Public Document Pack

Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Committee: **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **Tuesday 5 January 2010**

Time: **6.30 pm**

Venue **Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA**

Membership

Councillor Daniel Sames (Chairman)
Councillor Ann Bonner
Councillor John Donaldson
Councillor Tony Ilott
Councillor P A O'Sullivan
Councillor Trevor Stevens
Councillor Lynda Thirzie Smart (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Nick Cotter
Councillor Alastair Milne Home
Councillor Leslie F Sibley
Councillor Chris Smithson
Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Substitutes

Councillor Devena Rae
Councillor George Parish
Councillor John Wyse
Councillor Simon Holland
Councillor Rose Stratford

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Members should not normally be subject to the party whip.

Where a member is subject to a party whip they must declare this at the beginning of the meeting and it should be recorded in the minutes.

1. **Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitute Members**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

   Members are asked to declare any interest and the nature of that interest which they may have in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

3. Urgent Business

The Chairman to advise whether they have agreed to any item of urgent business being admitted to the agenda.

4. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2009.

5. Private Sector Housing Strategy (Pages 9 - 56)

Report of the Head of Housing Services

Summary
To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the current status of the project to produce the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy, which links to the Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, the Head of Housing Services and the Private Sector Housing Manager will be present at the meeting.

Recommendations
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) Note the contents of the report.

6. Older People's Housing Strategy (Pages 57 - 104)

Report of the Head of Housing Services

Summary
To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the progress being made with the development of the Cherwell Housing Strategy for Older People, a sub-strategy of the Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, the Head of Housing Services and the Strategic Housing Officer will be present at the meeting.

Recommendations
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) Note the contents of the report;

(2) Consider whether the Committee wishes to refer any comments on the report to the Executive for consideration at their meeting in February 2010.

7. Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10 (Pages 105 - 130)

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary
To agree topics for future meetings, to identify issues arising from the Forward Plan (January – April 2010) and to monitor the status of items on the work programme.

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Service and ICT (with special responsibility for tourism) and the Head of Recreation and Health will be present at the meeting to discuss the Council's preparations for the 2012 Olympics Tourism Potential.

Recommendations
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) Note the current overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10 and make amendments as necessary;

(2) Note the contents of the Forward Plan and identify any possible topics for scrutiny;

(3) Consider whether to include Built Area Conservation on the agenda for the March meeting and to invite the Portfolio Holder, Head of Service and other officers to attend;

(4) Consider whether to include Phone Access and Telephony on the agenda for the February meeting and to invite the Portfolio Holder and Head of Service to attend;

(5) Consider whether the Committee wishes to refer any comments on the report on "Preparation for the 2012 Olympics Tourism Potential" to the Executive for consideration at their meeting on 11 January 2012.

8. Youth Engagement Scrutiny (Pages 131 - 136)

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Summary
To update Members on the progress to date of the scrutiny review of Youth Engagement and to consider the emerging conclusions.

Recommendations
The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) Note the contents of the report and reflect on the evidence of the review to date;

(2) Consider and comment on the emerging conclusions.

Information about this Agenda

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence should be notified to democracy@cherwell-dc.gov.uk or (01295) 221583 prior to the start of the meeting.

Declarations of Interest

Members are asked to declare interests at item 2 on the agenda or if arriving after the start of the meeting, at the start of the relevant agenda item. The definition of personal and prejudicial interests is set out in the constitution. The Democratic Support Officer will have a copy available for inspection at all meetings.

Personal Interest: Members must declare the interest but may stay in the room, debate and vote on the issue.

Prejudicial Interest: Member must withdraw from the meeting room and should inform the Chairman accordingly.

With the exception of the some very specific circumstances, a Member with a personal interest also has a prejudicial interest if it is one which a Member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest.

Local Government and Finance Act 1992 – Budget Setting, Contracts & Supplementary Estimates

Members are reminded that any member who is two months in arrears with Council Tax must declare the fact and may speak but not vote on any decision which involves budget setting, extending or agreeing contracts or incurring expenditure not provided for in the agreed budget for a given year and could affect calculations on the level of Council Tax.

Queries Regarding this Agenda

Please contact Catherine Phythian, Legal and Democratic Services
catherine.phythian@cherwell-dc.gov.uk (01295) 221583

Mary Harpley
Chief Executive

Published on Wednesday 23 December 2009

Cherwell District Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA, on 10 November 2009 at 6.30 pm

Present:	Councillor Daniel Sames (Chairman) Councillor Alastair Milne Home Councillor Leslie F Sibley Councillor P A O'Sullivan Councillor Chris Smithson Councillor Trevor Stevens Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Substitute Members:	Councillor Devena Rae (In place of Councillor Nick Cotter) Councillor Rose Stratford (In place of Councillor Ann Bonner)
Also Present:	Councillor Colin Clarke Councillor Nigel Morris
Apologies for absence:	Councillor Ann Bonner Councillor Nick Cotter
Officers:	Paul Marston-Weston, Head of Recreation & Health Chris Rothwell, Head of Urban & Rural Services Jon Wild, Senior Recreation & Sport Development Officer Craig Forsyth, Communications Officer James Doble, Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer Natasha Clark, Trainee Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

30 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors declared interest with regard to the following agenda item:

7. Recent changes to the legislative framework governing overview and scrutiny.
Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Personal, As a member of Oxfordshire County Council and Chairman of the Oxfordshire County Council Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee.

31 **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

32 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 October 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the following amendment:

Councillor Colin Clarke to be shown as Also Present.

33 **Engaging Young People**

The Chairman opened the discussion with a summary of the aims and objectives of the scrutiny review into how the Council engages with young people. He reminded the Committee of the subtle distinction between consultation and democratic engagement, and emphasised that this review was not about changing the voting age but about ensuring that the Council had the procedures in place to allow it to hear the views of young people on issues that impact on them.

The Chairman said that as one of the Council's corporate priorities was 'a district of opportunity' it was important that the Council should provide young people with opportunities to get involved in local government and community issues and to encourage an interest in the wider political arena. This aim was behind the Local Area Agreement target NI 110 young people's participation in positive activities.

The Chairman and a member of the Committee had attended a recent meeting of the Bicester Youth Council. They had been very impressed by the maturity and commitment of the youth councillors and the professional manner in which they conducted the council business. There would be an opportunity for other members of the Committee to attend a session of the Banbury Youth Forum early in 2010.

The Chairman said that he believed that the current initiatives such as I'm a Councillor Get Me Out of Here and Local Democracy Week were beginning to produce results but that there was still much more that the Council could do in this area.

The Committee was in general agreement with these sentiments. In particular they felt that the Council should do more to promote citizenship in the local schools and encourage greater involvement from those councillors and officers who were school governors or active in the school parent/teacher organisations. They noted that not all young people were part of the traditional school system and so the same approach should be extended to all forms of further education.

The Committee felt that the excellent work conducted during Local Democracy Week should be extended to provide a sustained programme of

activities throughout the year. They suggested that the Council could host visits to Bodicote House and hold a series of debates on key topics, for example, the voting age.

The Head of Recreation and Health and the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager told the Committee about the initiatives they were planning to introduce in 2010. These included a game that would allow young people to participate in the budget consultation. They emphasised the increasing importance of this topic particularly in the light of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill 2008, which would place a legal duty to promote democracy on all local authorities.

The Committee reflected on the costs associated with supporting and promoting youth engagement. They acknowledged that there would be resource pressures on this type of activity but felt that this re-affirmed the need to make better use of the existing resources and exploit existing systems and relationships.

The Committee determined that the agenda for the February meeting would focus on the scrutiny review into how the Council engages with young people. It was essential that representatives from the local youth groups and youth parliament should be present at that meeting. They also agreed that the Scrutiny Officer should prepare a draft report based on the evidence and conclusions to date; and that the report should be circulated in advance of the February meeting of the Committee.

Resolved

That the agenda for the February meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should focus on the scrutiny review into how the Council engages with young people and that representatives from the local youth groups and youth parliament should be invited to attend that meeting.

34 **Markets and Residents' Parking**

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural and the Head of Urban and Rural Services were present to brief the Committee on developments relating to the district's markets and residents' parking.

Residents' Parking

The Portfolio Holder rehearsed the background to the residents' parking scheme in Bicester and the proposed scheme in Banbury. The Committee was advised that no further progress could be made in strengthening the enforcement standards for the Bicester scheme or introducing a scheme in Banbury until the Council was able to reach an agreement with Oxfordshire County Council regarding Civil Parking Enforcement.

The Portfolio Holder said that the devolution of Civil Parking Enforcement powers from Thames Valley Police to Cherwell District Council was an essential requirement for the introduction and successful operation of any residents' parking scheme and other traffic management initiatives.

The Head of Urban and Rural Services said that Oxfordshire was now amongst the minority of local authorities (about 20%) which do not have devolved Civil Parking Enforcement powers. The devolution of Civil Parking Enforcement powers required Secretary of State approval and it was recognised that it attracted significant implementation costs for the County Council, as the Highways Authority (to prepare traffic regulations, maintain signage and line painting), and for the District Council assuming the powers (for recruitment and training of enforcement officers or to manage an out-sourced enforcement service).

Earlier this year Oxfordshire County Council had indicated that the devolution of Civil Parking Enforcement powers to Cherwell District Council was no longer a transport priority due to financial pressures. They would be prepared to proceed if Cherwell District Council assumed all of the costs and associated risks. In the meantime, budget and resource constraints, meant that it was unlikely that Thames Valley Police would see as a priority the enforcement of parking infringements in Oxfordshire. Discussions continue but with little prospect of a resolution in the next 12 – 18 months.

The Committee was disturbed to learn of the lack of progress. They were concerned for the viability of the residents' parking schemes and also because they considered that the parking problems, particularly in the urban areas, were unacceptable.

The Committee considered whether there would be any benefit in approaching Thames Valley Police to request that they address the parking problem. They also reflected on whether the situation would be improved if additional off street parking was provided.

In conclusion the Committee asked the Portfolio Holder to keep them informed of progress and to attend a meeting in the spring to discuss the matter further.

Markets

The Head of Urban and Rural Services presented a report which detailed progress against the scrutiny recommendations on the future of markets in the district. The Head of Urban and Rural Services explained that unfortunately progress with regard to the markets at Bicester and Kidlington had been limited and that this was mainly due to staff resource problems at the District Council. However, the discussions with the Town and Parish Council and the market traders remained positive and he was confident that the rate of progress would increase in 2010. The two markets had been identified as service priorities for action in the 2010/11 budget and service plan.

The Committee was advised that the focus of attention had been on Banbury Market and that this was inevitable given the adverse impact it had on the current year budget, with a projected deficit of about £100K. The Head of Urban and Rural Services explained that the tender exercise to issue a new market licence was on schedule and it was hoped that a contractor would be identified before Christmas or early in the New Year. This was critical to ensure a reasonable timeframe for assuming operation of the market in April 2010.

Members of the Committee expressed concern that the Council seemed to be wholly committed to outsourcing the market to an external contractor and asked whether all the other options had been ruled out. They questioned whether the Council was better placed to manage the new contract or the contractor and whether it had learnt from past problems.

The Portfolio Holder explained that in effect the other options had ruled themselves out as there had been no interest from the Banbury market traders or other organisations, such as the Town Council, in operating the market and the lengthy timescales and significant investment required to bring the operation in-house were not feasible in the current economic climate.

The Portfolio Holder accepted the reservations expressed by the Committee but was optimistic that they would not come to fruition. He hoped that the current tender exercise would identify a strong candidate to take over the market operation and he was confident that the Council would take on a more direct and pro-active role in overseeing the management of the market in the future.

In conclusion the Committee noted that the tender exercise to issue a new licence for the operation of Banbury Market would continue as scheduled and agreed that they should review the situation again in early 2010.

Resolved that the Portfolio Holder, Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural should be invited to bring a further progress report on markets to the February or March meeting of the Committee.

35 **Recent changes to the legislative framework governing overview and scrutiny**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services which outlined recent developments in legislation relating to overview and scrutiny as set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, 2007, the Police and Justice Act, 2006 and the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, 2008. They noted that the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill, 2008 would shortly receive Royal Assent.

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager explained that in practice most of the powers contained in this legislation were already available to Councils under the 1972 Act. The Committee was informed that in summary the changes in legislation afford local authorities the right to scrutinise Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets and crime and disorder matters, individually or in concert with other councils and partner organisations. But in the main the legislation was merely confirming what was already common practice and it was not anticipated that there would be wholesale changes in the structure and operation of scrutiny in Oxfordshire.

The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager advised the Committee that he did however believe it would be prudent for the Council to designate the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the crime and disorder scrutiny committee. The Committee agreed that this would be a sensible measure.

The Committee considered that although the legislation allowed for the creation of formal committees to undertake joint scrutiny it seemed an overly bureaucratic process and they felt that an issue based ad hoc response was more appropriate. They were confident that if a common issue was identified there would be sufficient cooperation and commitment amongst the Oxfordshire local authorities to work together to address the problem.

Equally they felt it was essential that all the Oxfordshire local authorities took steps to avoid duplication and overburdening partner organisations with requests for information and attendance at scrutiny committees. A prime example of this was the annual briefing by the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police separately to the County Council and then to each of the district and city councils. They noted that Members and Officers at the County Council were exploring options for a combined briefing on a location basis. They welcomed the Thames Valley Police Authority initiative to develop a common protocol for crime and disorder scrutiny.

Resolved

1) That the contents of the report setting out the implications for this Council of the recent legislation relating to overview and scrutiny be noted;

2) That the requirement to review the overview and scrutiny work programme for 2010/11 and to ensure that it includes topics relating to the delivery of local improvement (LAA) targets connected to the Cherwell area be noted;

3) That it be noted that there is an option to establish a formal joint scrutiny committee with other local authorities in Oxfordshire to scrutinise local improvement (LAA) targets;

4) That it be recommended to Council that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be formally designated as Cherwell District Council's crime and disorder scrutiny committee and to recommend that the Constitution is so amended;

5) That it be agreed that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager be delegated to develop a draft protocol for the conduct of crime and disorder scrutiny for future consideration by this Committee;

6) That it be noted that there is an option to establish a formal joint scrutiny committee with other local authorities in Oxfordshire and partner organisations to look at crime and disorder issues that cut across organisational boundaries.

36 **Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the overview and scrutiny work programme 2009/10.

Existing work programme
The Committee noted the contents of the report and the existing work programme 2009/10. They determined that the January meeting would focus on housing related topics and that the February meeting would concentrate on the scrutiny review into Engaging Young People.

They agreed the following amendments to the work programme:

- That both Residents' Parking and RAF Bicester should remain on the monitoring work programme and that the relevant Portfolio Holder would brief the Committee on progress as appropriate;
- That the proposal to undertake a scrutiny review of the Council's policy regarding conservation areas should be considered at either the January or February meeting of the Committee;
- That the Sustainable Communities Strategy should be removed from the work programme as Members had received an update and briefing on this item at Council on 19 October 2009.

Forward Plan
The Committee indicated that they would wish to consider the 'Phone Access and Telephony Review' report before it was referred to the Executive. It was currently scheduled for the January 2010 Executive in the latest Forward Plan (October 2009 – January 2010). The Democratic, Scrutiny and Elections Manager explained that this report had 'slipped' a number of times and as he had not yet seen a draft he thought it was likely to 'slip' again. He would refer the Committee's request to the Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director.

Resolved

1) That the current overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10 be agreed subject to the amendments detailed above.

2) That 'Phone Access and Telephony Review' be added to the work programme and that the Portfolio Holder for Customer Service and ICT be asked to refer the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in advance of its submission to the Executive.

The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

Chairman:

Date:

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 - 2014

5 January 2010

Report of Head of Housing Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the current status of the project to produce the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy, which links to the Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) note the contents of the report.

Details

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In April 2009 it was agreed to develop a Private Sector Housing Strategy in order to recognise the importance of good quality private sector housing to residents in the district, and to highlight the contribution the private sector housing team can make towards meeting the Council's corporate priorities.

1.2 A stock condition surveys was underway and a fuel poverty survey had recently been completed, as well as a recent Government review of the private rented sector. As a result a plan was needed to address the issues raised.

1.3 The project to develop the strategy has been overseen by a Steering Group chaired by Councillor Michael Gibbard and including representatives from Adult Social Care, Age Concern, Oxfordshire PCT and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.4 In April 2009 in response to a request from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

established a Task and Finish Group to contribute to the production of the Private Sector Housing Strategy. The Task and Finish Group has met on two occasions and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of that Group have attended meetings of the Steering Group. Members of the Group also attended the public consultation events. Given the strategic importance of this topic the Task and Finish Group felt that it would be appropriate to discuss the draft document at a full Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting prior to it's consideration at Executive.

2.0 Current position

2.1 Following engagement with our stakeholders and partners we developed a strategy identifying four priorities for action over the next four years. These are:

a. Ensure existing privately rented homes are accessible and affordable;

b. Ensure existing stock is in good condition;

c. Support vulnerable people to remain living in their own homes and improve their health outcomes;

d. Improve energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

2.2 An action plan has been developed to accompany the strategy which includes a number of SMART actions which will ensure the strategy is implemented and monitored effectively.

2.3 The strategy has been subject to a six week formal consultation period from 20 November to 31 December 2009 which included a 'coffee morning' event, a press release, a direct postal mail shot to 114 stakeholders and interested parties, and the inclusion of a survey on the Council's website consultation portal.

2.4 Responses are currently being compiled and a report will be taken to a final steering group meeting on 12 January 2010 and agreement on the final strategy, as amended in light of the consultation feedback, will be sought.

3.0 Next steps

3.1 The final Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 - 2014 will be taken to Executive in March 2010 for formal adoption.

Implications

Financial: The Strategy has no additional financial implications and will be resourced within existing resources, and using new Recession Impact funding, Homelessness Grant and other funding streams as identified within the strategy.

Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Service Accountant PH&E, 01295 221552

Legal: There are no legal implications resulting from the adoption of this strategy. The Private Sector Housing team works within a tight legal framework relating to enforcement of property condition and provision of grants. The strategy does not detract from that framework.

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Solicitor, 01295 221687

Risk Management: The Council's annual survey of residents' views indicates that housing issues are of increasing importance to the public. Having in place an effective Private Sector Strategy is a key means of demonstrating the Council's recognition of, and resolve to address, pressing housing issues. The content and delivery of the Strategy's action plan are likely to be subject to audit and a significant factor in any future assessments made of the Council's performance.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

- Theme 2 - improve health - including health prevention and access to services for older people. It makes the link between housing and health issues for older people.
- Theme 5 - Secure more affordable housing. This will include increased provision of new specialist extra care housing for older people.
- Theme 8 - Access to rural affordable housing and relevant services for all groups and specifically younger and older people.

- Theme 10 - Focus on Cherwell's people including increasing involvement, improving advice and support and promoting independent living with older people.

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Private Sector Housing Strategy Scrutiny Scoping Document
Appendix 2	Draft Private Sector Housing Strategy
Background Papers	
-	
Report Author	Tim Mills, Private Sector Housing Manager
Contact Information	01295 221655 tim.mills@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Appendix 1

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Planning the scrutiny review

(Use this form to plan the work of a Task & Finish Group)

Ref SR024: Private Sector Housing Strategy

Purpose of Review Specify exactly what the Scrutiny Review should achieve and refer where possible to VFM issues of service cost, service performance and/or customer satisfaction.	• Request from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing • To contribute to the production of the Private Sector Housing Strategy which links to the Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011 • It provides an opportunity for Member involvement in policy development from the outset
Indicators of Success What factors/outcomes will demonstrate that this Scrutiny Review has been a success.	• Adoption and implementation of the Private Sector Housing Strategy by Council in November 2009
Methodology/ Approach What types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence	• Task and Finish Group members to participate in the work of the topic review groups and feedback to the Task and Finish Group. • The approach adopted by each topic review group will be determined by the issues each respective topic review group chooses to address • The Task and Finish Group will be represented on the Private Sector Housing Strategy Steering Group by 2/3 members (see annex 1b for the Steering Group draft Terms of Reference)
Target body for Recommendations Executive, Council, Other/Partners	• Private Sector Housing Strategy Steering Group • Executive • Council

Key dates
Identify key meeting dates and any deadlines for reports or decisions
	• These are linked to the Private Sector Housing Strategy project plan (see annex 1c)
	• End April 2009 – first meeting of Task and Finish Panel to:
	  ○ Appoint Chairman
	  ○ Establish terms of reference
	  ○ Agree work programme and representation on the topic review groups and Steering Group
	  ○ Receive briefing from Housing officers
	• May 2009 – First meeting of the Steering Group
	• May – October 2009 – development of the strategy through topic review groups (see annex 1c for detail)
	• October 2009 – final meeting of the Task and Finish Group to sign off the draft strategy before it goes to the Executive
	• November 2009 – formal adoption of the Strategy by elected Members

Risks Identify any weaknesses and barriers to success	• Resource constraints of the Task and Finish Group members • Slippages in the project plan timetable (outside the control of the Task and Finish Group) • Appropriate budgets for delivery not being available (outside the control of the Task and Finish Group)
Witnesses/ Experts/ Site Visits Who, why and when	• Wide consultation with partners i.e. Registered Social Landlords, housing associations, private landlords, tenants, as appropriate for the issues and options being addressed by the respective topic review groups
Publicity & Media Do we need to publicise the review to encourage community involvement? what sort of media coverage do we want? Fliers, leaflets, radio broadcast, press-release, etc.	• Will this review be subject to a press embargo? No • To be determined by the Private Sector Housing Strategy Steering Group
Resources & Budget • specialist staff • external support • consultation • research	• Resource allocation driven by the Private Sector Housing Strategy Steering Group

Completed by: Natasha Clark	**Date: 30 March 2009**
Approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee:	**Date: 07 April 2009**

Appendix 2

Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Draft
Cherwell's Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010-2014

Making the most of our existing homes

Consultation Draft
November 2009

Contents

Executive Summary – to be added

Part A Understanding the current Situation

1. Introduction 5
2. Setting the scene 10
3. Cherwell's vision for the existing housing stock 17

Part B Improving house condition and services

1. Priority - Ensure existing private homes are accessible and affordable 20
2. Priority - Ensure existing stock is in good condition 21
3. Priority - Support vulnerable people to remain living in their own homes and improve their health outcomes 22
4. Priority - Improve energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty 23
5. General and Common themes 24
6. Resourcing Cherwell's Private Sector Housing Strategy 24

Part C Taking the Strategy forward

1. Consultation 27
2. Implementation 27
3. Action planning 27
4. Monitoring 27
5. Action plan 28

Appendices

Appendix One - Glossary of terms
Appendix Two - Strategic Relevance
Appendix Three List of consultees - to be added
Appendix Four - Key messages from consultation carried out when preparing this strategy - to be added

Part A – Understanding the current situation

1. Introduction

Purpose of the Private Sector Housing Strategy

This strategy aims to ensure that homes in the district are of good quality, that no one has to live in unsatisfactory accommodation and that the changing housing needs and aspirations of residents can be met. We believe a good home is important. It provides a foundation which gives individuals the opportunity to work and aspire towards secure and affluent prospects. This in turn helps to foster sustainable communities.

Cherwell's commitment to investing in private sector homes and improving housing standards goes a long way in delivering a wide range of positive benefits for residents. With so much pressure on Cherwell housing stock we must help ensure that the private rented sector plays a full role in meeting local housing needs. We must continue to help develop and adapt private sector homes to meet the needs of different sections of the community, such as the elderly, to promote independence and social inclusion. We will also be working to address the disparities between different parts of the district in terms of housing conditions and affordable warmth.

Although the focus of this strategy is on the private housing sector it is part of a wider strategic framework and has been developed in close association with Cherwell's strategies and plans. This strategy supports and links directly to a wide range of other strategies at a national, regional and local level that seek to improve opportunities, health and well being of local people.

We have built on these links and through our work with partners and stake holders from the public, private and voluntary sectors we have established a vision that:

By 2014, private sector housing in the Cherwell district will provide our residents with more choice, a better quality home, more independence and more affordable warmth. Our partnerships will have been fully developed to achieve these goals.

Our vision can be summarised in four key words: choice, quality, independence and warmth.

The current position

In its report: 'Building better lives - Getting the best from strategic housing' released 9 September 2009, the Audit Commission states:

If councils thought of housing more broadly, they could do more to combat poverty, ill-health, educational under-achievement and help strengthen their local communities. The recession makes a strategic view of housing all the more important.

Cherwell District Council has already recognised these issues: its housing services were restructured in 2007 following the transfer of its remaining housing stock to Charter Community Housing. Three new service areas, with increased resources, were established to deliver strategic housing functions (including delivery of new social housing), address housing needs (including homelessness, assessment & re-housing and advice) and improve

private sector housing (housing standards and grants). The restructure understood the integral links between all housing activities and, allied to the recruitment of suitably skilled and experienced staff, has increasingly supported efficient, effective and sustainable delivery.

The council has also provided significant capital resources to deliver improved housing standards and adaptations for disabled residents and has established an in-house Home Improvement Agency to help vulnerable people access the grant assistance they are entitled to. Statutory enforcement work is delivered alongside advice and a range of grants and other assistance has been developed to deliver help where it is most needed and achieve the council's targets.

The council has secured external funding wherever possible and work with partners and customers where it is beneficial to do so. Our services have been benchmarked against other authorities and we have participated in a value-for-money pathfinder project. Customer service standards have been established and customer satisfaction and equality and diversity impact assessments inform what we do.

Current Services

Cherwell District Council's private sector housing team deals with around 1200 enquiries each year and provides a wide range of housing services to households living in private sector housing. Services include:

- Providing Disabled Facilities Grants and other forms of financial assistance
- Home Improvement Agency
- Working with partner agencies to provide equity release and other loan solutions to help homeowners improve their homes
- Delivering affordable warmth assistance and home energy efficiency advice
- Licensing private rented sector houses in multiple occupation.
- Enforcing housing standards and management in the private rented sector
- Reducing the number of empty properties in the district and targeting action where empty homes are causing a nuisance to the surrounding community

Strategic Relevance

The links between the council's strategies and other important regional and national documents are clearly understood. Set out below are some of the strategic documents which inform and direct housing activity. (Further detail of the objectives contained within these strategies is included at Appendix 2)

- Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society.
- Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11
- Oxfordshire Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Area Agreement
- Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2008-2011
- Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (December 2007)
- Cherwell Community Plan 2006-2011
- Cherwell Sustainable Communities Strategy: Our District; Our Future
- Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005-2011
- Cherwell Homelessness Strategy 2007-2011 – From Crisis to Prevention

- Cherwell Housing Strategy for Older People 2009-2014

The council's Housing Strategy 2005-2011 covers all aspects of the Council's housing role and contains seven priorities, but the two which are specifically concerned with the private sector have principally directed our activities since 2005. They are:

Priority 5: to improve housing standards, including overall condition and energy efficiency
Priority 6: to help people live independently in the community with suitable, adapted accommodation.

What we have achieved

In the preparation of this strategy we have researched the facts and figures but also listened to our partners' views on what they think the existing housing issues are. We have reviewed what has been achieved over the last four years as part of the housing strategy and evaluated initiatives we have undertaken.

Supported vulnerable people to remain in their own homes and improve their health outcomes

- Met the growing demand for disabled facilities grants (DFG) through increased capital allocation and reorganisation of the grants team.
- Secured additional DFG capital funding from government in 2008-09 to deliver 140 completed jobs and a record budget of £910k in that year.
- Obtained approval of a new and more flexible Grants and Assistance Policy 2008.
- Secured funding for an increased range of targeted discretionary grants.
- Delivered 176 Essential Repairs Grants to vulnerable households at a cost of £412k.
- Improved grant delivery by bringing the Home Improvement Agency in-house in April 2008 with financial support from partners.
- Developed and publicised our Small Repairs Service in partnership with Health and Social Care partners to reduce hospital admissions for vulnerable households and facilitate hospital discharge.
- Developed a Housing Strategy for Older People 2009.

Ensured existing stock is in good condition

- Commissioned a Stock Condition Survey in 2009 (see the section Stock Condition - Key findings, below).
- Implemented the statutory licensing scheme for houses in multiple-occupation (HMOs) from 2006 and issued licences to all properties known to require one.
- Improved housing standards by resolution of serious hazards at 229 premises through both enforcement and assistance.
- Prosecuted landlords for serious breaches of standards.
- Worked with partners to bring 214 homes occupied by vulnerable households up to the Decent Homes standard.
- Responded to 621 service requests relating to property condition (155 each year on average).
- Introduced a Landlord Home Improvement Grant in 2007 (using a special allocation of capital from government) to raise standards in private rented housing in return for nominations rights to the accommodation for those in housing need. Improved 31 homes (2007-09) and secured nomination rights totalling 88 years at a cost of £352k.

- Developed, with partners, an equity release scheme which has secured government funding, was implemented in 2009, and will be used to help improve the homes of elderly owner-occupiers.

Improved energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty

- Achieved total domestic energy efficiency improvements of 16.52% in the years 1996 to 2008 (compared with a 1996 baseline).
- Provided grant assistance to deliver improved energy efficiency in 131 privately rented homes.
- Worked with partners to encourage targeted households to take up energy efficiency grants for which they are eligible by means of specific mail-shots.
- Assessed the level of fuel poverty in the district and established a baseline for future action (2009 NI 187 survey).
- Provided a First-time Central Heating Grant in 2006-07 (using a special allocation of capital from government) to improve heating and insulation in private rented housing occupied by vulnerable households in return for future letting commitments. 17 homes improved at a cost of £62k.

Ensured existing private homes are accessible and affordable

- Developed the housing options service and produced a directory of housing advice and support services in the district.
- Reviewed the rent deposit schemes and introduced a new scheme Private Accommodation Lettings Scheme (PALS) from April 2009.
- Expanded and revised the range of information leaflets for tenants, private landlords and those investigating their housing options.
- Further developed the information available on and through the Council's website.
- Produced specific information on private rented accommodation for the emerging Polish community.
- Continued to hold and promote independently chaired Landlord Forum meetings every four months.
- Developed a homelessness strategy.
- Introduced the Landlords Home Improvement Grant (see also Housing Conditions achievements above) and secured nominations to 31 improved private rented homes.

General

- Established customer satisfaction measures for each service area and a monitoring system to ensure continuous improvement.
- Continued participation in a benchmarking partnership with similar authorities to collect and compare performance and drive improvement.
- Participated in a value-for-money pilot exercise with Housing Quality Network (HQN) to develop an effective process for comparing costs, with a view to establishing an Oxfordshire value-for-money group (2007-09).
- Carried out equality impact assessments of private sector housing services.

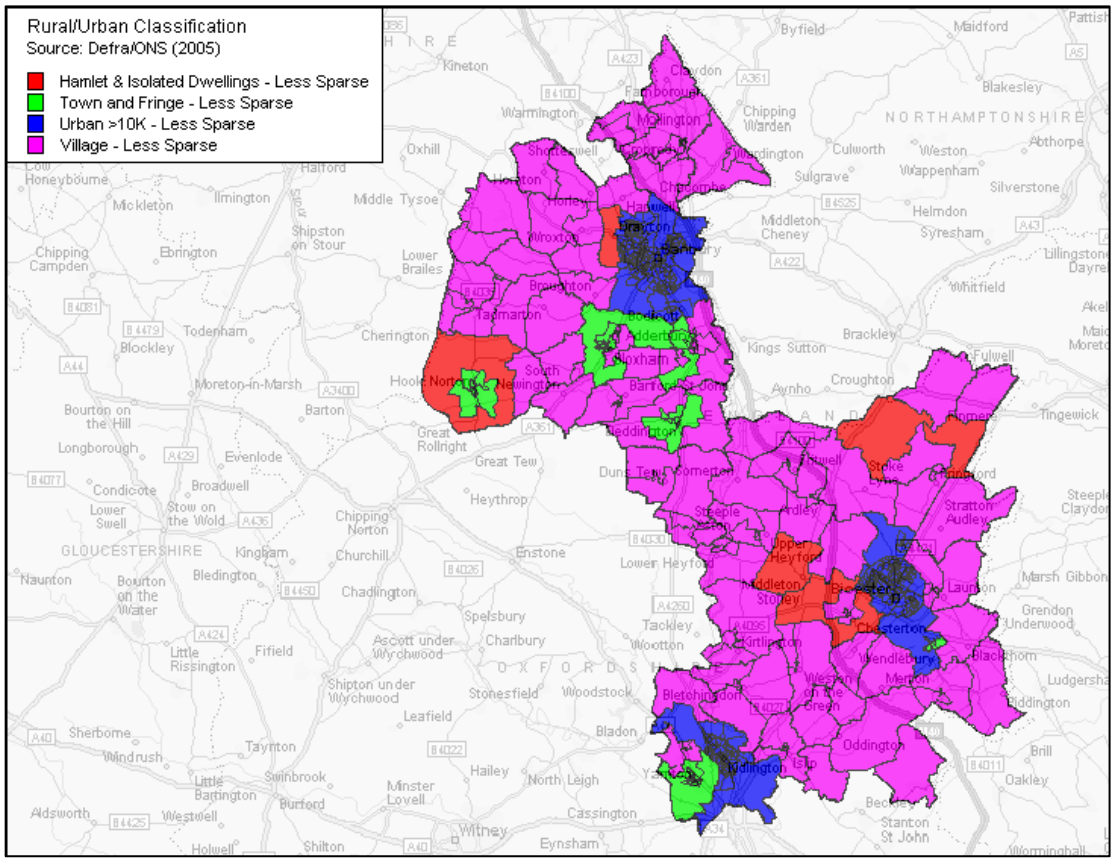
However, despite good performance there is still much to be done:

- The supply of new affordable housing cannot meet current or projected need so we must ensure that the private rented sector can provide suitable homes for those requiring affordable accommodation.
- Demand for disabled facilities grants continues to grow. The number of applicants is exceeding our ability to process and deliver adaptations and the capital budget is fully committed.
- More than ten percent of the district's homes are hazardous to the health of their occupants.
- Nearly a third of our homes do not meet the decent homes standard.
- Slow progress is being made with improvements to energy efficiency.
- More than half of all of the district's homes still have inadequate insulation.
- Ten percent of residents are in fuel poverty.
- Seven hundred homes have currently been empty for over six months.

2. Setting the Scene

Living in Cherwell

Cherwell's population is based in the three major centres of Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington, and in 75 small rural parishes. 65% of Cherwell's residents live in the three large settlements so the population is – perhaps surprisingly - mostly urban, which gives rise to challenges that are more usually associated with urban areas, though we also face some of the common rural issues such as restricted access to services and isolation.
The map below shows the distribution spatially



The total population in 2007 was 138,000 and is expected to increase by nearly 24% by 2031, with the largest growth in Bicester and the rural parishes. The population group aged 75 and over is expected to grow by 110% over the same period.

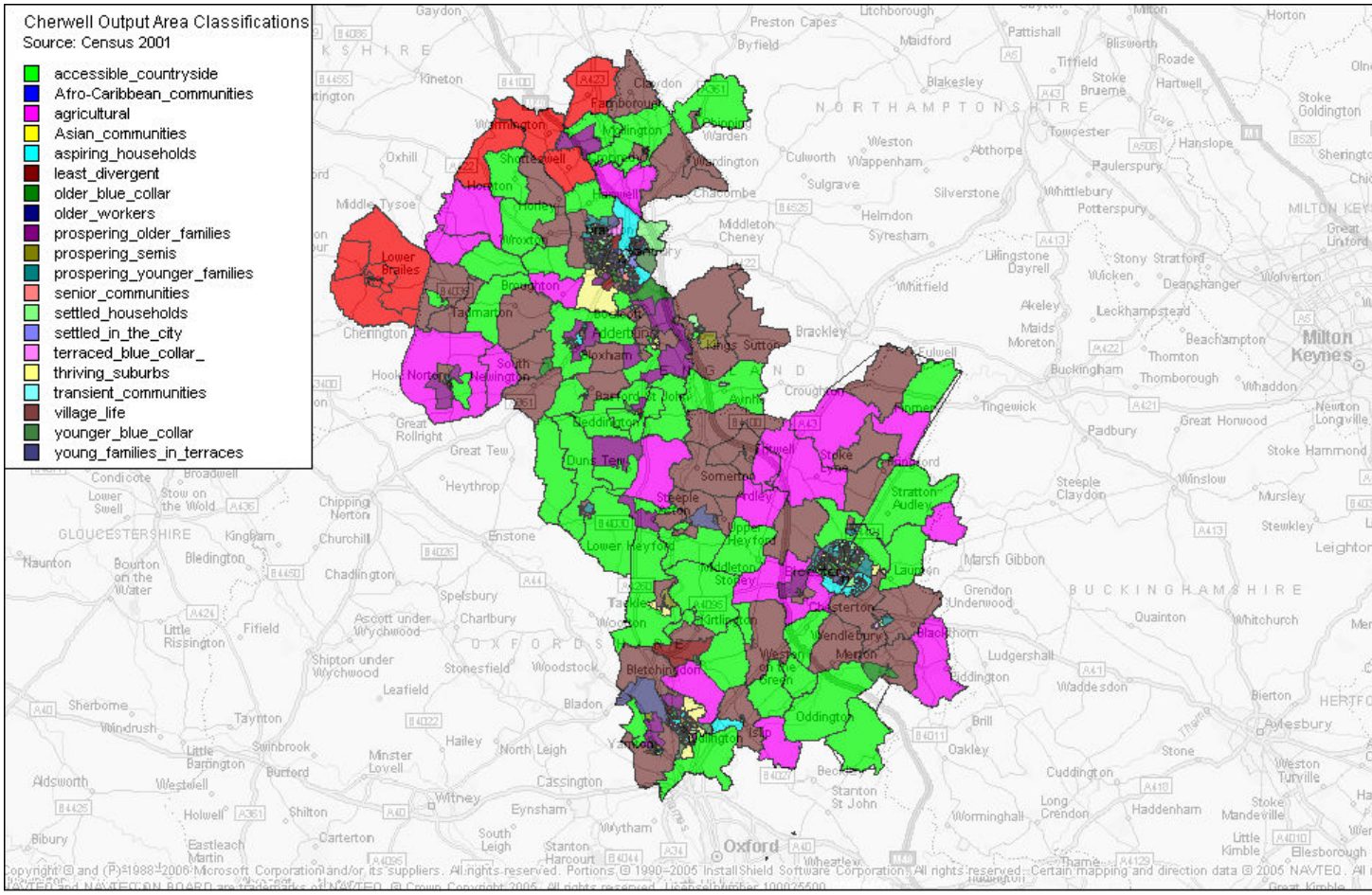
The latest estimates on ethnicity (2007) tell us that 11.2% of the population is from ethnic minority groups, an increase from 9.3% in 2001, with the "non-British white" category being the largest and the size of this group having grown by 61% since 2001 to 5,300.

Cherwell is a relatively affluent area but there are significant differences in wealth distribution. Banbury in particular has pockets of severe deprivation, second only to Oxford in the County. Seven areas in Cherwell are in the worst 10% in England in terms of skills, education and training (Index of Deprivation 2007). According to the Child Well-Being index, Cherwell is ranked 140 out of 354 Local Authorities – well below other rural districts in Oxfordshire. Within Cherwell district the most deprived areas for Child Well-Being are in urban Banbury. The index also highlights deprivation in rural areas with rural isolation a significant factor.

The following table shows the difference in tenure split between the two years the Council carried out Stock Condition Surveys

Table – Tenure change in Cherwell 2004-2009		
Tenure	**2004**	**2009**
Owner Occupier	75.8%	70.4%
Private Rented Sector	11.9%	17.4%
Social Housing	12.3%	12.2%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

28% of households claim one of more significant benefits, of which Council Tax benefit and Pension Tax Credits predominate. Our House Condition Survey 2009 also tells us that 23.7% of the district's households are classified as being vulnerable (over 13,000 households) (see Appendix 1 for definition of vulnerable) and that 11.5% of all properties accommodate a household with a disabled member.



Key points

- Projected population growth of 24% in the next 20 years
- Mix of affluence and significant deprivation within the district
- Significant benefit dependence in some areas
- Growth and fluctuation of the BME population
- A quarter of households with a vulnerable household member

What do we know about the housing stock and housing issues in Cherwell?

Stock condition

As an 'Excellent Authority' (Audit Commission 2008), Cherwell District Council recognises that accurate data is essential to properly understand conditions in its district. We are committed to undertaking a stock condition survey every four years in order to ensure we have the detailed information we need. Data from other sources is also valuable and we make use of information from central government (CLG's English Housing Survey), our local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (United Sustainable Energy Agency or USEA) and national grant agencies such as Eaga (who deliver Warm Front grants). We use available data to plan services and adapt them to changing needs and circumstances.

Our latest private sector housing survey was undertaken in early 2009, building on information obtained from earlier surveys in 2004, 1999 and 1994. This survey (undertaken in accordance with current best-practice[1]) provides us with statistically reliable information (in the form of a 'snap-shot') about the type, age and tenure of the stock as well as various measures of its condition. It also gives us information about residents, including ethnicity, financial circumstances and vulnerability issues. Comparing the new data with that from earlier surveys allows us to detect trends and determine whether particular issues need more or less attention.

Key stock condition issues

- More than one in every ten homes in the district has at least one serious hazard.
- Principle hazards are Excess Cold, Falls Associated with Steps and Stairs and Damp and Mould Growth.
- The cost of remedying these hazards is over £8million or £1,400 for each property affected.
- Almost thirty percent of homes in Cherwell fail the decent homes standard, compared with under a quarter in 2004.
- Private rented sector properties are in the poorest condition overall with over a third failing the decent homes standard.
- An estimated 16% of the RSL stock still fails the decent homes standard.
- The main cause of failure is poor state of repair but there are also significant numbers of decent-homes failures associated with serious hazards and inadequate thermal comfort.
- There are an estimated 13,755 vulnerable households in the district (one in four of all households) of which more than two-fifths are in fuel poverty.
- A quarter of vulnerable households live in homes which fail the decent homes standard.
- The cost of bringing all homes in the district up to the decent homes standard is more than £65 million or £12 million for the homes of vulnerable households (an average of £3,500 for each one).
- The average energy rating (SAP rating) of the district's stock is 53.8 compared with 50 in 2004 and with a national average of 49 in 2006[2].
- But nearly one in ten of the stock has a SAP rating of less than 35 (taken to indicate a serious health hazard).

[1] Collecting, Managing and Using Housing Stock Information, DETR (now CLG) 2001
[2] English House Condition Survey 2007

- The RSL stock has a better SAP rating overall (58) than the private rented sector (54) and owner-occupied (53).
- Well over ten percent of the stock has no more than 50mm of loft insulation and almost half has no more than 100mm. Only three in every ten homes have the 200mm which constitutes a good level of insulation. (The currently recommended level for new homes and for up-grades is 270mm.)
- Over 700 homes have currently been empty for six months or more, with some 66 empty for 5 or more years[3].

The principle messages to be drawn from the stock condition survey data is that despite clear improvements on many (but not all fronts) since 2004 and favourable comparisons with the national picture, there are still many unsuitable homes in the district and much to be done. Poor insulation and heating underlie many of the problems including serious hazards, failure to reach the decent-homes standard and fuel poverty. The size of the survey prevents us from drawing any accurate conclusions about relative conditions at ward or parish level.

Housing need and demand

In addition to information about stock condition the Council also considers information about residents' housing needs. We obtain data about future housing demand and residents' housing aspirations by several means, including:

- Specific and up-to-date local research: (Oxfordshire Housing Market Assessment 2007 (commissioned by the council with its Oxfordshire local authority partners), the council's own Cherwell Housing Needs report 2008 (a 2009 report is at draft stage) local housing needs surveys);
- Regular review of other data sources: (Hometrack (data source and analysis capability), Oxfordshire Data Observatory (information on housing need and lifestyle available at 'super output area' level), the council's own Housing Register data.); and
- Partnership working and review: (Regular 1-2-1 meetings with the council's Developing Partner RSLs, Management and Development Group meetings with all local stock holding RSLs).

The Housing Market Assessment established a need for five hundred additional social homes each year over five years. The 2008 Cherwell Housing Needs survey confirmed the figure at five hundred homes, but estimated they could be delivered over seven years.

Recent delivery of new affordable housing is shown in the following table:

Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
Number of affordable houses	61	166	133	87
As percentage of total new-build	6%	19%	29%	20%

New affordable housing is clearly unable to meet the currently estimated need. The recently approved eco-town in north-west Bicester is likely to deliver some 1500 new affordable homes over fifteen years but although this will assist with meeting demand in the south of the district is unlikely to affect matters in Banbury.

[3] Council Tax data April 2009

The council manages the allocation of the great majority of the district's social housing by means of its Allocation Policy, allied to a (sub regional) Choice Based Lettings Scheme. It also maintains the Housing Register. In excess of 3000 households are registered but the number of RSL-owned homes available for letting each year is typically about 350, - a very significant short-fall.

The table below shows the number of RSL lettings (not including transfer applicants) over the last 4 years

Total RSL lettings (including LA nominations but not transfers within or between RSLs)			
2005/06	**2006/07**	**2007/08**	**2008/9**
238	401	388	322

Source: HSSA

Although the council continues to work to improve the condition of the private rented stock it has historically had a poor image in terms not only of condition but also, critically, in terms of accessibility and security. As a consequence, many residents consider social rented accommodation a better and preferable option. The council has introduced schemes (such as its Private Accommodation Lettings scheme (PALs) and Landlords' Home Improvement Grant (LHIG) to improve access) and is encouraging people to recognise that the shortfall in available social rented accommodation will mean that many aspiring social tenants will face potentially long waiting times and possible disappointment. In those circumstances the message is that a privately rented home can and should be regarded as a realistic and appropriate alternative.

Nearly five percent of households have a monthly income of less than £500 and over twenty percent have less than £1,250. Over a third of households claim one of more significant benefits, of which Council Tax benefit and Pension Tax Credits predominate. The 2009 Cherwell Housing Needs report indicates that an estimated 79% of all new (emerging) households could not afford to buy a lowest quartile (cheapest 25%) entry level property. Only 22% of emerging households could not afford a private rent.

Adding to the problem of affordability, our House Condition Survey 2009 tells us that nearly a quarter of the district's households are classified as being vulnerable and over a quarter of those vulnerable households live in property which fails the decent homes standard. Over two-fifths of vulnerable households are also in fuel poverty (10.4% of the district's population, a figure close to the 10% produced through the separate NI187 methodology).

The council is also experiencing a significant growth in demand for disabled facilities grants. These play an important role in helping people remain in their own homes. As the population ages this demand is expected to continue and will present an on-going challenge to both the council's capital and revenue resources, not least because the specific funding contribution made by government has not kept pace.

The Stock Condition Survey 2009 has highlighted a substantial increase in the proportion of privately rented homes in the district's stock since 2004 (from 12% in 2004 to over 17%) but, although we expected to see an increase because of the popularity in recent years of buy-to-let investment, the number of owners seeking to rent property which they cannot currently sell is not known.

Impact of recession

This strategy has been produced in a time of recession. The likely impact of the recession is difficult to judge because its duration and the consequent impact on employment are not known. If the recession proves lengthy it is reasonable to expect that homelessness will rise, but this has not yet occurred. At present there is (anecdotally) an over-supply of private rented accommodation, a reduction in rents and an increasing number of landlords seeking to find tenants through the council. In the event that unemployment increases it is possible that the number of repossessions and empty homes may grow.

The council is currently encountering many new landlords (some of whom are undoubtedly 'reluctant landlords' who we expect to cease letting their property when the market improves). In the meantime there is a need to provide the information and advice they need to trade effectively and understand their legal obligations.

It might be assumed that falling house prices would make it easier for emerging households to purchase properties and "get a foot on the property ladder". However there are major obstacles to home ownership:

- property prices still remain well above the usually acceptable multiplier of 2.9 times a single income or 3.5 times a joint income
- lending is restricted, with lenders demanding much higher deposits
- parents are no longer as willing or able to put extra resources into their adult children's property purchase as they may face financial difficulties themselves or have seen their equity in their property diminish

However the overall picture for housing needs and the key issues remain largely unchanged.

Legislative changes

Changes in the law can have a profound effect and although the council uses the available consultation processes to make its views known, and also feeds back information through its various contacts with government and other agencies, we must ultimately operate in accordance with statutory requirements.

Significant recent changes include the Housing Act 2004, which came into effect in 2006 and included the introduction of an entirely new way of assessing house condition problems, a new enforcement regime and licensing of houses in multiple occupation and Local Housing Allowance, which introduced changes to how housing benefit is assessed and paid.

Changes in the way in which housing benefit is administered since April 2008 have had a particularly significant effect in the private rented sector: Benefit payments are now expected to be paid to the claimant and cannot (except in special cases, or when rent arrears reach 8 weeks) is paid directly to landlords. Government's intention was to empower tenants but the new arrangements are making landlords reluctant to let to more vulnerable households.

There are also a number of further changes in prospect:
The government consulted in May 2009 on a proposals document entitled "The Private Rented Sector – professionalism and quality " which deals with the twin themes of encouraging professionalism among private landlords and enforcement of better standards. Key proposals include a national register of rental property linked to an improved complaint

and redress system and regulation of letting agents to improve property standards, management and consumer protection. Changes to the way in which planning controls might be used to better control the number and location of houses in multiple-occupation are also being considered.

Diversity

The Council is mindful of the diversity of the district's population and many private sector housing services are by their nature directed specifically at vulnerable groups. Disabled facilities grants are provided for households containing an adult or child with a disability while the Small Repairs Scheme is aimed at older people.

We are aware from our research that non-white British people are more likely to rent in the private sector than people from other ethnic groups. Cherwell's largest ethnic minority is Asian/British Asian.

Home ownership is highest amongst the Indian ethnic minority. Traditionally, BME groups have accessed homeownership by buying rundown properties in unpopular areas and their access to homeownership may become limited if this opportunity reduces. Young ethnic minority households may not have the same access to inherited wealth or parental support as their white British counterparts, making them potentially more likely to rent privately. Therefore actions within this strategy relating to the private rented sector are likely to impact positively on ethnic minority groups within the district.

This strategy will be subject to a full equality impact assessment during the consultation period.

3. Cherwell's vision for the existing housing stock

Key messages for service provision

Consultation, informed by results obtained from the most recent stock condition survey and needs data, as well as evidence of changes highlighted by comparing current data with that from earlier surveys, has helped identify the issues and actions included in this strategy. The principle issues can be summarised as follows, but are further developed into priorities in Part B of the strategy and actions in Part C..

Stock condition issues

- There are significant stock condition issues to be addressed despite progress made to-date.
- Unsatisfactory insulation & heating is the overriding issue to be addressed and is the principle cause of the serious hazards identified, failure to reach the decent homes standard and fuel poverty.
- Private rented accommodation is poorer overall than other tenures.
- There is a need for landlord training and development to fill a skills gap and improve standards.
- Resources must be effectively targeted to assist households in greatest need, areas of deprivation and to where there are high levels of health and social care needs. More data is required to inform decisions on area-based interventions.
- More data is needed to inform decisions about appropriate empty-homes activity.

Access to private rented accommodation issues

- Demand for social housing is unlikely to be met and the private rented sector needs to become an appropriate and acceptable alternative if housing needs are to be met.
- Many vulnerable households require assistance to secure and maintain private rented sector tenancies.
- The private sector has grown significantly since 2004 but its future size is unknown and any decline will impact on our work.
- Best use must be made of the available social stock particularly the issues of under-occupation and empty dwellings.

Vulnerability and disability issues

- Demand for disabled facilities grants (DFGs) is expected to grow and to exceed resources.
- Many vulnerable households cannot afford to maintain their homes and are therefore reliant upon financial assistance.

Fuel poverty and energy efficiency issues

- A significant proportion of the stock is still inadequately insulated and therefore wasteful of the energy used to heat it.
- One in ten households are in fuel poverty

Access to service issues

- Awareness of the work the council does to address poor housing conditions and the assistance available is insufficient.
- Access to services needs to be improved.

Vision
Having gained an understanding of the issues affecting the lives of residents living in all tenures, and taking particular account of the needs of vulnerable households, Cherwell has set a vision for what services should look like over the next five years.

By 2014, private sector housing in the Cherwell district will provide our residents with more choice, a better quality home, more independence and more affordable warmth. Our partnerships will have been fully developed to achieve this.

Through our consultations and work with stakeholders we have identified what needs to be done to deliver this vision and have identified four priorities:-

Choice
Private sector landlords will provide accommodation and services of the very best standard to their tenants and will receive excellent support and guidance from the Council in doing so. The private rented sector will be a meaningful housing choice for people seeking accommodation which is flexible, accessible, affordable and in good condition.

- Priority - Ensure existing privately rented homes are accessible and affordable

Quality
The physical condition of private sector housing will have improved - this will include increasing the number of vulnerable households living in decent homes, reducing serious hazards in the home, and making the home a safe and healthy place for our residents and their families to live.

- Priority - Ensure existing stock is in good condition

Independence
Vulnerable people will be aware of the services available to them and will be helped to identify and carry out the repairs and improvements needed to ensure their home is kept in good condition and remains suitable for their needs. As demand grows we will fully explore opportunities to secure new funding and deliver assistance, including options such as equity release schemes, and we will implement these wherever appropriate.

- Priority - Support vulnerable people so that they can remain living in their own homes, and improve their health outcomes

Warmth
People will live in affordable warmth and will be better placed to heat their homes adequately, especially through the winter months. Residents will know what they can do to reduce the amount of energy used in their homes and the energy-efficiency of the district's homes will have increased.

- Priority - Improve energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty

How the priorities will be delivered:

The strategy recognises that the council is operating in a difficult financial environment and, although continuing to drive improvements in value for money, has to both reduce budgets and increase efficiency savings. The actions identified in the strategy will be delivered using existing budgets and will also utilise external funding secured by the council and its partners.

We shall continue to develop our services, to work with partners to deliver efficiencies wherever possible and to secure external funding when it is available. Resources will be targeted and reallocated to achieve our priorities and this will increasingly mean those vulnerable and households in need for whom the council provides the essential safety net.

The council strives to do better in several areas: it is determined in particular, to bring about much greater energy efficiency improvements; determine how best to make use of empty homes; and increase its engagement with private sector landlords both to improve standards and to secure access to privately rented accommodation for households in need.

The way we will deliver our services will be guided by the following principals:

- Working in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders to expand capacity and improve services
- Offering greater customer choice
- Customer led service delivery, with service designed to respond to the diverse needs of residents of Cherwell
- Value for money in service delivery and providing services that are both effective and efficient
- Making best use of all available resources
- Working maximise the impact of services
- Using our market intelligence to take a risk based approach to targeting our resources at those neighbourhoods with the work housing conditions or a client groups who are most vulnerable

Part B – Improving house condition and services

Part B of this strategy describes the priorities and the key objectives for each of them. There is an overarching need to publicise and promote the service. Rather than repeat common themes under each of the four priorities we have set them out together in the General section at the end.

1. Priority: Ensure existing privately rented homes are accessible and affordable

This priority encompasses the need to both regulate and support landlords and tenants and includes working to improve the image and desirability of the private rented sector; ensuring that it becomes a realistic tenure choice for those seeking accommodation in terms of both its quality and security; and assisting those who want a privately rented home to both locate and secure one that is suitable and affordable.

Key issues:
Working with tenants

- Ensuring residents understand the council's housing role and the services available, and that they are able to access them.
- Ensuring that language barriers do not prevent access to the Housing Service.
- Development of the information and advice available to landlords, tenants and prospective tenants.
- The need to develop schemes such as PALs so as to secure access to the private rented sector for households in need.

Key issues:
Working with landlords

- Partnership work to develop schemes to improve security of tenure.
- Review of discretionary grants available to private rented sector landlords and tenants so as to ensure that the grants programme effectively delivers access and affordability objectives.
- Continued support and development of the Cherwell Housing Providers' Forum (landlords' forum) as a means of engaging with landlords.
- Landlord training as a means of improving landlords' skills and driving up standards of practice and property condition.
- Landlord accreditation as a means of improving landlords' skills and driving up standards of practice and property condition.

Key actions for ensuring accessibility and affordability

1.1 Undertake further review of the Private Accommodation Lettings Scheme (PALS) to ensure its effectiveness in securing appropriate private rented accommodation for those in need. (See Homelessness Strategy priority 3.1)

1.2 Review existing grant schemes and grant opportunities, including Landlord's Home improvement Grant, to ensure we are best able to deliver efficient access and affordability objectives. (See Cherwell Homelessness Strategy priority 3.2 and Cherwell Temporary Accommodation Strategy objective eight)

1.3 Work with landlords to improve their skills and awareness as a means of improving both property and management standards. (See also objective 2.3)

2. Priority: Ensure existing stock is in good condition

We need to resolve serious health hazards and to reduce the number of homes which fail the decent homes standard, particularly where they are occupied by vulnerable households. Improving stock condition remains vital. Poor energy efficiency not only adds to climate issues but is the major cause of failed condition standards. Improving the energy efficiency of homes through insulation and better means of heating will therefore play a major role in reducing hazards and achieving decent homes. We need to understand how we can best bring empty homes back into use.

Key issues:
The unsatisfactory condition of homes

- The number of homes with serious health and safety hazards
- The number of homes failing the decent homes standard
- Ensuring that houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) - whether subject to a licence or not - are properly managed
- The need to work with housing providers to drive up standards in rented accommodation and, in particular, provide training and advice for landlords
- Ensuring that residents understand the council's role in housing, the services available and that they are able to access them
- Making sure that owners and landlords understand the need for timely maintenance work and are encouraged to undertake it.

Key issues:
Statutory duties

- Resolution of serious health and safety hazards and statutory nuisances
- The duty to keep the condition of the stock under review in order to measure progress and inform future decision making and objectives
- Ensuring that all HMOs which require a licence are subject to the licensing process
- Ensuring that licensed HMOs comply with their licence conditions

Key issues:
Resources must be used effectively

- The need to target interventions at the households living in the poorest accommodation and in greatest need
- The need for data to inform decisions on the appropriateness and location of area-based interventions
- The need for research to inform decisions on the need for empty homes interventions
- Ensuring that the Grants and Assistance policy is kept under review and that the measures available continue to be the most appropriate for achieving priorities.

Key actions for ensuring good stock condition

2.1 Re-target enforcement and other interventions to address serious hazards, statutory nuisances and also non-decent homes occupied by vulnerable households, and to increase the number of homes improved.
2.2 Audit HMOs to ensure that all qualifying premises are subject to a licence.
2.3 Raise awareness with owners and landlords of the need for timely and appropriate maintenance to both maintain and improve standards. (See also objective 1.3)
2.4 Formalise the annual review of the grants and assistance available to ensure that the discretionary grants programme effectively delivers stock-condition and stock-use objectives.
2.5 Expand the Flexible Home Improvement Loan scheme to deliver assistance to more elderly home-owners.
2.6 Reduce the number of empty homes in the district.

3. Priority: Support vulnerable people to remain living in their own homes and improve their health outcomes

We recognise that people usually want to continue to live in their current homes for as long as possible and that it is often best for them to do so. In many cases they need help and this can be provided through assistance with essential repairs and through the provision of aids and adaptations. We shall continue to develop the advice and practical assistance which are available and will work to ensure that there are appropriate financial and other resources to meet the need.

Key issues:
Supporting vulnerable people

- The need to secure the resources necessary to deliver disabled facility grants (DFGs) in the district.
- The need for a DFG policy to address the prioritisation and allocation of resources and, in particular, issues associated with a demand which exceeds supply.
- Development of practices and procedures which will improve the efficiency and value for money of the DFG service.
- Promotion of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service including the Small Repairs Service.
- Ensuring that the Grants and Assistance policy is kept under review and that the measures available continue to be the most appropriate for achieving priorities
- Encouraging uptake of Flexible Home Improvement Grants and the need to work with partners to both develop the scheme and secure additional funding.
- Development of data recording and reporting facilities.

Key Actions for supporting vulnerable people

3.1 Make best use of available Disabled Facilities Grant resources in a period of growing demand.

3.2 Formalise the annual review of the grants and assistance available to vulnerable households so as to ensure the discretionary grants programme is as effective as possible in delivering assistance. (See also objective 2.4)
3.3 Improve data recording and reporting so as to deliver effective performance management and data provision to partners.
3.4 Increase uptake of HIA services including Small Repairs Service.

4. Priority: Improve energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty

The latest stock condition survey has identified unsatisfactory insulation and heating as the single most important house-condition issue. We have also established that ten percent of households (identified in accordance with the NI187 requirements) are in fuel poverty. We will work with partners to improve the energy efficiency of the district's housing; ensure that home-owners can make informed choices about energy-efficiency improvements to their homes and are encouraged to carry them out. The strategy also aims to ensure that all rented homes reach an appropriate energy efficiency standard, and will introduce initiatives to tackle fuel poverty and to increase the uptake of grants and discounts funded by national and other agencies.

Key issues:
Energy efficiency of homes in the district

- The need to work with partners to ensure that home-owners can make informed choices about energy-efficiency improvements to their homes and are encouraged to carry them out.
- Working with partners to ensure that home-owners can make informed choices about renewable sources of energy and are encouraged to utilise and install them out.
- Ensuring that rented homes reach an appropriate energy efficiency standard
- The development and implementation of initiatives to increase the uptake of energy efficiency grants and discounts funded and delivered by national and other agencies.

Key Issues:
Reduce fuel poverty

- Develop and implement an Affordable Warmth policy to tackle fuel poverty.
- Use available sources of information to provide advice and assistance to households identified as being in fuel poverty.

Key actions for improving energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty

4.1 Increase the numbers of owner-occupiers and landlords installing insulation and implementing other energy-efficiency measures.
4.2 Reduce the number of households in fuel-poverty.

5. General and common themes

A cross-cutting theme that affects all our services is the need for the public and especially vulnerable households to be aware of them.

Key issues:
Access to services

- Those who require our services must know what is available and be able to access them
- Partners and other agencies must be able to refer or direct their clients to us effectively

Key actions for ensuring access to services
5.1 Increase public awareness of the council's housing role and the services available.

6. Resourcing Cherwell's Private Sector Housing Strategy

The restructure of the council's Housing Services placed the Private Sector Housing Team in a much stronger position to deliver an efficient and effective service. This has provided the Team with capacity to deliver several of the service improvements outlined in the Private Sector Housing Strategy. However, some of the Strategy's essential developmental areas produce resource implications and opportunities and these are detailed against each objective in the Action Plan. Summarised below are the current streams of revenue funding, some or all of which can contribute to the resource implications and opportunities which the Strategy brings.

Revenue Funding

- **CLG Recession Impact Funding.** The council has already been awarded this funding and recognises the significance of developing the private sector at a time of National Recession
- **CLG Homelessness Prevention Grant**. The council is awarded an annual grant to deliver its Homelessness Strategy. Developing the Private Sector is a Key Priority within the Strategy.
- **LAA Performance Reward Grant.** This is grant held by Oxfordshire's Public Service Board. Some of this grant has been allocated to partnerships which the council could approach for this Strategy as there is a clear relevance (such as funding which has been awarded for deprivation and climate change). There will also be additional opportunities as there is additional funding yet to be awarded.
- **Supporting People Programme.** The council currently receives Supporting People Grant income for its in-house Home Improvement Agency. As this programme nationally faces great cuts, it is crucial to ensure the council maximises opportunities through clearly evidencing need and delivering a value for money service ~ especially in light of funding for the scheme only being secure until March 2011 when it is due for review.
- **Maximising fee income for grants and loans.** The council's in-house HIA currently charges 10% for works up to £10,000 and 7% for works over £10,000 for DFGs. There is an opportunity to extend the charging of fees to Flexible Home Improvement Loans. The funding can be equivalent to 5% of the total loans made by the local authority

during the year, subject to a maximum funding of £25,000. This would significantly increase capacity within the Private Sector Housing Team and allocation of loans under this scheme. Increased allocation under the Flexible Home Improvement Loans Scheme will reduce pressure on the capital grants schemes (see below).

- **Generating income from additional activity.** The HIA has the ability to undertake fee-based work for clients who are not eligible for grant assistance. This work will be increased where and when capacity permits. The fees generated from HMO licensing make a contribution towards the cost of that activity but, since licences are issued for 5 years and most qualifying HMOs were licensed in 2006, that income stream is periodic.
- **Joint Commissioning.** The strategy may provide opportunity for discussion and negotiation for joint commissioning between The Council and Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust and Oxfordshire County Council where there are areas of joint concern and responsibility.

A mix of funding from these sources will be used to deliver the Strategy objectives.

Capital Funding

With demand for capital works increasing **and** a growing pressure on council resources, there is an urgent need to make the council's capital go further. The Private Sector Housing Strategy does not seek to draw increasing levels of capital resources from the council. The Strategy seeks to secure opportunities for inward investment from partners and reduce demand for capital grants. The Strategy will seek to do this through:

- **Negotiating increased investment from RSL partners.** This includes payment towards disabled adaptation works across the RSL stock and also includes sourcing alternative housing for households where the level of adaptations needed are disproportionate to the size or value of the home. These developments are inextricably linked to the production of a comprehensive DFG Policy.
- **Maximising match funding from private sector landlords.** This includes Energy Grants and Home Improvement Grants.
- **Maximising take up of loan opportunities.** This includes the Flexible Home Improvement Loans Scheme mentioned above.
- **Maximising grants and discounts provided by other agencies.** Examples of these include Warm Front Grants and Cocoon discount insulation.
- **Maximising grant opportunities from CLG.** The Council receives an annual capital grant from CLG for the DFG programme. Whilst it is not anticipated that this will reduce (it has stayed at the same level for over three years) it is important to maintain an open dialogue with CLG to retain this grant and take up additional opportunities of capital grant from CLG as they arise.
- **Continuous review of available grants and grant conditions.** By ensuring that the mix of available grants (and their conditions and criteria) continues to be entirely appropriate, we can get best value from existing capital provision.

Value for Money

Delivering value for money has been a major consideration when developing the Private Sector Housing Strategy. We are absolutely clear that where an increase in resources is proposed it is on the basis of the 'spend to invest principal'. An example of this is the proposal for a Private Sector Development Officer, which will forge stronger partnerships

with private sector landlords thus increasing take up of home improvement grant schemes. This will increase leverage to secure match funding and nominations, which will in turn reduce demand on the Council's temporary accommodation costs.

Value-for-money considerations are also informed by the relevant Audit Commissions Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOEs):

• The Council is able to demonstrate significant costs savings and / or quality improvements through partnership *(eg Production and application of a county-wide leaflet explaining DFGs and the grant processes)*
• The Council collects accurate information on costs and services and uses it to decide priorities and to strategically manage resources. Has effectively benchmarked services and uses the information to compare costs and evaluate systems, procedures and policies in other organisations against its own strategic priorities. *(eg participation in Benchmarking Group and HqN value for money pilot.)*
• The Council follows good practice for procurement. *(eg the bulk purchase of key-safes with other Oxfordshire authorities)*
• The Council understands the impact of the strategic approach and makes maximum use of other sources of finance to improve private sector property condition and uses full capacity partners to secure other sources of funding not available to the Council. *(eg participation in the creation of Flexible Home Improvement Loans Ltd., a successful bid for GOSE funding and the delivery of loans to elderly home owners without resource to the council's capital.)*
• The Council is successful in bidding for grants and making the most of match funded projects. *(eg Landlords Home Improvement Grant and Flexible Home Improvement Loan schemes.*

If we keep a focus on value-for-money we will deliver services that are sustainable, affordable and target the most vulnerable members of our community.

Part C - Taking the Strategy Forward

1. Consultation

The council has fully engaged with partner agencies, stakeholders and the public through a series of consultation events throughout the development of this strategy.

In addition, a six week consultation from 20th November to 31st December 2009 will be carried out where responses will be requested via a questionnaire through a variety of means including the council's website, a mail shot to those who engaged with the development in the early stages and other stakeholders and through a consultation event to be held at the Council's offices on 2nd December.

The results of the consultation will be considered in early 2010 with adoption of the Strategy anticipated for March 2010.

2. Implementation

The implementation of the strategy will be taken forward by building the objectives into annual service plans and the individual annual targets and work plans of the relevant staff.

3. Action planning

Below is a detailed action plan which will be amended to take account of the consultation responses to this Strategy. The key actions will be absorbed into Cherwell's Housing Strategy when this is revised for 2011 to ensure robust monitoring of progress towards the priority objectives.

4. Monitoring

Actions will be monitored by Cherwell's Strategic Housing Team and key actions reported through the Council's Performance Plus System.

5. Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action plan is for 3 years and will be refreshed after 2 years to develop services for the next 3 years

Priority: Accessible & affordable privately rented homes

No.	Objective	Year 1 target	Year 2 & 3 target	People Involved	Resources	Success	Year 1 Measures
1.1	Review Private Accommodation Lettings Scheme (PALS) to ensure continued effectiveness in securing appropriate private rented sector accommodation for those in need.	1. Establish a Private Sector Development Project. 2. Implement pre-PALs premises inspection. 3. PALs steering group to meet to agree review timetable	1. Procedural review. 2. Review Private Sector Development Project.	1. CDC Housing Needs Team 2. CDC Private Sector Housing Team 3. CDC Housing Benefits contractor and monitoring staff. 4. Floating support partners.	Officer time Recession Impact funding	1. Supply of sufficient suitable accommodation. 2. Clearly established and smooth-running processes. 3. Landlords willingness to re-use PALs. 4. Improved quality of available accommodation	1. Project established and project plan agreed. 2. Pre-PALs inspection procedure and monitoring in place. 3. Steering Group meeting held
1.2	Establish an annual review of both existing grant schemes and grant opportunities, including Landlord's Home improvement Grant	1. Review LHIG & other current schemes and implement revisions arising. 2. Review opportunities to make use of new schemes.	1. Review LHIG & other current schemes and implement revisions arising. 2. Implement any previously identified new schemes.		Officer time Recession Impact funding	1. Continued uptake of schemes. 2. Supply of sufficient suitable accommodation. 3. Clearly established and smooth-running processes. 4 . Improved value for money	1. Review of LHIG completed 2. Review of opportunities undertaken
1.3	Work with landlords to improve their skills and awareness as a means of improving both property and management standards.(see also objective 2.3)	1. Establish a Private Sector Development Project. 2. Review Cherwell Housing Providers Forum. 3. Review potential for local Landlord's Association.	1. Implement outcomes of review of Forum. 2. Take forward outcomes of review of Landlord's Association. 3. Review potential for Landlord Accreditation Scheme. 4. Take forward outcomes of review of Landlord		Officer time Recession Impact funding	1. Improving property condition as measured through pre-PALs inspections. 2. Reduced number of condition & tenancy issues requiring intervention by PALs officers.	1. Project established and project plan agreed. 2. Review of Provider Forum completed 3. Review of Landlords association completed.

			Accreditation Scheme 5. Review Private Sector Development Project.				

Priority: Ensuring existing stock is in good condition

No.	Objective	Year 1 target	Year 2 & 3 target	People Involved	Resources	Success	Year 1 Measures
2.1	Re-target enforcement and other interventions to address serious hazards, statutory nuisances and also non-decent homes occupied by vulnerable households, and to increase the number of homes improved.	1. Undertake research to identify the potential for both geographically and personal-need based targeted action. 2. Review website content to highlight the assistance available. 3. Undertake a promotional event to raise service awareness.	1. Implement appropriate targeted action. 2. Undertake a promotional event to raise service awareness.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team 2. CDC Housing Benefits contractor and monitoring staff.	Officer time.	1. Serious hazards resolved in **60** premises each year, on average, over the lifetime of the strategy. 2. Other hazards resolved in **20** premises each year on average, over the lifetime of the strategy. 3. **25** premises occupied by vulnerable households brought up to the Decent Homes standard each year, on average, over the lifetime of the strategy.	1. Research completed. 2. Website content reviewed and pages updated 3. Event taken place.
2.2	Audit houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) to ensure that all qualifying premises are subject to a licence	1. Review available data to identify premises potentially subject to need for a licence. 2. Undertake follow up mailing to identify those premises requiring further inspection. 3. Carry-out advertising campaign to raise awareness of licensing requirements.	1. Review and re-licence those premises originally licensed in 2006. 2. Implement pro-active inspection of premises identified as potentially requiring a licence. 3. Carry-out advertising campaign to raise awareness of licensing requirements.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team 2. CDC Housing Benefits contractor and monitoring staff. 3. CDC Communications Team	Officer time. Resources to fund advertising costs.	1. Number of qualifying but currently unlicensed premises identified. 2. Number of new licence applications received. 3. Premises with existing licences appropriately re-licensed.	1. Review completed 2. Mailing completed and list of properties identified 3. Campaign taken place

			4. Conclude pro-active inspection of premises identified as potentially requiring a licence				
2.3	Raise awareness with owners and landlords of the need for timely maintenance to both maintain and improve standards (see also objectives 1.3 & 3.4)	1. Review, revise and re-publish existing maintenance booklet. 2. Review options for an advertising campaign through CDC and other publications.	1. Launch and effect distribution to appropriate locations. 2. Take forward advertising campaign	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team. 2. CDC Communications Team	Officer time. Resources to fund production of leaflet.	Awareness raised amongst new landlords	1. New booklet published 2. Options for promotion agreed and planned
2.4	Formalise the annual review of the grants and assistance available to ensure that the discretionary grants programme effectively delivers stock-condition and stock-use objectives.	1. Undertake review and implement revisions arising	1. Undertake review and implement revisions arising	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team.	Officer time	Delivery of an effective range of grants	1. Review process established and review completed.
2.5	Expand the Flexible Home Improvement Loan to deliver assistance to more elderly home owners.	1. Appoint officer on suitable contract terms. 2. Undertake media promotion of the scheme. 3. Undertake direct promotion of the scheme through partners and established forums.	1. Review year 1 activity.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team. 2. CDC Communications Team.	Appointment of short-contract consultant, funded by fee income available from FHIL.	1. Increased number of loans arranged. 2. Successful bids (with partners) for additional funding.	1. Officer in post 2. Media promotion completed 3. Attend an agreed list of meetings to promote.
2.6	Reduce the number of empty homes in the district.	1. Review available data to inform decisions about empty homes initiatives. 2. Undertake programme of surveys to inform decision making. 3. Produce a new Empty Homes Policy.	1. Implement Empty Homes Policy 2 Review policy outcomes.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team. 2. CDC Council Tax contractor and monitoring staff. 3. CDC Communications Team.	Officer time Recession Impact funding	1. Reduction in the number of properties empty for more than 2 years. 2. **5** premises per year on average over years 2-5 of the policy, brought back into use as a direct result of council intervention.	1. Review of data completed 2. Surveys completed 3. Policy adopted.

Priority: Supporting vulnerable people

No.	Objective	Year 1 target	Year 2 & 3 target	People Involved	Resources	Success	Year 1 Measures
3.1	Make best use of available Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) resources in a period of growing demand.	1. Prepare and implement a DFG policy to include RSL allocations, grant priorities and waiting list criteria. 2. Undertake promotion of the Policy to service users and Members.	1. Review DFG Policy	1. CDC Private Sector Team. 2. RSLs 3. OCC 4. CDC Communications Team.	Officer time	1. Availability of clearly established practices and protocols. 2. Effective management of expectations.	1. DFG Policy agreed and adopted 2. Promotion taken place
3.2	Formalise the annual review of the grants and assistance available to vulnerable households so as to ensure the discretionary grants programme is as effective as possible in delivering assistance. (See also objective 2.4)	1. Undertake review and implement revisions arising.	1. Undertake review and implement revisions arising.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team.	Officer time	1. Delivery of an effective range of grants.	1. Review completed
3.3	Improve data recording and reporting so as to deliver effective performance management and data provision to partners.	1. Implement Foundations software to record and monitor HIA activity. 2. Transfer recording of Small Repairs Service activity to the Foundations system. 3. Establish and implement performance management reporting using the Foundations database. 4. Review the use made of the Uniform software and the potential for extending usage.	1. Review spreadsheets used for financial monitoring and recording of grant activity.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team.	Officer time	1. Comprehensive data recording and reporting. 2. Effective and efficient reporting to partners of SLA data requirements.	1. Foundations software in place 2. Small Repairs Scheme recording in place 3. Monitoring system in place. 4. Review completed
3.4	Increase uptake of HIA services including Small Repairs Service.	1. Undertake direct promotion of the service through partners and established forums. 2. Deliver a Small Repairs Service launch event in Bicester. 3. Review options for an HIA advertising campaign through CDC and other publications. 4. Participate with funding partners in review of service.	1. Review HIA service to take specific account of future funding and procurement decisions by partners.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team. 2. OCC 3. Supporting People partnership.	Officer time Revenue funding provided by partners.	1. Increase in the number of service users recorded.	1. Promotion taken place 2. Launch event taken place. 3. Review completed 4. Joint review carried out.

Priority: Improving energy efficiency to reduce carbon emissions & fuel poverty

No.	Objective	Year 1 target	Year 2 & 3 target	People Involved	Resources	Success	Year 1 Measures
4.1	Increase the number of owner-occupiers and landlords installing installation and implementing other energy-efficiency measures.	1. Appointment of Private Sector Energy-efficiency Officer, on short-term contract 2. Undertake targeted promotion of Warm Front grant in the form of letters and application forms to potentially eligible households. 3. Review the range of discretionary CDC energy efficiency grants and opportunities for targeted action. 4. Undertake promotion of the CHEEP grant through the Cherwell Housing Providers' Forum and other forums.	1. Undertake targeted promotion of Warm Front grant in the form of letters and application forms to potentially eligible households.	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team. 2. CDC Council Tax & Housing Benefit contractor and monitoring staff. 3. CDC Communications Team. 4. USEA (local energy-efficiency advice centre. 5. Eaga (agency delivering Warm Front)	Officer time. Warm Front grant. Cocoon insulation funding. Capital resources to fund CHEEP grants and Warm Front Top-up grants	1. Increased number of vulnerable households receiving Warm Front grants. 2. Increased uptake of insulation through Cocoon scheme. 3. Increased uptake by landlords of CHEEP grants	1. Staff member appointed 2. Promotion completed 3. Review completed 4. Promotion completed
4.2	Reduce the number of households in fuel poverty. (See also objective 4.1)	1. Appointment of Private Sector Energy-efficiency Officer, on short-term contract 2. Produce and implement an Affordable Warmth Policy. 3. Provide specific and tailored energy-efficiency advice in response to NI187 questionnaire returns. 3. Undertake targeted	1. Provide specific and tailored energy-efficiency advice in response to NI187 questionnaire returns. 2. Undertake targeted promotion of Warm Front grant in the form of letters and application forms to potentially eligible households. 3. Review the range of discretionary CDC	1. CDC Private Sector Housing Team. 2. CDC Council Tax & Housing Benefit contractor and monitoring staff. 3. CDC Communications Team. 4. USEA (local energy-efficiency advice centre. 5. Eaga (agency delivering Warm	Officer time Warm Front grant. Cocoon insulation funding. Capital resources to fund CDCs CHEEP grants and Warm Front Top-up grants	1. Reducing number of households in fuel-poverty as measured by annual NI187 survey returns. 2. Increased uptake of free insulation through Cocoon scheme. 3 . Increased number of vulnerable households receiving Warm Front grants.	1. Staff member appointed 2. Affordable Warmth Policy adopted 3. Advice provided 4. Targeted promotion taken place 5. Review completed 6. Promotion taken place.

		promotion of Warm Front grant in the form of letters and application forms to potentially eligible households. 4. Review the range of discretionary CDC energy efficiency grants and opportunities for both geographically and personal-need based targeted action. 5. Undertake promotion of the CHEEP grant through the Cherwell Housing Providers' Forum and other forums.	energy efficiency grants and opportunities for both geographically and personal-need based targeted action. 4. Undertake promotion of the CHEEP grant through the Cherwell Housing Providers' Forum and other forums. 5. Review Private Sector Energy-efficiency Officer role and opportunities for further contract. 6. Review affordable Warmth Policy.	Front). 6. RSLs with local stock.			

Common priorities:

No.	Objective	Year 1 target	Year 2 & 3 target	People Involved	Resources	Success	Year 1 Measures
5.1	Increase public awareness of the council's housing role and the services available. (see also objectives 2.1 & 2.3)	1. Establish a Private Sector Development Project. 2. Review options for an advertising campaign through CDC and other publications. 3. Undertake a promotional event to raise service awareness. 4. Review website content to highlight the assistance available. 5. Review range and distribution of leaflets. 6. Produce and implement leaflet distribution plan.	1. Undertake questionnaire survey to review customer s awareness of services. 2. Analyse survey results and review promotional activity. 3. Implement revised promotional activity.	1. CDC Housing Needs Team 2. CDC Private Sector Housing Team 3. CDC Communications Team	Officer time Recession impact funding	1. Improved customer awareness at events of services offered	1. Project established and project plan agreed. 2. Review completed and options agreed 3. Event taken place 4. Review of leaflets completed 5. Leaflet distribution plan implemented.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Affordable housing	Social housing (where rents are capped to benefit levels) and shared ownership property where owners can purchase a part share and pay rent to an RSL for the remainder
CHEEP grant	A discretionary grant from Cherwell District Council to improve energy efficiency in private rented sector property.
CIEH	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
CIH	Chartered Institute of Housing
Communities and Local Government (CLG)	The government department now responsible for overseeing housing issues.
Cocoon	An insulation scheme available to all Oxfordshire residents which delivers discounted insulation (free to recipients of certain means-tested benefits). It is run by USEA (the name of our local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre) and is funded by significant contributions which the energy companies are required to commit to energy efficiency. The Council works actively with USEA to promote this scheme.
Decent homes standard	Originally designed as a standard to drive up planned maintenance in social housing, it was extended into the private sector as a measure of quality. Local authorities have a specific requirement to reduce the % of non-decent homes occupied by vulnerable households. The standard includes measures of serious hazards, disrepair, age of amenities and thermal comfort.
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Mandatory grant for clients whose physical needs and requirements have been assessed by the Welfare Authority and for whom a referral has been made to the council. Subject to a test-of-financial-resources the council must approve a DFG for qualifying applicants up to a grant maximum of £30,000. Parents of a qualifying child are not means-tested. Government makes a capped capital contribution to DFGs.
Discretionary grant	Those grants which a council sees fit to make available out of its own resources to achieve its objectives, but which must be covered by a written grant policy.
Eaga	The organisation which has secured the contract to deliver the government's Warm Front grants.
Essential Repairs Grant (ERG)	A discretionary grant (usually provided through the HIA) to help vulnerable households carry out a range of urgent repairs to keep their homes safe and suitable.
Flexible Home Improvement Loan	This is a new Council initiative available to elderly owner occupiers who can get an equity release loan at lower than commercial interest rates.
Fuel Poverty	Generally taken to mean a need to spend more than 10% of income on fuel bills. However this is not an easy definition to work with because of the difficulty in obtaining financial information. Other surrogate measures are therefore used. In particular, NI187 uses receipt of a means-tested benefit and occupation of a home with a SAP rating <35 as indicating fuel poverty.
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
Hazards	Problems identified using the HHSRS and which are graded according to the degree of risk. Hazards giving rise to the greatest risk are called Category-1 hazards and the council must take action.
Home Energy Conservation Act 1996 (HECA)	This Act required local authorities to make domestic energy savings in the existing stock and set a target of a 30% reduction against 1996 levels by 2006.
Home Improvement Agency (HIA)	A discretionary service which, for a fee (often included in the

	grant), gives clients practical assistance with grants. HIAs can assist with the application process, tendering and selection of contractors and supervision of works. A Small Repairs Service is also available. Cherwell's HIA is an in-house service. Many authorities use an external provider. The service is jointly funded by the council, the Welfare Authority and Primary Care Trust.
Houses in multiple occupation (HMOs)	Dwellings occupied by more than 2 unrelated occupants (with a few specific exemptions). HMOs with 3 or more storeys occupied by 5 or more tenants require a licence to operate.
Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	The prescribed method for assessing housing defects (hazards) in all tenures and the basis for statutory interventions
LACORS	Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Standards – acts as an advisory body for local authorities providing, principally, legislative interpretation and good-practice advice.
Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)	The transfer of ownership and management of social housing from local authority to Registered Social Landlord following a ballot to determine tenants' wishes. Cherwell transferred its remaining stock in 2004 (following an earlier transfer of a part).
Mandatory grant	Grant which the council is required by law to give to eligible applicants. Disabled Facilities Grants are now the only mandatory grant.
National Indicators	A series of performance measures set by government which local authorities are required to report against and which are therefore important focuses of action.
Private Accommodation Letting Scheme	This is the Council's rent deposit scheme which enables households who are at risk of homelessness to access privately rented accommodation through the provision of a deposit bond and support for tenants.
Private sector	Includes all residential premises other than those owned by the council. Since Cherwell District Council transferred its stock in 2004, all residential premises in the district fall within the private sector.
Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)	Organisations (other than local authorities) which are recognised by government as providers of social housing and supervised accordingly.
SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure)	A widely used means of assessing and comparing energy efficiency of homes. A SAP of 35 or less is extremely poor and greater than 65 reasonable. The national average is 49.8
Small Repairs Service	One of the services provided to vulnerable households as part of the HIA. The SRS carries out a range of minor works including carpentry and plumbing but not electrical or gas work. Fitting key-safes to facilitate hospital discharge is a major activity.
Social housing	Accommodation provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) (previously known as housing associations).
Test of resources (Means-test)	A specified procedure for determining the contribution which a DFG applicant must make towards the cost of grant work. No means test applies in the case of adaptations for a child. Applicants in receipt of specified benefits are deemed not to have a contribution to make.
USEA	United Sustainable Energy Agency (formerly Thames Valley Energy Agency) is our local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, a not-for profit organisation part funded by the Energy Saving Trust.
Vulnerable household	There is no single definition of vulnerable but it is typically taken to mean a household with a member in receipt of a means-tested benefit. That is the definition used for this strategy and the stock condition survey which underlies it. For grant purposes receipt of a benefit is further qualified by

	the requirement to be aged 60 or more or to have a resident child aged 16 or under. That is the definition used in the council's Grants & Assistance Policy.
Warm Front	A nationally available grant from the government which delivers improved insulation and heating for various groups of vulnerable owner-occupiers and privately renting tenants. The Council works actively to promote Warm Front to eligible households.
Welfare Authority	Oxfordshire County Council is the statutorily designated Welfare Authority for the Cherwell District. The County Council's Social & Health Care service undertakes assessments and makes DFG referrals to the council in fulfilment of its duties as Welfare Authority.

Strategic relevance **Appendix 2**

National strategies:

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods - A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society
Department of Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Department of Work and Pensions February 2008

Main recommendations:

- Joint working including joint assessment, service provision and commissioning.
- The need for preventative services.
- Improved information and advice about the range of options available.
- Expansion of HIAs and handyperson services own homes.
- Equity release to help fund the cost of adaptations.

Regional and County (sub-regional) strategies:

Regional Housing Strategy 2008-11
The Regional Housing Strategy builds on the region's existing strategic priorities. It sets a framework for targeting the resources at the priorities for investment. It is also the framework for local authorities and housing providers to focus their efforts towards the common objective of delivering more affordable homes.

Main recommendations (relevant to this strategy):

- Number of vulnerable households who live in non-decent properties
- Equity release
- Energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty including reducing winter deaths
- Neighbourhood regeneration
- Improving non-decent housing through local authority partnerships

Oxfordshire Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Area Agreement
This is the overarching strategy for all public services across Oxfordshire and drives the selection of priority targets (National Indicators) within the LAA. Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA2) includes the following targets:

Main recommendation:

- The need for extra care housing, increased social care and increased participation in cultural and physical activities.

LAA2 targets:

- NI 154 Number of net additional homes provided.
- NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered.
- NI 141 Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living.

N1131 Reducing delayed hospital discharge.

Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2008-2011
This is the County plan for the distribution of Supporting People funding up to 2011. This funding pot was

established in 2003 to ensure that all vulnerable households receive the support they require to enable them to maintain their accommodation and live independently.

- Availability of support services to older people based on need not on accommodation type.
- Increasing quality of accommodation for physically and mentally infirm people to enhance independent living.
- Simplified referral links to minimise the need for multiple assessments.
  Services to meet the specific needs of ethnic minority groups.

Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment December 2007
This is the key document now required by National planning policy to define and analyse the housing market and various sub market areas in Oxfordshire.

Main conclusions/recommendations:

- Tackling affordability is the primary issue alongside meeting increased need
- The growth of smaller households including single person households and the growth of households headed by people over 65 are the most significant demographic drivers
- There is a lack of sufficient private rented sector properties in rural areas.

This research has been supported by the Cherwell Housing Needs Estimates Report (2008):

- estimated the level of need to be 529 affordable homes per year assuming that 102 new affordable homes are built each year (i.e. the average since 2001)
- this means that 102 affordable homes per year (or 15.2% of Cherwell's annual South East Plan requirements of 670) are needed each year to prevent need getting worse
- this work is being updated to take account of the final South East Plan figures & work on the Affordable Housing Viability Study

Oxfordshire County Council Extra Care Strategy 2008
The strategy was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council in order to drive forward the implementation of extra care in the County

Main recommendations:

- The need for extra care provision as a vital part of housing and care for our older people.
- The need to develop around 7000 units of private and socially commissioned extra care units.
- Acceptance of a variety of models and methods for securing extra care housing.
- The need for joint working between Housing and Planning Authorities to deliver extra need housing.

Local strategies:

Cherwell Community Plan 2006-2011
The community plan is the strategy of the Cherwell Community Planning Partnership which comprises a diverse range of organisations who have agreed common aims and actions to improve economic, social and environmental well being within the Cherwell District area. The Community Plan has 10 themes, 4 of which are particularly relevant to this strategy:

Main objectives:

- Theme 2 - improve health - including health prevention and access to services for older people. It makes the link between housing and health issues for older people.
- Theme 5 - Secure more affordable housing. This will include increased provision of new specialist extra care housing for older people.
- Theme 8 - Access to rural affordable housing and relevant services for all groups and specifically younger and older people.
- Theme 10 - Focus on Cherwell's people including increasing involvement, improving advice and support and promoting independent living with older people.

Cherwell Sustainable Communities Strategy: Cherwell: Our District; Our Future
This new partnership document will replace the Cherwell Community Plan as the primary strategic document for the district. All of the council's other policies will reflect and support its objectives, which are therefore the overarching principles for the council's activities. Objectives are set out in the form of four pledges, each of which has an important housing component:

The Sustainable Communities Strategy helps to meet the vision for Cherwell in 2030 and as produced four ambitions which are:

- Opportunities for all – our communities in 2030
- Diverse and resilient – our economy in 2030
- Connected and protected – our infrastructure and environment in 2030
- Resourceful and receptive – community leadership in 2030

Each of the above ambition is supported by objectives and priorities for action. The Private Sector Housing Strategy is integral to all four of the above ambitions but in particular has a key role in delivering the community and the connected and protected ambitions, and a lesser but still significant role in supporting the economy and community leadership ambitions.

Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005-2011
This is the strategic document for the delivery of the Council's Housing Service. It is due to be revised during 2010 and will include key actions from this sub-strategy

Main objectives:

- Priority 5 commits us to improving housing standards, including overall condition and energy efficiency.
- Priority 6 of the strategy focuses on helping people live independently and includes targets for provision of lifetime homes and delivery of DFGs.

Cherwell Homelessness Strategy 2007-11 – From Crisis to Prevention
This strategy was introduced to address a particularly serious local problem with homelessness. Cherwell was one of the first local authorities to produce a Homelessness Strategy and this is now a requirement for all authorities. The Strategy is supported by the Cherwell Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2008-11 – A Season for Change.

Main objectives:

- Offer a wide range of preventative measures.
- Increase access to settled homes.
- Halve the number living in temporary accommodation by 2010.

Cherwell Housing Strategy for Older People 2009-14
This strategy aims to ensure there is an adequate supply of good quality services to meet the needs of our ageing population.

Main objectives:

- Provide and support preventative services (including financial assistance) that allow people to remain living independently in their own homes.
- Increase provision of specialist older people's housing.
- Improve provision of information and advice about housing options for older people.
- Involve older people in the way we provide services
- Ensure new housing development meets the needs of older people.

Contact Details:

Tim Mills
Private Sector Housing Manager
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA

Tel: 01295 221655
e-mail: Tim.mills@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Older People's Housing Strategy

5 January 2010

Report of Head of Housing Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the progress being made with the development of the Cherwell Housing Strategy for Older People, a sub-strategy of the Cherwell Housing Strategy 2005 – 2011.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) note the contents of the report;

(2) consider whether the Committee wishes to refer any comments on the report to the Executive for consideration at their meeting in February 2010.

Details

Introduction

1.1 Cherwell's Housing Strategy for Older People 2009-2014 is designed to ensure we are providing the right housing and housing related support services to meet the needs of our older residents over the next 5 years. It has been designed to respond to the needs of the growth in the population of people aged 65 or over to ensure that resources are used as efficiently and effectively as possible.

1.2 The strategy has 5 priorities:

- **Provide and support preventative services that allow people to remain living independently in their own home**. This covers services the council runs or helps to commission such as private sector grants, the Small Repairs Service, and

Supporting People services. This section complements many of the actions now identified in the Private Sector Housing Strategy and the two teams are working closely on the action plan to deliver these.

- **Increase the provision of specialist older people's housing**. We have quantified the need for the provision of Extra Care Housing and have a delivery plan to do all we can to create a supply of this housing over the next 5 years and beyond. We also have plans to work more closely with RSL providers on their plans for improving their own sheltered housing provision.

- **Improve the provision of information and advice about housing options for older people**. We are working with Age Concern and will include other agencies with the aim of providing a comprehensive 'one stop' approach for older people thinking about their current and future housing needs.

- **Involve older people in the way we provide services**. We have set up a database of those who are interested in contributing to new services to ensure these are what people want and will use.

- **Ensure new development meets the needs of older people now and in the future**. This includes making sure new housing development meets the needs of all members of our community in both scheme and individual house design (for example through use of the Lifetime Homes standards). It also seeks to ensure the needs of older people are fully taken account of in rural development.

Current position

2.1 The strategy was sent out for full consultation with residents and stakeholders and the strategy is currently being amended to take account of this.

2.2 We have had a very positive response to this consultation. It has reinforced our understanding of certain issues such as the lack of awareness about services, the need for better information and advice and the need for suitable housing in rural areas.

2.3 As a result of the consultation we will be amending some areas of the strategy to include the following:

- Increased emphasis on the need to help people downsize in order to maximise the use of existing housing stock.

- A revised strategy for the provision of information and advice services based on new information about a potential partnership

with Age Concern.

- A more detailed action plan for delivering the strategy.

2.3 A steering group has been established to ensure the action plan for this strategy is delivered. This is chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing and comprises of stakeholders from within the Council, key external partners and representation from older people.

Next steps

3.1 A revised version of the strategy in a publishable format will be sent to Executive for approval in February 2010. The strategy has a three year detailed action plan with a built in review at the end of year 2 to establish an action plan for the remaining 3 years of the strategy.

Implications

Financial:	Resourcing the strategy is covered within Part C of the strategy. There are no additional resources identified at this stage. If funding is required for new projects these will be subject normal budget approval processes. Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Service Accountant 01295 221552
Legal:	There are no significant legal implications arising from this strategy. Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic services 01295 221686
Risk Management:	The risks of not being able to deliver the action plan for the strategy are included in the resources section in part C. Not preparing to meet the needs of our ageing population will leave the Council exposed to poor quality service provision for a vulnerable group within our community. This would have a serious affect on the health and well being of residents and on the Council's reputation management. Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566
Equalities:	The draft strategy seeks to increase opportunities for all older people in the District including the most vulnerable. The strategy will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment before the final strategy is published.

Comments checked by Claire Taylor, Community and Corporate Planning Manager
01295 221563

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

The draft strategy helps to deliver:

- Strategic Priority 1 – Cherwell: A district of opportunity
- Strategic Priority 2 – A safe and healthy Cherwell
- Strategic Priority 4 – Cherwell: An accessible, value for money Council

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Michael Gibbard
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Draft Older People's Housing Strategy
Background Papers	
None	
Report Author	Fiona Brown, Strategic Housing Officer
Contact Information	01295 221659 Fiona.brown@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Cherwell's Housing Strategy for Older People 2009-2014

Planning for Our Futures

Consultation Draft

April 2009

Contents

Executive Summary 1

Part A Understanding the current Situation

1. Introduction 3
2. Cherwell's Older People 3
3. National, Regional and Local Strategic Links 6
4. What do older people want and need 8
5. Cherwell's vision for housing and related services for older people 10

Part B Improving housing and services

Priority One - Provide and support preventative support services 11
Priority Two - Increase provision of older peoples specialist housing 16
Priority Three - Improve the provision of information and advice 19
Priority Four - Involve older people in the way we provide services 20
Priority Five - Ensure new housing development meets the needs of older people 20

Part C Taking the Strategy forward

Monitoring 22
Implementation 23
Consultation plans 23
Action plan and resources 24

Appendices

Appendix One - Glossary of terms 28
Appendix Two - More Choice, Greater Voice Modelling 29
Appendix Three - Key messages from consultation carried out when preparing this strategy 34
Appendix Four - Definitions for different types of specialist housing 35

Executive Summary

Cherwell is preparing to produce a new Sustainable Communities Strategy which acknowledges the growth in the number of older people who will be living in the District by 2031 (the period of the strategy). The population of people aged over 65 is set to nearly double compared to a growth in other age groups of 24%. This trend is greater than the regional and national trend and the steepest increases are in the numbers of very old people (those aged 85 and over).

Good housing is essential to the health and care of people in the District. For older people poor housing is associated with winter deaths, heart and respiratory conditions and injuries and deaths from falls. However good housing is wider than bricks and mortar, and housing providers have a role to play in ensuring that older people have access to community services and support and do not risk isolation and loneliness.

This strategy recognises that older people are individuals and that we need to make sure our services are accessible to all regardless of whether someone lives in a town or faces particular barriers through vulnerability or being part of a minority group.

The strategy aims to ensure we have an adequate supply of good quality services to meet the needs of our ageing population. There are five priority objectives:

Priority One: Provide and support preventative services that allow people to remain living independently in their own home

This includes services the Council provides directly such as the Home Improvement Agency and Small Repairs Scheme and grants and loans for home improvement, and services we help commission such as the Supporting People services for older people. Our aim is to provide a flexible menu of services that enable people to stay in their own homes as their needs change. We also want to introduce a more comprehensive support service to help people who choose to move to alternative housing.

Priority Two: Increase provision of specialist older people's housing

We have undertaken a needs assessment for specialist provision which we will seek to secure through a variety of methods. New provision will predominantly be extra care housing and we will work closely with the County Council to develop schemes in the District.

Priority Three: Improve the provision of information and advice about housing options for older people

We recognise that information about housing options is often disjointed and that housing concepts such as Sheltered and Extra Care are not always understood. This is not surprising where these or other similar terms are used to describe different housing and support services. People need clear information about what is available if they are to be able to exercise real choice about their housing. We will bring together a framework of agencies who can work in a consistent and comprehensive way to provide housing advice and support.

Priority Four: Involve older people in the way we provide services

We will make sure we involve older people in the way we design and deliver our services; to learn from their experience and provide services that are wanted and needed. We will set up a database of people who would like to get involved in various ways, in line with the Council's consultation policy, and make sure older people are involved at each stage as we develop our services.

Priority Five: Ensure new development of housing meets the needs of older people now and in the future

New developments and housing should meet the needs of all members of our community. We will seek for all new affordable housing to be designed to Lifetime Homes Standards and ensure that design for new developments takes account of best practice to enable ease of mobility, easy access to a range of activities and services and promotes safety.

Part A - Understanding the Current Situation

1. Introduction – Planning for our Futures

Forecasts show that the population distribution in Cherwell is going to change dramatically.

Population in 2031

Age group	Cherwell increase prediction
65 +	91%
75 +	110%
85 +	176%

Each of these age groups will increase 30% more than the average national increases. 21.6% of our population will be over 65 by 2031. Although these changes are forecast beyond the lifetime of this strategy they provide a startling reminder of the challenge Cherwell faces in trying to develop housing and related services that enable our older population to maintain their health and independence and remain active members of our community.

It has been increasingly recognised in national and local policy that good housing is essential for good health and well being. It is key to older people being able to retain independence. Without the provision of good quality housing and related support services the impact on the cost of care and health services will be unmanageable.

A good example of this is in falls prevention. In 2006/07 4,000 people aged 65 or over attended A&E in Oxfordshire because of a fall; 800 of these suffered a broken hip. Preventing falls through home risk assessments, adaptations, advice and monitoring will save the considerable cost of hospital admission and rehabilitation but more importantly will ensure an older person remains independent for longer. This strategy shows how services can be provided through good housing and housing related support.

This strategy aims to deliver the improvements necessary to provide older people with the housing services they need to remain living safely in their own homes, near friends and family and with a choice about the type of accommodation they live in. The key aim is to ensure we have an adequate supply of good quality accommodation and services at a cost that can be sustained.

Cherwell has a diverse community and a key underlying principle of this strategy is that different needs are understood and addressed. This strategy covers the large number of older people living in rural areas as well as those in the towns. It also takes account of small and often difficult to reach groups who may need additional support to access services or may need services tailored for their specific needs.

2. Cherwell's Older People

What do we know about older people in Cherwell?

Population projections for numbers of older people living in the District have been calculated to 2016 and to 2026 to allow for longer term planning by providers of

accommodation and services and to fit with the timeframe for the Cherwell Local Development Framework (LDF). We do know the numbers of old and very old in our population is due to increase at substantial and that we need to be very aware of this in our planning. A full breakdown of figures about older people and their needs is provided at Appendix 2. These figures have been taken from:

- Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessments
- Department of Health's Projecting Older People Population Information System (POPPI)
- Cherwell District Council Housing Needs Survey 2004
- Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2004

Cherwell's population is set to change.

- Over the next seven years there be will be an increase in the number of older people over 75 across the District of 9% (6,988 people). This rises to a percentage increase of 32% (8,474) by 2021. This age group is particularly important for the strategy as the need for specialist services and advice increases after 75
- The number of people in the over 85 category is set to increase even more dramatically. In 2016 there will be around 3,400 people over 85, an increase of 31% and by 2021 this will have increased to around 4,000 (an increase of 54%).
- The prevalence of dementia in the over 85s is likely to be 30% It has been particularly difficult to manage to keep people with dementia in their own homes, particularly as the illness progresses and this strategy aims to provide accommodation and services most likely to meet this need.

Health and Support Needs

In assessing potential needs for services the strategy has looked at a number of housing and support indicators. For example 26% of all older people over 75 are living alone with a limiting long term illness which is likely to make them more vulnerable in need of services. This figure rises to 70% of older people over 85. The Oxfordshire JSNA report predicts numbers in this group are likely to grow most in the following wards; Launton, Kidlington North, Hook Norton, Bicester West, Bicester East, Banbury Ruscote, Banbury Hardwick and Banbury Calthorpe.

Banbury has the highest percentage of people over 65 with some form of physical disability or mental health problem. Oxfordshire's JSNA report of 2008, shows that North East Oxfordshire has the highest prevalence of dementia in the Oxfordshire region at 0.7% of the total population. Cherwell also has the highest proportion of over 75s with a physical disability, frailty or sensory impairment at 20.3% (compared to the County average of 18.1%)

General trends indicate that one in 10 people over 65 are likely to suffer from depression (2,030 people) (JSNA data)

Where do older people live?

The highest number of older people are in Banbury but around 41% of Cherwell's older people (over 65) live in rural areas and risk isolation if services are not accessible for them.

Despite the numbers of older people in Banbury the JSNA predicts the greatest need for services is likely to be in Bicester East. This is due to the growth of over 85s in Bicester and figures on health needs and deprivation.

Tenure

Home ownership	60%
Affordable housing	20%
Other including privately renting or living with family	20%

About 20% of older people live in affordable housing (mostly social rented). Around a quarter of these tenants are likely to be under occupying.

Although we do not think we have a major problem with older people living in unsatisfactory housing we know that around 10 -15% of older people are living with at least one mandatory hazard as assessed under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System. The most usual hazard is excessive cold with about 1,541 older households living in properties without central heating.

Income

Cherwell District Council has pockets of deprivation, particularly within Banbury. Two parts of Banbury Ruscote Ward are in the 20% most deprived super outputs areas nationally. Figures show that many of the more vulnerable older people live in Ruscote, Neithrop and Grimsbury wards. Furthermore 11 rural wards feature in the 10% most deprived for access to barriers and services.

The Income Deprivation Affecting Older People Index (IDAOPI) combines a range of indicators about older peoples economic, social and housing issues into a single score. People living in Banbury score highest (indicating the greatest need) particularly in Grimsbury, Ruscote and Neithrop. This indicator shows Bicester to have the next highest score.

Whilst Cherwell does not have a large population of people from ethnic minority backgrounds the BME population is also ageing and the community is beginning to experience older people being separated from their traditional family support as children move away from the area. Some ethnic elders may also find it difficult to access services due to language barriers.

What might this mean for service provision?

- We need to prepare ourselves to meet the needs of our growing ageing population
- Provision of specialist housing should be mixed tenure including housing for outright sale and part buy/part rent due to the numbers of older people who are owner occupiers
- We need to do all we can to remove barriers accessing services for those living in rural areas
- We need to carry out further research into the needs of the most vulnerable and those who find it more difficult to access services including those affected by

deprivation and people who face a language or other barrier in order to target resources

- We need to target resources particularly in areas of deprivation and where there are high levels of health and social care needs
- We need to promote our work to address poor housing conditions as widely as possible and target those who most need help
- We should provide schemes within the District to help people to move with incentives for those releasing family accommodation

3. National, Regional and Local Strategic Links

There has been a raft of policies and guidance on providing housing and support for older people over the past eight years following the publication of Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing (Department of Health and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, January 2000) This led to a range of initiatives including the formation of the Housing and Older People's Development Group (HOPDEV), support for local authorities to develop their own strategies and looking at initiatives to make sure services are 'joined up' such as a single assessment process to assess all older peoples needs and Care Direct a comprehensive helpline service. The following table provides the links into this strategy from national, regional and local policies.

Level	Strategy	Main Recommendations
National	Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society. Department of Communities and Local Government, Department of Health, Department of Work and Pensions February 2008	• Joint working including joint assessment, service provision and commissioning • The need for preventative services • Personalisation of services including personal budgets • Improved information and advice about the range of options available, provided in a direct way at the appropriate time. Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs) have the potential to become a hub of information and advice • The expansion of HIAs and handyperson services so that more people can remain in their own homes. It recommends equity release to help fund the cost of adaptations • Increased specialist housing for older people i.e. extra care housing and retirement villages including the need to remodel sheltered housing provision • Proposals that all new public housing be built to Lifetime Homes Standards by 2011 and makes links to planning and design of both homes and communities using a range of planning tools

Regional	Oxfordshire Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Area Agreement This is the overarching strategy for all public services across Oxfordshire and which sets the strategy for the selection of the priority targets (National Indicators) within the LAA.	• Acknowledges the growing population of older people, the need for extra care housing, need for increased social care and need to encourage increased participation in cultural and physical activities • This strategy informs the Local Area Agreement 2 (LAA2) which includes the following targets • NI 154 Net additional homes provided. We know some of the need for increased housing comes from our older population • NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered. This will include specialist affordable housing provided through Extra Care schemes • NI 141 Number of vulnerable people achieving independent living. This will include older people receiving housing related support through the Alert service being re-commissioned through Supporting People • Delivering this strategy will also help contribute towards N1 131delayed hospital discharge
	Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment December 2007 This is the key document now required by National planning policy to define and analyse the housing market and various sub market areas in Oxfordshire	• Does not specifically address the likely housing need arising from the increase in the numbers of older people in the County but recommends that each Local Authority undertakes research and produces a strategy to meet this need • The report does identify the need for targeted housing related support through Supporting People funding, expansion of the Home Improvement Agencies and the development of specialist housing
Regional	Oxfordshire County Council Extra Care Strategy 2008 The strategy was commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council in order to drive forward the implementation of extra care in the County	• Makes the case for extra need provision as a vital part of the provision of housing and care for our older people • Establishes the need to develop around 7000 units of private and socially commissioned extra care units • Accepts that there can be a variety of models and methods for securing this housing • Recognises the need for this to be delivered jointly with District Housing and Planning Authorities
Regional	Oxfordshire Supporting People Strategy 2008-2011	• Housing related support services will be available to older people based on need not on accommodation type and will be available day and night. This is a shift away from contracts linked specifically to sheltered housing schemes • Accommodation that is provided will be good quality to enable physically and mentally infirm people to remain living there as independently as possible • Extra care housing will be available in every District • Referral links will be simplified to minimise the need for several assessments • Effective links will be made with community day services to minimise isolation • Services will meet the specific needs of ethnic minority groups

Local	Cherwell Community Plan 2006-2011 The community plan is the strategy of the Cherwell Community Planning Partnership which comprises of a diverse range of organisations who have agreed common aims and actions to improve the economic, social and environmental well being within the Cherwell District area	• This plan has 10 themes, 4 of which are particularly relevant to this strategy • Theme 2 - improve health - including health prevention and access to services for older people. This strategy makes the link between housing and health issues for older people • Theme 5 - Secure more affordable housing. This will include increased provision of new specialist extra care housing for older people • Theme 8 - Rural perspective including ensuring access to affordable housing and relevant services for all groups and specifically younger and older people. This strategy addresses the additional requirements of older people to access services in rural areas • Theme 10 - Focus on Cherwell's people including increasing involvement, improving advice and support and promoting independent living with older people. All of these aims are central to the aims of this strategy
Local	Corporate Plan and Improvement Plan 2007-2011 Sets out the Council's four strategic priorities	• Priority 1 - Cherwell: A district of opportunity. This includes housing growth, advice and support in finding a home, improving the standard of housing for vulnerable people and improving services in rural areas. All of these housing issues are addressed by this strategy in relation to older people • Priority 2 - A safe and healthy Cherwell. This priority includes delivering safer neighbourhoods and increasing participation in older people's groups. Provision of specialist housing and support can help add to people's feeling of safety in the neighbourhood. Making good links into older people's groups will help in the provision of information and advice on housing issues • Priority 4 - Cherwell: An accessible, value for money Council. This includes meeting the specific needs of all groups including older people, efficient use of resources in delivering services, easy access to services and good communication with customers
Local	Cherwell District Council Housing Strategy 2005-2011 The key document for the delivery of the Council's Housing Service. This is due to be revised during 2010 and will include key actions from this sub strategy	• Priority 2 of the Housing Strategy is to increase the provision of new affordable housing with a target of 600 new affordable homes over the lifetime of the strategy. The target does not specifically include specialist housing for older people. The provision of affordable specialist housing is likely to free up larger family housing • Priority 6 of the strategy is to help people live independently and has targets to achieve lifetime homes standards, maximise the use of DFGs, and promote the staying put (handyman) scheme and to work with Supporting People on the reconfiguration of the support service currently being delivered in Sheltered Housing schemes. These targets will be delivered through this Housing Strategy for Older People and a Private Sector Housing Strategy due to be produced in 2009

4. What do older people want and need?

In preparation of this strategy we have researched the facts and figures but also listened to what older people are saying they want and need in relation to housing and support services. We have done this in the following ways:

Consultation	Membership	Outcome
Older People's Housing Strategy Working Group	Representatives from Older People's Groups across the	Setting and writing of this strategy and agreeing the actions

	District	and targets. Key messages from this group are listed at appendix 3.
Informal consultations with specific groups	Specific interest groups including people with a learning disability and those from ethnic minority groups	A list of those visited and some key messages is held at appendix 3
Consultation with other agencies involved with older people	Representatives from Age Concern, County Council Social and Community Services and PCT formed a steering group for the project	Input from the perspective of their service users and joint working with other agencies

Review of other recent local consultations with older people

Account was taken of views gathered through other research conducted around Oxfordshire.

Tomorrow's Older People

An Age Concern report which focussed on the expectations and aspirations of those approaching retirement. This had a section focussing on housing. Key messages were:

- The environment and the community are the key factors in people's housing choices
- Most people recognise that a move to more suitable accommodation would be necessary if they start to have problems with mobility
- Most people want to continue to own their own home, however some would give up their home ownership if the equity could be passed to their children
- People want to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible although there is a need for opportunities to engage in stimulating activities
- There is still confusion about labels for different types of housing e.g. Extra Care and managed leasehold schemes
- Telecare is welcomed although there is a fear that this may fail or of losing privacy

Supporting People re-commissioning of Older People's Housing Related Support - Surveys undertaken with existing users

In the current review and re-commissioning of older people's support services residents of sheltered housing across the County completed two surveys in 2008. These highlighted the value older people across the District place on the service they receive in sheltered housing.

Get the Picture - Older People's day to day lives in rural West Oxfordshire 2004-2007 Age Concern and Oxford Brookes University

An innovative consultation involving people taking pictures and using interviews and narratives that tell policy makers directly about older people's lives. The key messages that emerged were:

- The importance of prevention –that little bit of help at times of transition that can help someone negotiate through situations that risk their independence
- The need for professionals to understand community networks and to utilise these rather than replace them
- The need to be able to access services locally, the importance of transport

National consultation

In the consultation for the national strategy for housing in an ageing society older people said they wanted:

- Homes that could be easily adaptable for overcoming mobility issues
- Storage space and space for visitors
- Housing that is low maintenance and affordable to heat
- Access to services, green and private space and in a safe neighbourhood
- Access to independent information and advice about housing options
- A reliable repairs and adaptations service and the little bit of support to remain in one's own home
- To be involved in design of everything that affects us from planning to safer communities to testing new equipment

Key messages

Older people are no less diverse in their needs and aspirations than any other sector of the population but there are clear consistent messages coming through recent consultations. These can be summarised as:

- People want to remain in their own homes for as long as possible with adequate support at the right time to enable this
- The location of housing is vital with good access required to shops and services
- Design of homes needs to be flexible to allow people to stay if they become disabled in any way
- Low level preventative support at the right time is vital for older people to maintain independence
- We need to ensure we listen to older people and put them at the centre of any planning - whether that is about bricks and mortar or about support and care

5. Cherwell's vision for housing and related services for older people

Having gained an understanding of the number and needs of older people in the District and had opportunities to understand their aspirations Cherwell has set a vision for what services should look like over the next five years.

1. Providing enough good quality housing and services to meet the needs of our increasing older population at a cost that can be afforded by older people and service commissioners and providers
2. Offering services which are accessible to all sections of our community including the most vulnerable groups and available whether people live in a rural or urban area
3. Involving older people when we design new estates, buildings and services

4. Providing services to people in their own homes that support independence, well being and good health
5. Working in partnership to join up with other services to make sure older people are supported to live healthy and fulfilled lives into later old age
6. Providing attractive and appropriate specialist accommodation that provides older people with options and choices about where they want to live, especially as their support needs increase
7. Making information and housing options advice accessible at the point older people need this
8. Designing new housing developments to provide a safe, accessible and inclusive environment for people of all ages

These aims will be delivered through five priority objectives:

- Priority One - Provide and support low level preventative services that allow people to remain living independently in their own home
- Priority Two - Increase provision of specialist older people's housing
- Priority Three - Improve the provision of information and advice
- Priority Four - Involve older people in the way we provide services
- Priority Five - Ensure new development of housing meets the needs of older people now and in the future

Part B - What should we be doing to improve our services?

Part B of this strategy describes these priorities and the key objectives for each of these aims

Priority One: Provide and support low level preventative services that allow people to remain living independently in their own home

A key message from the consultation work has been that a little bit of help at the right time can make all the difference to a person maintaining their independence and continue to manage the home

There are a range of services currently available to support people at home. Some of these are delivered by the Council and some through other agencies. This section concentrates on services where the Council can directly influence provision.

Home Improvement Agency

Cherwell District Council decided to bring the work of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) in house following an unsuccessful attempt to negotiate the provision of a countywide service by Supporting People (Anchor Housing previously provided the service). The Agency currently provides the following services:

General advice

This includes:
- ensuring people are aware of all appropriate housing options
- help with forms
- help to access financial assistance

- referral to other support services
- Help with fear of crime and crime reduction

Home visits

- These are undertaken to assess the problem, gather information, advise on options and agree an appropriate course of action and how this could be funded

Risk assessment

- Identification of any hazards or risks through a free home safety survey with the aim of falls prevention and general reduction of accidents in the home

Repairs and improvements

- Major adaptations - In liaison with Social and Community Services Occupational Therapists the agency will identify a solution to issues. Once agreed the agency will carry out assessment for funding, produce drawings and plans, obtain building control and planning permissions, contract the work and monitor progress and work quality
- Minor adaptations - such as handrails, grab rail, shower seats, etc.

Hospital discharge services

This includes small repairs and adaptations and moving furniture, clearing walkways, etc.

The service is still bedding down although work has already been carried out to improve efficiency and remove unnecessary additional paperwork for clients.

There is potential to increase the information and advice aspect of service to allow the agency to become the principal housing options service for older people within the District if sufficient resources can be secured. The delivery of information, advice and support is dealt with under Priority 3 of this strategy.

Small Repairs Scheme

This service consists of an officer and a van who can carry out a variety of small repairs and assistance such as putting up curtains or shelves and who can fit safety features such as smoke alarms and fitting key safes. The service also works with the Hospital Discharge scheme. There is usually a charge for this service but it is provided free to those on benefits making this a service available to the most vulnerable.

This service is highly valued by customers and with appropriate funding could be expanded to include other maintenance services and to grow in capacity. Feedback from residents have shown demand for services such as gardening and decorating which would provide crucial help to those wanting to stay put. Cherwell District Council wants to support initiatives to provide these services if resources can be found. In the first

instance we will look into providing advice and contacts for properly qualified contractors. It is a longer term aim for the Council to move towards this service.

This service provides a great opportunity to reach households who may not usually have contact with our service. We therefore want to make the most of this opportunity by ensuring we pick up on risks and sign post to other services. We will do this through training staff to carry out an assessment of each property visited to assess for falls and other hazards and a person's overall well being. Staff will then be able signpost or refer to other services. Cherwell has set up a 'Referrals for Prevention Scheme' for all staff who have contact with vulnerable people to have a clear route to refer a client through for other services. This allows any professional who makes contact with an older person to refer them for other services through a central point. The small repairs scheme will work within this scheme as part of the assessment process.

Grants and loans

The Council provides a range of home improvement grants and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to help people to maintain and improve their homes and enable people with mobility problems to stay put.

- **Grants**

There are a number of grants including the Warm Front Scheme to provide free insulation together with a grant to upgrade heating for vulnerable households. The Council can top up this grant through the Essential Repairs Grant where households qualify for this. The Essential Repairs Grant is means tested and aimed at owner occupiers whose property needs work to address serious hazards which if not dealt with could result in injury or ill health.

- **Flexible Home Improvement Loan**

This allows owner occupiers aged over 60 to take out a loan secured against their property in order to carry out a range of improvements to make their home safer, warmer and healthier. The loan can be paid off in a range of ways including making no payments until the home is sold and interest is charged at a very low rate. The scheme provides a safe way for older people to access the equity in their home without large financial penalties and through a trusted institution. This could allow the Council to reach greater numbers of older people than is possible with the provision of the grants outlined above.

- **Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)**

The Council has worked hard to improve the internal processes for spending the disabled facilities grant and as such is finding that grant is committed before the end of the financial year. We are seeking to find ways of making sure grant is used as effectively as possible, for example discussing funding of adaptations in Housing Association properties with the Registered Social Landlords. We also need to use our understanding of older people's needs in the District to help us maximise the amount of funding available from Central Government. This will be formalised in a DFG policy.

We need to ensure people are fully aware of the help they can receive through these grants and they can be accessed by those who need them most. The Council is therefore committed to publicising these as widely as possible through a variety of channels including the agencies working with the most vulnerable groups.

The above services will also be covered in the Private Sector Housing Strategy due to be completed in 2009/10 and actions to improve services will be cross referenced with this strategy.

Help with moving

Older people need a wide range of choices about how to meet their current needs. For some older people this may be a choice to move to smaller, specialised or more conveniently located accommodation. This needs to be a positive choice but there is more that could be done to help older people who take the decision to move. This of course brings added benefits of releasing family housing which is much needed across the District.

Age Concern Oxfordshire are working with Seamless Relocation, a private company, to provide a service for older people offering practical support and advice through every stage of moving house from selling, packing up, rearranging services and settling in to a property.

We need to do similar work with our Housing Associations across the area to set up a consistent service amongst providers to offer incentives and practical support to help people who choose to move.

Telecare

Telecare is the provision of specialist devices that work with a response services usually though a community alarm and help monitor and support vulnerable people. The equipment comprises of an emergency alarm plus sensors as needed which can raise the alarm in the event of possible emergencies such as fire, gas escape, flooding and link to movement sensors which can detect falls or unexpected changes in movement activity.

In 2006/07 Oxfordshire County Council received pilot funding to provide telecare with the aims of maintaining older people at home and was particularly targeted at people with dementia, fallers, those needing medication visits only and to facilitate hospital discharge. In Banbury the response to this service has been linked to the community alarm service operated by Charter Community Housing and the service will be linked into the Supporting People Alert Service.

Supporting People Services

Cherwell District Council is part of the Commissioning Body for Supporting People. During 2008 it has contributed to the review and re-commissioning of services for older people. Supporting People currently funds community alarm services in the community along with support services delivered to residents of Sheltered Housing.

The Supporting People review of services for older people established the need to break the link between support and the type of accommodation someone lives in. It was

determined that the service should be accessible to everyone who is assessed as needing it regardless of housing type and tenure.

The aims of the new Alert service are to:

- enable people in need of support to maintain their independence, health and well being in their chosen home
- prevent them from entering institutional care and reduce the instances of hospital admission

The service will:

- provide and respond to emergency alarm systems. This will include the provision of an alarm base unit with other telecare devices as required
- offer occasional, regular or short term intensive contact to provide support to help maintain independence. This support will be documented through a written support plan.

People will be assessed for eligibility for supporting people funding but the service will also be available to self payers.

The service will need to be fully re-tendered and as such leaves local providers at some risk. It is quite possible that providers of sheltered housing could find themselves as managers of the building with support being brought in by the new service provider. Some local providers may choose to opt out of the Supporting People funding altogether and so their services will need to be paid for by clients.

In Cherwell some sheltered housing will be decommissioned because residents will no longer be required to have an assessed support need to access the accommodation. This approach fits well with this Strategy to increase the extra care housing and see some reduction in the poorer quality sheltered housing. However the Council will still wish to support good quality sheltered housing as this offers another choice for older people when looking at their housing options.

There is a concern that the some people will become isolated as the idea of sheltered housing as a hub of community activity will be lost. Some of this has the potential to be replaced by extra care provision but the Council needs to continue the encouragement of older people's groups and make these accessible and attractive to all sections of our communities.

The older people's focus group put high importance on this service (see Appendix 3) and in particular wanted to see this widely available as a preventative service and that as many people as possible were eligible for supporting people funding for the service.

Joining up housing with non-housing preventative services

For an independent and satisfying life we all need support. As our needs increase due to physical or mental ill health we need a triangle of support from health services, social care and an enabling environment provided by good housing and community.

It is important that housing related services have strong links with other support services older people may need in order to maintain this triangle.

Areas where we could strengthen links to reach people who may need our services include:

Internal Council services

- Health Bus
- The work of street wardens
- Older people's groups

There are opportunities here to ensure that Council services link together to reach as many members of the community as possible. Other services can be valuable sources of information sharing and provide good opportunities to identify housing needs within the community.

Partnerships at strategic and operational levels

- ensure services link up through assessment processes and complementary services to provide a holistic approach
- provide a full range of services within our District

The partnership approach we have taken in developing this Strategy has helped to foster synergies between different Council departments and with other agencies and many of the actions within this Strategy will rely on this partnership work. A good example of this is the identification of the need to provide a full housing options service.

Key Objectives for the provision of low level preventative services
• Seek opportunities to increase the range of services offered through the HIA as resources allow; including helping identify gardening and decorating services for people • Formulate a new policy for DFGs to ensure resources are maximised and are targeted as effectively as possible • Train staff and develop an assessment process to enable HIA and other staff to carry out risk assessments whilst visiting people at home • Market the availability of grants through a range of agencies in order to reach all parts of our community • In conjunction with Supporting People ensure the new housing related support service meets the needs of older people in Cherwell • Work with RSL sheltered housing providers to ensure their response to the re-provision of Supporting People is in line with the strategic aims of this document and other Council strategies • Work with RSLs to provide a comprehensive incentive and support scheme to help older people who want to move to more suitable accommodation • Create stronger links with other Council Services such as street wardens, older people's groups and the Health Bus to provide greater coverage and referral to services • Make sure specialist accommodation provides facilities and opportunities to reach out to the surrounding community to provide support and social activities

Priority Two: Increase provision of specialist older people's housing

Current provision of Specialist Housing for Older People

We know we are going to have many more older people in the District, with the highest percentage growth in people aged over 85. The provision of specialist housing can enable older people to retain their independence to the end of their lives by providing suitable, adaptable accommodation with support and in the case of extra care can provide care services in a flexible and person centred way.

Cherwell has a large amount of sheltered housing, above the national average (see Appendix 2, table 2). Despite most of the accommodation being reasonably easy to let, much of this housing is no longer at a standard that would allow it to be a home for life. In particular upstairs flats with no lift access are a problem. RSLs in the area are currently undertaking their own asset management exercises to improve the stock but it is important that an overall strategy for provision is established to ensure we have sufficient housing to meet the needs of our growing older population. The Council is also well placed to influence the decommissioning of sheltered housing and reuse these schemes for use by other client groups where appropriate.

To this end Cherwell District Council carried out a joint exercise with Oxfordshire County Council to establish the demand for specialist accommodation. Modelling was carried out following the methodology in 'More Choice, Greater Voice; A toolkit for producing a strategy for accommodation with care for older people' produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) in February 2008. The results of this can be found in Appendix 2. This shows that we need to retain some good quality sheltered housing, which we believe remains a popular option for older people. Good quality sheltered housing will have good standards of accessibility (including a lift), at least one separate bedroom, the ability to be adapted to mobility needs, have a range of facilities to encourage social interaction and have access to support (See Appendix 4; Definitions of Specialist Housing).

We would want to support a range of models to promote choice including models such as the Abbeyfield Society that provides a level of enhanced support and a strong community environment. We would also support innovative models that came forward such as co-housing for older people where groups of people to come together to live in independent housing with some shared facilities and services in a way that promotes community and mutual support.

The modelling demonstrates we could lose around 396 units of sheltered housing by 2026 or sooner providing we are on target to develop the additional units of extra care.

Extra Care Housing

Extra care housing can provide a real alternative to both sheltered housing and residential care and provides an environment that supports independence. To meet the needs of the growing older population we need to prioritise the provision of extra care housing in the District. This is in line with the County Council's Extra Care Strategy published in January 2008.

Extra care housing can be designed in various ways but the key features are:

- accessible and specially designed housing with telecare equipment allowing older people with disabilities, including those with dementia, to live independently
- opportunities to build a community hub by providing social and health related activities
- Culturally sensitive services in a familiar locality
- flexible 24 hour care from an on-site care team which can be increased or decreased according to an individuals needs
- a real community of mixed tenure and abilities with good links to the wider community

Extra Care is designed to achieve a number of outcomes for older people:

- a real alternative housing option for older people from residential care or sheltered housing
- allows older people to retain independence for as long as possible
- can provide a hub of services and activities for older people in the wider community
- encourages independence rather than dependence that can be a problem in a residential home
- is an efficient and cost effective way of delivering care that can be flexible to the needs of the individual

Based on the More Choice Greater Voice modelling we can demonstrate a need for an additional 788 units by 2026 (635 by 2016). This figure includes all tenures including outright ownership, part ownership and affordable rented. This is very challenging especially in the light of increasing pressure for general needs housing. Extra care housing will be part of the mix of overall housing provision the District requires.

This provision is needed throughout the District including in rural areas where we have high numbers of older people. However delivery is much more challenging in terms of finding suitable sites and schemes that are in demand from local people as well as being large enough to sustain the high level of facilities required. The Council is committed to looking for opportunities to develop schemes in the larger village settlements that could serve surrounding villages; this could include Bloxham, Yarnton and Adderbury.

The consultation we have undertaken shows that older people want to be involved in the design of such schemes, for example that green space and small clusters of units are important and this is vital if we are to build schemes that do not have the design problems of sheltered schemes.

We also need to ensure that the option of moving to extra care housing is accessible to all members of our community. This has implications for service provision and for how information and advice on housing options is delivered.

The need for extra care housing will be established as part of the LDF where a clear statement of what will be accepted as extra care will be defined.

Key Objectives for increasing the provision of specialist older people's housing:
• Establish the need for extra care housing within the LDF to ensure contributions for new schemes is achieved within S106 agreements particularly on strategic sites (over 1,000 units)

- Ensure the definition of and standards for extra care housing are clearly laid down the LDF
- Set up a local strategy and delivery group in Cherwell as part of the County's Extra Care Governance and Delivery Framework to ensure all opportunities are pursued and to maximise successful outcomes
- Set up a framework for user involvement in the design of extra care schemes
- Work with scheme providers on information provision and equality of access to new developments
- Work with RSLs on their Asset Management Strategies to ensure provision of good quality accommodation for older people and that unsuitable units are re-designated or redeveloped in line with the identified housing and support needs in Cherwell District
- Investigate specialist support needs amongst older people to determine if provision is needed specifically for groups with a specialist need

Priority Three: Improve the provision of Information and Advice

Older people, like other groups in the population, need the right information at the right time if they are really going to be able to make good choices and decisions. The level of this need will vary with many people simply needing information that explains what is available, some needing more individually tailored information and advice that meets their specific requirements and the most vulnerable and at risk will need one to one advice, advocacy and practical help.

Housing information and advice services tend to be very disjointed across the District. People will generally approach the agency likely to meet their primary need but advice from this agency is unlikely to be holistic. There are a range of agencies who offer housing advice to older people but no individual agency has the capacity at present to offer a truly comprehensive information, advice and support service.

Agencies offering housing advice to older people currently include:

- Age Concern (information and advice line)
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Cherwell District Council Housing Options and Allocations service
- Cherwell District Council Home Improvement Agency
- Registered Social Landlords and Floating Support Services
- A number of voluntary groups such as WRVS and the Royal British Legion
- The District older people's groups also act as advocates for members and sources of information

In addition the Council has been instrumental in setting up a referrals for prevention service whereby any professional making contact with an older person has a clear route to refer that person for other services.

A local older people's housing options service is much needed which could reach out to the most marginalised and vulnerable people who are more likely to need extensive support to move from poor quality or inappropriate accommodation. It is important that a service is equipped to offer practical support to this group as well as advice to help with things like form filling, finances, setting up utilities, packing and small repairs. It also needs to be holistic enough to refer to other services in health, care and support.

The HIA is well placed to build on their existing advice service to expand this to provide advice about all housing options to whoever needs this. A service that is well publicised and accessible to all will make a huge difference to older people planning for their future needs. This is a key priority for the government who has promised funding for agencies who can expand this work. However this will need funding and commitment from a number of agencies and should be viewed as a longer term target.

In the shorter term Cherwell District Council will provide a housing options resource pack which can be used by Council staff and other advice agencies to offer holistic and comprehensive advice. This could include an assessment tool to help older people decide what their main priority needs are and full details of the range of options available from staying put services, to specialist housing such as Sheltered Housing and Extra Care and signposting to care and support services. This pack should also be distributed to our older people's clubs along with setting up of some rural surgeries and offered in translation to specialist groups.

Whilst the housing options pack will be the hub of advice, more vulnerable older people will need practical support to help them to exercise the choices they make. There is scope to link the work of the agencies listed above to provide a much more comprehensive and consistent service and to pool the resources available.

Key Objectives for the provision of information and advice

- Publish a housing options pack for use by professionals and older people to guide people when making decisions about their future housing requirements
- Establish a housing options and advice group to map current provision and opportunities for joint working
- Establish an interagency framework for providing a housing options service tailored for older people
- Seek opportunities to increase the role of the HIA to provide information and advice to a wider range of people

Priority Four: Involve Older People in the way we provide services

Older people want to shape the design of the homes they live in and the services they may want to access. In order to ensure this happens we need a clear framework to enable this.

This Strategy has been overseen by an older people's working group who are willing to remain involved in future improvements. This group has proved central to the objectives agreed in this document and will form the nucleus of a group willing to help deliver some of the key objectives of this Strategy.

We will hold a database of older people drawn from our older people's groups around the District who would be willing to contribute to our future implementation work. This could be getting involved in the design stages of new housing schemes, checking information packs are clear and helpful or helping us design how services are delivered. Consultation will be carried out in line with the Council's Community and Consultation Engagement Strategy.

Key Objectives for involving older people

- Set up a database of older people who would like to become involved in helping Cherwell District Council deliver better services for older people
- Ensure older people are involved in all new initiatives arising from this strategy through a variety of activities and events

Priority Five: Ensure new development of housing meets the needs of older people now and in the future

There is much that Local Planning Authorities can do to contribute to new communities and encouraging an environment where people of all ages want to live. Planning Policy Statement 3 requires that Local Planning Authorities should aim to create sustainable, inclusive, mixed communities with good mix of housing reflecting the accommodation requirements of specific groups; in particular families with children and older and disabled people.

In order to achieve this aim and ensure our communities are fully inclusive of the needs of all older people the Council will use its planning policy framework to encourage developers to help deliver the kind of new communities we would all want to live in future. The Council can help ensure the delivery of new housing and regeneration of existing areas is sustainable for people of all ages.

Lifetime homes

The lifetime homes standard has now been adopted as the main standard to ensure that homes can be easily adapted to meet a range of mobility needs. The standards cover 16 criteria which mean that homes can easily be adapted for someone in a wheelchair but are also helpful for families with young children and actually make life easier for everyone.

As part of the Cherwell's LDF we will produce a new Supplementary Planning Document outlining the standard of affordable housing we expect. This will increase the requirement for 50% of all new affordable housing to be designed and built to lifetime homes standards to 100% wherever this is possible within the physical constraints of the site.

The Council will seek to work with private developers to encourage the use of these standards in their design.

Sufficient provision of fully adapted wheelchair housing

The provision of wheelchair units and the ability to match applicants with appropriately designed and adapted properties is fundamental to ensuring people have the greatest opportunity to access the type of housing they need to remain independent.

The Council will carry out a mapping exercise to ensure officers have full details of current stock and where greater provision is needed. Additional stock can then be specified as part of any new developments. Once this mapping exercise is undertaken the need for additional provision will be identified within the overall mix of affordable housing required as part of the LDF.

The Council will work within the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme to ensure properties are labelled to show the level of adaptation so applicants will know whether a property will suit their particular need. Up to 100% of properties with significant adaptations will be advertised sub-regionally to allow the greatest flexibility for applicants seeking housing.

The Council will adopt its own wheelchair standard for the provision of new wheelchair accommodation as part of the LDF to which all developers will adhere as part of required standards.

Lifetime Neighbourhoods

Apart from Planning Policy Statements and Guidance (for example Planning Policy Statement 3 promotes inclusive, mixed communities and Planning Policy Guidance 13 seeks to ensure safe and easy access to housing shops and services) there are a raft of documents and tools which planners use to try and ensure that new developments meet the needs of all sections of our community. These include The Manual for Streets, Safer Places: The Planning System and Crime Prevention, and Cleaner Safer Greener Communities. These documents are used to help create design briefs for new developments that promote inclusive design.

The Council will fully utilise these documents within its design briefs and encourage developers to think about the implications of design for older people.

Provision of Housing for older people in rural areas

The Council works closely in partnership with the Oxford Rural Housing Partnership to develop affordable housing in the villages around the District. This has traditionally been targeted at the needs of younger people who want to stay in or return to the area. However it is becoming increasingly clear that older people may also need development of affordable housing that enables them to move within their own community to more suitable accommodation. This may also have the benefit of freeing up family housing. We will make sure that Housing Needs Surveys undertaken in villages identify any needs from older people and use this information to inform the mix of housing on any development.

Key Objectives for ensuring that new developments meet the needs of older people now and in the future
• Ensure standards for lifetime homes are established within the LDF • Set a Cherwell standard for the development of new wheelchair standard housing within the LDF • Collect information about disabled adapted properties in order to fully understand current provision. Ensure available affordable housing properties are advertised correctly on the choice based lettings system so that they can be best used to meet applicants' needs • Develop understanding about the level of need for disabled adapted accommodation and establish this within the LDF • Work to encourage all new developments to meet guidelines to encourage 'age proofed' design • Ensure Housing Needs Surveys in villages identify the needs of older people and that needs are reflected in the mix of housing provided on new developments

Part C – Taking the Strategy Forward

Resources

This strategy has been brought forward with an action plan that shows clearly the headline resources attached to each major area of spending, or the resources that need to be considered for each action. However, further context around resources is necessary to give an outline of the environment in which older peoples' services are being delivered.

Whilst there is not a finite availability of resources, it is important to clarify that this strategy is a needs-led strategy and not a resources-led one. As such the role of the Extra Care Implementation Group is to set about identifying resources from a range of options that help take forward priorities and deliver key actions. Some of those options and opportunities are listed below:

- Oxfordshire Supporting People funding
- National Affordable Housing Programme 2008-11 (Homes and Communities Agency)
- National Private sector Housing funding including Disabled Facilities Grants and Warm Front (affordable warmth)
- Staff time - Cherwell District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Registered Social Landlords, statutory and voluntary agencies, community groups and community representatives, care providers
- Synergies from partnership and multi-agency working
- Cherwell District Council – Housing Services, Planning and Affordable Housing Policy Services, Urban and Rural Services – existing staff resources
- Effective prioritisation of capital budgets – consideration of whether grants are distributed in most customer focused way
- Leverage from customers - whether equity release can help to resource the increased demand for grants
- Value for Money – delivery of value for money savings for Cherwell District Council as agreed for housing services
- Delivery mechanisms – use of existing structures, rather than creating new groups to ensure delivery and effective monitoring

The Council's Staff Resources

The Council restructured its Housing Services during 2007-08 and this led to increased resources being identified to support the creation of a Strategic Housing Team. This strategy assumes that the current resources within the team are preserved, as a reduction of resources would lead to a reconsideration of priorities that could be developed. A risk to the delivery of this strategy is the downturn in resources available from the 'public purse' as a result of the economic recession, and reduced strategic housing resources which may not be able to accommodate the plans set out in the action plan.

Key Major Resources

The table below summarises the funding resources assumed for this strategy – these resources are draft and will be developed during consultation.

Priority	2008/09 Funding	2009/10 Funding	Future Years' Funding	Assumptions E.g. people, land, bidding for funding	Risks
1. Provide and support low level preventative services that allow people to remain living independently in their own home					
Disabled Facilities Grants (Capital)	Total Spend £910,000	Budget £950,000	Dependent on need identified and managed – links to private sector housing strategy	Work on case prioritisation with partners (agency protocol) and increased customer options (e.g. moving home) to reduce demand for funds. Assumption is that the Council is currently resourcing DFGs and the pressure on these capital resources needs to be considered, hence the review of the DFG policy.	High costs of DFGs Funding could decrease Demand could increase Need to plan how that would be managed
Home Improvement Grants (Capital)			Possible additional funding for HIA e.g. gardens	Equity loans using customers' capital-tied resources will be fully explored.	Take up of equity loans has been low.
HIA including small repairs	£40,629	£40,629	Oxfordshire CC Assume £40,629		
HIA –	£39,549	£39,549	Oxfordshire	Quite possible	Any growth

including small repairs			SP Assume £33,617	that there will be 15% cuts in SP funding	in services will require new funding sources which CDC will actively seek
2. Increase provision of specialist older person's housing					
Re-modelling of sheltered housing schemes (capital and revenue)				Need to work closely with providers on their asset management plans to identify potential for this work	If schemes are to be remodelled for other client groups then -National cut backs to SP funding
ExtraCare schemes (capital)	1.3 m funding secured from DOH for Orchard Fields Extra Care Development, Banbury		NAHP, Department of Health	One scheme a year will be assumed to meet need, and seven schemes are needed in the District. Council capital funding is to be called on as a reserve, on a case by case basis.	No current funding secured from NAHP programme for older peoples housing . Risk that funding may not be available in future years
ExtraCare schemes (revenue)			Rents, service charges, care payments, individual budgets and SP	Revenue funding streams continue to fund provision of housing management, support and care	Relies on residents purchasing an average amount of care from the care provider for the scheme
3. Improve the provision of information and advice					
Council capital resources				Within existing CDC resources, but partnership working intended to lever in resources.	Lack of buy-in from partners, although work to date suggests buy-in is in

					place.
4. Involve older people in the way we provide services					
Resourcing of engagement mechanisms	N/A	Strategic Housing Team	Staff time for other partners	To be provided within existing resources	Lack of buy-in from partners and customers Reduced resources
5. Ensure new development of housing meets the needs of older people now and in the future					
Higher standards for new developments such as Lifetime Homes			Bids such as HCA funding	Opportunities exist around the bringing forward of the Local Development Framework to secure higher standards.	Economic recession means standards may not be financially viable.

The Council has designated a ring-fenced capital pot for affordable housing initiatives. It is not always possible to determine what call will be needed for these funds. This can depend largely on scheme financial viability, available external resources, and specific needs of customers. However, the Council's capital resources are used only when all other sources of funding have been fully explored, and where they can be shown to lever additional inward investment into the District.

Older Persons Housing Strategy Action Plan

The detailed resources to support the individual actions are identified on the draft action plan contained within this draft strategy. These resources will be refined further during the consultation programme of the strategy. The key actions will be absorbed into the Cherwell Housing Strategy when this is next revised to ensure robust monitoring of progress towards the priority objectives.

Monitoring

Actions will be monitored by Cherwell's Strategic Housing Team and key actions reported through the Council's Performance Plus Management System.

Implementation

The implementation of the strategy will be taken forward by two main groups:

- **The Older People's Housing Steering Group**

This group will be tasked with the monitoring and implementation of this strategy and in particular the development of extra care provision locally. This includes ensuring the need is identified within the LDF, that opportunities for development are supported and that schemes are delivered which meet local need. The group will comprise of officers from Cherwell District Council Housing and Planning Services, County Council, Age Concern and Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. The group will also have links through to older people through the consultation database.

- **Housing Information and Advice Group**

This group will act as a sub group of the steering group and bring together all agencies who currently advise and support older people on their housing options. This group will explore how agencies can work in partnership to provide a comprehensive housing and support service.

Consultation Plan on Draft Strategy

Following approval by the Council's Executive in April the Strategy will be subject to a 12 week consultation period. There will be a web based consultation with an on line questionnaire and the groups listed below will be sent a copy of the strategy with the option to complete the questionnaire by post. Meetings will also be arranged with a number of older people's groups including the older people's forum and special interest groups.

Groups to be sent a copy of the strategy include:

Age Concern
Banbury Asian Forum
Banbury and District Housing Coalition
Banbury Polish Association
Cherwell's Older People's Groups
Citizens Advice Bureau
Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire District Councils
Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust
Parish Councils in Cherwell District Council
Registered Social Landlords with accommodation in the District
Royal British Legion
WRVS

However anyone with an interest can request a copy of the strategy from:

Craig Knight
Strategic Housing Facilitator
Tel: 01295 227078
e-mail: craig.knight@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Older People's Housing Strategy Action Plan

Action plan is for 3 years and will be refreshed after 2 years to develop services for the next 3 years

Priority One: Provide and support low level preventative services that allow people to remain living independently in their own home

No	Objective	Targets and timescales	People Involved	Resources
1.1	Seek opportunities to extend the range of services provided by the HIA and small repairs scheme	**Year 2:** Produce a Cherwell 'trades directory' for people needing gardening, decorating and maintenance services **Year 1-3 :** Seek additional funding as opportunities arise to extend services	HIA staff Age Concern Strategic Housing Team HIA	Staff time Printing costs Staff time
1.2	Formulate a new policy for DFGs to maximise and target grants to those in most need	**Year 1** New policy produced and implemented **Year 2:** New policy implemented	HIA Strategic Housing RSLs	Officer time HIA agreed annual budget
1.3	Provide training and procedures for staff, including HIA staff to undertake a full risk assessment when visiting clients on initial contact	**Year 1:** Training carried out **Year 1**: Assessment form developed **Year 2:** Investigate how assessment can be linked to other assessment processes	Trainer HIA staff Other relevant staff	Cost of training Staff time
1.4	Market private sector grants and loans through a wide range of agencies including those working with the most vulnerable groups and older peoples groups throughout District	**Year 1-3:** Leaflets produced **Year 1-3** Maintain and improve website information **Year 1-3** Undertake other marketing such as community events etc	HIA staff	Staff time Printing costs
1.5	In conjunction with Supporting people make sure the new Alert service meets the needs of Cherwell District	**Year 1** Contribute to specification through Core Strategy and SP older people's steering groups **Year 1-3** Work with RSL providers to ensure their response meets the District needs and the aims of this strategy	Strategic Housing Supporting people RSLs	Staff time
1.6	Work with RSLs to provide a comprehensive scheme for older people wanting to move to more suitable accommodation	**Year 1** –Collate information about current practice and ask tenants views **Year 2**- Implement new scheme **Year 3 –**Review scheme	RSLs Strategic Housing Housing Options Team	Staff time Possible CDC grant to help finance scheme
1.7	Foster links with other Council services in order to increase referrals for services (e.g. health bus/street wardens/ older people's group)	**Year 1 –** Consult other services on strategy and identify opportunities for joint work **Year 2-3 –**Continue joint working	Strategic Housing Community Development	Staff time
1.8	Make sure facilities and activities in specialist accommodation are linked to the wider community so older people can access these	**Year 1-3** Discuss with RSLs regarding current housing. **Year 1-3** Build requirement into new developments of Extra Care	Strategic Housing, Extra Care Implementation Group	Staff time

Priority Two: Increase provision of specialist older people's housing

No	Objective	Specific outcomes	People Involved	Resources
2.1	Ensure the need for Extra Care is established in the LDF	**Year 1 –** Include need for extra care within overall housing mix identified within LDF	Strategic Housing Planning Policy	Staff time
2.2	Ensure the definitions and standards for extra care are established within LDF	**Year 1-** Fully define standard of accommodation acceptable for extra care development in LDF	Strategic Housing Planning Policy Consultant	Staff time Small amount of consultancy on the mix
2.3	Set up a local strategy and delivery group in Cherwell as part of the County's Extra Care Governance and Delivery Framework	**Year 1** –Establish group, terms of reference and work plan **Year 2 and 3**- Monitor progress and review work	Strategic Housing Planning Policy Development Control County Council Health Age Concern	Staff time
2.4	Set up a framework for user involvement in the design of extra care schemes	**Year 1-**Establish clear framework with the above group for user involvement	As above	Staff time
2.5	Work with the scheme provider on information provision and equality of access to new developments	**Year 1 –** Establish guidelines as part of group work for 1.3	As above plus RSLs	Staff time
2.6	Work with RSLs on their asset management strategies for Sheltered Housing to ensure provision of good quality accommodation for older people and that unsuitable units are re-designated or redeveloped in line with the identified Housing and Support needs in Cherwell District	**Year 1** – Discuss asset management with all RSL sheltered providers **Year 2 and 3 –**Continue to influence re-provision of schemes to meet Council's strategic aims	Strategic Housing RSLs	Staff time
2.7	Investigate need for specialist provision for minority groups	**Year 2 –** Undertake research into needs to older homeless people and other minority groups	Strategic Housing	Staff time

Priority Three: Improve the provision of Information and Advice

No	Objective	Specific outcomes	People Involved	Resources
3.1	Publish a housing options pack for use by professionals and older people to guide people when making decisions about their future housing requirements	**Year 1 –**Pack designed and issued **Year 2 and 3 –** Pack reviewed	Strategic Housing Other agencies as agreed	Would look for cost sharing with other agencies but funding and staff time will be required from CDC
3.2	Establish a housing options and advice group to map current provision and opportunities for joint working	**Year 1 –**establish group of all those involved in housing advice and support for older people to improve and link services	Strategic Housing HIA staff Age Concern and Other Agencies as agreed	Staff time
3.3	Establish an interagency framework for providing and options service for older people	**Year 1-2** –actions to come from above group	As above	Staff time
3.4	Seek opportunities to increase the role of the HIA to provide information and advice to a wider range of people	**Year 1-3** – Continue to review opportunities to expand service	Strategic Housing HIA	May require additional financial resources if opportunities to expand arise

Priority Four: Involve Older People in the way we provide services

No	Objective	Specific outcomes	People Involved	Resources
4.1	Set up a database of older people who would like to become involved in helping Cherwell District Council deliver better services for older people	**Year 1 –**Ask for volunteers from the Older People's Forum **Year 2 and 3 –**Maintain and improve database.	Strategic Housing Community Development Cherwell Residents	Staff time
4.2	Ensure older people are involved in all new initiatives arising from this Strategy through a variety of activities and events	**Year 1-3** Evidence outcomes from consultation undertaken	Strategic Housing	Staff time

Priority Five: Ensure new development of housing meets the needs of older people now and in the future

No	Objective	Specific outcomes	People Involved	Resources
5.1	Ensure standards for lifetime homes are established within the LDF	**Year 1 –** Requirements established in LDF	Strategic Housing Planning Policy	Staff time
5.2	Set a Cherwell standard within the LDF for the development of new wheelchair standard housing	**Year 1 –** Requirement established in LDF **Year 2** –Standard agreed and published	Strategic Housing Planning Policy	Staff time
5.3	Collect information about disabled adapted properties in order to fully understand supply and ensure affordable housing properties are advertised correctly so that they can be best used to meet applicant's needs	**Year 1-** Collect data on current supply **Year 2 –**Implement scheme under sub-regional choice based lettings	Strategic Housing Housing Needs Team	Staff time
5.4	Develop understanding about the level of need for disabled adapted accommodation and establish this within the LDF	**Year 1** –collect data and work out likely level of need as part of overall housing mix	Strategic Housing	Staff Time
5.5	Work to encourage all new developments to meet guidelines to encourage 'age proofed' design	**Year 1-3** –Consider needs as part of design briefs and when assessing Planning Applications	Planning Policy	Staff time
5.6	Assess rural areas for provision required for older people as part of housing needs surveys	**Year 1-3 -** Ensure any Housing Needs Surveys undertaken reflect the needs of older people	Strategic Housing ORCC	Staff time

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Extra Care Housing	This is the term used in Oxfordshire for Independent housing with care and support. A Full definition can be found in Appendix 4
HIA Home Improvement Agency	Home Improvement Agencies are local not-for-profit organisations that provide advice, support and assistance to elderly, disabled and vulnerable people and help them repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home to meet their changing needs. The purpose of the service is to help people to remain independent, in their own homes, warm, safe and secure
Housing Health and Safety Rating System	The assessment of health and safety risks caused by housing conditions to an occupier or potential occupier as introduced by the Housing Act 2004 (effective from 2006)
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	Evidence of needs which enables the Primary care Trust and the local authorities to work together to understand the future health, care and well being needs of their community. This informs the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement.
LAA Local Area Agreement	Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and the local authority , Local Strategic Partnershipand other key partners at the local level.
LDF Local Development Framework	A Local Development Framework is a folder of local development documents that outlines how planning will be managed in your area.
RSL Registered Social Landlord	The general name for not-for-profit housing providers approved and regulated by Government through the Tenant Services Authority (previously the Housing Corporation). The vast majority of Registered Social Landlords are also known as Housing associations
Supporting People	A government funded programme for services that help people live independently. Supporting people is run by a commissioning body comprising of local authorities, Primary care trust, Probation and provider representation which makes decisions about the commissioning and funding of services

Appendix 2: More Choice Greater Voice Modelling

Population

Key facts

- Cherwell's population is around 137,600 people with over 85s numbering 18,788 (mid 2007 figures)
- Whilst the population as a whole is set to grow the numbers of older people will increase in comparison to other age groups. This is illustrated in the graph below

Population Change 2006 - 2031

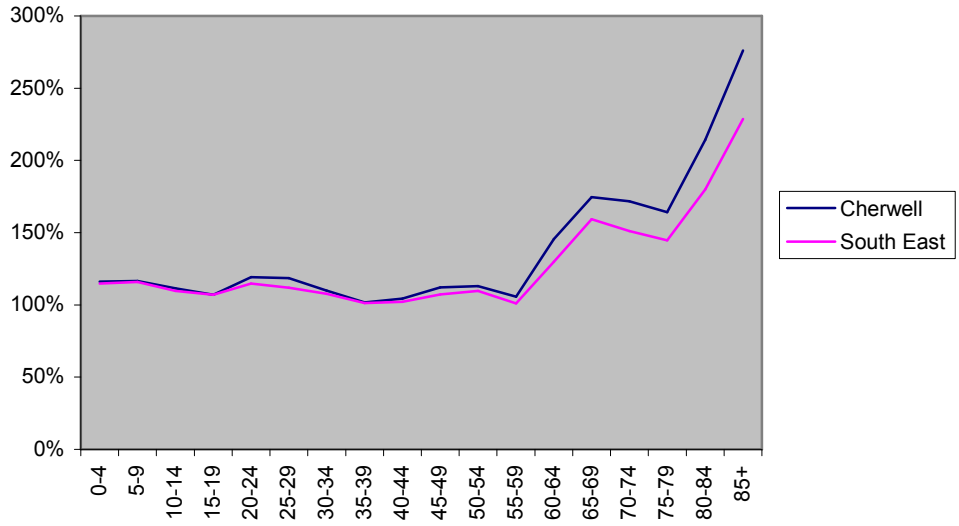


Chart 1

- This accommodation part of this strategy is particularly focussing on those aged 75 and over as it is this group that is most likely to need specialist accommodation. The population of over 75s is currently spread across the District areas as the chart below

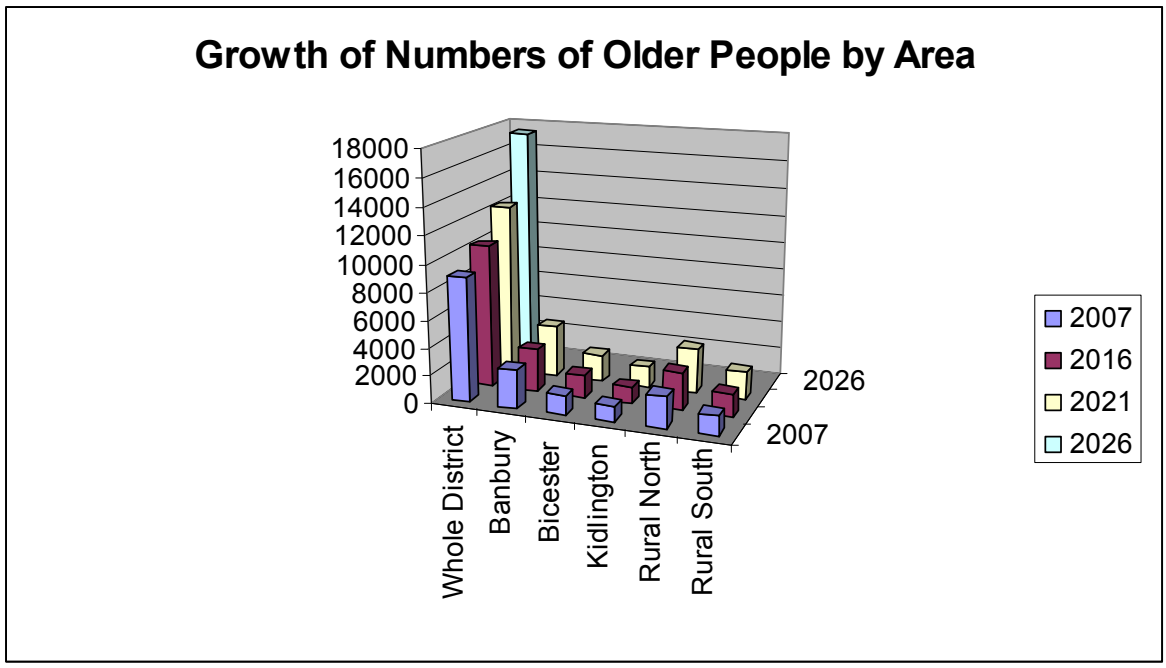


Chart 2

Growth in numbers of people aged 75 and over by area

	Whole District	Banbury	Bicester	Kidlington	Rural North	Rural South
2007	9015	2821	1390	1109	2292	1403
2016	10,388	3134	1639	1232	2727	1654
2021	12,474	3764	1969	1479	3275	1986
2026	17,300					

Table 1

Current Provision

The following tables show the small amounts of extra care currently available. Most of the current provision is private (called Assisted Living). There are two affordable schemes in the District with Planning Consent but not yet built. The table also illustrates the small amount of sheltered and extra care housing in rural areas. For these purposes we have included all housing currently covered by the Supporting people Contract for Sheltered Housing. However much of this housing does not fit the definition of sheltered housing in Appendix 4 and would be defined as housing for older people with no special design features.

Provision of specialist units/bedspaces by area

Provision	Whole District	Banbury	Bicester	Kidlington	Rural North	Rural South	Total
Sheltered (All tenures inc outright sale)	1660	770(rent) 174 (sale	286 (rent) 79 (sale)	129 (rent) 120 (sale)	10 (rent) 26 (sale)	66 (rent)	1261 (rent) 399 (sale)
Enhanced and Extra Care	115	52 Sale Assisted Living 9 Enhanced Sheltered	54 Sale Assisted Living	0	0	0	9(rent) 106 (sale)

Table 2

The District has more sheltered housing than the national trend

Overall provision in District per head of population

Provision	No of places	Per 1000 over 65 (18,786)	Per 1000 over 75 (9,015)	Per 1000 over 85 (2601)
Sheltered and extra care	1775	94	203	702
Provision in England Comparitor	516,524	68	136	491

Table 3

Indicative levels of need for population at 2016 and 2021 (based on population figures for over 75s of 10,388 in 2016, 12,474 in 2021 and 17,300 in 2026)

This table makes assumptions about the amount of accommodation needed based on a norm set by the toolkit.

Category	Current provision	Provision needed to 2016	Provision needed to 2021	Provision needed to 2026	Provision per 1000 population over 75 agreed	Norm ratio from MCGV*
Sheltered Housing for Rent	1261	519 (-742 from current)	623(-638 from current)	865 (-396 from current)	If 50	50
Sheltered Housing for Sale	399	779 (+380from current)	935 (+536 from current)	1297 (+898)	If 75	75
Enhanced Sheltered and Extra care Housing for rent	9	259 (+202 units from current)	312 (+255 from current)	*432 (+375)	If 25	20 shared between rent and sale
Enhanced Sheltered and extra care Housing for sale inc S/O	94	311 (+205 from current)	486 (+ 380 from current)	*519 (+413)	If 30	25
Of which Housing Provision for dementia	0	103	125	173	If 10	10 (inc within enhanced and extra care provision)

Table 4

Provision broken down by area to 2016/2021

Banbury (population of over 75s; 3,134 in 2016 and 3,764 in 2021)

Category	Current provision	no of units at 2016	No of units at 2021	Agreed ratio	Norm ratio
Sheltered Housing for Rent	770	235 (-535)	282 (-488)	75	50
Sheltered Housing for Sale	174	158 (- 16)	188 (+14)	50	75
Enhanced Sheltered and Extra care Housing for rent	9 enhanced	109 (+ 100)	132 (+123)	35	25
Enhanced Sheltered and extra care Housing for sale inc SO	52	63 (+11)	75 (+23)	20	30
Housing Provision for dementia	0	31	37	10	10

Table 5

Bicester (population of over 75s; 1,639 in 2016 and 1,969 in 2021)

Category	Current provision	no of units at 2016	No of units at 2021	Agreed ratio	Norm ratio
Sheltered Housing for Rent	286	81 (-205)	98 (-188)	50	50
Sheltered Housing for Sale	79	123 (+44)	148 (+69)	75	75
Enhanced Sheltered and Extra care Housing for rent	0	41	59	25	25
Enhanced Sheltered and extra care Housing for sale	54	49 (-5)	59 (+5)	30	30
Housing Provision for dementia	0	16	20	10	10

Table 6

Kidlington (population of over 75s; 1,232 in 2016 and 1,479 in 2021)

Category	Current provision	no of units at 2016	No of units at 2021	Agreed ratio	Norm ratio
Sheltered Housing for Rent	129	61 (-68)	74 (-55)	50	50
Sheltered Housing for Sale	120	92 (-28)	110 (-10)	75	75
Enhanced Sheltered and Extra care Housing for rent	0	31	37	25	25
Enhanced Sheltered and extra care Housing for sale	0	37	44	30	30
Housing Provision for dementia	0	12	15	10	10

Table 7

Rural North (population of over 75s; 2727 in 2016 and 3,119 in 2021)

Category	Current provision	no of units at 2016	No of units at 2021	Agreed ratio	Norm ratio
Sheltered Housing for Rent	10	136 (+126)	155(+145)	50	50
Sheltered Housing for Sale	26	204 (+178)	233 (+207)	75	75
Enhanced Sheltered and Extra care Housing for rent	0	68	78	25	25
Enhanced Sheltered and extra care Housing for sale	0	81	93	30	30
Housing Provision for dementia	0	27	31	10	10

Table 8

Rural South (population of over 75s; 1,654 in 2016 and 1,986 in 2021)

Category	Current provision	no of units at 2016	No of units at 2021	Agreed ratio	Norm ratio
Sheltered Housing for Rent	66	82	99	50	50
Sheltered Housing for Sale	0	124	148	75	75
Enhanced Sheltered and Extra care Housing for rent	0	41	50	25	25
Enhanced Sheltered and extra care Housing for sale	0	50	59	30	30
Housing Provision for dementia	0	16	20	10	10

Table 9

Appendix 3: Key messages from consultation carried out prior to publication of draft strategy

Message	Who said this?	How have we reflected this in the strategy?
Housing is only good if it has access to adequate services and facilities –especially transport	Strategy Working Group	Location of new development to be near shops services and transport Use health bus and older peoples groups to get information and advice out to people in rural communities
We need to combat loneliness and isolation	Strategy Working Group	Ensure specialist housing provides activities for people in the wider community Ensure services with contact with older people know about the older people's groups
Improve information and advice –particularly face to face	Strategy Working Group Learning Disability Group Asian Elders Group	Establishing Information and Advice Group to improve housing options service Provide information direct through older peoples groups and particularly to Asian groups and other specialist provision such as Learning Disability
Increase access to the community alarm service	Strategy Working Group	Through the Supporting People (SP) re-provision of the Alert service. Need to ensure access to this is not unduly restricted and that people on lower incomes are fully 'passported' for the SP funded service
Most people want to live in their own homes.	Strategy Working Group Learning Disability Group Asian Elders Group	Actions under Priority One of the strategy to support people remaining in their own homes
People who live in sheltered housing value this but there was a mixture of views about the service. Some people wanted to choose whether they had the support visit whilst others regretted the loss of a residential warden	Strategy Working Group	The re-provision of the SP service will mean people will not receive a visit unless they are assessed for this. Some providers may choose to opt out of the SP service and provide a dedicated scheme manager or warden service and CDC would support this as an option
Accommodation for older people in rural areas should be a priority	Strategy Working Group	Assessment of housing needs of older people as part of village housing need surveys Commitment to specialist housing in larger villages
Involve older people in the design of new developments	Strategy Working Group	Framework for involving people in housing design
People find it difficult to access services to say in their own home and need support in applying for housing	Banbury Asian Forum Learning Disability Group	Need to provide extra levels of information to these group on private sector provision (Priority One)

Appendix 4: Definitions for different types of Specialist Housing

People are often confused by what is meant by the different terms applied to specialist accommodation for older people. This is further confused by the use of different terms in the private and public sector and the differences across different areas of the country. This is Cherwell's definition of what we accept as standards within each category. Work is underway nationally to achieve a 'common currency' for older people's housing and these definitions are based on that work. Part of the work under Priority 3 of this strategy 'Improve the Provision of Information and Advice' will be to ensure older people are given clear information about what particular schemes offer in terms of design standards and support and care services.

Description	Who is it for?	Essential Features	Desirable Features
Housing for Older People (No special design features)	Aimed primarily at older people. May be suitable for people who want to move to smaller accommodation but not necessarily suitable for those with mobility needs. Security arrangements may vary.	Housing is let/sold primarily to older people. Must be at least one separate bedroom and accommodation is fully self contained.	Some common areas such as laundry, guest room and common room May have access to community alarm service and may be visiting or resident staff who provide a management service and or support services.
Sheltered Housing/Retirement Housing. (All special Design features)	This is aimed at those who may need specially adapted accommodation and who need appropriate accommodation and support to maintain future independence. Accommodation should be suitable to allow easy access for wheelchair users and/or those who find moving around or standing for long periods difficult. Kitchens and bathrooms are designed to enable people to cook and bathe for themselves or easily accessible for a carer to help do this.	Access to support from a residential or visiting support service. 24 hour alarm service. People will usually have to pay for the support provided either through their own income or funded through supporting people grant/ direct payments. Homes will be fully self contained with a minimum of one bedroom. They will be at or close to lifetime home standards and or wheelchair accessible standards. Will often benefit from good quality shared facilities such as common rooms for various activities and security access arrangements. Schemes will be located in areas close to shops and services.	Rooms for health related needs, access to internet, accommodation able to be easily adapted for telecare equipment Visiting services such as hairdresser, chiropodist etc. Activities for people living on the scheme and open to older people living in the local community.

Extra Care Housing/ Assisted Living	This is aimed at people who need specially adapted and or support services as above but people may also have an assessed care need. The schemes can cater for personal care needs and low level dementia needs.	Schemes will meet all the criteria above and will be built to full mobility/wheelchair accessible standards. Schemes will be fully adaptable for independent or carer assisted bathing and cooking. All schemes will have hard wiring for fitting telecare devices. Schemes will have internet access. In addition to a support and management service dedicated to the particular scheme, on site care is available to residents according to assessed needs. Restaurant facility for meals is available. Schemes will be located in areas close to shops and services	Schemes will have services available to the local community such as health services, social activities and day centre provision.
Residential Care and Nursing Care	Accommodation aimed at older people with high needs for personal and/or heath care throughout the day and night including those with mental health needs. Only homes designated as Nursing Homes provide care from a qualified nurse.	Residents have their own room but accommodation is not self contained and is care provision as opposed to housing provision. 24 hour support and care on site. All meals are provided Homes designed meeting the physical needs and mental heath needs of very frail older people.	

Contact Details:

Fiona Brown
Strategic Housing Officer
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA

Tel: 01295 221659
e-mail: Fiona.brown@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

www.cherwell-dc.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/2010

5 January 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Committee with an update on the work programme for 2009/10.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) note the current overview and scrutiny work programme for 2009/10 and make amendments as necessary;

(2) note the contents of the Forward Plan and identify any possible topics for scrutiny;

(3) consider whether to include Built Area Conservation on the agenda for the March meeting and to invite the Portfolio Holder, Head of Service and other officers to attend;

(4) consider whether to include Phone Access and Telephony on the agenda for the February meeting and to invite the Portfolio Holder and Head of Service to attend;

(5) consider whether the Committee wishes to refer any comments on the report on "Preparation for the 2012 Olympics Tourism Potential" to the Executive for consideration at their meeting on 11 January 2012.

Details

Introduction

1.1 Appendix 1 sets out the existing work programme for both the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Resources and Performance Scrutiny

Board, as agreed at the committee meetings in November 2009.

Proposals

Forward Plan

2.1 The Committee is asked to suggest items from the current Forward Plan (January – April 2010) on which it may wish to have an opportunity to offer advice to the Executive before any decision is taken, together with details of what it thinks could be achieved by looking at any items.

Scheduling – to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny

Built Environment Conservation Areas

2.2 At the work scheduling meeting in June 2009 the Committee considered a proposal to undertake a scrutiny review into the Council's approach to conservation, particularly in the context of the built environment. The original scoping document for such a review is set out at Appendix 2.

2.3 At that time the Committee decided not to include this topic on the work programme for 2009/10. However, some members of the Committee consider that this remains an issue of concern and that it should be the subject of scrutiny.

2.4 The Committee will wish to consider whether to include this item on the agenda for the March meeting and if so whether they wish to invite the Portfolio Holder, the Heads of Service and other officers to attend that meeting.

Phone Access and Telephony

2.5 This Committee, at its November meeting, agreed that the 'Phone Access and Telephony Review' should be added to the work programme and that the Portfolio Holder for Customer Service and ICT should be asked to refer the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in advance of its submission to the Executive. The latest timescales suggests that this should be included on the agenda for the February meeting of this Committee, as a draft report will be available in the second half of January (for consideration at the March Executive). A copy of this report will be circulated to members of the Committee as soon as it is available.

2.6 The report will outline proposals drawn from these principles:

- ensuring that the value of the telephony system as it stands is capable of being maximised.
- ensuring that the degree of business continuity associated with our telephony is appropriate
- how we use our telephony to receive service requests and provide information to our customers, both through our customer

service centre and through our business to business contact, and where customers (or customer service advisers) have direct contact with officers as a part of an ongoing case or application.

2.7 The Committee will wish to consider whether to include this item on the agenda for the February meeting and if so whether they wish to invite the Portfolio Holder and Head of Service to attend that meeting to discuss the report.

Monitoring Items - to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations

2012 Olympics Update

2.8 A report on the "Preparation for the 2012 Olympics Tourism Potential" is due to be considered by the Executive at the meeting on 11 January 2010. The report was not available as this agenda was published but it will be circulated to members of the Committee in advance of the meeting and they are asked to bring it with them.

2.9 The Oxford Mail (23/11/09) carried a short article on the 2012 Olympics and the potential tourism boost for Cherwell and the rest of north Oxfordshire, quoting Councillor Turner: *"We are working towards getting things in place to see what are the best ways to encourage people to come and visit".*

2.10 There was an action on the Head of Recreation and Leisure to provide further details on the current hotel capacity in North Oxfordshire. Following discussions with the authors of the report, it is not possible to determine or extrapolate a percentage capacity for overnight stays as the statistics are gathered from a number of sources including hotels, guest houses and visiting friends and relatives in private accommodation.

Concessionary Travel

2.11 The Committee is due to discuss Concessionary Travel with the Portfolio Holder and Head of Service at the meeting in February 2010. An updated copy of the recommendation monitoring sheet is at Appendix 3.

2.12 On 9 December 2009 the Government issued a ministerial statement on changes to Concessionary Travel (Appendix 4). From 1 April 2011 the responsibility for administering both the statutory minimum concession and the discretionary concession will transfer from district councils to county councils. The Department for Communities and Local Government will consult in 2010 on how the financial implications of the change will be taken forward as part of the next three year local government finance settlement.

Affordable Housing and Rural Exception Sites

2.13 An update on progress in this area is attached at Appendix 5.

Markets

2.14 The Portfolio Holder and Head of Service are due to attend the February meeting of the Committee to provide an update on progress with regard to the district's markets, in particular the appointment of a market operator for Banbury market.

Implications

Financial: There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific financial issues.

Comments checked by Denise Westlake, CSR Service Accountant, Payroll and Pensions Manager, 01295 221982

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific legal issues.

Comments checked by Liz Howlett, Head of Legal and Democratic Services, 01295 221686

Risk Management: If too many items are included on the work programme there is a risk that scrutiny agendas become overloaded. This undermines effective scrutiny because Members are unable to concentrate on the key issues and officer resources are over-stretched. It may be necessary to hold further meetings during the year if the risk of not achieving the work programme becomes apparent. The report of the individual scrutiny reviews will address any specific risk issues.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management & Insurance Officer 01295 221566

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

All

Executive Portfolio

All

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/2010
Appendix 2	Built Area Conservation Scoping Document
Appendix 3	Concessionary Travel – update on scrutiny recommendations
Appendix 4	Ministerial statement on changes to Concessionary Travel
Appendix 5	Progress report on Affordable Housing and Rural Exception Sites
Background Papers	
• Forward Plan (January – April 2010) • Preparation for the 2012 Olympics Tourism Potential, report to Executive 11/01/10	
Report Author	Catherine Phythian, Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221583 Catherine.phythian@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme 2009/10

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Meeting			
			Jan	Feb	Mar	Later
Scheduling – *to identify and agree potential topics for scrutiny*						
Housing Strategy for Older People	OSC	**Agenda item for 5 January meeting**	✓			
Built Environment Conservation Areas	Raised by Cllr Bonner	**Work programme item for 5 January meeting.** To consider the draft scoping document for possible review.	✓		?	
Preparations for an ageing population	OSC (Cllr R Stratford to monitor developments)	Invite representatives of Oxfordshire Health & Well-Being Board to attend future meeting				?
Youth Facility Provision	OSC	Possible joint scrutiny with other Oxfordshire authorities. Watching brief to consider if this is an option.				
Young People's VFM review	OSC	**Agenda item for 9 February meeting.** To consider the outcomes and conclusions of the VFM review into young people's services		✓		
Registered Social Landlords' Management Group	R&PSB	**Agenda item for 16 February meeting.** Q&A session		✓		
Phone Access and Telephony Review	OSC	**Work programme item for 5 January meeting** **Possible agenda item for February meeting** Review proposals in advance of consideration by Executive (currently scheduled for March 2010)	✓	?		
Scrutiny – *agreed topics for consideration at committee meetings*						
Engaging with young people	OSC	**Agenda item for 9 February meeting.** Member of Youth Council and officers from other local authorities & UK Youth Parliament to attend.		✓		

OSC: Overview & Scrutiny Committee
T&FG: Task & Finish Group
Group

R&PSB: Resources & Performance Board

FSWG: Finance Scrutiny Working Group
PSWG: Performance Scrutiny Working

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Jan	Feb	Mar	Later
2010/2011 Budget	R&PSB	**Agenda item for 12 January meeting.** To review budget scrutiny 2010/11.	✓			
Partnerships: ORCC	R&PSB	**Agenda item for 12 January meeting.** To consider draft report and recommendations. Final report scheduled for 16 February meeting.	✓			
Partnerships: Cherwell Safer Communities	R&PSB	**Agenda item for 16 February meeting.** To consider scoping document and project plan.		✓	→	
Contracts review	R&PSB	To consider and agree an approach for contract scrutiny				✓
Task & Finish Groups – *agreed topics for review outside committee meetings*						
Private Sector Housing Strategy	Cllr Rose Stratford (Ch) Cllr Stevens (VC) Cllr Smithson Cllr Rae Cllr Tompson Cllr Sibley	**Agenda item for OSC on 5 January 2010** Policy development work on the private sector housing strategy.	✓			
Crime & Anti-social behaviour	Cllr Irvine Cllr Ahmed Cllr Billington Cllr Cullip Cllr Tompson Cllr Sibley Cllr Smithson	Active – final report scheduled for Executive in early 2010				
Monitoring – *to examine responses to scrutiny reports and to check on progress on implementation of recommendations*						
Preparation for the 2012 Olympics tourism potential in the district	OSC	**Work programme item for 5 January meeting.** Executive report scheduled for 11 January 2010.	✓			
Concessionary Fares	OSC	**Work programme item for early 2010 meeting** PfH to attend and brief on progress on recommendations and developments on government consultation		?		
Affordable Housing & Rural Exception Sites	OSC	**Work programme item for 5 January meeting** Brief on progress on recommendations	✓			

OSC: Overview & Scrutiny Committee
T&FG: Task & Finish Group
R&PSB: Resources & Performance Board
FSWG: Finance Scrutiny Working Group
PSWG: Performance Scrutiny Working Group

Title	Committee/T&FG	Comments	Jan	Feb	Mar	Later
Markets in Cherwell	OSC	**Work programme item for February meeting** PfH to attend and brief on progress in spring 2010		✓		
RAF Bicester	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes to keep OSC informed of progress & developments. Will bring to OSC meeting when appropriate.				
Residents' Parking Schemes	OSC	PfH and Strategic Director to provide briefing notes to keep OSC informed of progress & developments. Will bring to OSC meeting when appropriate.				
Partnerships: Bicester Vision	R&PSB	**Work programme item for 12 January meeting** To agree scope and project plan for review in early 2010.	✓		✓	
Fees and Charges	R&PSB	**Agenda item for 12 January meeting** Review of progress against recommendations and in advance of next budget round	✓			
Food Waste Processing	R&PSB/PSWG	Review autumn 2010 6 months after final stage of roll-out programme.				✓
Sports Centre Modernisation	FSWG	Spiceball Sports Centre due to open winter 2009. FSWG to review on completion in Spring 2010.			✓	

OSC: Overview & Scrutiny Committee
T&FG: Task & Finish Group
Group

R&PSB: Resources & Performance Board

FSWG: Finance Scrutiny Working Group
PSWG: Performance Scrutiny Working

Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Appendix 2

Planning the scrutiny review

(Use this form to plan the work of a Task & Finish Group)

BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION – APPROACH, RESOURCES AND OUTCOMES (Particular reference to Conservation Area - CA - designation and policies)

Purpose of Review Specify exactly what the Scrutiny Review should achieve and refer where possible to VFM issues of service cost, service performance and/or customer satisfaction.	**Origins of Scrutiny Review** Councillors have expressed concern about the outcomes achieved by the Council's conservation area work. They have approached the Planning and Housing Portfolio Holder Councillor Gibbard and suggested that the topic should be considered in detail via a Scrutiny Review. Similar issues have been raised by Banbury Town Council. The scrutiny topic and focus is initially one of questioning the customer satisfaction position in this field. In particular the concerns arise from experience in respect of Banbury / Grimsbury (Banbury) Conservation Areas: • The original aims of the designation to protect the built environment are not being achieved • Planning decisions do not take full account of the quality of the built environment in these areas • General planning policies are not appropriately reconciled with the aims of conservation area designation (this is links to the formulation of policy through the Local Development Framework and pressures for housing development, especially flat conversions) • The Council does not effectively enforce against breaches of planning control that detract from the qualities of the conservation areas • The Council is not active in undertaking management and enhancement work in conservation areas (e.g. street improvements and facelift approaches, living over the shop initiatives, grant schemes to private owners, use of national funding sources) • The Council has not considered using stronger controls (special levels of restriction on normal permitted development rights via Article 4 Direction – this approach can prevent some smaller scale changes to buildings and the external environment – such as replacement windows, painting etc.) [Note: Article 4 direction - remove permitted development rights within Conservation Areas or areas that are sensitive to change but only under very special circumstance can they be used.] • The Council has not done enough to encourage or persuade good practice by private property owners

	(especially by producing and promoting design guidance – a project to introduce a design leaflet on good practice in flat conversion works has been delayed) Because the concerns are raised in context of a specific conservation area – a case study approach might be considered within the review – using Grimsbury. However generalisation of issues from a specific Conservation Area requires care and some balancing, wider, consideration will be needed. It will also be important that the case study is used to raise general issues – it is procedurally inappropriate for specific conclusions for Grimsbury Conservation Area to be drawn by through the review. **Purpose** To review the Council's general approach and resource commitment to built environment conservation (with specific reference to Conservation Area designation, policies, controls and guidance). To review how policy is applied and what outcomes are achieved. This to include consideration of: • The national legislative and policy framework • The current state of local policy • The interface between built environment conservation and other planning policy objectives • The current service offering (performance, costs etc) • Councillor and customer satisfaction with the service and the outcomes achieved (see below for particular issues) against the original expectations • Possible improvements or changes of approach in respect of current service and policies, including Use of specific design guidance (sub-division) • Appropriateness and implications of additional controls (Article 4 directions) • Compare and contrast effectiveness of conservation area status • Review of conservation related appeal decisions • The implications for the Local Development Framework (LDF) and conservation area appraisal and management plan work – which is the place where final policy balance and detail has to be resolved and formalised
Outcomes What will demonstrate that this Scrutiny Review has been a success	1. Wider understanding of, and support for, the built environment conservation work of the Council (internally and externally) 2. Identification of possible improvements/changes approach and resources 3. Identification of policy issues relating to LDF. 4. Improved customer satisfaction ratings with the policy/process
Methodology/ Approach What types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence	• Whole committee review (**not** smaller informal T&FG, as wider understanding and ownership of findings is essential to success. Formal political responsibility for outcomes is also crucial as recommendations could carry through into formulation and application of planning policy and case decisions) • Officer briefing and Q&A session • Literature and desk top research on legislative and policy framework and best practice models • Witness sessions (see below for ideas)

Target body for Recommendations Executive, Council, Other/Partners	• LDF Panel • Portfolio Holder • Executive
Key dates Identify key meeting dates and any deadlines for reports or decisions	• Early 2010 ~ preferred date for scrutiny review based on availability of planning resources • Likely to take 3- 6 months to complete
Risks Identify any weaknesses and barriers to success	• Constraints on CDC resources (in conducting a review with substantial workload and in implementation of some possible outcomes) • Difficulties of securing adequate external input and understanding and buy in to purpose of review from partner organisations • Danger of cross over from "in principal" consideration of approaches to local or individual planning cases • Danger of role confusion in terms of outcomes – Planning Committee consideration of current or specific future planning application cases can not be subject to discussion (Excluded Matters). The planning policy formulation role of Executive in considering the overall balance between conservation and other planning objectives must be clear. There is already an established method of involving O&S Members in overall policy – via the Local Development Framework Advisory Panel – which has a link member for scrutiny and is chaired by the Portfolio Holder (membership update of this panel is due). Outcomes should be in the form of recommendations to the Portfolio Holder and for him to consider via the Panel
Witnesses/ Experts/ Site Visits Who, why and when	Suggestions: • Other councils with similar characteristics – good practice examples • National specialist bodies (official and voluntary - e.g. English Heritage, Society For Protection of Ancient Buildings, English Historic Towns Forum etc) • External specialists / experts (may be necessary to buy in) • Resident representatives • Landowner/developer interests • Local amenity groups and societies (including Banbury Civic society who have a special interest in this topic) • Town and parish councils (possible juxtaposition of views between Banbury experience – for greater controls? and some Shennington and Alkerton village interests – against greater controls)
Publicity & Media Do we need to publicise the review to encourage community involvement? what sort of media coverage do we want? Fliers, leaflets, radio broadcast, press-release, etc.	• Will this review be subject to a press embargo? No, though appropriate stage of releasing information on outcomes and reporting in public should be carefully considered according to objectives and outcomes • CDC press contact: TO BE CONFIRMED • Spokesperson for Scrutiny Review: TO BE CONFIRMED
Resources & Budget • specialist staff • external support • consultation • research	Sources of information include: • CDC Planning Officers will be called as witnesses • CDC Legal team will be required to support this review • Published materials and related research (key documents are CA Legislation, Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 Planning and the Historic Environment, other national and local policy sources)

	• External witnesses (see above) Note – this is an internally driven review and the degree to which CDC can expect external input is limited – especially in respect of national and specialist bodies. It may therefore be necessary to rely mainly on particular local interests already involved in the issue and holding strong views. The method of balancing this with other views needs to be considered. Purchase of external advice is a possibility – albeit overall resource issues need to be well judged.

Completed by: John Hoad,	**Date:** amended May 09
Approved by Overview & Scrutiny Committee:	**Date:**

Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Overview & Scrutiny - Monitoring Recommendations

Review Title:	**Concessionary Travel**		
Committee:	**Overview & Scrutiny Committee**	**Date of report to Executive:** 6 July 2009	**Update:** 10 December 2009
Scrutiny Officers:	Catherine Phythian		

	Recommendation	Executive Response	Progress
1.	**Smart Card Reader Scheme** That Cherwell District Council should not pursue the introduction of a Smart Card Reader scheme at this time due to the significant financial investment required and reservations about the current technical capacity of such schemes to meet the Council's needs. The government consultation on the future administration of concessionary travel schemes compounds the uncertainty.	**Agreed**	No further action. In December 2009 the Government announced that from April 2011 statutory and discretionary Concessionary Travel will be the responsibility of County Councils.
2.	**Mis-ticketing** That the Portfolio Holder should publicise the importance of checking bus tickets and encourage bus pass holders to submit examples of mis-ticketing. The Portfolio Holder should follow-up examples of mis-ticketing with the bus companies; monitor the scale and value of the problem for the remainder of the financial year; and report on the results and proposed actions to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the spring of 2010.	**Agreed**	To be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February/March 2010
3.	**Management Information** That the Portfolio Holder should encourage the concessionary fare service providers to move to a monthly rather than quarterly claim and settlement cycle.	**Agreed**	To be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February/March 2010
4.	**National Travel Tokens** That the current arrangements for the issue of national travel tokens should continue for 2009/10 and that the Portfolio Holder should monitor the take up and use of the national travel token	**Agreed**	To be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February/March 2010

	scheme. The Council's continued participation in the national travel token scheme should be reviewed against the findings of the independent research into the provision of community transport schemes in the district (see recommendation 5).		
5.	**Community Transport** That Cherwell District Council should continue to support and promote the provision of community transport schemes across the District. In support of this corporate priority the Portfolio Holder should commission research into the feasibility of introducing alternative community transport schemes in those parts of the district where residents do not benefit from the concessionary bus pass, national travel tokens or the Dial-A-Ride service.	**Agreed**	Report due from Oxfordshire Rural Community Council due in early 2010. To be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February/March 2010.
6.	**Consortium approach** That the Portfolio Holder should open discussions with colleagues at the County Council and the District/City councils with a view to promoting a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of the national concessionary travel scheme, subject to the outcome of the government's consultation on the administration of concessionary fares schemes.	**Agreed**	No further action. In December 2009 the Government announced that from April 2011 statutory and discretionary Concessionary Travel will be the responsibility of County Councils.
7.	**Government Consultation** That the Portfolio Holder should be invited to use the work of this Task & Finish Group and the conclusions and recommendations in this report to inform the Council's response to the government's consultation on the administration of concessionary fares schemes.	**Agreed**	Completed: Consultation response submitted in July 2009.
8.	**Concessionary Travel Scheme** That the start time for the concessionary travel scheme in Cherwell should not be reviewed again and should remain at 09.30 am, in line with the statutory scheme, until April 2011 when the new arrangements for the administration of the concessionary travel scheme will come into force.	**Agreed**	No further action. In December 2009 the Government announced that from April 2011 statutory and discretionary Concessionary Travel will be the responsibility of County Councils.
Executive decision and additional recommendations (6 July 2009)			
	a. Agreed, with the amendment that following further discussion between Oxfordshire local authorities that the consultation response from this authority to the Government should state that the concessionary travel scheme be operated nationally by the Government (who would deal with the cost of the scheme and reimbursements), but administered locally by District Councils (who would deal with local residents). **See 7 above.** b. Additionally portfolio holder requested to investigate adverts on buses raising the issue of mi-ticketing and the cost per use of the dial-a-ride service. To be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in February/March 2010.		

Statement on Changes to Concessionary Travel announced in Pre-Budget Report, December 2009

A package of reforms to concessionary bus travel in England was announced today as part of the Pre-Budget Report. The package includes proposed changes to responsibilities for administering the concession following a consultation on this issue earlier this year. Also announced were plans to re-establish the link between the age of eligibility for free England-wide local bus travel and the state pension age as part of a wider package of changes to increase the age at which pensioner benefits can be received in line with pension age changes.

The introduction of the England-wide concession in 1 April 2008 has given the opportunity for greater freedom and independence to around 11 million older and disabled people. No older or disabled person in England need now be prevented from bus travel by cost alone, and the concession represents a major step forward in tackling social inclusion for some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Over 200 responses were received to the consultation on administrative reform of concessionary travel and a summary of these responses has been published today. Having considered the consultation responses Ministers have concluded that shifting responsibility for administering the statutory minimum concession from shire district councils to county councils will deliver real benefits and will help ensure the long term sustainability of the concession.

Given this change it also makes sense to move the ability to make discretionary travel concession schemes (using powers under the Transport Act 1985) away from shire and metropolitan districts to county councils and PTEs. Although district councils may still be able to use their broad well-being powers in this area. There will be no changes to administrative responsibility in London, or unitary authority areas.

This reform will bring with it many benefits, including:

- Enabling efficiencies to be realised, for example through economies of scale and by reducing the number of negotiations with bus operators;
- Making accurate funding by formula easier;
- Harmonising concessionary travel responsibilities with the wider responsibilities of transport authorities for the first time; and
- Assisting with the roll-out of smart ticketing

It is intended that this change to administrative responsibilities will come into force from 1 April 2011. An order under section 9 of the Concessionary Bus Travel Act 2007 will be presented to Parliament for scrutiny in due course.

The Department for Communities and Local Government will consult in 2010 on how the financial implications of the change will be taken forward as part of the next three year local government finance settlement.

These changes to the arrangements for administering concessionary travel should by no means detract from the success of this hugely popular policy and the Government intends to continue offering free off-peak local bus travel throughout England to older and disabled people.

Also announced today were plans to change the age of eligibility for concessionary bus travel in line with the changes that are being made to the state pension age from April 2010. For the purposes of concessionary travel this means tying the age of eligibility for the bus pass to the pensionable age for women. So, as the pensionable age for women gradually increases from 60 to 65 over the ten-year period from 2010 to 2020 so too will the age of eligibility for the concessionary bus pass increase for both men and women.

Currently both men and women become eligible for a free bus pass at 60. These plans mean that by 2020 the age of eligibility will increase to 65. Until pensionable age is equalised between the sexes in 2020, men will continue to become eligible for a concessionary bus pass when they reach the pensionable age of a woman born on the same day.

The changes to the age of eligibility will not impact on anyone already in possession of a bus pass. The changes will only affect those due to turn 60 on or after 6 April 2010 and will bring eligibility for the national bus concession into line with changes to other entitlements that have already been announced by the Department for Work and Pensions, such as the change in the age of eligibility for the Winter Fuel Allowance.

The purpose of the concession is to provide greater freedom and independence to older people in their retirement. Until 2002 eligibility was linked to the state pension age, with women becoming eligible at 60 and men at 65. In 2002, the age of eligibility was equalised at 60 for both men and women.

With the difference in state pension age for men and women set to disappear between 2010 and 2020, Ministers have decided that it is now time to begin to re-establish the link with pension age for concessionary travel and remove the anomalous position of working age citizens receiving free bus passes. This is the fair thing to do and will further assist in securing the long term financial sustainability of this generous and popular scheme.

An Order will be presented to Parliament under the powers contained in the Travel Concessions (Eligibility) Act 2002 to enact these changes.

The changes announced today are part of a wider package of workstreams aimed at streamlining the administration of concessionary travel. Other areas of reform include proposals to simplify how bus operators are reimbursed for carrying concessionary passengers and plans to speed up the adoption of smart ticketing as part of the Government's strategy on smart and integrated ticketing which will be published shortly.

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 5

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

5th January 2009

Update on Rural Affordable Housing Improvement Plan

This report is to give members an update on progress on the Rural Affordable Housing Improvement Plan endorsed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April 2009 and by the Council's Executive in August 2009. An updated version of this plan is attached along with an example of a parish update report.

Since the plan was adopted the following improvements have been carried out:

- Quarterly reports are being sent to Parish Councils and ward Councillors to update on progress in their Parish. . These have been generally well received, for example Wiggington Parish Council commented that the report was 'excellent and a great help'.
- A service level agreement has been signed with the Oxfordshire Rural Communities Council (ORCC) in respect of the delivery of the rural housing enabler (RHE) service
- A joint work plan for the RHE has been agreed between CDC and ORCC with clear targets for the work of the enabler.
- Greater resources have been made available to develop site appraisal work within the Council's Development Control team leading to faster turnaround on appraising suitable sites.
- A meeting has been held with senior managers at Greensquare Group (of which OCHA is a part) to emphasise the importance of delivery on rural schemes to the Council. This has resulted in OCHA agreeing that one member of the development team should be the single point of contact on rural exception sites and will be responsible for ensuring good communication with all other ORHP members and the Parish Councils.
- Greater resources have been given over to site appraisal work within the Planning Development Control service leading to faster turnaround on appraising suitable sites
- We have built on positive relationships with the Duchy of Cornwall and the Colleges resulting in negotiation over land acquisition.
- We are in the planning stages for moving to a rolling housing needs programme from April 2010. This will enable us to better understand where we should be targeting our activity.
- Initial invitations have been sent out for a training and awareness raising event for members of the District and Parish Councils on the 22nd February 2010.

Outcomes

- Since the review we have started actively working with a further 6 parishes (Adderbury, Launton, Barfords, South Newington, Islip and Shipton on Cherwell) with sites identified in 3 of these parishes.
- We have undertaken a further housing needs survey in South Newington with two further housing needs surveys in Islip and Milcombe agreed for January. We have also undertaken 3 register of interests to update existing need on schemes which are at design stage.
- We are close to Planning Applications being submitted on two sites at Weston on the Green and Hornton.
- Overall delivery of rural housing is high this year with 61 homes in rural areas developed since April. The majority of these have been allocated to applicants with a local connection.

Fiona Brown
Strategic Housing Officer
December 2009

Rural Affordable Housing Improvement Plan

Last Updated November 2009

Action	Desired outcome	By When	By whom	Progress/Completed
Communication ***"this is something that is done to us, not for us"***				
Produce an ORHP annual report for Cherwell detailing progress made throughout the District (schemes delivered /units on site/ housing needs survey undertaken/case studies etc)	Raises profile and builds confidence in Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership locally	1st production Apr 2010	FB/TM	Discussion with ORHP re producing County material with section devoted to activity in Cherwell DC
Issue quarterly reports to all active parishes and District Ward Councillor to update on progress	Parish and Ward Councillor kept informed of progress and obstacles	**Achieved**		Quarterly reports now being sent with positive feedback and increased communication with PCS. Practice has now been adopted in other Districts in Oxfordshire
Single point of contact for the Parish to be identified at the start of the process – additionally a designated housing and planning contact to be assigned to the parish	Improved communications	**Achieved**		To be made clear through new Cherwell information booklet – see below – and key contacts given as part of the quarterly reports
Increased promotion of activities • through Local Development Framework newsletter • Cherwell link	Greater awareness of rural affordable housing issues	Throughout 2009-10	FB/DP	Article for Cherwell Link to be written for March 2010 edition. DP to consider timing and content of article for LDF newsletter
Improve Cherwell District Council website content	Greater awareness and information sharing	Dec 2009	FB	Rural Improvement plan on website – need to improve these pages with information including new booklets
Ensure parish plan process fully encompasses affordable housing	Affordable housing gains priority in Parish Plans	**Achieved**		Parish Councils are being encouraged to undertake a housing needs survey alongside parish plan questionnaires

Produce DVD to explain the benefits of affordable housing to villages	Increased interest in Affordable Housing	**Achieved**		DVD being distributed at PC meetings when affordable housing presentation given
Update rural affordable housing booklet and other documents ~ with clarification of definitions and distinction between rural affordable housing and exception sites, timescales for each stage of the process, key contacts and responsibilities etc.	Increased interest and better understanding of rural affordable housing	Documents produced by March 2010	FB/TM	Cherwell booklet with accompanying /summary leaflet being written. ORHP updating internal information leaflet.
Investigate if scrutiny can undertake a review of rural housing and exception sites	Addresses Parish Council concerns and District Councillors more aware of rural housing issues	**Achieved**		Improvement Plan endorsed by Executive
Raise the profile of rural housing issues with District Councillors through a information/training event	Increased commitment from elected members supported by increased knowledge	March 2010	FB	Planning for event in February 2010 underway.
Raise rural affordable housing issues with parishes at all available opportunities	Increased number of opportunities to work with parishes	Throughout year	TM	RHE now has a work programme which includes targets for Parish contact
Working Smarter ***"would suggest that a dedicated planner to look at rural exception sites might be beneficial to the Council."***				
Put together a Service Level Agreement/Protocol for all Delivery Implementation Group members about role/tasks and timeframes for these-this should include ensuring appraised sites are ranked in order of preference	Sites progressed in a timely fashion	**Achieved**		Roles and responsibilities of group members re-clarified in January and service standards produced for publication in new booklet. SLA now signed with ORCC
Planning to identify additional staffing resources to carry out site appraisals	Improved response times	**Achieved**		Specialist officer designated to undertake this work in Jan 09 for 6-9 months. This post has since been extended
Cherwell District Council to identify targets for delivery of rural affordable	Greater priority and scrutiny of rural affordable housing	To be confirmed		Targets established with ORHP. 150 units across County over 3

housing	delivery			years (with a stretch target of 200). One new scheme per District per year
Site identification ***"The biggest problem has been in obtaining land."***				
Use the planning system to proactively identify possibilities for exception sites	A supply of possible rural exception sites is gathered for targeting land owners where local need is demonstrated	In line with Local Development Framework timescales	DP	Initial trawl of identified sites provided January 2009 and is being followed up through written appraisals of site suitability.
Investigate other rural exception sites policies, keep abreast of government changes and consider revisions to rural exception sites as part of Local Development Framework (consider Shropshire, Horsham and East Hants)	Greater incentives to land owners to release sites for affordable housing A policy framework that enables the delivery of rural affordable housing	In line with Local Development Framework timescales	DP	Local Development Framework not yet at detailed policy making stage. Emerging housing need evidence, further Local Development Framework work and needs clear needs evidence of needs plus village policy and best practice elsewhere will inform review of rural exception site policy work. CDC to respond to Government paper on Incentivising Landlords
Review of publicly owned land within Cherwell	May identify land that could be targeted	April 2009	DP	Consider sites through the site identification process. Need to follow up Church initiative to use land for affordable housing.
Continue to build relationships with Colleges/Duchy of Cornwall and other landowners where land owned by them may be suitable	Release of suitable land	On going	MS	Work currently being undertaken by Sanctuary with Duchy at Weston on the Green and will use this as opportunity to discuss any other possible sites. Approaching Corpus Christi college as college as part of site identification at

				Lower Heyford. A letter has been sent to the Oxford colleges, the Church and the Duchy of Cornwell to request help in releasing land. Positive responses from New College and Exeter College
Discuss with parishes other options for providing affordable housing other than new build – acquisitions, empty homes?	Small amounts of affordable secured where no land available	On going	FB/TM	Rural Housing Enabler NB following up through usual engagement with Parish Councils so this option can be considered. Revise housing needs survey documents to remind respondents this might be another option. Work being undertaken to check any empty homes (over 6 months that could be brought back into use). Budget request submitted for funding to help an RSL purchase if opportunity arises
Ensure housing needs survey carried out as part of a rolling programme in order to evidence need for rural exception sites up front. Need to ensure Cherwell District Council can resource this. Surveys will run alongside site identification work to allow good targeting of resources	Council will have up to date info to justify need for rural affordable housing	2009/10	FB	Programme of surveys being prepared and investigating if this can be resourced. Parish Councils will be consulted on this and on the new Housing Needs Surveys and Reports. TM and FB to look at possible process and programme for undertaking these

For further information contact Fiona Brown – Strategic Housing Officer 01295 221659 fiona.brown@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Staff key –
DP – David Peckford
FB – Fiona Brown
MS – Martyn Swann
TM – Tom McCulloch

Oxfordshire Rural Housing Partnership
Quarterly Parish Council Progress Report

Date: 21 September 2009
Name of Parish: Hornton

Stage of Development: Undertaking Needs Survey/Site Identification/**Site Negotiation**/ Pre Planning Discussions/ Planning Submitted/ Scheme on Site

Anticipated Units: Rural Exception Site at Bell Lane- 4 units

Current Position: Register of Interest shall guide the final mix of houses at Bell Lane

Documents Attached: update report from OCHA

Action Required	By Whom	Target Timescale
Register of Interest Report to be completed and circulated	Tom McCulloch	End of September 2009

Key Contacts	
Fiona Brown (CDC Housing)	Tel: 01295 221659 Fiona.brown@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Tom McCulloch (Rural Housing Enabler ORCC)	Tel: 01865 883488 tom.mcculloch@oxonrcc.org.uk
Bob Duxbury (CDC Planning)	Tel: 01295 221821 Bob.duxbury@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Marita Ford (Greensquare- Oxford Citizens Housing Association- Housing Group)	Tel: 01865 782 589 Marita.ford@greensquaregroup.com
A copy of this report has been sent to District Councillor Douglas Webb	

For further information please contact Tom McCulloch in the first instance.

This page is intentionally left blank

Resources & Performance Scrutiny Board

Youth Engagement Scrutiny

5 January 2010

Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update Members on the progress to date of the scrutiny review of Youth Engagement and to consider the emerging conclusions.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

(1) Note the contents of the report and reflect on the evidence of the review to date;

(2) Consider and comment on the emerging conclusions.

Details

1 Youth Engagement

1.1 At the Committee's meeting on 15 September 2009, Members agreed a scoping document for the scrutiny review of the Council's youth engagement activities (Appendix 1).

1.2 The Committee considered that undertaking such a review could assist the Council in gauging the effectiveness of it's performance and delivery against national indicators: NI 110 (Young People's participation in positive activities) and NI 21 Dealing with concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police.

2 Youth Engagement Scrutiny Review Progress

Evidence

2.1 All evidence gathered throughout the review has been circulated

separately to Members. It will form Volume Two of the final report. Key elements of the evidence are detailed below.

Background Briefings

2.2 During the course of the review, the Head of Recreation and Leisure, the Recreation and Health Improvement Manager and the Senior Recreation Development Officer attended meetings of the Committee to brief members on the Council's work in support of youth engagement.

2.3 The Chairman of the Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Task & Finish Group, briefed the Committee on the work and initial findings of this review. The review had set out to establish whether young people congregating on the streets were engaged in anti-social behaviour or if this was perception. In the course of the review the Group went on walkabouts with street wardens in Banbury and Bicester; met with members of Banbury and Bicester youth groups; and spoke to representatives of the National Youth Agency. Officers from the Safer Communities and Community Development team were involved in the review and provided evidence and advice on the type and volume of anti-social behaviour in the district.

2.4 The Task and Finish Group had concluded that it was largely a question of perception and that in general the young people congregating on the district's streets were not engaged in anti-social behaviour. The challenge facing Cherwell would be to promote this message and at the same time reassure the public.

2.5 As background to the review all members of the Committee have been sent a copy of a DVD: The Youth of Today, a film produced by young people in south Oxfordshire who have teamed up with their communities to explore the reasons for the negative perception of young people.

Field Work

2.6 In October 22 pupils from four schools in Banbury and Bicester visited Westminster to find out more about how democracy works. The visit was organised by Cherwell District Council as part of Local Democracy Week 2009. After a tour of the Lords and Commons, they had a chance to quiz local MP, Tony Baldry. He faced questions on young people being disregarded because they are not old enough to vote, the future of paediatrics at the Horton General Hospital, public sector spending cuts and MPs' expenses.

2.7 Also as part of Local Democracy Week schools across North Oxfordshire took part in the "I'm a councillor, get me out of here" on-line event. Four Cherwell District Councillors, including two members of the Committee, took part.

2.8 In November members of the Committee attended a meeting of the

Bicester Youth Council, to observe the youth councillors at work and to talk to them about their interest in local democracy. The Committee members were impressed by the commitment and mature approach of the youth councillors.

Question and Answer Session

2.9 Representatives from neighbouring local authorities and members of the Cherwell Youth Councils and the Oxfordshire Youth Parliament have been invited to attend the February meeting of the Committee for a question and answer session about youth engagement in local democracy.

3 Emerging Conclusions

3.1 The Committee will wish to consider and comment on the following emerging conclusions for inclusion as recommendations in the final report:

1. That although youth engagement is a discretionary activity with a limited budget and resources there is scope for the Council to do more through better use of the existing resources and exploiting existing systems and relationships.

2. That the excellent work conducted during Local Democracy Week should be extended to provide a sustained programme of activities throughout the year.

3. That the Council should do more to promote citizenship in the local schools and encourage greater involvement from those councillors and officers who were school governors or active in the school parent/teacher organisations. As not all young people are part of the traditional school system the same approach should be extended to all forms of further education.

4. That the Council should appoint elected members to act as link/liaison councillors for each of the local Youth Councils to alert them to issues of interest to young people and to support and mentor them.

5. That the Council should ensure that all of the Council's Heads of Service are aware of the work we currently undertake with young people and ensure that the involvement of young people is a mainstream consideration in their service processes and procedures.

6. That the Council should introduce a formal policy for youth engagement.

Implications

Financial: There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Risk Management: There are no risk implications arising directly from this report.

Wards Affected

All

Corporate Plan Themes

A district of opportunity

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Barry Wood
Portfolio Holder for Policy and Community Planning

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Scrutiny Review Scoping Document
Background Papers	
Youth Engagement Scrutiny Review Evidence Pack	
Report Author	Catherine Phythian, Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Contact Information	01295 221583 Catherine.phythian@Cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Cherwell DISTRICT COUNCIL North Oxfordshire

Appendix 1

Planning the scrutiny review

Engaging with Young People

Purpose of Review Specify exactly what the Scrutiny Review should achieve and refer where possible to VFM issues of service cost, service performance and/or customer satisfaction.	1. To consider whether the Council has suitable mechanisms in place to actively involve young people. 2. To examine how the Council currently involves young people in its decision making, operation and provision of services, (including but not limited to consultation, communication and education). 3. To consider whether this follows best practice and is of a suitable standard. 4. To consider how the Council is contributing towards the promotion of citizenship locally and review the activities of Local Democracy Week. 5. To ascertain whether the Council is doing all that it can to ensure it is a suitable environment to enfranchise young people.

Indicators of Success
What factors/outcomes will demonstrate that this Scrutiny Review has been a success.
	The outcomes of this review have the potential to improve performance and delivery against:
	• **NI 110 (Young People's participation in positive activities)**
	This indicator is designed to measure young people's participation in structured positive activities. What young people do, or don't do, out-of-school matters. Research demonstrates that the activities young people participate in out-of-school have a significant bearing on their later life outcomes. Positive activities are a good use of young people's time because they provide opportunities to:
	  • acquire, and practice, specific social, physical, emotional and intellectual skills
	  • contribute to the community
	  • belong to a socially recognised group
	  • establish supportive social networks of peers and adults
	  • experience and deal with challenges
	  • enjoy themselves
	• **NI 21 Dealing with concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police**
	This measure is also being employed as a proxy to measure confidence in local agencies to tackle the community safety issues that matter to local people (i.e. a measure of Neighbourhood Policing in the widest sense). It is an indicator of people's view about those issues which are important to their quality of life.

Methodology/ Approach What types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence	• Committee based Q&A sessions • Informal meetings with local young people and attendance / observation at existing Youth Councils etc • Desk top review and interviews to identify alternative approaches and possible best practice • Observation of Local Democracy Week activities
Target body for Recommendations Executive, Council, Other/Partners	• Executive / Council • Safer Communities Partnership re NI 21 • Children's Trust re NI 110
1. Key dates Identify key meeting dates and any deadlines for reports or decisions	• Sept ~ Dec 2009 research and evidence gathering • 15 September ~ OSC meeting ~ initial discussion • 13 October ~ OSC meeting ~ possible Q&A session • 12 – 18 October ~ Local Democracy Week • 10 November ~ OSC meeting ~ possible Q&A session • 5 January ~ OSC meeting ~ draft report and recommendations
Risks Identify any weaknesses and barriers to success	• Resource constraints in CDC • Accessibility / availability limits for contact with existing youth groups • Making contact with 'hard to reach' young people and marginalised groups who are not currently involved with CDC • How to manage the expectations of young people • CRB checks and associated legislation.
Witnesses/ Experts/ Site Visits Who, why and when	• CDC officers: PfH, Strategic Director, Service Heads and Team Leaders • CDC councillors involved in Local Democracy Week • Crime & Anti-social Behaviour Task and Finish Group • Youth Parliament members • Bodicote Parish Council (has co-opted youth members) • OCC: Local (head) teachers and other youth workers • Attendance at Youth Councils held in Cherwell and other parts of the County • Observation at Local Democracy Week activities
Publicity & Media Do we need to publicise the review to encourage community involvement? what sort of media coverage do we want? Fliers, leaflets, radio broadcast, press-release, etc.	Will this review be subject to a press embargo? No CDC press contact: Craig Forsyth Spokesperson for Scrutiny Review: Cllr Sames (OSC Chairman and Young People's Champion)
Resources & Budget • specialist staff • external support • consultation • research	Expect to manage within existing CDC resources.

Completed by: Rolls/Wild/Phythian/Clarke	**Date: September 2009**
Approved by Overview & Scrutiny Committee:	**Date: 15 September 2009**