prioritise this project in 2019/20. Once internal reviews are completed, further consideration will be given to how this objective can be achieved within available funds.
2.4.1 Improve conditions in the private rented sector	Implement actions arising from HMO licensing responsibilities:- Proactively identify HMOs that should be licensed under the new regulations Review management standards in at least 150 HMOs Monitor impact of new legislation	Private Sector Housing Team	Mar-20		The number of licenced HMOs has more than doubled since the licensing requirements were extended from 1/10/18. There are currently 167 licenced HMOs in the district, of which 36 have been licensed in 2019/20. Conditions at 15 premises have been reviewed through the Self-Certification scheme, 72 HMOs have been subject to reactive review and a further 72 investigated proactively.

	Improve at least:- 100 premises through formal and informal enforcement interventions 20 premises through grant and loan work	Private Sector Housing Team	Mar-20		Since the start of 2019/20 and up to 31/12/19, the Council has improved 75 homes through enforcement intervention and a further 13 by means of landlord grants. (Note that this does <u>not</u> include any Disabled Facilities Grant or Home Improvement Agency work.)
2.4.2 Take a leadership role to demonstrate that increased standards in new build housing are deliverable	Work in partnership with A2Dominion to continue data collection and monitoring on travel patterns, energy, water use and waste generation t North West Bicester	Bicester Team	Ongoing		The second year of monitoring has been completed for Elmsbrook at NW Bicester. This has provided valuable data on the progress towards meeting Eco Town standards and identified that the scheme is successful in reduced energy use and in developing a successful community. There remain areas that are challenging at this stage of the development particularly in reducing use of the private car given the limited facilities available on the site.
	Work in partnership with other Oxfordshire councils to develop an evidence base on sustainability and deliverability of higher standards for new build properties	Bicester Team	Mar-20		Work is ongoing. It is anticipated that the Oxfordshire 2050 Plan will develop strategic high level policies regarding sustainability and deliverability of higher standards for new build properties. Government is currently consulting on measures to increase energy efficiency in new dwellings. It is anticipated that there will be other consultations regarding design codes and the future home standard. Work is ongoing.
	Prepare a CDC Affordable Housing Standard Guide	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		Build! are working on a standard for affordable homes as follows: Affordable housing is to be built to Passivhaus standard to ensure both building quality and energy-use efficiency. Build! officers have met with BRE advisors to explore the adoption of the new 'Home Quality Mark' standard. This will set a minimum requirement for all other aspects relating to housing design based on the aspects that matter most to our customers. CDC Officers are working on the CDC Local Plan review which will include the requirements already set out in the Supplementary Planning Document (Developer Contributions) such as affordable homes built to the Technical Space Standards and other best practice design standards - work on this is ongoing.
2.5.1 Identify key partners that require housing representation and influence to deliver healthy communities	Complete and audit of partnerships and agree representation	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Apr-19		A formal audit has not been completed due to limited resources. There have also been changes in organisational structures to include shared posts with the County Council. However, Officers continue to ensure that there is housing representation on the main strategic partnership groups and those groups that operate countywide.
2.5.2 Increase corporate co-ordination in relation to housing activities across the council	Establish a Housing Board within CDC	Assistant Director, Housing & Social Care Commissioning, Transformation Team, Housing Strategy & Development Team, Private Sector Housing Team, Build!, Bicester Team, RP	Jun-19		A formal Housing Board has not been established. Governance and leadership arrangements across the Council have changed over the last 12 months, with additional shared posts across CDC and County Council being created. This has presented opportunities to highlight housing issues and promote joint working across the Council. Consideration will need to be given as to whether a Housing Board is required and how this will be resourced.
2.5.3 Implement a new framework of engagement with RP partners to deliver thriving, healthy communities	Meet regularly with RPs to plan housing delivery and the development of healthy communities, working in partnership and through Growth Deal.	Assistant Director, Housing & Social Care Commissioning	Apr-19		Regular Performance Review meetings are held with individual RPs. The review covers all matters relating to the development, management and letting of affordable housing and how they, as a landlord, are supporting the development of settled, sustainable and healthy communities.
2.5.4 Adopt a corporate approach to commissioning services to support sustainable communities	Complete mapping exercise of 'whole' council investment in Cherwell communities	Housing Strategy and Development Team, Communities Team & OCC	Oct-19		The mapping exercise has not been completed due to lack of resources, team and organisational changes over the last 12 months. However, as part of the budget setting process, the Council's Finance Team will have significant information on the budgets for Cherwell investment in communities, albeit this will be financial and may not include the support provided by Council staff in their various roles and work activities. other departments in the Council and OCC will be aware of the support and investment that they provide to communities. Given this, the mapping exercise could be completed in 2020/21.
	Develop common monitoring approach to council grants/contracts for work supporting communities in Cherwell	Housing Strategy and Development Team & Communities Team	Oct-19		Not completed. It may be possible to re-visit this objective but in the meantime the Housing Service continues to grant fund organisations that make a unique and important contribution to tackling homelessness : Salvation Army Bicester, The Beacon Centre and Faithworks (in addition to current contracts with Connection Support and Citizens Advice North Oxfordshire and South Northants).

Priority 3: Enhance opportunities for people to access suitable homes and have housing choices.

Action	Target	Responsibility	Deadline	RAG	Comments & Update
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3.1.1 Increase staff awareness of the range of housing options available	Train all housing and customer services staff on all forms of housing available, including briefings site visits and team meetings	Housing Options Team	Ongoing		In 2019/20, the focus for the Housing Options & Allocations Team has been to identify and manage changes, and implement software system upgrades to enhance delivery of housing services to customers. Where possible, relevant officers have attended team meetings to enhance knowledge about the various housing and infrastructure delivery projects that are ongoing in Cherwell. Housing Managers have been in discussions with Customer Service staff to highlight the findings of the Housing Health Check/mystery shopper responses. Some Housing Options staff have shadowed the Strategy and Development Team which has helped to share knowledge about the various housing options and development projects across the district. Work will continue to ensure staff are kept up to date and have a good knowledge of the housing options available to customers. Strategy Team will give a presentation to Planning colleagues in January 2020 to promote Extra Care Housing.
3.1.2 Increase customer awareness of the range of housing options available	Improve information available through the website and other media	Housing Options Team Housing Strategy & Development Team	Ongoing		In 2019, CDC and Homechoice website information has been updated to reflect the launch of the updated Cherwell Bond Scheme and Key Worker Bond Scheme, as well as the changes to the housing application process and publication of the Accommodation Guide for Workers in Oxfordshire etc. The Housing Service has designated officers responsible for keeping the housing website information up to date. Work is ongoing.
	Develop a business case for a pilot post to help older people make timely and positive choices to move to appropriate accommodation	Housing Options Team	Sep-19		Whilst a business case for a separate post has not been developed, the Housing Options Team now has a specific officer who deals with the allocation of Extra Care Housing and liaising with the Private Rented Sector Team about property adaptations for all age group households but in particular assisting older people with moves to more suitable or adapted accommodation. Raising customer awareness of the various housing options available is now an embedded part of the work to develop individual Personal Housing Plans with customers.
	Ensure Community Connect Navigator is fully aware of housing options and legal remedies through attendance at team meetings and possible co-location with Housing Options Team and Private Sector Housing Team	Housing Options Team and Private Sector Housing Team	Apr-19		The Community Navigator was part of the Oxfordshire Trailblazer project and worked alongside (and was co-located at times) with the Housing Options team for the period of the project. 'Aspire' have obtained funding to continue the Community Navigator work and this is currently in place, funded until 2021, with continued joint work, updates and liaison with the Housing Options Team as needed.
3.1.3 Improve access to the Housing Options service	Implement an online housing application form	Housing Options Team	Apr-19		The online housing application form was launched in March 2019 and an upgrade to Abris system was implemented in September - this allows customers to upload documents in support of their online housing application.
	Prepare a business case for an enhanced housing options portal	Housing Options Team	Apr-19		The enhanced housing options portal is linked to Abris and HomeChoice. It was necessary to secure and implement upgrades to the current Abris system functions before adding modules. The work to implement an enhanced housing options portal will be part of a programme of further improvements and small works to the system. Work to explore costs and benefits will need to be undertaken.
3.1.4 Deliver personalised advice on the full range of suitable housing options available in the district	Complete a review of the housing advice "offer" to customers to fully incorporate shared ownership, self-build, rent to buy and all rented tenures	Housing Options Team and Housing Strategy & Development Team	Jun-19		Officers from the Housing Strategy & Development Team have attended Housing Options Team meetings to provide development scheme information. Housing Allocations officer has attended Registered Provider performance review meetings to ensure there is a shared opportunity to understand customer needs and the various housing options that are on offer to customers. More work and training can be done on this but the main reason for households approaching the Council is to seek rented affordable housing through a social housing landlord. All possible housing options are explored with customers when developing a personal housing plan and as part of homelessness prevention.
3.2.1 Review the Housing Allocations policy	Complete Allocations Policy annual Health Check	Housing Strategy & Development Team and Housing Options Team	Jun-19		The new Allocations Policy was approved in October 2018 and implemented in Jan 2019. This will be reviewed in 2020 and will include a review of income/capital thresholds, the variances between the CDC Allocations Policy and policies and procedures of RP partners, plus the impact of the Partial Review of the Cherwell DC Local Plan - meeting Oxford's unmet housing need.
	Prepare a report including summary of Health Check findings and recommended amendments to policy	Housing Strategy and Development Team and Housing Options Team	Jun-19		See above. The findings of the Shelter Health Check/ mystery shopping exercise have been used to inform the development of an action plan for implementing improvements (to include improvements to Customer Service advice 'scripts'). These findings and action plan in 2019 will also be used to support the Allocations Policy review in 2020 and any staff training.
3.2.2 Promote the most efficient use of existing adapted social housing stock	Review Allocation scheme to make best use of adapted properties for disabled and older people	Housing Strategy & Development Team and Housing Options Team	Dec-19		See above re the review of the Policy in 2020. Since the Allocations Policy was last approved, officers have reviewed the housing register to identify households with disabilities and older households. Internal procedures and work arrangements have been updated (dedicated member of the team specialising in assisting older people and people accessible housing needs, to find suitable properties. The officer also works with the Private Rented Sector team in relation to identifying potential property adaptation requirements).
3.3.1 Increase the provision of private rented sector accommodation through various means including council-led initiatives and establishing a dialogue with investment landlords	Meet with RPs to establish their appetite and capacity to deliver secure high quality private rented accommodation	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		Discussions with RP partners have not identified an appetite to deliver this tenure but Officers will continue to discuss this as an option, which may be more attractive to Registered Providers who own and manage market rent properties elsewhere. CDC itself has intervened in this market with the imminent launch of private rented sector flats at Crown House. This project has significantly regenerated a part of the town centre by bringing in to use a longstanding empty office block. The launch of these flats increases general housing supply and contribute to the town centre economy.

	Review Cherwell Bond Scheme (CBS) to incentivise more Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords to let their properties at Local Housing Allowance rates	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		CBS review was completed in May 2019 and the scheme was revised. The updated scheme was launched in September 2019 with appropriate marketing and an update presented at the Landlords Forum in October. The CBS has been extended to include a Bond for Key Workers. New working arrangements have consolidated former practices and delivered improvements.
	Complete a feasibility study of options for council-led development of private rented accommodation	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		Given the limited appetite of RP partners to develop this tenure and the cost of Private Rented accommodation in Cherwell, this objective has not been a priority for officers, especially whilst internal changes and reviews have been ongoing.
	Look for partners, either private sector landlords or RPs who could deliver affordable shared accommodation for under 35s	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Mar-20		This housing option has been promoted through RP review meetings and discussions in general with RP partners. There is some reluctance around the provision of shared accommodation but RPs will give it further consideration, especially as the need for this accommodation is increasing. Work is ongoing. Build! has a limited number of shared accommodation units. They have no plans to expand the number within the current development programme.
3.3.2 Provide wider opportunities for people to access self-build as a housing option	Review the 2018 pilot for self-build mortgages and build on lessons learnt	Transformation Team and lenders	Dec-19		Work on this objective has not started and is unlikely to be completed in the short term due to its lower priority level.
	Develop links with local community led housing groups to identify the potential for delivery of community led and co-housing schemes in the district	Housing Strategy and Development Team	Ongoing		In October 2019, the Oxfordshire Growth Board was successful in attracting Homes England Community Led Housing Fund and has used this to commission a research project about how community led housing could support the ambitions for housing growth and particularly the delivery of affordable housing in Oxfordshire. The research project will end on 31 March 2020 and the output/recommendations from this work will inform future Community-led Housing and Co-housing projects in Cherwell and other Oxfordshire Districts. The Council is currently working with Hook Norton Low Carbon Hub on a project to deliver Community-led housing in the parish. Work is ongoing.