

APPENDIX 3

Strategic Context in Detail

National Context

Welfare Reforms – The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced significant changes to the benefits system including new caps on local housing allowance (LHA) and housing benefit, the creation of Universal Credit (UC) and the reform of Council Tax Benefit and Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 contains further changes including the ending of automatic entitlement for 18-21 year olds and the restriction of benefits for families with more than two children.

The Care Act 2014 – The Care Act 2014 extends the role of local authorities with adult social care responsibilities who provide assistance to people who have care needs. The Act defines housing as a ‘health-related service’, highlighting the need for integrating care and support provision. To meet these needs adult social services departments will need to work with local housing authorities to provide a range of housing and support services, such as supported housing and extra care housing.

Housing and Planning Act 2016 – The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced a number of policy changes including:

- Registered Providers will extend the Right to buy to their tenants on a voluntary basis (giving their tenants the same rights as local authority housing tenants)
- starter homes (a home available to first time buyers between 23 and 39 at a discount of 20%) were defined as affordable housing for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework
- local planning authorities have a duty to keep a register of demand for self-build properties and grant planning permission for adequate serviced plots to meet the measured demand for self-build housing in the district.
- new and changed enforcement powers for local housing authorities aimed at tackling rogue landlords

The Housing White Paper 2017 - ‘Fixing our broken housing market’, released in February 2017 set out the Government’s proposals to:

- make changes to the planning system to facilitate development and build homes faster
- ensure the required infrastructure is delivered at the right time
- support smaller builders, local authorities and housing associations to build
- support building for rent and custom and self-build initiatives
- provide more support for first time buyers alongside other affordable provision
- introduce a revised methodology for calculating housing need.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRAct) - implemented in April 2018 has substantially increased the duties owed by local authorities to homeless people and people threatened with homelessness. These include a greater emphasis on homelessness prevention with councils being required to help people at risk of losing accommodation as soon as they are threatened with homelessness within 56 days and increased duties to households not in priority need.

National Planning Policy Framework – In July 2018, the government published the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and amended Planning Policy Guidance, changes included:

- introduction of a new Affordable Housing definition. Social rented homes are reintroduced into the government's definition and it is broadened to include Build to Rent units (marketed at an affordable rent), Starter Homes and Discounted Market Sales housing.
- At least 10% of homes on 10+ dwelling schemes should be for affordable home ownership, with exemption rural exception sites, Build to Rent schemes and specialist housing proposals (such as for the elderly or students).
- Introduction of 'entry level exception sites' suitable for first-time buyers or those looking to rent their first home. These sites must comprise a high proportion of entry-level homes and adjacent to existing settlements.
- Shifting viability assessment from the decision-making stage to the plan making stage and 'where up to date policies have been set out the contributions expected from development, planning applications that comply with them should be assumed to be viable'.
- Introduction of a new standardised housing need assessment

The Social Housing Green Paper – The government published the green paper 'A new deal for social housing' on 14 August 2018, setting out a proposed strategy for reforming social housing. It aims to rebalance the relationship between landlords and residents, tackle stigma and ensure social housing can act as a stable base and support social mobility. It is based around five themes:

- ensuring homes are safe and decent
- effective resolution of complaints about social landlords
- empowering residents and strengthening the regulator
- tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities
- expanding supply and supporting home ownership.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing reforms - From 1 October 2018, the Government has extended the number of properties subject to mandatory licensing so it is now a requirement that HMOs that are occupied by five or more people from two or more separate households regardless of how many floors are subject to mandatory licensing.

Regional Context

Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 led to the establishment of Health and Wellbeing Boards, to promote more joined up commissioning of health, social care and public health services. The Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board has a Children's Trust, Adults Joint Management Group and a Health Improvement Partnership Board reporting to it and public involvement underpinning the whole system. The Health Improvement Partnership Board has the purpose 'to add life to years and years to life, focusing on the factors underpinning wellbeing, while levelling up differences in the health of different groups in the County'. The Health and Wellbeing Board recognises the links between health and housing and this is reflected in one of their priorities being "Tackling the broader determinants of health through better housing and preventing homelessness". The Health Improvement Board takes responsibility for delivering this priority. The full Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy is available at:

<https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/aboutyourcouncil/plansperformancepolicy/oxfordshirejointwbstrategy.pdf>

Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal

On 22 November 2017 it was announced that Oxfordshire and the Government would collaborate in the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal (the Deal). As part of the Deal Oxfordshire (through Oxfordshire Growth Board) will receive up to £215 million of funding

from the Government to deliver 100,000 new homes by 2031, this includes £150 million for infrastructure delivery and £60 million for 1,320 additional affordable homes by 2021.

Local Context

Cherwell District Council Business Plan

The South Northants and Cherwell District Council's Joint Business Plan 2018/19 has three high level priorities and some specific objectives under these that relate to housing:

- **Protected, Green & Clean**
 - Maintain the District as a low crime area (including incidents of rough sleeping)
- **Thriving Communities & Wellbeing**
 - Prevent homelessness
 - Safeguard the vulnerable
 - Deliver affordable housing & work with private sector landlords
 - Deliver the welfare reform agenda
- **District of Opportunity & Growth**
 - Deliver innovative and effective housing schemes

Homelessness Strategy 2018-2020

Our two year strategy sets out our aims to tackle homelessness across the district. It details how we will provide open and effective access to a range of housing services, support and other opportunities for any resident affected by homelessness to help them rebuild their lives. The strategy was informed by a comprehensive review, undertaken between December 2017 and April 2018, of homelessness and homelessness services in our district.

Cherwell District Council's Tenancy Strategy 2017

The strategy recommends that tenancies in rented affordable housing should for a minimum of 5 years (only 2 years in exceptional circumstances). Lifetime tenancies should be offered to tenants with certain vulnerabilities or those that have been involved in self-build or self-finish. Affordable rents (and service charges where applicable) should be capped at local housing allowance rates. Registered Providers should not convert more than one third of their social rented properties to affordable rent and that the council will discharge its homelessness duty into the private rented sector when a suitable, affordable tenancy is available.

Cherwell District Council's Housing Allocation Scheme

The current version of the Allocations Scheme came into effect in November 2018. Recent amendments were made to meet the respond to the implications of the HRAct. A further review of the scheme is scheduled to be completed 12 months after the HRAct came into force.

Cherwell Local Plan

The Cherwell Local Plan Part 1 2011-2031 was adopted in July 2015. The plan seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing to meet the housing need for Cherwell identified in the SHMA. It outlines how housing provision will be focused in and around Banbury and Bicester with limited growth in the rural areas directed towards the larger, more sustainable villages (including the new settlement at former RAF Upper Heyford). It also sets out that sites of 11 or more dwellings are expected to provide 30% affordable housing if they are located in Banbury or Bicester and 35% in Kidlington and the rural areas. The plan supports exceptions sites to provide affordable housing to meet an identified need in rural communities.