

To: The Head of Housing

Date: 30/8/23

Report of: Allocations & Assessment Team Leader

Title of the Report: Annual Lettings Plan 2023/24

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report:

To seek approval of the Annual Lettings Plan Targets for 2023/24

Policy Framework:

Meeting Housing Needs

Recommendations:

(1) To note and approve the proposed Annual Lettings Plan targets for 2023/24

Appendices

Appendix I: A summary of the new properties expected to be built and let in 23/24

Appendix II: A summary of the housing need for 1 bedroom properties on each housing list on 3/3/23

Appendix III: A summary of the housing need for family properties on each housing list on 3/3/23

Appendix IV: A summary of the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation during 23/24

Appendix V: The Annual Lettings Plan for 2023/24

Introduction & background

1. The Annual Lettings Plan is designed to set allocation percentage targets, which are set by the Council to determine the proportion of social housing offered to different lists within the Council's Housing Register, in order to best balance their competing demands and needs.

The Oxford Register for Affordable Housing (or the "Housing Register") consists of three separate housing lists:

- **The Homeless List;** for applicants to whom Oxford City Council has accepted a statutory homeless duty and placed in temporary accommodation who are awaiting an offer of secure/permanent accommodation.
- **The Transfer List;** for Council tenants and eligible social housing tenants of Private Registered Providers of social housing (participating in the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing Partnership) living in Oxford and applying for a move to alternative accommodation.
- **The General Register List;** for all other households applying for social housing in Oxford.

2. The Allocations Scheme (section 2.3.1) states:

"The Head of Housing will approve the Annual Lettings Plan setting out the percentage of allocations to be made to each group."

Supply of Housing

3. The supply of social housing becoming available depends on the number of new build properties due to be let in the City each year and the number of re-lets of existing social housing. In total there are expected to be around 730 properties becoming available to let in Oxford between 1/4/23 and 31/3/24. The Council and its partner Registered Providers of social housing in Oxford are expecting to build and let at least 199 new properties (see **Appendix I**) and the majority of the rest will be re-lets of existing social housing, where for example, the current tenant has moved. There may be a small number of units purchased for use as Housing First properties and properties purchased by OCC with the help of Retained Right to Buy Receipts and other funds to help increase supply.
4. There are expected to be up to 6 new five bedroom houses built and let during 2023-24 to help house some of the large families in high housing need. The Council through its Housing Company has in the past extended some suitable properties when they are vacant and also secured some

larger properties to be let and will review whether this is possible again in the future.

Demand for Housing

5. The demand for housing in Oxford continues to greatly exceed the number of properties becoming available despite plans in place to build new properties to help meet this housing need. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) completed for Oxfordshire, shows that between 24,000 and 32,000 homes are needed between 2011 and 2031 to meet Oxford's housing need.
6. The Council and its partner Registered Providers of social housing successfully re-housed 704 households in housing need from 1/4/22 to 31/3/23 including 79 homeless households living in temporary accommodation. However, the demand for housing continues to remain very high with almost 3000 housing applicants on the Oxford Register for Affordable Housing and more applying all the time.

Demand compared to Housing Need

7. The number of applicants on the Housing Register clearly demonstrates that there continues to be a high demand for affordable housing in Oxford, however, these figures cannot be looked at without considering the degree of housing need on each housing list. Due to the high demand for affordable housing in Oxford and the limited number of properties that become available it is necessary for the Council to prioritise applications for housing based on applicants' housing need. The Council's Allocations Scheme uses Priority Bands, to assess applicants housing needs and to prioritise them for housing. There are five priority Bands, ranging from Band 1 (exceptional housing need) down to Band 5 (low or no housing need).
8. When considering the housing need on each housing list this report has focused on the number of households in Bands 1, 2 and 3 requiring family accommodation as they are considered in the greatest housing need on the Housing Register for this type of accommodation. For single applicants and couples requiring 1 bedroom accommodation this report has focused on housing applicants in Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4, as this is more representative of those considered to be in the greatest housing need for non-family accommodation. **Appendices II & III** show a summary of the demand for each type of accommodation by size and list for family and non-family accommodation.

Housing Need on the Homeless List

9. The number of households threatened with homelessness and approaching the Council for housing assistance remains high and is increasing (see **Appendix IV: A summary of the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation during 23/24**). The Council continues to prevent homelessness where possible; however, some temporary accommodation will always be needed to help some homeless households. All households on the Homeless List living in temporary accommodation are considered to be in high housing need. On 31/3/23, there were 115 households in temporary accommodation (including 13 in emergency hotel accommodation) this was 8 higher than 31/3/22. Following a sharp increase in homeless presentations (a trend seen nationally and largely due to the current economic climate) the number of households in temporary accommodation has increased to 157 (including 46 in emergency hotel accommodation – a mix of singles and families) as of 30/8/23.
10. The Council continues to seek to prevent homelessness where possible and to reduce the stay of households in temporary accommodation to 9 months or less where practicable.
11. The pressure on the Council to secure sufficient temporary accommodation while keeping costs down is higher than ever. The Council recognises it is not desirable for households, particularly the vulnerable and families, to spend long periods in temporary accommodation. Homeless applicants to whom the Council has accepted a homeless duty and included on the Homeless List are housed as rapidly as possible into more suitable accommodation. It is also essential that there is sufficient throughput in temporary accommodation and for homeless households to be re-housed quickly so there is enough temporary accommodation available to meet the needs of those the Council is unable to prevent from becoming homeless.

One Bedroom Need and Homeless in Temporary Accommodation

12. There is acute pressure to maintain sufficient temporary accommodation to meet the needs of the number of customers seeking help - particularly those with a one bedroom need, with large numbers of household's (mainly singles) seeking housing assistance/facing homelessness. On 6/3 there were 64 households with a one bedroom need in temporary accommodation – including 30 households owed a main homeless duty on the Homeless List. The remaining 34 households included 4 who had been re-housed and were in the process of moving, 4 under offer waiting to view & sign the tenancy for their new home, 2 with a negative homeless decision needing to leave and 24 with a one-bedroom need owed a homeless relief duty pending a main duty decision and needing help. On 30/8 the number of single households with a one bedroom

housing in temporary accommodation increased to 90 despite a number of households being successfully re-housed by OCC into private rented or social housing.

13. The supply of one bedroom properties becoming available for 23/24 is slightly lower than last year and only 162 general needs one bedroom properties are expected to become available to let (15 less than 23/24). There may be 6 additional Housing First properties purchased during 23/24 subject to a funding bid by the Single Homeless Rough Sleeping Team which will help. Demand greatly exceeds supply and the one-bedroom lettings targets can only go a small way to help housing those in housing need from each list – including those on the Homeless List. So many will need to consider other housing options too such as securing accommodation in the private sector with the help of OCC where required.
14. The Lettings Targets proposed for the Homeless List are 35% for general needs one bedroom properties and 5% for designated elderly accommodation (55+). This will allow for around 58 one-bedroom properties to be let to households on the Homeless List in temporary accommodation during 23/24 (a slight increase on the 40 one bedroom properties allocated during 22/23).

The table below is an extract from the proposed lettings plan and shows the breakdown of targets for general needs one bedroom properties and 55+.

Non-Family (Non-Designated) Accommodation							
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on 1, 4 & 54*	Move-on 2*	Transfer	General	TOTAL
Studio flat / One Bed	<i>Target</i>	35 %	27.5%	10%	12.5%	15%	
	<i>Expected lets</i>	57	45	16	20	24	162
Designated Elderly Accommodation 55+ & 1 bed general needs bungalows							
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General	TOTAL	
Any Size	<i>Target</i>	5 %	10%		85%		
	<i>Expected lets</i>	1	2		14	16	

**Move 1 Homeless Pathway, Move On 2 – Care Leavers/Young Persons Under 25, Move 4 Mental Health Pathway. Move 5 Housing First & any others.*

One Bedroom Housing Need on the General Register & Transfer Lists

15. The lettings targets to the Homeless List aim to balance with the competing targets of seeking to re-house customers moving on from the Homeless, Mental Health & Young Person's pathways. To free up much needed supported housing for those unable to manage independently and also to re-house Rough Sleepers with Housing First support to properties purchased for this use as well as other individual general needs social housing properties. There are currently 50 singles with move on priority and around a further 15 new referrals are in the process of being assessed.
16. The targets will also enable customers in need on the Transfer List to have some options to move too – most of the around 30 properties to be allocated to this list are likely to go to downsizers moving to smaller properties or successor tenants required to move, freeing up much needed larger homes to re-let to families in need. A small number will also go to other high needs transfer cases. There are currently 7 tenants aged under 55 under-occupying their home seeking to downsize by 2 or more bedrooms and 23 tenants seeking to downsize by one bedroom to a more suitable property. There are also 17 tenants aged 55+ under-occupying their home seeking to downsize by 2 or more bedrooms and 88 tenants seeking to downsize by 1 bedroom to a more suitable property.
17. The targets for General Register List – allow for around 30 properties to be available to customers in housing need – including those who are threatened with homelessness and/or who need to on health and social/welfare grounds (including hospital discharges) or are otherwise living in unsuitable accommodation. To seek upstream homeless prevention as many of those on the General Register if not otherwise housed could end up approaching OCC as homeless and meet the priority need threshold duty to provide temporary accommodation. There are also 5 policy successors cases with a one bedroom need who need to downsize from larger family homes too and will be others during 23/24.

Families on the Homeless List in Temporary Accommodation

18. From 1/4/22 to 3/3/23 there were 34 homeless families allocated social housing and re-housed; 15 into 2 bedroom, 17 into 3 bedroom and 2 into 4 bedroom properties. An overall increase in lettings of around 30% on the previous year (21/22) including over double the number 3 bedroom properties let to the Homeless List. However, demand from Homeless families and the pressure on securing sufficient Temporary Accommodation remains high.
19. There are 9 households on the Homeless List with a two bedroom housing need, however, there are expected to be an increase in households approaching as OCC as homeless during 23/24 so the

lettings target allows for up to 50 two bedroom properties to be allocated to the Homeless List during 23/24. This will ensure families OCC has been unable to prevent from becoming homeless and placed into temporary accommodation will have the opportunity to apply for two bedroom social housing properties along with considering other housing options too.

20. The demand for larger family properties is high across the Housing Register particularly on the General Register & Transfer Lists with limited options available in Oxford to secure alternative suitable housing in the private sector. OCC has seen an increase in the number of larger families seeking housing assistance including some facing homelessness. With the high rents in Oxford above Local Housing Allowance rates in the private sector (including benefit capped cases) there are only limited options to prevent homelessness – particularly where families need to remain in the City due to schooling etc. The Homeless List lettings targets of 20% and 10% respectively for 3 and 4 bedroom properties are considered proportionate when balanced against the much higher number of families in higher housing need on the other Housing Lists.
21. There are currently 13 households with a 3 bedroom housing need living in Temporary Accommodation on the Homeless List. The proposed Homeless Lettings target allows for around 29 such properties to be allocated to this list during 23/24. Giving the opportunity to existing and future families placed in temporary accommodation an option to move on as quickly as practicable. Balanced with seeking to help to re-house some of the large number of competing households on the other Housing Lists living in overcrowded or otherwise unsuitable accommodation in high housing need.
22. There are currently no households on the Homeless List with a 4 bedroom need, however, larger families do approach OCC as homeless and there are very limited options to re-house them. So, the targets proposed allow for a small number of 4 bed properties to be allocated to the Homeless List – around 3 during 23/34 which will help meet this demand as it arises (or to allocate to other Housing Lists if not). Many larger families with a 4 bedroom housing need including those placed into Temporary Accommodation also need to consider moving to more suitable 3 bedroom properties to improve their existing circumstances (including 3 bedroom parlour houses). This is another reason for around 29 three-bedroom properties to be let to the Homeless List during 23/24 to help re-house them as soon as possible.

Families on the Transfer List in Housing Need

23. The housing need of tenants on the Transfer List requiring family properties remains high (see **Appendix III**), despite over 134 families being re-housed to larger or more suitable accommodation from 1/4/22 to 3/3/23 (around a 15% increase on 21/22).
24. There are 136 tenants on the transfer list in Bands 1 to 3 seeking to move to 2 bedroom properties, however, there are also a large number of customers on the General Register applying for housing too and who could be potentially homeless if not re-housed. The emerging trend of customers with a 2 bedroom need applying on the General Register is expected to continue this year and so this is reflected in the higher Annual Lettings targets to the General Register List while seeking to help re-house those in the most need on the Transfer List too. The 25% Lettings Target to the Transfer List could help up to around 83 customers to move during 23/24 this would be around a 30% increase on last year. This will help free much needed social housing including 1 bed properties (as overcrowded tenants move from 1 bed to 2 bed properties) and 3 or 4 bedroom properties (as tenants downsize to 2 bed properties from larger homes).
25. There are still a large number of households on the Transfer List with a 3 and 4 bedroom need living in overcrowded accommodation or needing to move, for example, on health grounds. The proposed Lettings Targets of 42.5% and 45% respectively for 3 and 4 bedroom properties is the highest proportion across the lists and will go some way to help re-house around 61 families with a 3 bedroom need and 12 with a 4 bedroom need (including possibly a small number of families with a 5 bedroom need). By moving overcrowded families on the Transfer List to larger homes this will in turn increase the supply available to others on the Housing Register, mainly 2 bedroom homes to be let to smaller families in housing need on the Housing Register including the homeless/those threatened with homelessness.

Families on the General Register List in Housing Need

26. The housing need for family accommodation on the General Register List (see **Appendix III**) remains high. There are currently 109 customers on the General Register List with a 2 bedroom housing need in Bands 1 to 3 with many more applying all the time. There were over 200 two-bedroom properties allocated to the General Register List last year. The lettings target to the General Register List of 60% for 2 bedroom properties represents the need to seek to ensure customers in housing need including those who are potentially homeless have an opportunity to be housed balanced with the lower overall demand on the Transfer and Homeless Lists too. Around 199 two bedroom properties are expected to

be allocated to the General Register List during 23/24 (similar to last year) year. The demand for 3 and 4 bedroom properties or larger is high on the General Register List although lower than on the Transfer List. The lettings targets of allocating 32.5% of 3 bedroom properties and 45% of 4 bedroom properties to the General Register List reflect this. There are expected to be around 46 three-bedroom properties and 12 four bedroom properties (including a very low number of larger properties) allocated to families in need on the General Register List (a small increase on last year).

Appendix I: A Summary of New Properties Expected to Built & Let in 23/24

Development Site	Landlord	Flats			Houses			Total
		1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed	5 Bed	
Barton Park	OCC/Ox Place	8	22		30	23	5	88
Lucy Faithful House	OCC	10	8					18
Littlemore Park	Peabody (formerly Catalyst)	9	60		6	2	1	78
Jericho Health Centre	OCC		2	3				5
Warren Crescent	OCC				10			10
Total		27	92	3	46	25	6	199

Appendix II: A summary of the housing need for 1 bedroom properties on each housing list on 3/3/23

For single applicants and couples requiring 1 bedroom accommodation this report has focused on housing applicants in Bands 1, 2, 3 and 4, as this is more representative for those considered to be in the greatest housing need for non-family accommodation.

Demand for One-Bedroom Properties

1 Bed Minimum Housing Need (under 55)

Priority Band	Homeless	General Register	Transfer	Total
Band 1		2	10**	12
Band 2	1	53*	39**	93
Band 3	29	56	10	95
Band 4		114	2	116
Total	30	225	61	316

* Including 43 move-on applicants assessed as ready to move-on to more secure housing in Band 2 living in supported housing in the City (for example the Homeless Pathway or the Mental Health Pathway).

** Including 7 tenants in Band 1 on the Transfer List under-occupying their home seeking to downsize by 2 or more bedrooms and 23 tenants in Band 2 seeking to downsize by one bedroom to a more suitable property.

1 Bedroom Minimum Housing Need (55+)

Priority Band	Homeless	General Register	Transfer	Total
Band 1		4	23**	27
Band 2		10*	109**	119
Band 3	6	24	23	53
Band 4		31	5	36
Total	6	69	160	235

**Including 7 applicant in Band 2 assessed as ready to move-on from supported housing in the City to more secure housing.*

***Including 17 tenants in Band 1 on the Transfer List under-occupying their home seeking to downsize by 2 or more bedrooms and 88 tenants in Band 2 seeking to downsize by 1 bedroom to a more suitable property.*

Appendix III: A summary of the housing need for family properties on each housing list on 3/3/23

When considering the housing need on each housing list this report has focused on the number of households in Bands 1, 2 and 3 requiring family accommodation as they are considered in the greatest housing need on the Housing Register for this type of accommodation.

2 Bedroom Minimum Housing Need

Priority Band	Homeless	General Register	Transfer	Total
Band 1	0	2	9	11
Band 2	0	14	71	85
Band 3	9	93	56	158
Total	9	109	136	254

The Transfer List includes 2 tenants under-occupying their home in Band 1 seeking to downsize by 2 bedrooms and 16 tenants in Band 2 seeking to downsize by 1 bedroom. Although demand on the Transfer list appears highest from the figures above they don't reflect the high numbers of customers applying for housing on the General Register List who were housed during 22/23. There were 204 families with a 2 bedroom housing need housed from the General Register List compared to 62 families on the Transfer List.

3 Bed Minimum Housing Need

Priority Band	Homeless	General Register	Transfer	Total
Band 1			5	5
Band 2		24	57	81
Band 3	13	111	248	372
Total	13	135	310	458

4 Bed Minimum Housing Need or Larger

Priority Band	Homeless	General Register	Transfer	Total
Band 1	0	1	2	3
Band 2	0	21	45	66
Band 3	0	59	58	117
Total	0	81	105	186

Appendix IV: A summary of the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation during 23/24

On 2/4/23

Households in temporary accommodation 2022/23

Fiscal Year

○ 2021/22

● 2022/23

Households Total

115

Households in OCC TA

102

Households in B&B

13

Current number of households by Type

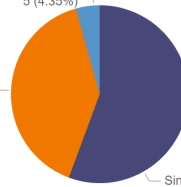
Other (i.e. couples, with adult children, b...

5 (4.35%)

With children under 19

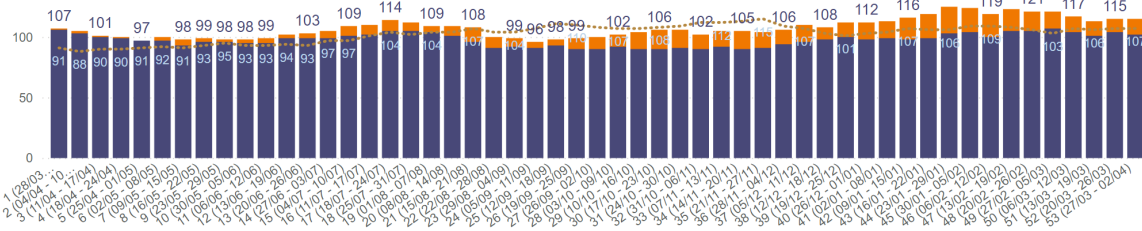
46 (40%)

Single 64 (55.65%)



Households CY and LY Total by Week (as of Friday) and BnB (Y/N)

BnB (Y/N) ● No ● Yes ● LY Total



On 30/8/23

Households in temporary accommodation 2023/24

Fiscal Year

□ 2023/24

Households Total

157

Households in OCC TA

111

Households in B&B

46

Current number of households by Type

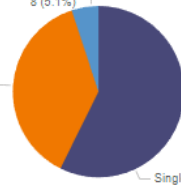
Other (i.e. couples, with adult children, b...

8 (5.1%)

With children under 19

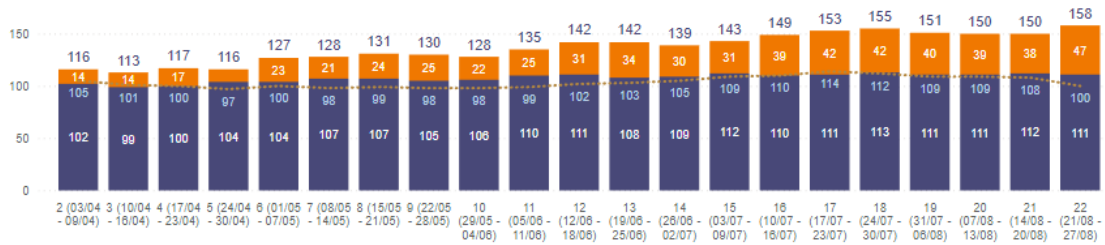
59 (37.58%)

Single 90 (57.32%)



Households CY and LY Total by Week (as of Friday) and BnB (Y/N)

BnB (Y/N) ● No ● Yes ● LY Total



Appendix V: The Annual Lettings Plan for 2023/24

Family Accommodation							
Property Size		Homeless			Transfer	General	TOTAL
Two Bed	Target	20%			25%	55%	
	Expected lets	66			83	183	332
Three Bed	Target	25%			42.5%	32.5%	
	Expected lets	36			61	46	143
Four Bed	Target	10%			45%	45%	
	Expected lets	3			1 2	12	27
Non-Family (Non-Designated) Accommodation							
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on 1, 4, & 5*	Move-on 2*	Transfer	General	TOTAL
Studio flat / One Bed	Target	35 %	27.5%	10%	12.5%	15%	
	Expected lets	5 7	45	16	20	24	162
Designated Elderly Accommodation 55+ & 1 bed general needs bungalows							
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General	TOTAL	
Any Size	Target	5 %	10%	85%			
	Expected lets	1	2	13		16	
Sheltered Accommodation							
Property Size		Homeless	Move-on	Transfer	General	TOTAL	
Any Size	Target	0%			100%		
	Expected lets	0			50		50

Expected Allocations between 1/4/23 to 31/3/24: 730

*Move 1 Homeless Pathway, Move On 2 – Care Leavers/Young Persons Under 25, Move 4 Mental Health Pathway. Move 5 Housing First & any others