

Cambridge City Council

Housing Strategy 2009-2012

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Foreword by Councillor Catherine Smart, Executive Councillor for Housing

Executive Summary: To follow

PART 1: CONTEXT

Chapter 1 The need for a housing strategy

Cambridge is a small but thriving city with a strong local economy. Being at the centre of a major growth area it will see major increase in the number of homes between now and 2021. This increase presents a number of opportunities as well as challenges.

We need to make sure that expansion takes place in a way that creates new homes and communities that people want to live in. House prices and rents are high in Cambridge, and so it is important that we provide a range of sizes and types of affordable housing to meet the needs of local residents.

Growth must include not only provide new homes but appropriate facilities and infrastructure and be done in such a way that minimises any negative impact on the environment and contributes to our priorities around tackling climate change and reducing Carbon Dioxide emissions.

As well as new homes it is important that we continue to invest in and make best use of the existing homes within the City, again taking into account the need to tackle climate change, and ensure that the existing communities can benefit from the planned growth.

Pressure on existing housing means that homelessness and rough sleeping have historically been an issue for Cambridge. We must continue to use a range of measures to help to prevent people from becoming homeless, and ensure that people have access to a range of housing options to suit their needs.

Cambridge has an ethnically diverse population. It also has a number of vulnerable people with a range of housing and service needs, which will increase as the City grows and as the population ages. We need to ensure that we take into account a range of diverse needs in planning and providing housing and related services.

We must rise to the challenge presented by the current downturn in the global economy, and continue to find ways to meet our housing priorities within the resources available to us.

We as a district Council cannot do this on our own. We need to work closely with a range of partners and with residents themselves to ensure that we provide cost effective services and that resources are channelled to the areas where they are needed most.

This strategy identifies how we can make a difference by working in partnership to meet these challenges. The strategy:

- Identifies progress made against the Council's previous Housing Strategy;
- Provides a picture of housing within the City and identifies areas for action where the Council can make a difference by working in partnership with residents and agencies;
- Highlights our medium-term priorities for action and investment; and
- Sets out our plans to address these priorities and how they will be resourced.

How this Strategy Fits In

This strategy replaces the previous Housing Strategy which ran from 2004-2007 and was 'refreshed' for 2008. It is based on:

- The priorities within the Cambridge Local Strategic Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Cambridge City Council's own Medium Term Objectives; and
- The priorities agreed within the Cambridge sub-regional Housing Strategy 2009-2011, which are in turn based on each of the sub-region's Sustainable Community Strategies. (The chapter headings in this strategy for Cambridge reflect those used in the sub-regional housing strategy).

It draws on:

- Information from the Cambridge sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA);
- Priorities agreed within a range of City sub-strategies which tackle specific issues within the City, such as the Council's Private Sector Housing and Older People's Housing strategies;
- A range of consultation carried out with local residents and partners.

There used to be a requirement for all Local Housing Authorities to have a 'Fit For Purpose' Housing Strategy. However, the government in its statutory guidance document 'Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities' published in July 2008 now requires all Councils to ensure that refreshed Housing Strategies, along with the statutory Homelessness Strategies:

- fully reflect the wider vision of the authority and its partners
- reflect a clear and evidenced approach
- provide a strong focus on how partners will deliver their commitments, including on the infrastructure needed to support housing growth
- Incorporate revised housing (and homelessness) strategies within their Sustainable Community Strategies where possible

- In light of this guidance, as the Cambridge sub-region has just agreed a new sub-regional housing strategy, and the LSP's SCS is not due for review until 2011.

When the SCS is reviewed we will consider whether the Council will continue to have a separate Housing Strategy, or whether it will be sufficient to incorporate the Housing Strategy more centrally within the SCS.

Chapter 2: The National and Regional Policy Agenda

National Strategies and Policies

The key national strategies and policies relevant to this housing strategy are:

- Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable (Housing Green Paper on increasing the supply of new homes)
- National planning policy for housing (PPS3)
- Sustainable communities: settled homes; changing lives (the national strategy on dealing with homelessness)
- Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (the national Strategy for housing in an ageing society.
- Creating strong, safe, prosperous communities (statutory guidance on the central and local government, partners and citizens working together through Local Strategic Partnerships, delivery of Sustainable Community Strategies, etc)

More detail is given in the Cambridge sub-regional Housing Strategy.

Other national reviews include:

- The Callcutt Review of housebuilding delivery
- The Barker Review of housing supply
- The Cave Review of social housing regulation
- The Hills report on the assessment of the aims of social housing
- The Stern Review on the economics of climate change¹
- The Rugg and Rhodes Review of the Private Rented Sector

Other national initiatives which have come to the forefront since the sub-regional housing strategy was agreed include:

- A 'New Opportunities' White Paper outlining the Government's commitment to improve opportunities for people and ensure they are not disadvantaged by where they live, enabling the country to benefit from the anticipated expansion of the global economy.
- A 'Reforming Welfare for the Future' White Paper, from which a Welfare Reform Bill has emerged, proposing significant changes to the welfare benefits system
- The introduction of a new Homes and Communities Agency to combine the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes previously delivered by Communities and Local Government, including the Decent Homes programme

- The introduction of a new Tenant Services Authority which is engaging in a 'National Conversation' on new standards for tenants of affordable housing.

Other relevant national policies and strategies anticipated but not yet published, which will impact on or influence this strategy include:

- A Housing Reform Green Paper to provide a better system for those living in rented housing. This will respond to some of the challenges set out in the Hills Review of Social Housing, the Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation, and the Rugg and Rhodes Review of the Private Rented Sector. It will aim for greater fairness in social housing and making the best use of resources including getting better use out of the existing stock; increasing housing supply, choice and quality in the private rented sector; clarifying the government's approach to mixed communities, etc.
- A Review of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System
- Changes to the Revenue and Capital Rules for New Council Housing which would enable Councils to build social housing
- A Single Equalities Bill which will combine existing anti-discrimination legislation and statutory instruments into a single Act of Parliament to give everyone 'a fair chance in life' regardless of gender, race, sexuality or disability.

Regional Strategies and Policies

The main strategies and policies for the East of England include:

- Regional Spatial Strategy: The East of England Plan
- The Regional Housing Strategy
- Regional Housing Investment Plan
- Regional Economic Strategy

(A single Integrated Regional Strategy is being developed to pull these regional strategies together under one umbrella).

- The Supporting People East of England Regional Strategy

See Appendix 1 of this Strategy to access further details on these national and regional strategies and policies.

Chapter 3

Sub-Regional, County-Wide and Local Priorities

The Housing Strategy has been developed within the context of strategic priorities agreed through the Cambridgeshire Together Vision and Local Area Agreement, Cambridge's Sustainable Community Strategy, the Housing Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region, and Cambridge City Council's Medium Term Objectives.

Cambridgeshire's Vision 2007-2021 and Local Area Agreement (LAA)

Cambridgeshire's Vision, developed by the local partnership 'Cambridgeshire Together Board', is 'for Cambridgeshire to be a county of strong, growing, prosperous and inclusive communities supported by excellent services where people can fulfil their potential; live longer, healthier lifestyles; and influence decision-making'. There are five key goals, each with priorities for achieving them: Managing Growth, Economic Prosperity, Environmental Sustainability, Equality and Inclusion, and Safer and Stronger Communities. These are being delivered through the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement.

Targets within the LAA have been agreed from a set of National Indicators which partners will need to work together to achieve. The individual chapters in this Housing Strategy identify how our priorities link to the relevant indicators within the LAA.

Cambridge City's Sustainable Community Strategy

From the Cambridgeshire Together Vision, the Cambridge Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has developed a Sustainable Community Strategy for Cambridge, setting out a vision for the City and presenting a set of priorities to help deliver improvements in quality of life.

Cambridge LSP Vision and priorities:

Three key priority issues, to be tackled in conjunction with a range a range of agencies and partnerships:

- Tackling climate change
- Building Sustainable Communities
- Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities

These priorities are set within the context of the opportunities presented by Cambridge being at the centre of a major growth area, and the need to ensure

that the planned growth is achieved in a sustainable way, both in relation to new and existing communities.

Key housing related outcomes within the SCS which this Housing Strategy can help to achieve include:

- Reduction of carbon emissions and improvements in comfort levels in people's homes through energy efficiency measures in both new and existing homes.
- High sustainability standards in the design, mix and construction of new development;
- A sufficient supply of decent, affordable housing, including socially rented, to meet need in the City;
- Achieving and maintaining the Decent Homes standard in the Council's own dwellings;
- Development of new homes and communities which people want to live in, which are close to jobs, facilities and public transport to try to reduce people's reliance on car use;
- Integrated communities where people from different backgrounds get on together
- More older people living independent, active lives, and a reduction in the risk of older people falling
- Greater opportunity for residents to influence decisions affecting their local area.

Housing Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-region

The Cambridge housing sub-region is made up of seven districts: Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.

The Cambridge Sub-regional Housing Strategy has been developed by the Cambridge Sub-regional Housing Board (CRHB) with the strategic vision based on the Cambridgeshire (and Suffolk) Sustainable Community Strategies. It has been developed in consultation with a range of partners, and draws on market information produced through the Cambridge sub-regional Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).

The sub-regional strategy is built up around the following themes:

- Minimising the environmental impact of housing and housing activities, and reducing carbon emissions
- Understanding and responding changes in the global economy
- Understanding, responding to and influencing the local housing market
- Provision of new homes within sustainable communities where people want to live and work

- Ensuring that best use is made of existing homes and that existing homes are fit to live in
- Ensuring that people have a range of housing options and choices and preventing and tackling homelessness.
- Ensuring that vulnerable people receive appropriate housing-related support, and that housing and housing related services meets a range of diverse needs including those of hard-to reach groups

The sub-regional strategy sets a range of objectives within these themes, identifies actions to meet these objectives and shows how this will help to achieve the targets set within the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement.

Cambridge City Council Medium Term Objectives

As well as county and sub-regionally agreed priorities, Cambridge City Council has its own vision and set of Medium Term Objectives which this housing strategy will help the Council to achieve.

Cambridge City Council Vision and Medium Term Objectives:

The Council's vision of the City is of a compact, dynamic, sustainable City with a thriving historic core surrounded by attractive neighbourhoods and green spaces, and where the community as a whole and every person in it matters. There will be strong leadership on environmental issues, and diverse local communities will enjoy a high quality of life in safe, accessible neighbourhoods supported by affordable housing, integrated transport, and good access to leisure and community facilities. Cambridge will continue to foster a strong local economy together with its development as a centre of excellence and a world leader in the fields of higher education and research.

To help achieve this vision, the Council will:

- Promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region
- Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods
- Ensure that residents and other service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council
- Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car

Chapter 4

Understanding our Housing Market

The Cambridge sub-region's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, (SHMA) developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders, was published in June 2008, and is being updated on an ongoing basis. Where possible, the information has been updated to reflect recent changes in the economic climate. The following are some of the key messages for Cambridge which help to shape our strategic direction in relation to housing.

Housing Strategy Objective:

- Ensure appropriate and up to date information is available on the housing market to inform future strategic direction and influence policy

Key Messages for Cambridge City

Demography

- Cambridge has a population of 115,200 people (Mid-2007 estimates);
- 19,000 new homes to be built in the City between 2001-2021 (RSS Target – under review);
- A larger proportion of the forecast population growth in the Cambridge sub-region will be within Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire districts
- An increase in all household sizes is expected; the largest increase is expected to be in single person households, followed by couple households;
- The population of all age groups is expected to increase, with the largest increase being amongst 30-59 age group, followed by 0-15 year olds;
- Numbers of older people are expected to increase between now and 2021, although to a lesser extent than in other parts of the sub-region; a 63% increase in 65-74 year olds, a 19% increase in 75-84 year olds, and a 14% increase in 85 and overs is expected between 2007 and 2021.
- 14.5% of City residents had a limiting long-term illness in 2001; this increases to around 25% amongst the Council's tenants

Economic Context and Commuting Patterns

- There are around 114,000 jobs in Cambridge. Around 45% are filled by those who both live and work in the city, which means that a large proportion of the workforce commutes into Cambridge;
- In Cambridge City and South Cambs districts, most wards have 50% or more of their employed residents working locally, although there are significant numbers commuting in, particularly from East Cambridgeshire and East Huntingdonshire.

- Between 2001 and 2021 labour supply and jobs are expected to keep broadly in pace with each other.
- Although not immune to the current economic recession, Cambridge is expected to weather the downturn better than many other areas, although effects are expected to be felt more in the longer rather than the shorter term.

Tenure and property type

- There are 46,611 homes in the city (as at 1 April 2008), compared to 42,658 in 2001.
- At the time of the Census 2001, 55% were owner-occupied, 7% Housing Association and 19% Council owned.
- The private rental market is an important one for the City, with 19% of homes being in the private rented sector. Latest figures indicate that this may have increased to around 25% in 2009.
- The City has a higher proportion of terraced houses, which has implications for the condition of the stock, and a higher proportion of flats;
- Most of the sub-region's Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are in the City, largely linked to the student population; HMOs make up 8% of the City's dwelling stock;
- The percentage increase in affordable housing between 2001/02 and 2005/06 was 1.6%, compared with an overall stock increase of around 5%;

Empty Homes

- Around 0.7% of the private sector housing stock is empty at any one time, and around 70 homes have been empty for more than six months;
- There has (at least until 2008/09) been a buoyant buy-to-let market in the City, particularly so amongst newer properties. However, there has been no evidence to suggest that significant numbers have been purchased to remain empty as there have in some parts of the country.

Affordability

- Housing costs in all tenures are generally higher than the rest of the sub-region, and affordability of housing is a significant issue. In the Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey 2006, "affordability of housing" was identified as the feature of local life that respondents in Cambridge were least satisfied about;
- The ratio of house prices to average income in the City was 9:1 in August 2008, an increase of 0.2 since May 2008. Although prices have come down slightly since then, affordability is still a key issue for Cambridge, with 44% of Cambridge population unable to afford to purchase a 1 bedroom lower quartile property in the City based on income alone;
- Affordability is also an issue for the private rented sector, with the average cost of renting being over 40% of average annual household income;

- Access to the private rented sector is a particular problem for those on benefits, with Local Reference Rents for Cambridge being significantly lower than the actual cost of renting in the City.

Housing Need

- There were approximately 4,700 applicants on the Council's Housing Needs Register in 2006, rising to 7,362 in March 2009 (following the introduction of Choice Based Lettings);
- Based on household size, the greatest need is for one and two bedroom accommodation;
- With the shift of emphasis to homelessness prevention the number of households accepted as homeless has continued to decrease in recent years, from 261 in 2003/4 to 138 in 2007/08.
- Demand for intermediate housing through the Homebuy register has been rising, and is higher for people living and/or working in the City than the rest of the sub-region. Where purchasers can afford to do so they tend to select larger properties than they strictly need based on their household size;
- Single person households represent 46% of applicants for intermediate housing in the city;
- 1,509 new affordable homes are assessed as being required each year for the 5 years 2008/09 to 2012/13 to meet current and future housing need, with 82% of the need being estimated as being for social rented and 18% for intermediate tenures. 177 new affordable homes are currently planned annually, leaving a current shortfall of 1,332 each year;

Diverse Housing Needs

- Cambridge has the third highest non-white BME population in the Eastern Region, accounting for 10.4% of the city's population, and approximately 21% of the city's population consists of people from a variety of minority ethnic groups, including 'White Other' and 'White Irish' census categories. The largest three ethnic minority groups in Cambridge are Chinese, Indian and Bangladeshi;
- There are no accurate figures on migrant workers, but 3,500 have registered with the Workers' Registration Scheme in the City since 2004, and in 2007/08, 3,780 National Insurance Numbers were issued to overseas nationals living in Cambridge City. Polish, Hungarian, French and German are the main groups;¹
- 15 Gypsy/Traveller pitches are required to meet needs within the City by 2011;
- Specialist housing for younger people within the sub-region is largely concentrated within the City (and St Edmundsbury);
- Approximately 9,000 students occupy housing other than bespoke study rooms;

¹ Cambridge Annual demographic and socio-economic information report, Cambridgeshire County Council http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0AC0AFAB-12E9-470C-B67C-4CB1213844BA/0/CambridgeReport09_part1.pdf

- Numbers of physically and mentally frail elderly people are expected to increase across the county between now and 2021, with a total county-wide increase in 'frail' elderly of around 55%;
- Alongside a reduction in residential care provision, a target has been set, based on redistribution of existing county-wide funding, for 189 units of extra-care housing for older people within the City (an increase in the current provision). There is also a target in the county-wide Best Value Review of sheltered housing to reduce the number of social rented sheltered housing units in the City to 536.

Priorities

- Continue to update the information within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, including monitoring the impact of the current economic downturn, and use the information effectively to influence strategic direction and service delivery
- Improve information available through the SHMA, through an agreed sub-regional work programme
- Ensure that the SHMA continues to be relevant to and available to a wide range of partners and agencies
- Improve the links between the SHMA and county-wide health-led Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to provide a more joined up picture of local need

PART 2: OUR PRIORITIES

Chapter 5

Environmental Impact

Sub-regional housing strategy theme:

- Minimising the environmental impact of housing and housing activities, and reducing carbon emissions

Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy Key Priority:

- Tackling climate change

Cambridge City Council's Medium Term Objectives:

- To promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region
- Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car

LAA Indicators:

NI 186: Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the local authority area

Housing Strategy Objectives:

- Tackle climate change and reduce CO2 emissions
- Increase energy efficiency and promote affordable warmth in new and existing homes across all tenures
- Promote sustainable design and construction methods
- Ensure, as far as possible, that new homes and new communities meet high standards of environmental sustainability

Local Strategies and Policies:

Climate Change Strategy 2008-2012

Home Energy Strategy 2006-2011 and Affordable Warmth Policy

Local Plan 2006 and Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth

Southern Fringe Area Development Framework, Cambridge Station Area Development Framework, Cambridge East Area Action Plan and the submission draft of the North West Area Action Plan

Key Data

- 27% of total CO₂ emissions within the UK comes from the energy used to run our homes
- Our local target is to improve the average SAP rating by 2 points per year across all tenures

The council has a key part to play in meeting the national climate change targets. This includes influencing the design and construction of new homes and environments, as well as measures to improve energy efficiency in the existing housing stock.

Existing Homes – Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth

The City's Climate Change Strategy and Home Energy Strategy include local targets and priority actions for increasing energy efficiency and reducing CO₂ emissions. In relation to Home Energy, our current target is for energy efficiency, using the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating (the government's recommended system for home energy ratings) to be increased by 2 points per year across all tenures. We will review our targets in light of recent and proposed changes to national and county-wide priorities and targets.

Good progress has been made in this area. During 2007/08 the overall SAP rating across the City was increased by 2.5 points, leading to a reduction in CO₂ emissions of just under 14,000 tonnes, and the energy efficiency of the City's homes has increased year on year since 1996, and by just under 14% between April 2004 and March 2008.

The definition of Fuel Poverty is when more than 10% of a household's income needs to be spent on heating the home to a comfortable level. The government's target is to eradicate fuel poverty within vulnerable households by 2010, and other households by 2016. Local targets are also being set against the National Indicator 187 (Tackling Fuel Poverty). Between April 2005 and October 2008 the running costs of a typical 3-bedroom semi-detached property in the City have increased by approximately 66% in relation to gas, and 49% for electricity and so meeting these targets has become increasingly challenging.

For the Council's own homes, energy efficiency will be continue to be improved through the Decent Homes programme, and through improvements introduced as part of modernization projects – in particular in relation to our sheltered housing schemes. We will need to ensure that energy efficiency continues to be improved beyond 2010 (the deadline for all Council homes to meet the Decent Homes standard).

Energy Performance Certificates are now issued to all new Council tenants in line with new legal requirements. We will continue to train front-line staff and work with tenants and leaseholders to provide advice on energy efficiency and reducing fuel bills.

In other tenures we are strengthening partnership working to secure external funding for tackling the problem. For example we have recently secured Regional funding for energy efficiency work to be carried out in private rented homes through the Landlord Accreditation Scheme. We will also continue to support the delivery of national and local schemes – including those run through the Energy Saving Trust, HEAT, Warmfront and the Cambridgeshire Climate Change Partnership.

Our Comfort Zone scheme is designed to promote home energy efficiency in targeted areas of the City, providing advice and assistance to local residents to help them to make their homes more energy efficient and to reduce the number of households in fuel poverty. We have successfully tackled one area of around 150 homes, resulting in a 9% reduction in energy bills across the zone, and are now working on a second area of the City. The private sector stock condition survey due to be published in 2009 will help to identify other parts of the city where this approach might be effective.

We are working with local Housing Associations to support energy efficiency improvements, and we will work to encourage RSLs to sign up to the Climate Change Charter.

We will also continue to include energy efficiency works in delivering our home improvements grants and loans and through Disabled Facilities Grants as appropriate, and to help vulnerable people to access grants from the national Warm Front scheme to carry out insulation and heating improvements.

Refurbishment and Decent Homes

In relation to repair, improvement and modernisation of the Council's own homes we have adopted and are implementing a set of environmental principles to minimise waste, reduce energy consumption and maximise use of sustainable construction methods.

Refurbishment of our sheltered schemes in particular presents us with opportunities to provide more energy efficient accommodation. Examples include installation of solar panels at Rawlyn Court, and improved thermal insulation at Mansel Court. We are trialling a range of measures in the modernisation of Talbot House and we will continue to use lessons learnt when upgrading Brandon Court.

We currently assess all potential major housing works contractors against a set of environmental criteria at the procurement stage, and we are reviewing

more broadly the procurement of building services by the Council to ensure that building services contracts are procured in a sustainable way.

We will continue, wherever possible, to re-use and/or recycle materials – eg metal piping, roofing materials etc, when improvement and refurbishment schemes are carried out, and to seek additional opportunities in this area. We have also started to consider future recyclability when purchasing new products– eg kitchen units – to minimise what will go to landfill in the future.

New Homes

With the amount of growth planned for the City and surrounding area it is essential that growth is treated as part of the solution to climate change. This includes promoting energy efficiency through sustainable construction methods, energy efficient design, developing the use of low and zero carbon technologies, and design of new communities which reduce the need to travel by car and encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

A number of environment and sustainability projects are being developed for the major growth sites through Cambridgeshire Horizons in relation to energy use, transport infrastructure, water efficiency etc.

The Local Plan requires new developments to meet principles of sustainability, and our Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides more guidance on how new developments can be more sustainable, eg in relation to energy efficiency, ease of adaptation to future use, transport and accessibility, sustainable drainage, construction materials, recycling and waste, etc.

The new Local Development Framework which will replace the Local Plan is likely to set Code for Sustainable Homes Standards for all new housing. Most of the growth sites that have come forward so far are offering to meet Code Level 3, with some like Trumpington Meadows also delivering housing at Level 4 of the Code. We are aiming for around 2,500 homes on the North-West Cambridge site to be developed to Code Level 5.

We aim to achieve Code Level 4 as a minimum in all new affordable housing, with an aspiration to achieve higher where possible. Code Level 4 is planned for affordable housing delivered on the Cambridge Challenge sites, subject to the Inspector upholding the Council's proposed policy. The redevelopment of the Simons House scheme will be an exemplar Code Level 5 scheme.

We will continue to trial energy efficiency measures and new technologies in new developments. There is also a draft policy requirement for a district energy scheme on the North West Cambridge site to enable homes and University buildings to share energy systems and reduce fuel consumption and carbon emissions. The Council is also looking at how it can develop a new exemplar scheme on its own land.

We will use the development of the new Local Development Framework to try to identify further opportunities to address climate change and sustainability issues in new developments

Priorities:

- Review the priorities and targets in the Home Energy Strategy
- Continue to train front-line staff and work with tenants and leaseholders to provide advice on energy efficiency and reducing fuel bills
- Continue to promote and support the delivery of national and local energy efficiency schemes to help people to access home improvement funding
- Use the information provided by the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey to identify future priorities within private sector housing
- Ensure that energy efficiency work in the Council's own homes continues beyond the 2010 Decent Homes deadline
- Improve our approach to assessing recyclability of new materials and products used in improving the Council's homes
- Encourage RSLs to sign up to the Cambridge Climate Change Charter to demonstrate their commitment to tackling climate change
- Implement the outcomes of the Council's Sustainable Building Procurement Review to ensure that building services are procured in a more sustainable way
- Identify new opportunities in the development of the Cambridge Local Development Framework to address climate change and sustainability issues in new developments
- Work with partners to develop an exemplar scheme on Council owned land, and to trial energy efficiency measures and new technologies on other new housing developments
- Evaluate measures currently being trialled in the refurbishment of Talbot House sheltered scheme, and use lessons learnt to improve energy efficiency in the up and coming refurbishment of Brandon Court sheltered scheme

Chapter 6

New Homes New Growth

Sub-regional housing strategy themes:

- Provision of new homes within sustainable communities where people want to live and work

Cambridgeshire Together Theme:

- Managing Growth

Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy Key Priorities:

- Tackling climate change
- Building Sustainable Communities
- Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities

Cambridge City Council's Medium Term Objectives:

- Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car;
- Promote Cambridge as a sustainable city, in particular by reducing carbon dioxide emissions and the amount of waste going into landfill in the City and sub-region;
- Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods;
- Ensure that residents and other service users have an entirely positive experience of dealing with the Council

Cambridge City Council Local Plan Vision

- The vision for Cambridge is of a compact, dynamic City with a thriving historic core surrounded by attractive and accessible green spaces. It will continue to develop as a centre of excellence and world leader in the fields of higher education and research, and it will foster the dynamism, prosperity and further expansion of the knowledge-based economy. It will also grow in importance as a Sub-regional centre for a wide range of services. The Local Plan for Cambridge seeks to guide and facilitate growth in a sensitive and sustainable manner, ensuring that the high environmental quality of the City is protected and enhanced and that future developments offer a full range of opportunities to all its citizens.

LAA Indicators:

NI 154: Net additional homes provided

NI 155: Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)

Housing Strategy Objectives:

- Ensure sustainable growth in homes and infrastructure to support the local economy
- Facilitate the delivery of sustainable new affordable housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures to meet a range of housing needs
- Promote the development of inclusive new communities

Key Local Strategies and Policies:

East of England Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy 2001-2021 (RSS)
Cambridge Economic Development Statement
Sub-regional Economic Strategy (currently in draft form)
Local Plan 2006
Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
Affordable Housing Guide (currently in draft form)
Southern Fringe Area Development Framework, Cambridge Station Area
Development Framework, Cambridge East Area Action Plan and the
submission draft of the North West Area Action Plan

Key Data

- 19,000 homes are to be built in Cambridge between 2001 and 2021 under the current RSS current target (which is subject to review).
- Around 3,500 of these had been built by April 2008.
- 1,509 new affordable homes are required per year for the next 5 years.
- The Council has enabled the development of 1,464 new affordable homes between April 2003 and March 2009.
- There are around 114,000 jobs in Cambridge. Around 45% are filled by those who both live and work in the city;
- An increase in all household sizes is expected - single person households in particular, followed by couple households. The greatest need, based on existing household size, is for one and two bedroom accommodation
- The ratio of house prices to average income in the City was 9:1 at August 2008.

Economic Context and the Need for Growth

Cambridge and its surrounding area has a strong local economy and is recognised as one of the fastest growing and most dynamic areas in the UK. The main employment is in public administration, education, retail and leisure, health, and the high-tech sector. Jobs in the City and South Cambridgeshire

are predicted to grow by 35,000 by 2031, with a 50,000 increase across Cambridgeshire as a whole.

As well as the Council's own objectives in this area (shown above), the vision for the Greater Cambridge Partnership, in its draft Sub-Regional Economic Strategy, is that 'Greater Cambridge should be a world leader in the knowledge-based economy that combines business success with a high quality of life for all'.

More housing, and in particular more affordable housing, is essential if the local economy is to continue to prosper. Sustainable growth will also help to ensure that Cambridge continues to be an attractive place in which to live and work, with the City's urban expansion providing opportunities to improve quality of life and upgrade essential infrastructure, providing better transport links, new job opportunities, and improved leisure and cultural facilities.

The government also recognises the role of Cambridge in delivering nationally required growth. The City is at the centre of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area, one of four main areas designated by the government to sustain major growth over the coming years.

The Eastern Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets a target for 73,300 new homes to be built in the East of England between 2001 and 2021, with a target of at least 19,000 for Cambridge City. The RSS is under review to be extended to 2031 which could lead to an increase in the target number of dwellings. The nature of Cambridge as a growing City with a small historic centre and limited road space represent particular constraints to further housing growth beyond 2021.

Location of Planned Residential Growth

Around 3,500 new homes have been built in Cambridge between 2001 and March 2008. Around two-thirds of the remaining planned residential growth will be within three major new developments on the southern, eastern and north-western fringes of Cambridge. The rest is anticipated to be on infill sites elsewhere in the City. More details on progress on each of these developments is available on the Council's website.

The City Council also maintains a close interest in growth sites close to Cambridge that could present opportunities or implications for City residents. This includes further development at Cambourne; a major new settlement planned for Northstowe; and the continued development of Orchard Park (formerly known as Arbury Park) which is currently in South Cambridgeshire but which could become part of the City if current boundary-change proposals are accepted by the Secretary of State.

The current allocation of land for housing development, identified in our Local Plan, is aimed at meeting housing requirements up until 2016. In order to meet housing targets to 2021 and beyond, further land needs to be identified

and allocated for development, and we are carrying out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to identify potential sites.

Delivering Growth in Homes and Infrastructure

Cambridgeshire Horizons is a not-for-profit company set up by Cambridgeshire's local authorities, along with the former English Partnerships and the East of England Development Agency, to drive forward sustainable growth as required by the local authorities' planning policies. Horizons co-ordinates efforts across the Councils, other public sector agencies and the private sector to ensure the delivery of growth to the highest possible standards. Cambridge City is represented on the Horizons Board

Ensuring adequate infrastructure is in place is essential to ensuring that growth is sustainable. As well as new facilities planned within new developments including shops, leisure facilities, access roads, footpaths and cycleways etc, improvements will be made to existing facilities, such as developing the area around Cambridge station to provide an improved public transport interchange, with better bus, cycle and pedestrian access to the station and improved rail and bus links across Cambridge.

The quality of new developments is important in delivering sustainable new communities. The Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth sets out the core principles about the level of quality to be expected in new developments, based on the 4Cs of Community, Climate Change, Connectivity and Character. We also are developing a range of Development Plan Documents to replace those in the Local Plan to enable development and improve the quality of new homes being built.

We are engaged in a Cambridgeshire Development Study which is considering the merits of different scenarios put forward for accommodating the suggested varying levels of growth in the County to 2031, taking into account such issues as demographic and economic growth forecasts, infrastructure capacity and sustainability and carbon emissions, which will feed into the RSS review.

As some of the growth area fringe development falls outside the City boundary, we have set up joint committees with the County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council to consider those issues relating to growth that span council boundaries, including Joint Development Control and Planning Policy committees. We also have a number of staff jointly employed by the City and South Cambridgeshire to deliver growth, including a Joint Urban Design Team, and staff facilitating the delivery of affordable housing. The two authorities are also jointly commissioning consultants to undertake an Infrastructure Study which will form part of the evidence base for the two districts' Local Development Frameworks

Impact of the Economic Downturn

Recent published research suggests that places like Cambridge are relatively well-placed to weather the economic downturn.

However, the Council's Annual Monitoring Report 2008 shows that the economic downturn is inevitably going to have an effect on delivery over the next few years. Information from developers suggests that they currently expect developments to be delayed by 1-2 years, and that larger developments are likely to be spread over a longer time period.

Despite the current economic climate, the underlying demand for housing and the need for growth remain. Cambridgeshire Horizons is co-ordinating a range of actions to try to increase the pace of delivery whilst maintaining the overall quality of developments, and we will continue to work together with local partners to maximise the delivery of homes and infrastructure within the current climate.

Affordability and the Need for Affordable Housing

With high house price to earnings ratios, affordability of Housing is a major issue for Cambridge. It is important that good quality affordable housing is available in the right places so that the workforce on which the economy depends can afford to live in or near the City.

The Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey 2006 identified that access to decent, affordable housing is the most important issue affecting feelings about quality of life in the City. Draft results from the Place Survey 2008 also show that a significant percentage of people within the City feel that access to affordable decent housing needs to be improved.

In 2008 it was calculated that 1,509 additional affordable homes would be required per year over the next five years to meet current and future demand. This means affordable homes which meet the national definition laid down in PPS3. (See Appendix 1 for web-link). Since this assessment was made, and since the 'credit crunch' started to bite, there has been a significant increase in the number of people applying for social rented housing (see Chapter 8, Housing Options Housing Choice).

Delivering Affordable Housing

There is unlikely to be financial resource available to fully meet identified need. However, this does not change our commitment to maximising the provision of affordable housing.

Affordable housing on the growth sites is being delivered jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council. We are working with Cambridge Partnerships Ltd, our 'Cambridge Challenge' partner, to develop 3,300 affordable homes on the southern fringe, the NIAB site (part of the north-western fringe) and parts of Northstowe.

Our Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (AHSPD) sets out many of our requirements in relation to the development of new affordable

housing to meet housing needs in sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.

Under the AHSPD, housing developments on sites of 0.5 hectares or more and all developments including an element of housing which have 15 or more dwellings, will only be permitted if they provide an agreed mix of affordable housing types to meet housing needs. The Council will seek as affordable housing 40% or more of the dwellings or an equivalent site area, a target which we have been successful in meeting since the inception of this policy

In addition to this, our previous Housing Strategy sought a 75:25 tenure split between social rented and intermediate market housing, a target which we have been achieving. Evidence provided in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment confirms that this target continues to be appropriate.

The AHSPD also seeks, for the urban extensions to Cambridge and on other sites as appropriate, half the new affordable homes to be 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings, but with no more than 10% being 1 bedroom homes; and half to be 3 bedrooms or larger, at least 20% being 3 bedroom homes.

The AHSPD supports the 'pepper-potting' or clustering of affordable housing, so that people of different incomes can live alongside one another, and also requires affordable housing to be located in such a way that minimizes social exclusion.

We require all affordable homes to achieve or exceed the former Housing Corporation design and quality standards and any subsequent standards adopted by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).

We require all new affordable homes to be developed to Lifetime Homes standard. We previously sought to 10% of new affordable homes on larger sites to be designed to wheelchair standard, but based on national evidence of need we will now require at least 2% of affordable homes to be fully Wheelchair Accessible, with a further 8% provided to meet other specialist needs, and this is what we are currently seeking on the major growth sites. Where possible homes will be designed for identified households.

Affordable housing provision is required to be on-site, other than in exceptional circumstances, and we have developed an Affordable Housing Land Policy to clarify the Council's expectations on the delivery of free land for affordable housing.

We are working with the rest of the sub-region to capture good practice and agree some model section 106 clauses, to improve consistency in our use of Section 106 agreements.

Although we recognise that viability of schemes may be an issue during the current economic crisis, we will continue to presume that any development will include full and appropriate provision for affordable housing unless the

developer can demonstrate, through a full economic appraisal, that scheme viability would be jeopardised.

Following requests from partners we will develop some clearer dwelling standards to work to in relation to space and design.

We have produced an Affordable Housing Policy Guide which gives more detail on our affordable housing requirements.

We will be consulting on preferred options for future partnership arrangements to replace our current 'preferred partners' list, and also on how to improve the management of affordable housing locally, in particular to try to develop local management standards for new developments.

To ensure that social rented housing continues to be available to those who need it, we require 100% of all initial lettings, and 75% of subsequent lettings to be made through our Choice Based Lettings system, Home-Link, and we will use local lettings policies where required to provide mixed and balanced communities.

Supply of Land for Affordable Housing

As well as requiring affordable housing on larger sites we also need to maximise use of our own land. We have carried out an audit of Council owned land held under the Housing Revenue Account, which identified a number of sites which may be suitable for disposal or redevelopment, and a Housing Investment Framework has now been established setting out how some of this land will be brought forward. A three-year rolling development programme was agreed in early 2009, which has the potential to contribute land for an additional 114 new homes over the next three years.

In developing our own sites we will continue to work closely with development partners to involve the local community at an early stage, to ensure that developments are well integrated into the locality and that specific local needs can be met where possible. We need to extend this work to developments on other sites.

We now have arrangements in place with Cambridgeshire County Council for us to be notified when they intend to dispose of land, and we need to develop similar arrangement with other public bodies. We also need to work with Housing Associations to map redevelopment opportunities within their own stock.

We anticipate new directions from national and regional policy which we must respond to. One example is the government's proposal of more freedom for Local Authorities to be able to build and retain the rental income from new homes. We will test the feasibility and viability of emerging proposals in this area.

Our environmental requirements in relation to new housing are referred to in Chapter 5 of the Housing Strategy. Impact of growth on new communities is referred to in chapter 7.

Housing for the Universities

There are two universities in Cambridge – The University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University – which have an important role to play in the local economy, and the Local Plan identifies a number of sites suitable to meet their current and future needs.

For example, the north-western fringe development includes land ear-marked to meet the long term needs of the University of Cambridge. It includes plans for around 2,000 to 2,500 homes (including 50% affordable housing to meet 'key worker' needs of the university) plus 2,000 units of accommodation for postgraduate and undergraduate students.

Anglia Ruskin University is particularly short of purpose-built accommodation, and the university is keen to house as many of its students as possible in purpose built accommodation.

Sites allocated in the local plan for student residential accommodation and which become available will be safeguarded to help meet this need.

Priority Actions:

- Continue, with our partners, to use and develop the Council's policies to deliver growth required in and around the City
- Publish a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and use this to earmark land for housing development
- Carry out an Infrastructure Study in partnership with South Cambridgeshire DC, and use this to inform the emerging Local Development Framework
- Maximise the delivery of new affordable housing
- Agree model s106 clauses and best practice across the sub-region to support the delivery of affordable housing
- Develop and adopt a set of approved dwelling standards for new affordable homes
- Publish an Affordable Housing Policy Guide to communicate our affordable housing requirements to our development partners
- Improve arrangements for selecting affordable housing development partners

- Work with partners to develop stronger partnerships around the management of affordable housing and develop local management standards which can be applied to new developments
- Implement and regularly review our programme for developing affordable housing on our own housing land
- Work to ensure that the use of Council land for affordable housing is considered systematically alongside other options
- Work with the Homes and Communities Agency to develop arrangements with public bodies and RSLs to enable us to access surplus public land for affordable housing
- Consider whether the Council should become a developer of affordable housing in line with government proposals
- Develop local lettings policies for the affordable housing on the new growth sites and at Orchard Park.

Chapter 7

Existing Homes and Communities

Sub-regional housing strategy theme:

- Ensuring that best use is made of existing homes and that existing homes are fit to live in

Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy Key Priority:

- Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities

Cambridge City Council's Medium Term Objective:

- Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods

LAA Indicators:

NI 17: Perceptions of anti-social behaviour

NI 4: Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality

NI 1: Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area

Housing Strategy Objectives:

- Ensure safe, Decent, energy efficient and well-managed homes and environments within the Council's own stock
- Increase the number of safe and decent homes in the private sector—particularly for vulnerable people
- Make the best use of existing homes
- Maximise the positive and minimise the potential negative impact of growth on existing communities
- Promote community cohesion

Key Local Strategies and Policies

HRA Business Plan

Private Sector Housing Strategy

Community Safety Strategy

Cambridge Standard

Housing Capital Programme

Asset Management Strategy (Housing)

Key Data:

- At March 2008 there were around 46,600 homes in the City
- At 2001, 19% of the housing in the City was privately rented, 55% owner-occupied, 19% Council owned and 7% Housing Association.

- Draft figures for 2009 suggest that there may now be 25% privately rented, 53% owner-occupier, 15% Council-owned and 7% Housing Association. (Figures to be confirmed)
- Around 45% of privately rented homes are Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- An estimated 0.7% of private sector homes are empty at any one time, with 70 homes empty for more than six months, and our target is to bring 12 long-term empty homes back into use each year

Council Stock

Cambridge City Council is one of only two remaining authorities in the Cambridge sub-region still retaining its own stock; remaining with the Council was identified as a priority by the Council's tenants through the results of two stock transfer ballots, the latest one being in 2003/04.

Priorities for investment in the Council's housing stock and assets are laid out in our Asset Management Strategy for Housing.

The Council is on track to achieve the Decent Homes Standard in all its homes by the government target date of 2010, after which the emphasis will be on ensuring that homes remain decent in the future. Investment is also earmarked through our Housing Capital Programme for additional improvements to the Council's homes, including health and safety work, improvements to communal areas of flats, and improvements to the Council's sheltered housing schemes – particularly those offering bedsit accommodation. We will continue to consider joint procurement opportunities with South Cambridgeshire District Council's housing provider for work outside the Decent Homes programme where cost-effective to do so.

The 'Cambridge Standard' agreed by tenants as part of the stock options work, identified the importance to tenants of investing in the environment around their homes, including improved parking, external lighting, footpaths, and fences and gates, and an annual programme of work is in place to address some of these issues. This Standard is due to be reviewed and work programmes will be adjusted accordingly.

High quality management of the Council's stock is also important to tenants and the Audit Commission, in its inspection of our Housing Management Service in October 2008, judged the service as 'Good', giving it a two star rating with 'Excellent' prospects for improvement; continuous improvement in this area is a priority.

Resident involvement is also important to us, with tenants and leaseholders sitting on our Housing Management Board, a strong network of Residents Associations, and a wide range of other resident involvement activity across the housing management service. We are working with the new national Tenant Services Authority to further strengthen the impact of resident involvement.

Shared Ownership and Leasehold Properties

The Council owns just under 100 homes available for sale on a shared ownership basis. With the shortage of mortgage funding available these have become more difficult to sell in recent months, and if that continues we may need to consider alternative options for making best use of some of those homes.

Just under 1,100 flats and maisonettes in Council-owned blocks are occupied by leaseholders. Whereas in the past the numbers have been increasing, with a significant reduction in the number of Right to Buy sales over the last few years this number appears now to have stabilised. A range of measures have been introduced recently improve our approach to managing and maintaining these properties, although more work is required around understanding the full costs of the service and providing a more equitable service between leaseholders and tenants.

With the main Decent Homes programme coming to an end in 2010 we need to take a longer term view of work to be carried out in blocks of flats, taking into account the financial implications for leaseholders who need to be recharged for that work.

Private Sector Housing

The Council's approach to private sector housing has been agreed through its Private Sector Housing Strategy 2006-2011, with the key priorities identified in relation to existing housing including:

- Maximise the supply of housing by bringing empty homes back into use;
- Enable people to live in safe and decent homes;
- Minimise homelessness through prevention;
- Make homes more energy efficient and minimise fuel poverty;
- Ensure fair and equal access to good quality services; and
- Improve the information we have about the city's housing and the people who occupy and own it.

Significant progress has been made against this strategy, much of which has been in partnership with other agencies. Achievement and priorities in relation to minimising homelessness and energy efficiency and fuel poverty are dealt with in other chapters of this strategy

Safe and Decent Homes in the Private Sector

The Council's main activity in this area has been providing grants and loans for home improvements for vulnerable owner-occupiers, increased use of

enforcement, and implementation of new government schemes such as the new Housing Health and Safety Rating System and mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation.

In 2003, 7.4% of private sector homes were considered to be unfit (under the old 'fitness' standard – since replaced by the Decent Homes Standard). Stock modeling carried out in 2007 indicated that up to 25% of private sector homes may not meet the Decent Homes standard - mainly on the basis of thermal efficiency. An updated private sector housing Stock Condition Survey has been carried out during 2008, currently in draft form, which will, together with the information gathered from inspections of private sector properties, give a clearer and more up to date picture of the overall condition of the stock across the range of private tenures, and enable us to agree further priorities in this area.

Regional funding is now available through a private sector decent homes, regeneration and mixed communities fund. Priority is being given to partnership bids, and the Council needs to consider how it can work together with other partners to try to access some of this funding for improving private sector housing conditions.

Improvements in energy efficiency and ensuring affordable warmth are also priorities in this area (See Chapter 5). The Council's approach to Disabled Adaptations is dealt with in Chapter 9.

The Council's Safer Homes scheme carries out small safety works for around 300 elderly households a year. LAA reward grant funding has been granted to extend this scheme to provide a cross-tenure Handyperson Service in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, and we are working with Supporting People to agree how this can link into a county-wide scheme for which SP funding has since been made available.

We need to improve our approach to anti-social behaviour in private residential areas, and we will work with partners, including local landlords, to develop measures to achieve this.

The Private Rented Sector

Privately rented housing is an important part of the housing market in the City, with a high proportion of the City's housing being in the private rented sector.

With a high number of older terraced homes in the City and the high proportion of Houses in Multiple Occupation it is important that we use a range of measures to tackle the condition and management of the private rented sector, and our approach across the private housing sector is outlined in our Private Sector Housing Strategy. (See above)

As well as tackling issues through general advice to landlords and use of enforcement powers we also have a Landlord Accreditation Scheme aimed at

improving the management of private rented housing in the City and we will continue to work with landlords to increase the membership of this scheme. As well as the private rented sector being important in supporting local workers and providing housing for more vulnerable residents, our Local Plan identifies that around 8% of undergraduates (and 46% of post-graduates) from the University of Cambridge live outside of purpose-built hostels. Around 90% (9,000 students) at Anglia Ruskin University students are also housed other than in purpose built accommodation.

Therefore a significant number of students, as well as some staff, are occupying the private rented sector. To help to relieve the pressure on this sector and ensure a wide range of choices of housing are available to local people it is important that we continue to support the development of new purpose-built student accommodation for both Universities through our implementation of our Local Plan.

Other Social Rented Housing

Around 8% of the City's dwellings are owned by Registered Social Landlords. Small developments of new affordable homes by RSLs are often within or adjoining existing areas of Council owned housing, which has the potential to lead to management issues within those areas, and we need to work more closely with those RSLs to ensure a more joined up management service.

Much of the work on tackling anti-social behaviour through the Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Strategy has been focused on the Council's own estates. We need to improve the impact of our approach in other areas, including working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to ensure a consistent response to complaints

Making best use of empty homes

An estimated 70 homes are estimated to have been empty for more than 6 months. The recent downturn in the economy does not appear yet to have impacted significantly on the number of long-term empty homes, although we need to continue to monitor this.

Long-term empty homes are currently dealt with through advice and support to landlords, enforcement, and the availability of grants to landlords to bring homes up to standard to be leased to a housing association for use of affordable housing. (Although take-up of these grants has been low to date). Council intervention has led to 28 empty homes being brought back into use since April 2007.

The Council will continue to monitor the prevalence of long-term empty homes, including any potential increase caused by the current economic climate, and will continue to work with owners to bring those homes back into use.

Impact of Growth on Existing Communities

With the significant growth planned for Cambridge over the coming years, it is important that the decisions made in those areas do not have an adverse impact – indeed that they can enhance – existing communities and foster community cohesion. We will do this through such measures as effective development and use of planning policies, use of local lettings policies for existing rented homes where appropriate, and enhancement of our Housing Options service, as well as developing new approaches in conjunction with relevant partners. We will also carry out Infrastructure Study to identify existing and future infrastructure requirements for the City.

Priorities 2009 onwards

- Ensure all the Council's homes meet the Decent Homes standard by 2010 and are maintained as Decent from then onwards
- Continue to invest available resources in improvements to Council stock and the surrounding environment
- Review the 'Cambridge Standard' agreed with tenants
- Work with the new national Tenant Services Authority to ensure that the Council's tenants have a central role in decisions that affect their lives
- Monitor the impact of the 'credit crunch' on sales of shared ownership properties and, necessary, consider alternative options to make best use of these properties
- Continue to improve the management and maintenance of the Council's leasehold properties, and consider the financial implications for leaseholders when planning Decent Homes work beyond 2010
- Review the approach to improving conditions in the private sector in light of updated stock condition information
- Work with RSLs on providing a more joined up management service and in areas of mixed Council and Housing Association housing
- Monitor and respond to any increase in the number of private sector empty homes, and continue to use available measures to bring empty homes back into use
- Improve our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour in residential areas – in particular in relation the private rented sector and working with RSLs
- Work to increase membership of the Landlord Accreditation scheme

- Develop new approaches with partners to ensure that development of new communities enhance existing communities where appropriate, and that potential negative impacts are identified and minimised as far as possible

- Review the Private Sector Housing Strategy in 2011.

Chapter 8

Housing Options and Housing Choice

Sub-regional housing strategy theme:

- Ensuring that people have a range of housing options and choices and preventing and tackling homelessness

Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy Key Priority:

- Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities

Cambridge City Council's Medium Term Objectives:

- Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods
- Lead the growth of Cambridge to achieve attractive, sustainable new neighbourhoods, including affordable housing, close to a good range of facilities, and supported by transport networks so that people can opt not to use the car

Housing Strategy Objectives:

- Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Minimise use of temporary accommodation
- Offer choice of and access to a range of housing options
- Promote sustained settled lifestyles, and tackle social exclusion

Key Local Strategies and Policies:

Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012

Key Data:

- There were 7,362 applicants on the City's Home-Link (Choice Based Lettings) register at the end of March 2009 – an 18% increase since August 2008.
- In 2007-2008, 138 households were accepted as homeless (reduced from 261 in 2003-2004)
- The government's target is to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation in the City to 70 by 2010 (from 101 in 2004)
- Around 68% of rough sleepers and those presenting at the nightshelter do not have a local connection with the city

Choice Based Lettings

The Cambridge sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme, Home-Link, was launched in February 2008, giving applicants for Council and Housing Association homes more choice as to where they want to live, including more opportunity to move across districts within the sub-region. The scheme also offers applicants more transparent information than was available previously on how properties are being allocated and let.

The number of applicants registered has increased significantly since the scheme was started. It is recognised nationally that Choice Based Lettings Schemes tend to lead to increased demand when they are first introduced, but even before CBL was introduced, the number of applicants was increasing, from around 2,900 in 2002, to around 4,700 in 2006.

There has been a particularly large increase in recent months with the number of applicants on the register rising by 18% between August 2008 and March 2009.

The Home-Link Service has recently been reviewed following its first year of operation and a number of service improvement recommendations made as a result. A key action is to ensure that vulnerable people are not disadvantaged in accessing and using the new system.

Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Partnership working in this area has increased considerably over the last few years, and has led to some significant achievements, including reducing the number of people applying for and being accepted as homeless through effective use of prevention measures (particularly amongst 16-17 year olds), reducing the number of households in Bed and Breakfast and other temporary accommodation, improving move-on arrangements for those in temporary accommodation, introducing a Rent Deposit scheme, commissioning a Learning and Development Service to support homeless and formerly homeless people, and introducing a Reconnections Policy for rough sleepers to be re-connected with the areas from where they came.

The Council's revised Homelessness Strategy was adopted in January 2009. The new strategy is built around 4 key themes:

- Temporary accommodation;
- Homelessness prevention
- Access to longer term housing options; and
- Sustaining settled lifestyles & tackling social exclusion.

An action plan has been agreed to deliver the required improvements in this area. These include finding more innovative ways to tackle the causes of homelessness, the conversion of Jimmy's night-shelter to an assessment

centre, increasing move-on solutions for people in temporary accommodation and increasing support and resettlement services for older homeless people.

Enhanced Housing Options

Providing good quality housing advice and ensuring people have a wide range of choices of housing options are important elements in preventing homelessness and enabling people to have a more settled lifestyle.

Our Housing Options Service provides, amongst other things comprehensive advice on housing related issues – eg tenancy rights and obligations, dealing with rent and mortgage debt, finding accommodation etc.

With the recent increases in the number of people registered with our Home-Link scheme for social housing it is even more important to ensure that people know about and are able to access alternative housing solutions. The Cambridge Sub-Region has recently been awarded government 'Kick Start' funding to launch an Enhanced Housing Options scheme to extend the function of Home-Link to offer a wider range of housing options to applicants using the system.

This will include improving access to other types and tenures of housing, including private rented and shared ownership/ intermediate tenures for key workers and other applicants, and disabled adapted properties in the owner-occupied sector. It will also enable us to provide advice on employment and learning opportunities.

We need to consider, with partners, whether the proposed county-wide Home Improvement Agency specification should include support to older people and people with disabilities to help them to move home within the private sector where they choose to do so – eg where this might provide better value for money than offering a grant or loan to improve or adapt their existing home.

Priorities

- Deliver the actions in the Council's Homelessness Strategy. In particular:
- Further reduce the numbers of households in temporary accommodation to achieve the government target set for Cambridge of 70 by 2010
- Further reduce the use of Bed & Breakfast as a form of temporary accommodation
- Develop an Enhanced Housing Options service so that the Home-Link scheme provides applicants with access to a range of housing solutions

- Implement the recommendations from the review of the Home-Link scheme, and continue to monitor and improve access to the service to ensure it meets the diverse needs of applicants
- Develop new ways of increasing access into the private rented sector for homeless households
- Deliver a new Assessment Centre to replace the existing nightshelter in the City
- Increase move on opportunities in the hostel system and standards in larger hostels
- Increase support and resettlement services for older homeless people
- Minimise evictions amongst home-owners with mortgage arrears
- Consider the provision of support for older and/or disabled people who want to move but remain living within the private sector, as part of the county-wide review of the Home Improvement Agency specification.

Chapter 9

Vulnerable people, Supporting People and People with Diverse Needs

Sub-regional housing strategy theme:

- Ensuring that vulnerable people receive appropriate housing-related support, and that housing and housing related services meets a range of diverse needs including those of hard-to reach groups

Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy Key Priority:

- Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities

Cambridge City Council's Medium Term Objective:

- Maintain a healthy, safe and enjoyable city for all, with thriving and viable neighbourhoods

LAA Indicators:

- NI 141: Percentage of vulnerable People achieving independent living.
- NI 32: Repeat incidents of domestic violence

Housing Strategy Objectives:

- Improve our understanding of the housing needs of diverse and vulnerable groups
- Provide housing and related services to meet the diverse needs of people within the City, in particular those who may be vulnerable or disadvantaged in some way.

Key Local Strategies and Policies:

Supporting People Strategy (Cambridgeshire)
Supporting People Commissioning Strategy (Cambridgeshire)
Disability Housing Strategy 2008-2011 (Cambridgeshire)
Community Safety Plan 2008-2011
Domestic Violence Strategy (Cambridgeshire)
Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing (Cambridgeshire)
Older People's Housing Strategy 2009-2014
BME Housing Strategy
RSS Gypsy and Traveller Single Issue Review
Private Sector Grants and Loans Policy

Some Key Data:

- An increase of 63% 65-74 year olds, 19% in 75-84 year olds, and 14% in 85 and overs is expected in the City between 2007 and 2021
- 14.5% of City residents have a limiting long-term illness in 2001
- 10.4% of the city's population are non-white, and 21% class themselves as other than White British
- 15 Gypsy/Traveller pitches are required in the City by 2011

This chapter shows our approach to meeting the housing needs of people with a range of diverse needs, in particular those who may be vulnerable.

Older People

The number of older people in the City is expected to rise between now and 2021, and although this increase is not anticipated to be as significant as some of the other authorities in the sub-region, the Council needs to plan for and take steps to address the needs of this growing population.

In view of this, the Council has adopted an Older People's Housing Strategy. Our vision is for older people in Cambridge, with a range of diverse needs, to be able to:

- Live independently for as long as possible, with support and/or adaptations if they need them;
- Live in safe, decent, accessible, warm and energy efficient homes and to stay in their existing homes for as long as possible where they choose to do so;
- Have a range of housing options to choose from, preferably close to services and facilities, to meet their particular needs;
- Have access to high quality and appropriate information and support to enable them to make informed choices about their housing.

Priority actions include continuing to improve the Council's sheltered housing stock, working with NHS Cambridgeshire to increase the amount of extra-care housing following the county-wide Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing; working with Supporting People to maximize availability of floating support; ensuring that new developments and new homes take the needs of older people into account in their design, and a requirement that all new affordable housing meets Lifetime Homes standards.

Younger People

Cambridge generally has a younger population profile than other parts of the sub-region, and numbers of younger people are expected to increase. Much of this is due to the influence of students and younger workers, many of whom live in college accommodation and the private rented sector. The needs of some of the more vulnerable younger adults in the city are currently picked up through our Homelessness Strategy and Housing Options Service. We need to assess, through working with younger people and other partners, whether we need to strengthen our strategic approach in this area.

People with Disabilities

Key priorities in relation to people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities have been agreed through the Cambridgeshire Disability Housing Strategy, and we will work with partners involved to deliver those priorities. Actions include improving the information available on the needs of people with disabilities through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, improving information on disabled adapted housing available through HomeLink and in the private sector, and improving people's access to information on housing and support options available.

In addition, the Council will continue to prioritise the topping up of Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to try to minimize the waiting time for disabled adaptation works to be carried out, although with increasing pressure on capital funding available, national changes to the DFG regime, and apparent fluctuations in demand, the amount available for topping up will need to be kept under review.

There are currently 73 households on our needs register awaiting adapted accommodation. In new developments we will require at least 2% of affordable housing to be fully wheelchair accessible, with a further 8% provided to meet other specialist needs. Where possible, these homes will be specifically designed for identified households. All other new affordable homes must meet the Lifetime Homes standard as a minimum.

Mental Health.

The direction of travel for Mental Health Services within Cambridge Adult includes a shift from use of shared accommodation to self-contained accommodation with support provided. We are working with Mental Health commissioners and providers to better understand the housing needs of this group and how links between the services can be improved to meet needs.

Domestic Violence

Tackling domestic violence is one of the five main priorities of the Community Safety Partnership's Community Safety Plan, and is also a priority in the Council's Homelessness Strategy. A county-wide Domestic Violence Strategy is also in place with the vision of working in partnership to support victims, including children and young people who experience or witness domestic violence, using protection and prevention, dealing with perpetrators, and raising public awareness. We need to ensure that all our services are equipped in relation to identifying victims and making appropriate referrals.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups and Migrant Workers

A relatively high proportion of the City's population is classed as BME, although overseas students have a significant influence on this figure.

The Council's approach to the housing needs of BME groups within the City has been agreed through the Council's BME Housing Strategy. The aims of the strategy are:

- To help the Council to have a better understanding of the housing situation, needs and aspirations of the BME citizens in Cambridge;

- To ensure that BME citizens have an equal opportunity to help shape the housing services we deliver;
- To make sure that BME citizens enjoy equality of opportunity in accessing housing and housing related services, and suffer no disadvantage on the grounds of their colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origin;
- To ensure that housing and housing related services are appropriate to the diverse cultures existing within the city.

Significant progress has been made in improving BME participation in resident involvement activities amongst the Council's tenants and leaseholders. Other parts of the housing service have also made progress in engaging with local BME groups to understand and address the needs of those communities – eg engagement with the Chinese Community leading to the redevelopment of Simons House including provision for Chinese elders, and with the Polish community to improve access to information on housing advice services available.

More needs to be done to understand the ethnic and faith profiles of those accessing and requiring the Council's services, including understanding the migrant worker profile, and to strengthen engagement with local BME groups in order that the needs of these groups can be addressed. We also need to understand why satisfaction levels expressed by ethnic minority tenants in the STATUS survey are lower than those for non-BME tenants.

Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers are recognised as amongst the most disadvantaged BME groups in the country, and it is important to try to meet their housing needs, as it is for the settled community.

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy Single Issue Review of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation requires the Council to provide 15 permanent Gypsy/Traveller pitches by 2011, and 28 by 2021. Prior to this review the Council had been trying to identify a location for a transit site.

With a tight boundary, and limited land available within the City available to be freed up before 2011, this is a challenge for the Council. South Cambridgeshire also need to increase their provision, and the two districts will need to consider working together to achieve the targets.

We are developing a Gypsy and Traveller Site Development Policy as part of our proposed Core Strategy, and a Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment Guide to help us to identify suitable sites for development.

The RSS review also requires districts to work together to provide the required number of pitches for transit use and travelling show people across the county.

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Trans-Gender

We need to improve the information we have on LGBT residents to understand whether our services are meeting the needs of these groups. Improved monitoring is required across the housing service to understand the profile and needs of this group, as is engagement with the LGBT community in relation to housing issues.

Supporting People

The Council has an influence on decisions around the commissioning of Supporting People (SP) funded housing support services, through representation on the Cambridgeshire Supporting People Commissioning Body and member Joint Steering Group.

One of the priorities within the SP Commissioning Strategy is to ensure a more equitable distribution of funding across the county. For some client groups the City receives higher levels of funding than some other districts. This is partly for historical reasons, but also because, for some client groups, the City as an urban area has a greater need for provision. The Council is committed to working with Supporting People to deliver SP's strategic objectives, but needs to continue to try to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people in Cambridge are recognised and met as far as possible within the resources available. This will become even more important as household growth puts additional pressure on resources.

The county's SP funded sheltered housing and floating support services, currently provided by a range of providers, are due to be put out to county-wide tender from 2010, with the likelihood that services will in future be provided through larger cross-county contracts. The Council will need to work strategically with partners to influence the specifications for these services to try to ensure that they meet the needs of Cambridge residents. We will also need to decide whether the Council should still bid to continue as a direct provider of these services within the City.

The Council also runs an in-house Home Improvement Agency (HIA) providing disabled adaptations and home improvements for vulnerable people. With the service being part-funded by Supporting People and NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire's HIA services are likely to be re-tendered from 2011. Again, the Council will need to influence the future specification for this service, as well as deciding whether to bid to continue to provide the service in-house.

For all of these contracts, whether or not we are able to continue as a provider, it will be important that we influence the specifications for these contracts to ensure a quality service to meet the needs of local service users.

Priorities

- Deliver the actions agreed in our Older People's Housing Strategy, BME Housing Strategy and the county-wide Disability Housing Strategy

- Improve diversity monitoring across our services to help us to better understand the profile of existing and potential service users and respond more effectively to their needs
- Consider whether a stronger strategic focus is required for meeting the needs of younger people
- Work to identify current and likely future demand patterns for disabled adaptation works across all tenures, and work with partners to try to ensure that adaptation needs can be met
- Work with Mental Health commissioners and providers to identify and respond to the housing and service needs of this group, and improve links between Housing and Mental Health services
- Ensure training is available to housing staff on identifying and responding to incidents of domestic violence
- Review our strategic approach to domestic violence to ensure that we are we are doing all we can to tackle this issue
- Develop planning policies to clarify our requirements in relation to Gypsy and Traveller site provision, and work to identify suitable locations for sites
- Work to ensure that the support needs of City residents are met as far as possible within the Supporting People resources available
- Decide whether to bid to continue to be a provider of Sheltered Housing, Floating Support and/or Home Improvement Agency services when these contracts are retendered
- Review the Choice Based Lettings Scheme to ensure that vulnerable groups are not disadvantaged

PART 3: IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter 10

Resourcing the Strategy and Next Steps

Resourcing the Strategy

The priorities within this strategy will be funded through a combination of the following:

- The Council's own revenue resources (HRA and General Fund). The Council's Medium Term Strategy gives details of the overall spend and savings targets to be met. Any significant changes to these resources are likely to have an impact on resources available to deliver this strategy;
- Cambridge City Council was one of the six housing authorities involved in the national pilot to assess whether landlord services could be self-financed outside of the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system. If this becomes an option, we will carry out full evaluation to decide whether to follow this route;
- Our ring-fenced Housing Capital programme funded from the HRA and General Fund. This will be reviewed annually to take into account changes in the funding available for the programme;
- National funding streams aimed at facilitating growth, including the Housing Growth, Rolling, and Community Infrastructure Funds.
- National Affordable Housing Programme grant funding made available through the Homes and Communities Agency for new affordable housing. This is currently only available to RSLs and other developers, but may be available in future direct to Local Authorities. We are currently exploring the government's proposals for Councils to build new homes with NAHP grant and retain the rental income, and we will consider closely whether this is a viable option for Cambridge;
- Contributions from developers through section 106 agreements. This will generally be in the form of free land for affordable housing, although in some circumstances the Council may accept a financial contribution (commuted sum) instead;
- Other government grant available for specific projects. Eg the proposed redevelopment of Jimmy's nightshelter to an assessment centre and development of an Enhanced Housing Options service have been made possible through availability of government grant;

As always, it is important that we maximise access to existing and emerging external funding streams where available to meet our strategic objectives.

Next Steps

This strategy, once approved, will be available to the public through the Council's website, and An Equality Impact Assessment of the strategy will be published.

Actions to achieve the priorities within the strategy will be developed with relevant partners, and a 'SMART' action plan drawn up. These will be delivered through our service planning process, and progress will be monitored through our departmental Housing Improvement Panel and Housing Management Team.

The future approach to setting out the Council's strategic housing priorities will be agreed when the Sustainable Community and Sub-Regional Housing Strategies are reviewed for 2011.

Appendix 1: Web Links

National and Regional

Audit Commission

<http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/>

National and Regional Policies and Strategies: see Appendices 7 & 8 of the **Cambridge sub-regional Housing Strategy**

http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/documents/crhb/publications/appendix_to_cambridge_sub-region_housing_strategy_2008-11.pdf

East of England Regional Spatial Strategy Single Issue Review – Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-and-related-strategies.en>

Cambridge Sub-Region

Cambridge Sub-Regional Housing Strategy: Housing the Cambridge Sub-Region 2008-2011

http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/housing/crhb_publications.aspx

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/housing/shma.aspx

Sub-regional Economic Strategy 2009-2014 (Draft) – Greater Cambridge Partnership *Link to follow*

Cambridgeshire

Cambridgeshire's Vision 2007-2021 (Cambridgeshire Together)

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdoonlyres/E4EFAA81-F270-4C59-BE77-29D45257C1D9/0/CambsVision20072021reduced.pdf>

Local Area Agreement (LAA)

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdoonlyres/774C1C91-75A0-4D6C-8B5D-419380255C7D/0/LAA.pdf>

Cambridge Annual demographic and socio-economic information report, Cambridgeshire County Council

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdoonlyres/0AC0AFAB-12E9-470C-B67C-4CB1213844BA/0/CambridgeReport09_part1.pdf

Best Value Review of Sheltered Housing – White Paper

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/088984D2-3302-4BA5-9A36-FEF988DE4C10/0/BestValueShelteredHousingWhitePaperv4.pdf>

Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth

http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/about_horizons/how_we_do_it/quality_charter.aspx

Cambridgeshire Development Study

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/planning/regional/cambsprocess/The+Cambridgeshire+Development+Study.htm>

Supporting People Strategy and Supporting People Commissioning Strategy

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/supportingpeople/schsupstratrevs.htm>

Disability Housing Strategy 2008-2011 (Cambridgeshire) *Link to follow*

Domestic Violence Strategy

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/157FD586-0B18-4BB8-A812-04B152DC745F/0/JARsupStrategy20052008.pdf>

Joint Strategic Needs Assessments

<http://www.cambridgeshire.nhs.uk/default.asp?id=656&query=jsna#highlight>

Cambridge City

Affordable Housing Policy Guide *Link to follow*

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/affordable-housing-spd.en>

Affordable Warmth Policy

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/pdfs/Affordable-Warmth-Policy.pdf>

Annual Monitoring Report 2008 (AMR)

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/annual-monitoring-report.en>

Asset Management Strategy (Housing) 2007-2010

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing-services/leaflets/asset-management-strategy.en>

BME Housing Strategy 2007-2012

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-and-related-strategies.en>

Cambridge East Area Action Plan

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/cambridge-east-area-action-plan.en>

Cambridge Standard *Link to follow*

Climate Change Strategy 2008-2012

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment-and-recycling/sustainable-city/climate-change/>

Community Safety Plan 2008-2011 (Community Safety Partnership)

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/community-safety/cambridge-community-safety-partnership.en>

Economic Development Statement – draft –*Link to follow*

Home Energy Strategy 2006-2011

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2006/1116cs/10.pdf>

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/Homelessness%20strategy%20draft%20action%20plan.pdf>

HRA Business Plan

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/pdfs/housing-ra-businessplan.pdf>

Housing Capital Programme

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2008/1113cs/05.pdf>

Housing Strategy 2004-2007

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-and-related-strategies.en>

Housing Strategy ‘Refresh’ 2008-2009

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/Housing%20strategy%20refresh.pdf>

Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/index-pages/growth-areas-and-planning-policy.en>

Medium Term Objectives

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/council-performance/best-value-performance/bvpp-2007/medium-term-objectives/>

Medium Term Strategy

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/finance/budget-process.en>

North West Cambridge Area Action Plan (draft)

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/north-west-cambridge-area-action-plan-issues---options-report.en>

Older People's Housing Strategy 2009-2014

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-and-related-strategies.en>

Private Sector Housing Strategy

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/Private%20sector%20housing%20strategy.pdf>

Southern Fringe Area Development Framework

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/southern-fringe-area-development-framework.en>

Sustainable Community Strategy (Local Strategic Partnership)

http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/cms-service/download/asset/?asset_id=8794007

Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/policy-and-projects/sustainable-design-and-construction-supplementary-planning-document.en>

Annex A: Progress against 2008-2009 Action Plan

(NB, progress against 2004-2007 action plan was documented in Housing Strategy 2008)

| | Action | Progress |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Work with Cambridge Housing Society to develop a zero carbon affordable housing scheme on the Simons House sheltered scheme site | On target for Sustainability Code Level 5 (zero carbon) scheme. In detailed design stage. Due to start on site December 2009. Completion due March 2011. |
| 2 | Work with selected Cambridge Challenge RSL partners to incorporate 'exemplar' sustainable affordable housing projects within the southern fringe growth sites. | All the affordable housing on the Cambridge Challenge sites are to be provided at Sustainable Code Level 4, and we're working with them to produce higher standards of sustainability. (Actual progress on site has been delayed due to the economic downturn). |
| 3 | Encourage energy efficiency in private housing through the landlord accreditation scheme | Government grant funding confirmed but not yet received. |
| 4 | Implement action plan within the home energy strategy | Home Energy Strategy and action plan to be reviewed 2009/10 |
| 5 | Deliver the 2008/09 actions in the Mock Inspection Improvement plan, including the actions arising from any formal Inspection that may occur as required, and prepare for anticipated Audit Commission inspection | Audit Commission assessed the service as Good; awarded '2 stars with excellent prospects for improvement' |

| | Action | Progress |
|----|---|---|
| 6 | Engage with benchmarking practices through the Housing Quality Network to provide regular comparison reports to Heads of Service on individual areas of service. Include Performance Indicator data and demonstrable Value For Money for each service area. | Benchmarking carried out with sub-region. Now making links with new, more comparable partners to benchmark with. |
| 7 | Influence the Supporting People programme and monitor and evaluate the impact of the reduction in resources/changes to commissioning arrangements. | Programme influenced in a number of areas, including HIA review, extra-care commissioning strategy and research on support needs.No change yet to commissioning arrangements. |
| 8 | Manage the transition of housing needs, homelessness and housing options services and resources into the Council's new Customer Service Centre | Customer feedback being sought, and Housing Optionsand Customer Service teams are liaising regularly to address issues. |
| 9 | 9. Conduct/contribute to a review of the sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme and allocations policy | Sub-regional review completed. Starting to implement. |
| 10 | Review effectiveness and service quality arising from Housing needs, Options & Homelessness restructuring | Customer feedback being sought, and Housing Optionsand Customer Service teams are liaising regularly to address issues. |
| 11 | Identify outcomes and opportunities from Government's evaluation of Housing Revenue Account Self Financing options. | Discussions have taken place internally and with government. |

| | Action | Progress |
|----|--|---|
| 12 | Review approach to achieving the Government's target of a 50% reduction in temporary accommodation use by 2010. | Approach agreed in new Homelessness Strategy |
| 13 | Monitor Choice Based lettings policy changes in terms of access to permanent housing for homeless households | CBL review completed. Policy changes to be implemented |
| 14 | Review Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeper priorities and responses and produce new three year strategy | Homelessness Strategy approved, incorporating rough sleeping |
| 15 | Complete the establishment of a single/non statutory homelessness assessment centre in Cambridge: | Background work under way. Due to start on site Autumn 2009. Completion due December 2011 |
| 16 | Procure a Learning and Development Service for homeless people in Cambridge | Service in place |
| 17 | Implement legal requirements related to the private rented sector to increase the number of decent homes in the city | <i>Awaiting feedback</i> |
| 18 | Carry out a Housing Condition Survey and report findings to the Executive Councillor for Housing | Survey under way. Awaiting results |
| 19 | Negotiate and agree Home Office crime reduction targets and agree action plans with Community Safety Partnership to deliver. | <i>Awaiting feedback</i> |

| | Action | Progress |
|----|--|---|
| 20 | Refresh Anti Social Behaviour Strategy and produce ASB action plan to achieve objectives in agreement with Community Safety Partnership. | ASB Strategy now part of Community Safety Plan |
| 21 | Maximise outputs for City Council of absorption of Community safety funding streams into Local Area Agreements structure | <i>Awaiting feedback</i> |
| 22 | Review and renew Racial Harassment Strategy. | <i>Awaiting feedback</i> |
| 23 | Review new Community Safety Strategy and produce refresh | <i>Awaiting Feedback</i> |
| 24 | Assist City Homes in implementing the Respect Standard for Housing Management and work with RSL's to monitor their implementation. | Plans on hold for now due to resourcing issues. |
| 25 | Develop and implement programme for prioritising and bringing forward of land audit sites for affordable housing development. | Programme agreed and implementation started |
| 26 | Contribute to and participate in the establishment of on going partner monitoring arrangements under the Cambridge Challenge | <i>Awaiting feedback</i> |
| 27 | Influence the areas to be considered for further analysis, and commission and produce sub analysis arising from the Strategic Sub Regional Housing Market Assessment | Annual work programme in place, and subject to review |

| | Action | Progress |
|----|--|--|
| 28 | Contribute to the Sub Regional BME housing need pilot analysis activity and identify specific outputs for Cambridge | Work under way to update HomeLink monitoring categories to capture migrant workers. Improvements in local data collection to be carried out 2009/10 |
| 29 | Work with other participating authorities to identify suitable site (s) for Gypsy & Traveller provision to meet identified needs and the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy single issue review outcomes. | Work under way on developing Traveller Site Development policy and site assessment criteria |
| 30 | Produce a comprehensive Older Persons Housing Strategy for Cambridge | Strategy approved. Action plan being developed |
| 31 | Produce affordable housing policy/procedures to underpin affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document | Policy agreed |
| 32 | Contribute to the production of the Sub Regional Housing Strategy and produce the Cambridge sub elements of the strategy | Sub-regional housing strategy approved. This local housing strategy represents sub-elements of the sub-regional strategy |
| 33 | Review the Cambridge preferred partner RSL arrangements and develop a Cambridge Social Housing Partnership frame work and agreement | Liaison taking place with RSLs |
| 34 | Create and introduce systems and processes for monitoring nominations and local lettings plan agreements with partner RSL's. | Lack of progress on-site due to economic downturn. Work progressing on local lettings plan for Orchard Park. |

| | Action | Progress |
|----|---|--|
| 35 | Review the Housing Capital Programme to ensure that resources are targeted effectively | Programme reviewed and being implemented |
| 36 | Review the use of the Council's miscellaneous leased properties in supporting vulnerable groups | Review carried out and being implemented |

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Appendix 3

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

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| Affordable Housing | Affordable housing is housing provided at a subsidised cost to people who are unable to afford or access housing on the open market. (A full definition is available in national Planning Policy Statement 3) |
| AHSPD | Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document - part of the Cambridge Local Plan. Its objectives are to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing to meet housing needs, and to assist the creation and maintenance of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities |
| ASB | Anti-social behaviour. Sub-criminal behaviour which may lead to action by local authorities and the police under anti-social behaviour legislation |
| Audit Commission | An independent watchdog which assesses local public services and makes recommendations for improvement to promote a 'better quality of life' for local people |
| BME | Black and Minority Ethnic. Refers to groups or individuals who are not classified as 'White British'. This also includes Gypsies and Travellers. |
| Cambridge housing sub-region | Alliance of local authorities around the Cambridge area, working in partnership to address the housing needs of the region. The local authorities are Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury District Councils. The Cambridge sub-region is one of nine sub-regions in the East of England. |
| CBL | Choice Based Lettings. The scheme under which social housing is let to applicants, which enables applicants to bid for available properties rather than waiting to receive an offer of accommodation. The scheme for the Cambridge sub-region is known as Home-Link |
| CRHB | Cambridge Sub-Regional Housing Board <i>extract from terms of reference</i> |
| Code for Sustainable Homes | The Code for Sustainable Homes is an environmental impact rating system used for new homes in England, which sets standard for increasing levels of sustainability and energy efficiency to limit the environmental impacts of new homes. |
| Community Infrastructure Fund | A government run fund to support transport infrastructure costs required to enable faster housing development in Growth Areas. |
| Decent Homes | A standard set by government relating to the condition of people's homes. The definition of a Decent Home has recently changed with the introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The government's target is that all local authority homes should meet the Decent Homes standard by 2010. |
| DFGs | Disabled Facilities Grants. Grants provided by the Council for adaptation work in the home for people with disabilities. |

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| Energy Performance Certificates | From October 2008 Energy Performance Certificates are required to be issued whenever a building is built, sold or rented out. The certificate provides 'A' to 'G' ratings for the building, with 'A' being the most energy efficient and 'G' being the least. Alongside the certificate is a report suggesting improvements to make the building more energy efficient. |
| Equality Impact Assessment | Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on the Council's policies and services to assess whether they may have a different or adverse affect on some communities or groups compared to others, and whether the policy or service actively promotes good relations between different groups. |
| Floating support | Support provided to vulnerable people in their homes. |
| Fuel Poverty | Fuel poverty arises when more than 10% of a household's income would need to be spent on heating the home to a comfortable level |
| General Fund | The account which deals with income and expenditure other than for the Council's own housing. |
| Growth Area | Areas designated by the government to accommodate large-scale development growth. Cambridge is within one of the current four Growth Areas. |
| Growth Fund | Growth Fund is un-ringfenced block funding available to Local Authorities and their partnerships to deliver growth priorities within their areas. |
| Handyperson Scheme | A scheme which carries out small jobs within in the home for vulnerable people |
| Home Improvement Agency | An agency which provides disabled adaptations and home improvements for vulnerable people. Cambridge's HIA is currently run by Cambridge City Council |
| Homes and Communities Agency | The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) brings together the previous functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes previously delivered by the government Communities and Local Government department. The HCA is conduction a 'Single Conversation' with local authorities and other partners on the specific housing and regeneration needs of their individual areas |
| HHSRS | Housing Health and Safety Rating System. A national scheme, introduced by the Housing Act 2004, to replace the old Fitness standard within dwellings. |
| HMB | Housing Management Board. A committee made up of elected members and tenant representatives which makes decisions on how to run the housing service for the Council's tenants and Leaseholders, and how to spend available money |
| HMO | House In Multiple Occupation. A single building let as separate units - bedsits or similar. There will be several separate tenancies within one HMO. |

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| Homebuy | The national scheme which enables social tenants and those on the housing register, key workers and other first time buyers to buy a share of a home and get a first step on the housing ladder. It is aimed at people who are unable to afford to buy a property outright but can sustain home ownership. The scheme is administered through local Homebuy Agents. |
| Homebuy Agent | An agent appointed by the government to administer the Homebuy scheme in an area. Orbit Housing is the Homebuy Agent for Cambridgeshire and surrounding areas from 2009. |
| Home-Link | The Choice Based Letting Scheme for the Cambridge Sub-Region. (See CBL above) |
| HRA | Housing Revenue Account. The account which deals with the rent and service charge money paid by Council tenants and leaseholders, and pays for management, maintenance and improvement of the Council's homes and surrounding areas. This has, by law, to be kept separate from other funds such as the General Fund (funded through Council Tax) |
| Intermediate affordable housing | Housing at prices and rents above those of social rent, but below market prices, which meet the criteria for affordable housing. These can include shared equity products (eg Homebuy), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent. |
| JSNA | Joint Strategic Needs Assessments provide an overview of population health and well being needs in an area. |
| Key Worker | Key Worker refers to government sponsored schemes for providing affordable housing for certain categories of public sector workers - eg police, teachers, fire service personnel and health service workers. Each region is able to identify its own key workers within certain limits. |
| LA | Local Authority. Includes District and County Councils (and, elsewhere, Metropolitan Districts). |
| LAA | Cambridgeshire's Local Area Agreement is a three-year plan setting out the priorities for the local area as agreed between central government and the local area through the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership and other key local partners. |
| LDF | Local Development Framework. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Local Development Frameworks will replace Local Plans. The LDF is the collection of documents that will set out the policies for development and land use. |
| Landlord Accreditation Schem | A local scheme set up to encourage local landlords to sign up to a set of management standards for their properties. |
| Local Plan | Local Plans set out detailed policies and site-specific proposals for the development and use of land within an area, and guide the day-to-day decision making on planning applications. Cambridge's Local Plan was agreed in 2006 and is gradually being replaced through the introduction of a Local Development Framework. |

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| Lifetime Homes Standard | Homes built to the Lifetime Homes standard have certain design features that make them flexible enough to meet the changing needs, over time, of the households that occupy them. (The Joseph Rowntree Trust has further information) |
| LSP | Local Strategic Partnership. A partnership made up of senior representatives key local agencies including the City and County Councils, Police, PCT, voluntary and business sectors, further education and learning and skills providers. The LSP is responsible for producing the Sustainable Community Strategy. |
| Long-term empty homes | Homes which remain unoccupied for six months or more |
| Low cost home ownership | Home ownership at below-market prices, within the definition of Affordable Housing |
| MTOs | The Council's Medium Term Objectives set out in the Medium Term Strategy. |
| Medium Term Strategy | The Council's key financial planning document. It sets out and considers the implications of the MTOs and priorities approved by the Council |
| National Affordable Housing Programme | The affordable housing programme, administered by the Housing Corporation, through which developers can bid for capital grant funding for affordable housing. |
| National Indicators | A set of 198 indicators set by the government. Local Strategic Partnerships are required to adopt 35 of these as part of their Local Area Agreement and agree targets against them. They are also be required to report on progress against the remaining indicators not included in the LAA. |
| NHS Cambridgeshire | The Primary Care Trust for Cambridgeshire responsible for delivering health services to local people. |
| PPS3 | Planning Policy Statement 3 (replaced PPG3). This sets out the government's policies around providing new housing, to enable local authorities, through the planning process, to require certain things of new developments, including the quality of housing and the mix of sizes and tenures required. |
| Regional Spatial Strategy | The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England sets out the government's transport and planning policies in the region for a 15-20 year period. |
| RSL | Registered Social Landlord. A housing Association which is registered with and regulated by the Housing Corporation, providing social rented and other low cost housing. |
| Right to Buy | The right for eligible council tenants to buy their home from the Council at a discount. |

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| Rolling Infrastructure Fund | A national fund used to fund infrastructure projects, which is then recouped at a later date from developers, usually when houses are sold, to allow development to happen in a timely manner. Once recouped the money is then invested into another project to bring forward development. |
| SAP rating | Standard Assessment Procedure Rating. A national standard rating to assess energy efficiency. |
| Section 106 agreement | Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into an legally binding agreement with a land developer. Such agreements can be used to require developers to provide affordable housing and/or community facilities on a site. |
| Section 106 commuted sum | Money provided by a developer through a section 106 agreement instead of the developer providing housing or facilities on that site. Commuted sums are used for affordable housing on other sites. |
| Shared Ownership | Homes in which the occupier owns a share of the equity and pays rent on the remaining share. Cambridge City Council owns just under 100 homes available for sale on a shared ownership basis. |
| SHMA | Strategic Housing Market Assessment. A collection of data and survey information about all the parts of the the local housing market. Our SHMA covers the Cambridge Housing sub-region, and helps in planning for housing and housing related services in an area. |
| Social Rented Housing | Rented housing owned and managed by local authorities and registered social landlords. |
| SHLAA | Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments. These are required by national Planning Policy PPS3 to identify sites available for housing development |
| Supporting People | The central government programme set up to fund, monitor, review and improve housing-related support services. The Cambridgeshire Supporting People programme is administered through Cambridgeshire County Council working in partnership with the local housing authorities and other agencies. |
| Sustainable Community Strategy | The Sustainable Community Strategy is developed by the Local Strategic Partnership. It sets out a vision for the City and identifies the priorities for the partnership in delivering improvements in the quality of life of local people. |