



Cambridge City Council Housing Scrutiny Committee

Date: Tuesday, 19 June 2018

Time: 5.30 pm

Venue: Committee Room 1 & 2, The Guildhall, Market Square, Cambridge, CB2 3QJ

Contact: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk, tel:01223 457013

Committee Members Briefing and Light Refreshments 5.00pm

Tenant and Leaseholder representatives, assisted by officers, will give a presentation regarding their role on the Committee

Agenda

- 1 Apologies
- 2 Appointment of Vice-Chair (Tenant/Leaseholder Rep) for 2018/19
- 3 Declarations of Interest
- 4 Minutes (Pages 7 - 22)
- 5 Public Questions

Part 1: To be chaired by Vice Chair (Tenant/Leaseholder Representative)

- 6 To Note Decision Taken by the Executive Councillor for Housing
- 6a Garage Rent Increase Transitional Protection (Pages 23 - 24)

Decision for the Committee

- 7 Tenant Representative Vacancy (Pages 25 - 28)

Decisions for the Executive Councillor for Housing

- 8 2017/18 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry
Forwards and Significant Variances - Housing
Revenue Account (Pages 29 - 46)

Part 2: To be taken by the Chair of the Committee

Decisions for the Executive Councillor for Housing

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|----|--|-------------------|
| 9 | 2017/18 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances - General Fund | (Pages 47 - 56) |
| 10 | New Social Housing, Community Centre and Commercial Units on Akeman Street | (Pages 57 - 82) |
| 11 | Investing in Affordable Housing | (Pages 83 - 88) |
| 12 | Discharging Homelessness Duties in the Private Rented Sector | (Pages 89 - 120) |
| 13 | Grant Award - Wintercomfort Report to follow. | |
| 14 | City Centre Rough Sleeping | (Pages 121 - 178) |
| 15 | Extension of Mandatory Licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation | (Pages 179 - 202) |
| 16 | Adoption of a Private Rented Sector Housing Standards | (Pages 203 - 272) |

Housing Scrutiny Committee Members: Todd-Jones (Chair), Bird (Vice-Chair), Cantrill, McGerty, Payne, Sheil, Thittala and Thornburrow

Alternates: Page-Croft, Barnett and Sinnott

Tenants and Leaseholders: Lulu Agate (Tenant Representative), Diane Best (Leaseholder Representative), Kay Harris (Tenant Representative), John Marais (Tenant Representative), Diana Minns (Tenant Representative) and Mandy Powell-Hardy (Tenant Representative)

Executive Councillors: Price (Executive Councillor for Housing)

Information for the public

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- Website: <http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk>
- Email: democratic.services@cambridge.gov.uk
- Phone: 01223 457013

Housing Scrutiny Committee

Terms of Reference

A. Overview and scrutiny of the strategic and other housing functions for which the Executive Councillor for Housing is responsible, including responsibility for the development of housing strategies and policies, tackling homelessness, the Council's housing responsibilities with regard to the private rented sector, bringing vacant homes back into use, the development of new homes and partnership working with other housing providers.

B. Overview and scrutiny of the strategic and other housing functions for which the Executive Councillor for Housing is responsible, including responsibility for the development of housing strategies and policies, tackling homelessness, the Council's housing responsibilities with regard to the private rented sector, bringing vacant homes back into use, the development of new homes and partnership working with other housing providers.

C. To be the main discussion forum between the Council, its tenants and its leaseholders for all matters relating to the landlord function of Cambridge City Council.

Membership

City Councillors (Such number as shall be decided by the Council from time to time)

Six elected tenants and leaseholders of Cambridge City Council of whom at least five shall be tenants of Cambridge City Council.

Appointment of tenant and leaseholder members

Tenant and leaseholder members shall be co-opted by the Scrutiny Committee following the procedure for election set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4E.

Voting

Tenant and leaseholder members are voting members in respect of matters concerning the management of the Council's housing stock (Part 1 of the agenda.) Tenant and leaseholder members may contribute to discussion of other matters (Part 2 of the agenda) but shall not have a vote.

Appointment of Chair
The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee shall be appointed by the Council and be a councillor and shall chair Part 2. The Vice-chair shall be nominated by the elected tenants and leaseholders and shall chair Part 1 if present. If the Chair or Vice-chair is not present, a councillor shall be appointed as the Vice-chair for that meeting.
Other matters relating to elected tenants and leaseholders
These are set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules in Part 4E. They include information about the roles, responsibilities and training of tenant and leaseholder representatives, expenses and allowances, and the circumstances in which they may cease to be members of the Committee.

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HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 January 2018

5.30 - 8.55 pm

Present:

Scrutiny Committee Members: Councillors Todd-Jones (Chair), Bird (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Cantrill, Gawthrope, Holland, Sheil, Agate, Best, Harris, Marais, Minns, Powell-Hardy and Price (Executive Councillor)

Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Price

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Diane Best, Lulu Agate, Kay Harris, John Marais, Diana Minns (Vice Chair), and Mandy Powell-Hardy

Officers:

Strategic Director: Suzanne Hemmingway

Strategic Director: Fiona Bryant

Business Manager & Principal Accountant (Shared Housing Finance Team):
Julia Hovells

Interim Head of Housing Development Agency: Cath Conlon

Growth Projects Officer (Community & Culture): Julian Adams

Empty Homes Officer: Danae Evans

Project Officer (Private Rented Sector): Philip Winter

Committee Manager: Toni Birkin

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

18/1/HSC Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Page-Croft.

18/2/HSC Declarations of Interest

18/3/HSC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the 21 September 2017 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

18/4/HSC Public Questions

None

18/5/HSC Record of Urgent Decisions taken by the Executive Councillor for Housing

5a Ditchburn Place

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair / Tenant Representative)

The Committee noted the decision.

The Committee made the following comments regarding the report:

Councillor Holland requested a review of this decision. In view of the collapse of Carillion, an in house service provision might be a better option.

Diana Minns expressed disappointment that the decision had been taken out of cycle and that the Committee had not been able to fully debate the issues raised.

The Strategic Director (Suzanne Hemmingway) stated that the timeframes for making the decision had been dictated by the County Council. The non-tender decision had been based on cost. The City Council could not deliver within the allowed budget.

Councillor Cantrill asked if subsidising the services from City funds had been considered.

The Strategic Director confirmed that it would not be possible to subsidise the service from Housing Revenue Account funds.

The Executive Councillor expressed concerns about the City subsidising County Council functions. However, was happy to look again at this decision and would raise the Committees concerns with the County Council.

5b Housing Related Support for Older People

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair / Tenant Representative)

The Committee noted the decision.

18/6/HSC Repairs Standards and Recharging

This item was deferred to a later meeting.

18/7/HSC HRA Garages Charging Review

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair / Tenant Representative)

Matter for Decision

The Housing Revenue Account managed a portfolio of 1,652 garages and 43 parking spaces, which were let as separate tenancies on a weekly rental basis to a variety of customers, including council housing tenants, leaseholders, and other residents of the city, charities, business and commuters.

The current complex variable charging structure for garages had been in place since a whole scale review of garages in 2013/14. It was now considered timely to review and simplify the process, particularly in light of new garages and parking spaces available as part of the new build programme and in preparation for the intended replacement of the existing Housing Management Information System.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Approved the garage and parking space charging structure as outlined in Appendix A of the Officer's report.
- ii. Approved delegated authority to the Strategic Director to designate an area of garages or parking spaces as being in a high value or high demand area, and therefore attracting the higher rental charge.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Business Manager & Principal Accountant, Shared Housing Finance Team.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Questioned the even-handedness of charging some tenants more for their garages based on their addresses.
- ii. Questioned why tenant representatives had not been involved in the review and requested better engagement in the future.

The Principal Accountant said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Confirmed that if renting a garage or parking space was a condition of the tenancy, then those charges would be eligible for housing benefit.
- ii. Confirmed that where tenants were facing an increase in garage costs, these could be phased in over a 5 year period.
- iii. Garages in high value areas would not be classed as high value assets.
- iv. Confirmed that sensible decisions would be made regarding future development where the boundary between high and low garage rents crossed the site.
- v. Housing officers were responsible for marketing garage and discussed options with potential tenants on site visits.
- vi. Potential tenants were never forced to take a property with a garage which incurred a cost and was unwanted.

The Committee resolved by 9 votes to 2 and one abstention to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

18/8/HSC Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Setting Report 2018/19 to 2022/23

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair / Tenant Representative)

Matter for Decision

The Housing Revenue Account Budget-Setting Report provided an overview of the review of the key assumptions. It set out the key parameters for the detailed recommendations and final budget proposals, and is the basis for the finalisation of the 2018/19 budgets.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

The Executive Councillor for Housing took a view on a key decision which materially differed to that of the Housing Scrutiny Committee. Under 2.5 of Part 4D Executive Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, the matter was referred to the Leader of the Council for decision.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Business Manager & Principal Accountant, Shared Housing Finance Team. The Committee noted the updated Equality Impact Assessment.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Sought clarification regarding additional funding required for work at Ditchburn Place and questioned why the original bid had not covered all phases of the required upgrade work.
- ii. Welcomed the provision of an Estate Champion van.
- iii. Asked when the Transformation of the Housing Service would be reviewed and what level of tenant involvement could be expected.
- iv. Suggested that additional funding would be needed to address the impact of the role out of Universal Credit.
- v. Sought clarification on leaseholder charging.
- vi. Requested further details on the housing register regarding what the number of household on the list translated to in numbers of people waiting to for housing. (The Principal Accountant undertook to provide this information outside the meeting).

Councillor Price stated that the phase one of the Ditchburn Place refurbishment had been agreed under a Liberal Democrat administration.

Councillor Cantrill objected to the response and requested that the minutes record that he had been seeking a value for money answer. It had not been his intension to make a political statement.

Councillor Cantrill introduced the Liberal Democrat Alternative Budget.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. John Marias expressed support for the proposals.

- ii. Kay Harris stated that the ROAM group supported the proposal to recharge repairs requested for works that were tenant responsibility as the costs involved were significant.
- iii. Suggested that the funding for communal areas should be shared across all tenures as council only estates were a thing of the past.

The Principal Accountant said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Confirmed that the proposed amendment to rents for larger new built properties would bring them into line with existing social rent tenants at target rent.
- ii. New tenants would not be in a more advantageous position than existing tenants in a comparable sized property.
- iii. In response to question on the impact on the 30 year business plan, she stated that the rent reduction would equate to approximately the cost of one new property a year.
- iv. The additional funding for communal areas would be a single sum, spread across, two-years of capital expenditure. Savings would need to be made elsewhere in order to fund the work.

Councillor Price stated that the number of council housing units was now half what it was in 1989. Any reduction in the new build programme would impact on those on the waiting list.

Reducing rent for larger properties would be unfair as families come in all sizes and occupy a variety of properties. Children often shared bedrooms making property size a poor indicator of family size.

The Strategic Director (Suzanne Hemingway) stated that provisions had been planned to address potential problems caused by Universal Credit. A budget proposal for a general fund provision to support all Cambridge residents impacted by the introduction of UC would be considered by Strategy and Resources Committee. Advice and support was currently provided in partnership with other agencies. The full impact of Universal Credit could be some years away.

Councillor Cantrill summed up the alternative budget and suggested that the housing market in Cambridge was broken. In response to comments from the tenant representative he proposed expanding the protection from repair recharges could be expanded to all older or vulnerable tenants.

The following votes was chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair /Tenant Representative)

Resolved (**by 6 votes to 5**) to vote on the Liberal Democrat alternative budget point by point where they differed from the substantive recommendations.

The Liberal Democrat alternative budget:

(bii) (**7 votes in favour to 5 against**). The amendment was carried.

(K) (**7 votes in favour to 5 against**). The amendment was carried.

(L) (**7 votes in favour to 5 against**). The amendment was carried.

The Committee adjourned for 10 minutes.

The Strategic Director, (Suzanne Hemingway) confirmed that revenue bid agreed above could stand with or without the linked capital budget. If the Executive Councillor decided not to endorse the recommendations, the decision would be passed to the Leader for decision.

The following votes were chaired by Councillor Todd-Jones

The Liberal Democrat alternative budget:

(N) (**2 votes in favour to 5 against**). The amendment was lost.

(S) (**2 votes in favour to 5 against**). The amendment was lost.

The following vote was chaired by Diana Minns (Vice Chair /Tenant Representative)

Resolved (**8 votes to 1 and 4 abstentions**) to endorse the recommendations A to L, as amended, of the budget proposals.

The following votes were chaired by Councillor Todd-Jones

Resolved (**5 votes to 0 and 2 abstentions**) to endorse the original report recommendations M to V of the budget proposals.

The Executive Councillor could not agree the recommendations. Therefore, under 2.5 of Part 4D Executive Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, all recommendations agreed by the Scrutiny Committee would be submitted to the Leader of the Council for determination.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

18/9/HSC Housing Portfolio Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals for 2018/19 to 2022/23

This item was Chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

The report detailed the budget proposals relating to this portfolio that were included in the Budget-Setting Report (BSR) 2018/19 which would be considered at the following meetings:

Date	Committee	Comment
22 January 2018	Strategy & Resources	Consider proposals / recommendations from all Scrutiny Committees in relation to their portfolios
25 January 2018	The Executive	Budget amendment may be presented
12 February 2018	Strategy & Resources	Consider any further amendments including opposition proposals
22 February 2018	Council	Approves General Fund Budget and sets Council Tax

The report also included a recommendation concerning the review of charges for this portfolio.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

Review of Charges:

- i. Approved the proposed charges for this portfolio's services and facilities, as shown in Appendix A to the Officer's report.

Revenue:

- ii. Noted the revenue budget proposals as shown in Appendix B of the Officer's report.

Capital:

- i. Noted that there were no capital bids or savings presented for this portfolio.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Business Manager & Principal Accountant, Shared Housing Finance Team.

Diana Minns suggested that consultation methods should be reviewed and improved as current response rates, from families in particular, were very low.

The Committee resolved by 5 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions to endorse the recommendation.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

18/10/HSC New Social Housing on Markham Close Garage Site

This item was Chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

The report provided details of the indicative capacity of the site at 1-12 Garages, Markham Close. Originally highlighted on the Development Rolling Programme (updated HSC June 2017) it was estimated that the site had the potential to deliver 2 affordable homes. Following a more detailed inspection this had now been revised to 4 No. 1 bedroom flats.

The report sought approval of a capital budget for the HRA based on the indicative capacity study which had been undertaken for the site and the outline appraisals referenced in the report.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Noted the indicative mix of the proposed scheme
- ii. Approved the indicative capital budget of £855,190 to cover all construction costs, professional fees and associated fees to deliver a scheme that meets an identified housing need in Cambridge City. This sum had been allocated in the most recent publication of the Budget Setting Report (January 2018).
- iii. Approved that the site is offered to Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) to progress for development to deliver a scheme which will meet the strategic aims of the Council in the delivery of new social housing. The scheme will be developed in accordance with the CIP process which had been approved at Strategy & Resources Committee on 9th October 2017.
- iv. Noted that the Executive Councillor had a delegated authority to approve the transfer of land to CIP for the redevelopment of the site at a later date. This would be subject to CIP demonstrating that its development proposal meets the Council's strategic aims for the site and the development and delivery milestones are in accordance with the CIP Approvals Process agreed at S&R Committee on 9th October 2017.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Interim Head of Housing Development Agency. The Committee noted that the site was in King's Hedges Ward and not Queen Edith's as stated in the report.

The Interim Head of Housing Development Agency said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The numbers of properties that could be accommodated on the site was constrained by neighbouring properties and a restricted access route.
- ii. The Planning Department and County Council Highways Department had not expressed any concerns about the proposals.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

18/11/HSC New Social Housing on Gunhild Way Garage Site

This item was Chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

The report provided details of the indicative capacity of the site at 1-12 Garages, Gunhild Way. Originally highlighted on the Development Rolling Programme (updated HSC June 2017) it was estimated that this site has the potential to deliver 2 new family homes.

The report sought approval of a capital budget for the HRA based on the indicative capacity study which has been undertaken for the site and the outline appraisals referenced in the report.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Noted the indicative mix of the proposed scheme.
- ii. Approved the indicative capital budget of £585,720 to cover all construction costs, professional fees and associated fees to deliver a scheme that meets an identified housing need in Cambridge City. This sum had been allocated in the most recent publication of the Budget Setting Report (January 2018).
- iii. Approved that the site is offered to Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) to progress for development to deliver a scheme which will meet the strategic aims of the Council in the delivery of new social housing.

The scheme will be developed in accordance with the CIP process which was approved at Strategy and Resources Committee on 9th October 2017.

- iv. Noted that the Executive Councillor had a delegated authority to approve the transfer of land to CIP for the redevelopment of the site at a later date. This would be subject to CIP demonstrating that its development proposal meets the Council's strategic aims for the site and the development and delivery milestones are in accordance with the CIP Approvals Process agreed at S&R Committee on 9th October 2017.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Interim Head of Housing Development Agency.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Questioned how the properties being delivered matched the current needs of those on the Housing Register.
- ii. Discussion of points to be raised in the response to CIP: it's not for profit status, how it was monitored for value for money and how it was funded.

The Principal Accountant said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Clarified the position regarding disabled adapted properties. These would be delivered by the development programme but would not be available on every small scale development.
- ii. Stated that lessons learnt from concerns raised about security of mailboxes on other sites would be incorporated into the design process.
- iii. A design guide was in place for projects and an expert in "Secure by Design" would review plans.

The Executive Councillor stated that in house staff had delivered new build properties to a high standard. However, the team lacked the capacity to deliver all small scale project.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

18/12/HSC Community-Led Housing

This item was Chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

- i. The award of grant by the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Community Housing Fund to local authorities to promote community-led housing, has led to a new initiative being proposed by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council. It was designed to help community groups deliver housing schemes on land identified by the community; help make sure designs are right for the local area and meet the needs of people in need of affordable housing.
- ii. The scheme would allow interested groups each to bid for up to £4,500 to scope a project in their area as well as explore and develop capacity to take approved schemes forward.
- iii. This report sought delegated authority for awarding grants to such groups.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Delegated authority to a Strategic Director to award grants of up to £4,500 each to community groups, to assist them to develop proposals for community-led affordable housing through such models as Co-housing, Community Land Trusts or self-build schemes.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Growth Projects Officer (Community & Culture).

The Growth Projects Officer (Community & Culture) said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Grants would be widely publicised and expressions of interest would be welcomed from many groups including: Co-operative housing Groups, Community Land Trusts and low income groups.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

18/13/HSC Review of the Empty Homes Policy

This item was Chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

The Empty Homes Policy 2012 was in need of revision following operational changes and the introduction of the Empty Homes Loan (2017).

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

The Executive Councillor approved the proposed changes and the adoption of the revised Empty Homes Policy 2017 attached as Appendix 1 of the Officer's report.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Empty Homes Officer (Private Rented Sector).

The Committee noted the following correction to 10.3 bullet point 4, of the Empty Homes Policy:

~~The City Council's leasehold services if the owner wishes to sell and previously exercised their Right to Buy.~~

Is deleted and replaced with:

The City Council's leasehold services, if the owner had previously exercised their Right to Buy and wishes to sell.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Thanked the Officers for their hard work on the project.
- ii. Welcomed the achievement to-date.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations.

The Executive Councillor approved the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

18/14/HSC New Build Affordable Housing Update

This item was Chaired by Councillor Mike Todd-Jones

Matter for Decision

This report provided an up-date on the sites in the Council's New Build Housing Programme – whether recently completed; under construction or being assessed in terms of feasibility and viability for development. The latter is known as the Rolling Programme.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

The Executive Councillor noted the up-dated position of schemes.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Director (Fiona Bryant).

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. Sought clarification regarding the status of funding if projects were suspended.
- ii. Sought clarity on staffing structures and the differing roles of the two Strategic Directors.

The Strategic Director said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Clarified the term windfall sites as being sites not currently in council ownership which could be brought forward for development in partnership with other parties.
- ii. Confirmed that scheme proposals moved on and off the list. Funding for suspended schemes was retained in the central pot.

The Committee and the Executive Councillor noted the report.

18/15/HSC Decision notice

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

CHAIR

GARAGE RENT INCREASE TRANSITIONAL PROTECTION

Decision of:	Councillor Price , Executive Councillor for Housing		
Reference:	18/URGENCY/HS/2		
Date of decision:	23/4/18	Recorded on:	23/4/18
Decision Type:	Key Decision		
Matter for Decision:	Garage Rent Increase Transitional Protection		
Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options):	A report to Housing Scrutiny Committee in January 2018 approved the introduction of higher rental charges for garages in city centric locations. Transitional protection was approved for tenants of council homes who rent garages in these areas as the garages were originally built for the use of council tenants, Following a number of representations, it has been agreed to extend this transitional protection to other city residents.		
The Executive Councillor's decision(s):	The Executive Councillor for Housing has decided to extend the transitional financial protection offered to council tenants who rent garages in the higher value area of the city to other city residents who rent garages in this area. The protection will ensure that garage rents go up by no more than inflation plus £2.00 per rent week, plus the prevailing rate of VAT until the full charge is achieved.		
Reasons for the decision:	Review of policy approved following receipt of a number of representations from those in financial hardship about the value of the rent increase in one go. As it is Impossible to determine who will suffer financial hardship, the transitional protection will be offered to all city residents for whom the significant increase will apply.		
Scrutiny consideration:	The Chair and Spokesperson of Housing Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.		
Report:	A report detailing the background and financial considerations for the original policy was approved at Housing Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2018. The financial impact of providing the additional transitional financial protection is estimated to be £57,925.92 in 2018/19, and will be incorporated into the 2018/19 budget as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy.		
Conflicts of interest:	None known		
Comments:	This decision would be reported to the Housing Scrutiny Committee on 19 June 2018.		

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Item

TENANT REPRESENTATIVE VACANCY

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Housing Scrutiny Committee 19/06/2018

Report by:

David Greening, Head of Housing

Tel: 01223 - 457997 Email: david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 On 25th May 2018 we received a resignation from John Marais for his position as Tenant Representative on the Housing Scrutiny Committee; this will take effect from 25th June 2018.
- 1.2 Membership requires 5 Tenants and 1 Leaseholder Representative to sit on the committee. The next Tenant Representative election is due to take place in 2020 so the Constitution states that the Scrutiny Committee may co-opt an eligible person to fill the vacancy until the next scheduled election date.
- 1.3 This report sets out the requirement of the Committee to co-opt a person in to the vacant position. It also provides details of potential options available to identify an eligible person.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Delegate authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing, Chair, Vice-Chair and Opposition Spokesperson, to consider the options for representative replacement outside of the committee meeting and report back to the Committee ahead of the autumn cycle.

3. Background

- 3.1. A resignation has been received from a Tenant Representative on the Housing Scrutiny Committee
- 3.2 Under the agreed arrangements, membership of the Housing Scrutiny Committee requires 5 Tenants and 1 Leaseholder Representative. The next tenant representative election is scheduled to take place in 2020. Section 6.1, Part 4E Appendix 1 of the Constitution states- *If a Tenant or Leaseholder representative dies in office or resigns, the Scrutiny Committee may co-opt an eligible person to fill the vacancy until the next scheduled election date.*
- 3.3 When co-opting a new Member, there are no set qualifying requirements for the candidate, so the committee has freedom to choose a person whose attributes or experience qualifies them in the committee's opinion as 'eligible'. Any member can suggest a candidate and give reason for their suitability. The Resident Involvement team holds details of residents who take part in a variety of engagement activities across the city; these could be used to help identify eligible candidates.
- 3.4 A second option would be to contact candidates who have previously stood in Tenant and Leaseholder Representative elections. In 2013 a Tenant Representative resignation led to a committee decision to invite the candidate who came second in the most recent election to join them on the committee. In the 2016 election there was one other candidate who stood who could be contacted if required.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

None.

(b) Staffing Implications

None.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Not Applicable.

(d) Environmental Implications

Not Applicable.

(e) Procurement Implications

None.

(f) Community Safety Implications

None.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

None.

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Appendices

Not Applicable

8. Inspection of papers

If you have a query on the report please contact Emily Watts, Resident Engagement Officer, tel: 01223 - 458323, email: emily.watts@cambridge.gov.uk.

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Item

2017/18 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances – Housing Revenue Account

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by:

Julia Hovells, Principal Accountant

Tel: 01954 - 713071

Email: julia.hovells@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents, for the Housing Revenue Account :

- a) A summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the final budget for 2017/18 (outturn position)
- b) Revenue and capital budget variances with explanations
- c) Specific requests to carry forward funding available from budget underspends into 2018/19.
- d) A summary of housing debt which was written off during 2017/18.

2. Recommendations

Under Part 1 of the Housing Scrutiny Committee Agenda, the Executive Councillor, is recommended, following scrutiny and debate at Housing Scrutiny Committee:

- a) To approve carry forward requests totalling £698,690 in revenue funding from 2017/18 to 2018/19, as detailed in **Appendix C**

Under Part 2 of the Housing Scrutiny Committee Agenda, the Executive Councillor for Housing is asked to recommend to Council (following scrutiny and debate at Housing Scrutiny Committee):

- b) Approval of carry forward requests of £3,798,000 in HRA and General Fund Housing capital budgets and associated resources from 2017/18 to 2018/19 to fund re-phased net capital spending, as detailed in **Appendix D** and the associated notes to the appendix.

3. Background

Revenue Outturn

- 3.1 The overall revenue budget outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account is given in the table below.

2016/17 £'000	Housing Revenue Account Summary	2017/18 £'000	% Final Budget
1,751	Original Budget (HRA Use of Reserves)	2,317	95%
191	Adjustment – Prior Year Carry Forwards	545	22%
(74)	Adjustment – Increased Interest Receipts – Reduced Interest Paid	(179)	(7%)
100	Adjustment – Increased Rent Income	(143)	(6%)
(207)	Adjustment – Increased Bad Debt Provision	1	0%

(211)	Adjustment – Reduced Depreciation	(93)	(4%)
(28)	Other Adjustments	(6)	0%
1,522	Final Budget	2,442	100%
(388)	Outturn	1,160	(48%)
(1,910)	(Under) / Overspend for the year	(1,282)	(52%)
545	Carry Forward Requests	699	29%
(1,365)	Resulting Variation for the HRA	(583)	(24%)
0	Other variances	0	0%
(1,365)	Variance and reduced use of HRA Reserves	(583)	(24%)

- 3.1 **Appendix A** shows original and final budgets for the year (with the movements summarised in the above table) and compares the final budget with the outturn position for the HRA for 2017/18. The original revenue budget for 2017/18 was approved by the Executive Councillor for Housing on 18 January 2017.
- 3.2 **Appendix B** provides explanations of the main variance.
- 3.3 **Appendix C** lists revenue carry forward requests.
- 3.4 The net underspend across the Housing Revenue Account of £1,282,028 incorporates a number of key areas of underspending.
- 3.5 General HRA Services were £674,292 less than budgeted due in part to delays in some of the Housing Transformation activity (£158,463) and in elements of the corporate change programme and contributions to corporate projects (£332,580), particularly the office accommodation strategy, coupled with underspending in City Homes (£183,510) due to vacancies within the team and a shared interim Head of Service.
- 3.6 Special HRA Services were underspent by £46,612 due to reduced temporary housing demand (£58,590) and underspending in sheltered housing (£30,835), partially offset by overspending in respect of Ditchburn Place (£40,995) and at Scholar's Court (£40,564) where the

HRA has had to meet the service charge costs associated with un-sold shared ownership units.

- 3.7 Repairs expenditure reported a net underspend of £431,690, combining delays in elements of the revenue planned maintenance programme (£532,255) due to a change in contractor and the need for advance remedial works to be carried out with savings in the cost of gas servicing and maintenance (£70,254). Response repairs reported a significant overspend (£227,145), with extensive flat roof repairs required in year, external support used to facilitate restructure of the service and the need to cover sickness absence.
- 3.8 Slippage and savings in the Housing Capital Investment Plan result in a reduced use of revenue financing of capital expenditure of £94,791.
- 3.9 Income received in the HRA was greater than anticipated (£431,751), combining over-achievement in dwelling rents, commercial property rents and service charges and contributions received.

Capital Outturn

- 3.10 The overall capital budget outturn position for the Housing Capital Investment Plan (HRA and Housing General Fund) is provided in the table below. **Appendix D** shows the outturn position by programme with the associated notes providing explanations of variances.

2016/17 £'000	HRA Capital Summary	2017/18 £'000	% Final Budget
37,271	Original Budget	47,263	197%
2,171	Adjustments (Re-phasing -prior year)	2,668	11%
(13,159)	Other Adjustments	(25,905)	(108%)
26,283	Final Budget	24,026	100%
23,373	Outturn	18,923	79%
(2,910)	(Under)/Overspend for the year	(5,103)	(21%)
2,896	Re-phasing Requests	3,798	16%
(14)	(Under) / Overspend	(1,305)	(5%)

- 3.11 Spending in the Housing Capital Investment Plan in 2017/18 was below that originally anticipated, with significant reduction in the budget, particularly for new build expenditure as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in September / October 2017.
- 3.12 At outturn, against the latest capital budget approved, underspending of £1,383,000 was evident in new build investment, with slippage of £1,094,000 identified. This related predominantly to delays at Anstey Way, Ventress Close and the 2015/16 garage sites, where obtaining vacant possession and planning permissions, selecting contractors, and for some sites agreeing new processes with the Cambridge Investment Partnership has introduced some delays.
- 3.13 Investment in the housing stock, in respect of decent homes and other capital activity was underspent by £2,088,000, with the need to defer £1,291,000 of investment into future years having been identified.
- 3.14 The capital expenditure relating to the re-acquisition of shared ownership dwellings was not as great as anticipated in 2017/18, and the allowance of £1,171,000 to meet inflation across all aspects of the programme was not allocated, as underspending across the programme meant that this was not necessary. It is requested that the inflation allowance is re-phased into 2018/19 to allow the authority to proceed and enter into the build contracts and affordable housing agreements that have been delayed.
- 3.15 Permission is sought to re-phase the use of £95,000 direct revenue financing of capital expenditure from the Housing Revenue Account into 2018/19, and to recognise the deferral of assumed capital receipts for the sale of shared ownership properties at Clay Farm (£2,199,000) and Devolution Grant (£668,000), where these will be used to finance the re-phased capital expenditure identified.
- 3.16 Recognition also needs to be given to a reduced use of major repairs reserve as a funding source in 2017/18 (£1,182,000), with the need to recognise the deferred use of this in 2018/19 to finance re-phased capital expenditure.

HRA Write Offs

- 3.17 In line with the revised process for the writing off of HRA debt, considered by Housing Scrutiny Committee in March 2015, this report also provides an appendix detailing write off of HRA debt during the

financial year 2017/18. **Appendix E** includes a summary of debt written off by both category of write off and also value banding.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The variance from the final revenue budget (see above), would result in a decreased use of Housing Revenue Account of £1,282,028. After re-phasing resource for capital projects financed from revenue, and carry forward of revenue resource to fund deferred revenue expenditure, the overall variance and decreased use of Housing Revenue Account Reserves is £583,338.

A decision not to approve a carry forward request may impact on officers' ability to deliver the service or scheme in question and this could have staffing, equality and poverty, environmental, procurement, consultation and communication and/or community safety implications.

(b) Staffing Implications

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report..

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

There are no new equality or poverty implications associated with this report.

(d) Environmental Implications

There are no new environmental implications arising from this report.

(e) Procurement Implications

There are no new procurement implications arising from this report.

(f) Consultation and Communication

Consultation with tenant and leaseholder representatives is an integral part of the Housing Scrutiny Committee process.

(g) Community Safety

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Directors Variance Explanations – March 2018
- Budgetary Control Reports to 31 March 2018

7. Appendices

- Appendix A – HRA Revenue Outturn 2017/18
- Appendix B – HRA Major Revenue Variance Explanations
- Appendix C – HRA Revenue Carry Forward Requests
- Appendix D – Housing Capital Investment Plan Outturn 2017/18
- Appendix D (Notes) – Notes to the Housing Capital Investment Plan
- Appendix E – HRA Write Offs 2017/18

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Julia Hovells, Principal Accountant

Telephone: 01954 - 713071 or email: julia.hovells@cambridge.gov.uk.

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Final Outturn

Service Grouping	Original Budget £'s	Final Budget £'s	Outturn £'s	Variation Increase/ (Decrease) £'s	Carry Forward Requests - see Appendix C £'s	Net Variance £'s
INCOME						
Dwelling Rents	(36,596,900)	(36,600,230)	(36,717,451)	(117,221)	0	(117,221)
Rental Income (Other)	(1,119,500)	(1,144,770)	(1,222,421)	(77,651)	0	(77,651)
Service Charges	(2,724,240)	(3,152,130)	(3,204,036)	(51,906)	0	(51,906)
Contributions towards Expenditure	(3,360)	(202,920)	(296,237)	(93,317)	0	(93,317)
Other Income (Incl. RTB Capitalisation)	(456,960)	(456,960)	(548,616)	(91,656)	0	(91,656)
Total Income	(40,900,960)	(41,557,010)	(41,988,761)	(431,751)	0	(431,751)
EXPENDITURE						
Supervision & Management (General)	3,538,300	3,671,410	2,997,118	(674,292)	403,900	(270,392)
Supervision & Management (Special)	2,454,880	2,539,690	2,493,078	(46,612)	0	(46,612)
Repairs & Maintenance	6,218,580	6,573,400	6,141,710	(431,690)	200,000	(231,690)
Depreciation	9,857,820	9,765,080	9,721,242	(43,838)	0	(43,838)
Debt Management Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Expenditure	3,361,230	3,366,380	3,427,104	60,724	0	60,724
Total Expenditure	25,430,810	25,915,960	24,780,252	(1,135,708)	603,900	(531,808)
Net Cost of HRA Services	(15,470,150)	(15,641,050)	(17,208,509)	(1,567,459)	603,900	(963,559)
Interest Receivable (Interest on Balances)	(424,080)	(589,280)	(602,085)	(12,805)	0	(12,805)
(Surplus) / Deficit on the HRA for the Year	(15,894,230)	(16,230,330)	(17,810,594)	(1,580,264)	603,900	(976,364)
Appropriations / Other Movement in the HRA Balance						
Loan Interest	7,516,350	7,502,580	7,506,503	3,923	0	3,923
Housing Set-Aside	10,269,740	6,769,740	6,769,740	0	0	0
Impairment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	925,520	4,614,210	4,519,419	(94,791)	94,790	(1)
Transfer to / from Ear-Marked Reserves	(500,000)	(214,400)	174,704	389,104	0	389,104
(Surplus) / Deficit for year	2,317,380	2,441,800	1,159,772	(1,282,028)	698,690	(583,338)
(Surplus) / Deficit b/f	(10,178,140)	(10,178,140)	(10,178,140)			
Balance Carried Forward	(7,860,760)	(7,736,340)	(9,018,368)	0	0	0

Changes between original and final budgets may be made to reflect:

- portfolio and departmental restructuring
- approved budget carry forwards from the previous financial year
- technical adjustments, including changes to the capital accounting regime
- virements approved under the Council's constitution
- additional external revenue funding not originally budgeted

and are detailed and approved:

- in the January committee cycle (as part of the Budget-Setting Report)
- in the June/July committee cycle (outturn reporting and carry forward requests)
- in September (as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy - MTFS)
- via technical adjustments/virements throughout the year

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
Supervision and Management (General)		
HRA Overheads	Budgets set aside to meet the HRA share of corporate change, including corporate restructures, shared services and office accommodation changes were not utilised in 2017/18. Some of this expenditure is expected in 2018/19 and carry forward request have been incorporated accordingly.	(332,580)
City Homes	Significant staff underspend due to vacancies as a result of restructure and sharing an interim Head of Housing. Under-occupation scheme not fully subscribed in 2017/18.	(183,510)
Strategic Advisor - Housing and Welfare Reforms	Investment in activity to transform the Housing Service was not fully delivered in 2017/18. Carry forward is requested to allow further investment in 2018/19 to include training, business process change, additional staff input in some areas to tackle performance against desired target levels.	(158,463)
Departmental Overheads (HRA)	The HRA was required to meet up-front feasibility and site investigation costs incurred by the Cambridge Investment Partnership for schemes on HRA sites where development is now unlikely or where a formal decision to develop the site had not been taken at 31st March 2018 as revenue expenditure.	76,161
Resident Involvement	Underspend in employee costs due to a vacancy in the team and in printing and postage costs due to an increase in on-line circulation of Open Door.	(34,322)
Anti-Social Behaviour	Underspending in legal fees.	(18,336)
Tenancy Support	Underspending in employee costs due to changes following the restructure, with a few fewer hours occupied by staff than those included in the establishment in this area.	(11,051)
Other		(12,191)
Total		(674,292)
Supervision and Management (Special)		
Temporary Accommodation	Underspending due to staffing structure changes, and a reduction in the number of temporary housing units required during 2017/18, coupled with premises and utility costs being lower than anticipated.	(58,590)
Ditchburn Place	Under achievement in catering and other income due to lower occupancy levels whilst the major refurbishment is undertaken.	40,995
Scholar's Court	Service charges paid for shared ownership properties which are yet to be sold. Costs of service provision, managed by Carter Jonas, greater than anticipated.	40,564

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
Sheltered Housing	Underspending in premises and utilities costs across all sheltered housing schemes.	(30,835)
Independent Living Service	Underspending in employee costs as not all staff are part of the pension scheme and in the costs of providing enhanced support to council tenants on low incomes.	(18,520)
Emergency Alarms	Under-achievement in income due to lower than anticipated installation of new alarms.	17,275
Other	Includes underspending in special service cost centres where the explanations above include the impact of net direct spending with income variations also taken into consideration.	(37,501)
Total		(46,612)
Repairs and Maintenance		
Planned Repairs	Contract with Foster's started mid-way through year, and substantial part of programme is deferred to enable concrete testing / repairs to blocks of flats which were identified during survey	(532,255)
Response Repairs	Additional external contractor support required due to skills audit assessments (to facilitate re-structure), extensive number of flat roof repairs and sickness absence, which increased costs where posts needed to be covered.	227,145
Technical Services	Significant underspending in employee costs due to vacancies across the Surveying Team, with only some of the roles covered with temporary resource. Underspending in training and project related budgets as a direct result of staff vacancies and resulting limited capacity.	(71,668)
Gas Servicing	Savings due predominantly to fewer repairs additional to contract throughout the year.	(70,254)
Citywide Schemes	Overspending in cyclical contracts, particularly in respect of fire extinguisher, fire alarm and fire safety equipment servicing and maintenance.	19,655
Other		(4,313)
Total		(431,690)

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
Other HRA Expenditure		
Depreciation	The level of depreciation charged to the HRA for 2017/18 was lower than anticipated. This was predominantly due to delays in the new build delivery programme, where fewer assets required depreciating in 2017/18 than anticipated.	(43,838)
Council Tax on Voids	The cost of Council Tax in void properties was higher than anticipated, predominantly due to the need to pay Council Tax for new build dwellings well in advance of them being ready for occupation. This was exacerbated by holding shared ownership dwellings in advance of finding suitable purchasers, the impact of which will continue into 2018/19.	57,926
Other		2,798
Total		16,886
HRA Income and Other		
Dwelling Rents	Rent income was over-achieved by 0.32% due to a decline in the number of right to buy sales in the latter part of the year and prudent assumptions made as part of the HRA Budget Setting Report in January 2018 in respect of delays in the delivery of some of the new build housing programme in 2017/18.	(117,221)
Rental Income (Other)	Rent for HRA commercial property was over-achieved in 2017/18 (£52,100) due to some of the units at Akeman Street continuing to be occupied, where it was assumed that vacant possession would have been realised by now as a result of the decision to re-develop the site. Income for garage rentals was also marginally higher than budgeted (£25,500) due to the introduction of additional garages and parking spaces on some new build schemes.	(77,651)
Service Charges	Service charge income was over-achieved due to a combination of increased cost recovery from leaseholders, combined with higher than anticipated service charges for some of the new build schemes delivered in 2017/18, such as Virido, Clay Farm, where both expenditure and income budgets needed to be created to accurately record the activity now that final services charges for each scheme have been set.	(51,906)
Contributions towards Expenditure	Contributions towards expenditure were over-achieved by £93,300 and include the recovery of rechargeable repair costs, alongside other contributions received.	(93,317)
Other Income	Other income is over-achieved due to the recharge to capital for the administrative costs of the right to buy process and the costs recharged to the General Fund for shared amenities both being greater than budgeted.	(91,656)
Other		0
Total		(431,751)

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £
<i>HRA Interest, Premiums and Appropriations</i>		
Direct Revenue Funding of Capital Expenditure (DRF)	A marginally reduced demand on the use of revenue funding of capital was realised in 2017/18, due to slippage in the Housing Capital Investment Programme. This included the impact of delays in the new build, decent homes and other spend on the housing stock areas of investment. This will instead be required in 2017/18.	(94,791)
Transfer to or from Ear-Marked Reserves	The transfer from reserves for the cost of replacement of the housing IT system (£500,000) was not required in 2017/18, as the new supplier is yet to be selected. The net contribution to other HRA reserves was greater than anticipated in 2017/18.	389,104
Other		(8,882)
Total		285,431
Total for Housing Revenue Account		(1,282,028)

Housing Committee - Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Carry Forward Requests

Request to Carry Forward Housing Revenue Account Budgets from 2017/18 into 2018/19 and future years

Item		Request £
	Director - S Hemingway	
	Supervision and Management General	
1	Investment in activity to transform the Housing Service was not fully delivered in 2017/18. Carry forward is requested to allow further investment in 2018/19 to include training, business process change, additional staff input in some areas to tackle performance against desired target levels.	158,000
2	Resource identified for the HRA contribution to corporate and accommodation based changes was not called upon in 2017/18 in full , but is instead expected to be utilised in 2018/19 when many of the changes will now take place. This includes the moves associated with the office accommodation strategy, the HRA's contribution to the fund for the apprenticeship levy and the impact of corporate support service reviews.	245,900
	Supervision and Management Special	
	No carry forward requests from 2017/18 into 2018/19.	
	Repairs and Maintenance	
3	A carry forward of budget is requested to complete the 2017/18 external repair and paint programmes due to delays in the programme caused by a change in contractor coupled with the need to undertake remedial works following receipt of concrete condition survey data..	200,000
	Appropriations	
4	A marginally lower than anticipated use of revenue funding of capital was evident in 2017/18 as a direct result of underspending in the Housing Capital Investment Plan, predominantly relating to a delay in the delivery of new build schemes and underspending in both decent homes and other investment in the housing stock. This resource, in addition to other capital funding resources, will instead be required in 2018/19 to fund the deferred expenditure.	94,790
	Total Carry Forward Requests for Housing Revenue Account / Housing Scrutiny Committee	698,690

2017/18 Housing Capital Investment Plan - HRA & General Fund Housing

	Original Budget £000's	Current Budget £000's	Outturn £000's	Variance £000's	Re-phase Spend £000's	Notes	Re-Phasing Year				Budget
							2018/19 £000's	2019/20 £000's	2020/21 £000's	Post 2020/21 £000's	2018/19 £000's
General Fund Housing Capital Spend											
Investment in Non-HRA Affordable Housing	0	0	0	0			0	0	0	0	0
Other General Fund Housing	797	800	769	(31)		1	0	0	0	0	803
Total General Fund Housing Capital Spend	797	800	769	(31)	0		0	0	0	0	803
HRA Capital Spend											
Decent Homes Programme	6,170	4,530	3,271	(1,259)	1,056	2	357	0	0	699	6,374
Other Spend on HRA Stock	2,042	1,716	887	(829)	235	3	235	0	0	0	2,867
HRA New Build	34,457	7,545	6,162	(1,383)	1,094	4	1,094	0	0	0	26,742
HRA Acquisition	0	5,590	5,434	(156)	156	5	156	0	0	0	156
City Homes Estate Improvement Programme	0	21	21	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Sheltered Housing Capital Investment	1,796	2,137	2,167	30	(30)	6	(30)	0	0	0	3,398
Other HRA Capital Spend	830	516	212	(304)	116	7	116	0	0	0	1,121
Inflation Allowance	1,171	1,171	0	(1,171)	1,171	8	1,171	0	0	0	2,743
Total HRA Capital Spend	46,466	23,226	18,154	(5,072)	3,798		3,099	0	0	699	43,401
Total Housing Capital Spend	47,263	24,026	18,923	(5,103)	3,798		3,099	0	0	699	44,204
Housing Capital Resources											
Right to Buy Receipts (General Use)	(305)	(527)	(285)	242	0	9	0	0	0	0	(532)
Right to Buy Receipts (Retained for New Build / Acquisition)	(8,464)	(3,220)	(6,723)	(3,503)	(287)	9	(287)	0	0	0	(5,355)
Right to Buy Receipts (Debt Set-Aside)	0	0	(1,419)	(1,419)	0	9	0	0	0	0	0
Other Capital Receipts (Land and Dwellings)	0	0	(1,085)	(1,085)	0	10	0	0	0	0	0
MRA / MRR	(18,551)	(8,293)	(7,111)	1,182	(1,182)	11	(1,182)	0	0	0	(18,245)
Client Contributions	0	0	(417)	(417)	0	12	0	0	0	0	0
Direct Revenue Financing of Capital	(926)	(4,614)	(4,519)	95	(95)	13	(95)	0	0	0	(598)
Other Capital Resources (Grants / Shared Ownership / Loan Repayments / Prudential Borrowing)	(18,145)	(5,974)	(4,022)	1,952	(2,867)	14	(2,867)	0	0	0	(15,601)
	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Total Housing Capital Resources	(46,391)	(22,628)	(25,581)	(2,953)	(4,431)		(4,431)	0	0	0	(40,331)
Net (Surplus) / Deficit of Resources	872	1,398	(6,658)	(8,056)			(1,332)	0	0	699	3,873
Capital Balances b/f	(29,165)	(29,165)	(29,165)								(11,142)
Use of / (Contribution to) Balances in Year	872	1,398	(6,658)				(1,332)	0	0	699	3,873
Set-aside for future Debt Redemption	8,411	8,411	8,296			8					
Ear-marked for specific Retained Right to Buy Receipts 1-4-1 Investment	12,536	12,536	16,385			8					
Residual capital resources remaining to fund future Housing Investment Programme	(7,346)	(6,820)	(11,142)								(7,269)

Changes between original and final budgets may be made to reflect:

- rephased capital spend from the previous financial year
- rephased capital spend into future financial periods
- approval of new capital programmes and projects

and are detailed and approved:

- in the June/July committee cycle (outturn reporting and carry forward requests)
- in September (as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy - MTFS)
- in the January committee cycle (as part of the Budget-Setting Report, BSR)
- via technical adjustments/virements throughout the year

Notes to the Housing Capital Investment Plan

Note	Reason for Variance
1	Overspending of £92,000 in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants was predominantly due to an agreement with CLG to receive additional grant in the latter part of the year, but to pass it across to Huntingdonshire District Council as we did not have sufficient demand in Cambridge. £70,000 of the overspend is therefore related to this and is directly offset by grant received. The overspend in DFG's has been more than offset by underspending in Private Sector Grants and Loans of £126,000, where demand has significantly reduced in recent years.
2	A net underspend of £1,259,000 in decent homes expenditure during 2017/18 is a combination of under and overspending against the specific decent homes elements. Overspending in wall structure (£66,000), HHSRS (£29,000), and bathrooms (£8,000), is more than offset by underspending in kitchens (£15,000), roofing works (£71,000), roof structure (£175,000), re-wiring (£481,000), energy and insulation works (£52,000), central heating (£392,000), sulphate (£27,000), other health and safety (£45,000), decent homes work to new builds (£219,000) and external doors (£32,000). These variances are before accounting for leaseholder income, which is reported separately. Contractor overheads shows an apparent overspend of £72,000 against decent homes works, but is offset by an underspend in overheads against other HRA works of £159,000 and in capitalised officer fees with an apparent overspend of £73,000, offset by an underspend of £114,000 in other HRA works. Re-phasing of underspending in 2017/18 into 2018/19 is requested in respect of energy improvements (£9,000), roofing works (£71,000), other health and safety works (£45,000), central heating and boilers (£200,000) and external doors (£32,000) Re-phasing into 2022/23 is requested in respect of re-wiring (£480,000) and decent homes works to new build homes (£219,000) when the budget is expected to be required.
3	A net underspend of £829,000 was evident in 2017/18, combining underspending in a number of areas where work is still required and funds will need to be re-phased into 2018/19, including; disabled adaptations (£436,000, with £85,000 to be re-phased), asbestos removal works (£67,000, with £50,000 to be re-phased), communal area floor coverings (£42,000, with £40,000 to be re-phased), fire works (£62,000, with £60,000 to be re-phased) and hard-surfacing works (£15,000 with no re-phasing) Overspending in garages of £55,000, lifts of £4,000 and other communal area works of £7,000 was reported at year end.
4	The net underspend of £1,383,000 in the new build programme in 2017/18 relates to a number of delays in delivery in areas of the programme, coupled with spending ahead of profile in a few schemes. Net re-phasing of £1,094,000 is required. Re-phasing of budget for 2015/16 Garage Sites (£465,000) Anstey Way (£160,000), Akeman Street (£12,000), Ventress Close (£430,000), Queensmeadow (£7,000), Wulfstan Way (£21,000), Colville Garages (£22,000 and Gunhild Way (£11,000), is partially offset by negative re-phasing where spend is ahead of profile for Hills Avenue (£6,000), Kendal Way (£7,000) and Markham Close (£11,000). The profile of spending on all of these schemes will be reviewed again as part of the HRA Medium Term Financial Strategy. A key area of underspending in 2017/18 was the final position for the scheme at Clay Farm, which resulted in a saving of £397,000 at completion.
5	Under delegated authority, the Strategic Director approved a budget for the acquisition of homes on the open market for use within the HRA to enable utilisation of retained right to buy receipts in a timely manner. 21 homes were acquired in the year from a budget of £5,590,000, with £156,000 of this budget requested to be re-phased into 2018/19 to complete works to ensure that the 12 flats acquired at Tuscan Court receive the remedial works required to make them ready to let.
6	Spending in 2017/18 was £30,000 ahead of that profiled in respect of the budget for work to re-develop Ditchburn Place and as a result the budget in 2018/19 will be reduced accordingly. Phase I of the re-development of this schemes has now completed, with the ultimate result being the re-provision of flats for extra care housing for a minimum of 30 residents, but with the capacity for utilising all 50 units for this purpose in the future if required.

7	A net underspend of £304,000 in this area of the programme comprises a lower level of activity in respect of shared ownership re-purchase in 2017/18 (£119,000 under budget), and underspending due to delays in the project to re-locate Stores to Cowley Road (£123,000). Funding to upgrade aspects of housing IT system has not been utilised in 2017/18, due to the decision to re-procure the entire system, with a request to re-phase the underspend of £23,000 into 2018/19 to meet any required preliminary investment. The balance of funding for projects to introduce the Cambridge Public Sector IT Network (£6,000) will not now be required, nor will funding for works to HRA commercial premises (£32,000).
8	The allowance in the programme for inflation to costs was not required to be allocated across expenditure heads in 2017/18 as underspending across the decent homes, other investment in the housing stock and new build budgets meant that the additional funding was not required. It is proposed that this budget is re-phased into 2018/19 to ensure that sufficient budget is available in year to meet the costs of any deferred work, particularly in the new build area, where tender outcomes are awaited and CIP costs under new affordable housing agreements are still to be finalised following procurement by Hill Investment Partnership on a scheme specific basis.
9	47 properties were sold in total during 2017/18. £285,000 of the capital receipt is available for general use (after all costs have been deducted from each receipt), while £1,419,000 of the overall capital receipt is identified as set-aside to be offset against the debt associated with the unit no longer owned. A further £6,723,000 of right to buy receipts have been retained by the local authority in 2017/18, but must be re-invested in financing up to 30% of additional social housing units, provided this is done within a 3 year time frame. The authority is required to invest a significant sum during 2018/19 to ensure that it meets its responsibilities under the retention agreement, and this may mean the acquisition of further dwellings on the open market, if new build schemes or land acquisitions associated with new build schemes do not progress as anticipated, to avoid passing the receipts to central government.
10	Capital receipts totalling £1,085,000 in respect of the sale of property on the open market were accounted for in 2017/18. The receipts have been, or will be used to fund future investment in affordable housing.
11	The major repairs reserve was used to finance capital expenditure in the housing stock in 2017/18, including investment in decent homes work, other investment in the housing stock and investment in new homes, particularly where an element of re-provision is required. Where less of this funding was utilised in 2017/18 than anticipated, it will instead be utilised in 2018/19.
12	Income was recovered from leaseholders in 2017/18 in relation to their share of the cost of major improvements undertaken as part of the decent homes programme (£369,000) and was also received from private residents in relation to contributions towards DFG's or private sector housing repair grants (£48,000).
13	Due to marginal slippage in the housing capital plan in 2017/18, the use of revenue funding for capital purposes was marginally less than anticipated. A request to adjust the use of revenue funding of capital expenditure in 2018/19, resulting in the deferred use of £95,000, will ensure that there is sufficient funding to meet the re-phased expenditure requested above.
14	Receipts from the re-sale of shared ownership dwellings in 2017/18 were considerably higher than estimated with 8 re-sales or staircasing payments received. Receipts from the sale of shared ownership units at Scholar's Court were also higher than estimated, with forecasts having been based upon the purchase of the smallest share possible until we had any evidence of the proportions being acquired for the first new scheme of this type. The Disabled Facilities Grant was higher than expected due to the award of £70,000 of additional grant which was passed on to Huntingdonshire District Council. These over-achievements in income were more than offset by recognition of no receipts against the expected £2,199,000 for shared ownership sales at Clay Farm, as no units were sold in 2017/18 and the ability to claim £387,000 less Devolution Grant than expected due to slippage in the New Build Programme.

HRA Debts Written Off in 2017/18Write Off Cases by Category

Write Off Category	No. of Cases	Value Written Off
Debtor deceased	76	56,750.29
Bankruptcy / Insolvency	3	1,787.52
Debt Relief Order	4	3,161.11
Debt is Statute barred	4	9,773.60
Debtor untraceable	22	45,611.47
Uneconomical to Pursue / Recovery Procedures Exhausted	19	11,133.48
Balance of debt is small	2	16.63
Imprisonment	4	4,152.23
Unable to substantiate debt	1	102.55
Other special circumstances	5	3,007.06
Debt re-instated	6	(2,224.03)
Total Written Off (Net)	146	133,271.91

Write Off Cases by Value Banding

Write Off Value Band	No. of Cases	Value Written Off
Less than £100.00	17	884.91
£100.00 to £199.99	14	1,995.81
£200.00 to £299.99	4	916.46
£300.00 to £399.99	10	3,640.28
£400.00 to £499.99	20	8,999.27
£500.00 to £749.99	22	13,446.70
£750.00 to £999.99	12	10,498.25
£1,000.00 to £1,499.99	10	12,384.25
£1,500.00 to £1,999.99	12	19,936.06
£2,000.00 to £2,999.99	10	24,477.74
£3,000.00 to £3,999.99	5	18,131.90
£4,000.00 to £4,999.99	2	8,925.92
Greater than £5,000.00	2	11,258.39
Debt re-instated	6	(2,224.03)
Total Written Off (Net)	146	133,271.91

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Item

Housing Scrutiny Committee

2017/18 Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances – Housing Portfolio

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by:

Julia Hovells, Principal Accountant

Tel: 01954 - 713071

Email: julia.hovells@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

1.1 This report presents, for the General Fund Housing portfolio :

- a) A summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the final budget for 2017/18 (outturn position)
- b) Revenue and capital budget variances with explanations
- c) Specific requests to carry forward funding available from budget underspends into 2018/19.

2. Recommendations

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and make known their views on the following proposals for consideration by the Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources at the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 2 July 2018:

- a) Carry forward requests totalling £348,120 revenue funding from 2017/18 to 2018/19, as detailed in **Appendix C**, noting that none are proposed for this portfolio on this occasion.
- b) Carry forward requests of £200,000 in capital resources from 2017/18 to 2018/19 to fund re-phased net capital spending, as detailed in **Appendix D**.

3. Background

Revenue Outturn

- 3.1 The overall revenue budget outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account is given in the table below.

2016/17 £'000	Housing Revenue Account Summary	2017/18 £'000	% Final Budget
3,438	Original Budget	3,462	96.3
0	Adjustment – Prior Year Carry Forwards	57	1.6
(89)	Adjustment - Service Restructure	-	-
(1)	Adjustment – Earmarked Reserves	70	1.9
0	Other Adjustments	7	0.2
3,348	Final Budget	3,596	100.0
3,196	Outturn	3,193	88.8
(152)	(Under) / Overspend for the year	(403)	(11.2)
57	Carry Forward Requests	348	9.7
(95)	Resulting Variation for the HGF	(55)	(1.5)
0	Other variances	0	0.0
(95)	Variance and reduced use of General Fund Reserves	(55)	(1.5)

- 3.1 **Appendix A** shows original and final budgets for the year (with the movements summarised in the above table) and compares the final budget with the outturn position for the HRA for 2017/18. The original revenue budget for 2017/18 was approved by the Executive Councillor for Housing on 18 January 2017.
- 3.2 **Appendix B** provides explanations of the main variance.
- 3.3 **Appendix C** lists revenue carry forward requests.
- 3.4 Net underspending of £402,476 was predominantly due to the receipt of Flexible Homeless Support Grant in 2017/18, with the agreed intention that it will be used to fund expenditure across multiple years, with a carry forward request for £282,800, coupled with underspending in Housing Strategy (£102,596) as a direct result of vacant or partially vacant posts and carry forward of Community Housing Fund Grant from 2016/17, which will not be spent until 2018/19. Underspending was partially offset by some overspending, particularly at 451 Newmarket Road (£40,604), where considerable maintenance works were required in 2017/18.

Capital Outturn

- 3.5 The overall capital budget outturn position for the General Fund Housing Portfolio is given in the table below. **Appendix D** shows the outturn position by scheme and programme with explanations of variances.

2016/17 £'000	General Fund Housing Portfolio Capital Summary	2017/18 £'000	% Final Budget
5,992	Final Budget	3,095	100.0
2,900	Outturn	3,151	101.8
(3,092)	Variation - (Under)/Overspend for the year	56	1.8
3,091	Re-phasing Requests	200	6.5
(1)	Variance	256	8.3

- 3.6 Resource of £200,000 to create an Empty Homes Loans Fund was not utilised in 2016/17. Due to the nature of the scheme, which intends to recycle the £200,000 in the form of loans awarded and later repaid, the budget is requested as a carry forward into 2017/18 to allow progression of the scheme.
- 3.7 The project to deliver a new community centre on the Clay Farm site has been delayed during 2016/17 due to construction issues. Now resolved, work on site has re-commenced, with completion now anticipated to be in mid-July 2017.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The variance from the final revenue budget (see above), would result in a decreased use of General Fund Reserves of £402,476. After re-phasing resource for capital projects financed from revenue, and carry forward of revenue resource to fund deferred revenue expenditure, the overall variance and decreased use of General Fund Reserves is £54,356.

A decision not to approve a carry forward request may impact on officers' ability to deliver the service or scheme in question and this could have staffing, equality and poverty, environmental, procurement, consultation and communication and/or community safety implications.

(b) Staffing Implications

There are no direct staffing implications associated with this report..

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

There are no new equality or poverty implications associated with this report.

(d) Environmental Implications

There are no new environmental implications arising from this report.

(e) Procurement Implications

There are no new procurement implications arising from this report.

(f) Consultation and Communication

Consultation with tenant and leaseholder representatives is an integral part of the Housing Scrutiny Committee process.

(g) Community Safety

There are no community safety implications arising from this report.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Directors Variance Explanations – March 2018
- Budgetary Control Reports to 31 March 2018
- Capital Monitoring Reports – March 2018

7. Appendices

The following items, where applicable, are included for discussion:

Appendix	Proposal Type	Included
A	Revenue Summary for this portfolio	✓
B	Revenue Major Variances for this portfolio	✓
C	Carry Forward Requests for this portfolio	✓
D	Capital Summary for this portfolio	✓

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

Julia Hovells, Principal Accountant

Telephone: 01954 - 713071 or email: julia.hovells@cambridge.gov.uk.

O:\accounts\Committee Reports & Papers\Housing Scrutiny Committee\2018 June\HGF\Final\Housing (HGF) - Committee Outturn Report 2017-18.docx

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Revenue Budget - 2017/18 Outturn

Service Grouping	Original Budget £	Final Budget £	Outturn	Variation Increase / (Decrease) £	Carry Forward Requests - see Appendix C £	Net Variance £
Housing General Fund						
Housing Strategy, Home Aid, Housing Aid / Needs						
Housing Advice Service	854,920	880,580	898,194	17,614	0	17,614
Town Hall Lettings	66,900	104,290	104,345	55	0	55
Housing Strategy	161,610	213,450	110,854	(102,596)	41,920	(60,676)
Home Aid / Home Improvement Grants	55,460	55,460	49,336	(6,124)	0	(6,124)
Shared Home Improvement Agency		0	0	0	0	0
	1,138,890	1,253,780	1,162,729	(91,051)	41,920	(49,131)
Housing General Fund, Other						
Homelessness Costs	195,400	181,900	195,402	13,502	0	13,502
Flexible Homeless Support Grant	0	0	(323,869)	(323,869)	306,200	(17,669)
Choice Based Lettings (Revenue Running Costs)	26,270	26,270	2,587	(23,683)	0	(23,683)
Grants to Housing Agencies	777,880	714,830	719,619	4,789	0	4,789
Bermuda Road Garages	(5,960)	(5,960)	(7,571)	(1,611)	0	(1,611)
Racial Harassment	44,410	44,410	44,072	(338)	0	(338)
Growth - Community Services	63,570	63,570	63,271	(299)	0	(299)
Strategic Housing GF Recharges	(16,670)	(17,630)	(17,630)	0	0	0
Housing Development Agency (H.D.A)	(110)	(110)	(110)	0	0	0
125 / 451 Newmarket Road - Revenue costs	(12,720)	(12,710)	27,894	40,604	0	40,604
Contribution to / from HRA	487,720	487,720	506,582	18,862	0	18,862
Syrian Re-Settlement	0	0		0	0	0
Dual Diagnosis Street Team	0	0	1,144	1,144	0	1,144
Reducing Pensioner Poverty	0	15,900	15,903	3	0	3
	1,559,790	1,498,190	1,227,294	(270,896)	306,200	35,304
Total Housing General Fund	2,698,680	2,751,970	2,390,023	(361,947)	348,120	(13,827)
Environment - Environmental Health						
Housing Standards	527,110	555,110	559,432	4,322	0	4,322
Property Accreditation	68,140	68,140	61,364	(6,776)	0	(6,776)
Energy Officer	167,970	220,640	182,565	(38,075)	0	(38,075)
Total Environment	763,220	843,890	803,361	(40,529)	0	(40,529)
Total Net Budget	3,461,900	3,595,860	3,193,384	(402,476)	348,120	(54,356)

Changes between original and final budgets may be made to reflect:

- portfolio and departmental restructuring
- approved budget carry forwards from the previous financial year
- technical adjustments, including changes to the capital accounting regime
- virements approved under the Council's constitution
- additional external revenue funding not originally budgeted

and are detailed and approved:

- in the January committee cycle (as part of the Budget-Setting Report)
- in the June/July committee cycle (outturn reporting and carry forward requests)
- in September (as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, MTFS)
- via technical adjustments/virements throughout the year

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Scrutiny Committee

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £	Contact
Housing Strategy, Home Aid, Housing Advice, General Fund and Other Housing			
Flexible Homeless Support Grant	Flexible Homeless Support Grant was awarded to the authority by Central Government to assist in meeting the increased statutory requirements of the new Homeless Reduction Act. As part of the budget process in January / February 2018 it was agreed that the resource would be utilised to fund additional staffing across a number of years to allow the authority to fulfil its obligations.	(323,869)	David Greening
Housing Strategy	Underspending in Housing Strategy was due to the Development Officer having been seconded to South Cambridgeshire District Council for the entire year, a 7 hour a week vacancy in the Housing Strategy Manager post, held for funding research and government grant for community housing projects, which was not required to be spent in-year. The grant is being used to fund CLT East to work with community groups and offer grants to groups. Request made to carry unspent community housing grant forward into 2018/19.	(102,596)	Helen Reed
125 / 451 Newmarket Road	Rent income under-achieved and significant maintenance works required in 2017/18, particularly at 451 Newmarket Road, where decoration and flat roofing works were required.	40,604	David Greening
Choice Based Lettings (Revenue Running Costs)	The revenue running costs for the Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings system were less than anticipated in 2017/18, with the contribution to South Cambridgeshire District Council for administering the scheme and IT costs both less than budgeted.	(23,683)	David Greening
Contributions to / from the HRA	The recharge from the HRA to the General Fund for the cost of upkeep to shared amenities was greater than budgeted in 2017/18, due in part to the cost of amenity street lighting.	18,862	Julia Hovells
Housing Advice Service	Expenditure in the Housing Advice Service for 2017/18 exceeded the budget, predominantly due to the need to employ additional staff resource to respond to the requirements of the new Homeless Reduction Act. This expenditure was funded using Flexible Homeless Support Grant, with the balance of the grant to be carried forward into 2018/19.	17,614	David Greening

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Scrutiny Committee

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Major Variances from Final Revenue Budgets

Service Grouping	Reason for Variance	Amount £	Contact
Other		11,121	
Total		(361,947)	
Environment - Environmental Health			
Energy Officer	The majority of the variance is due to Sharing Prosperity Activity that will continue in the new financial year. This funding will automatically be carried forward as per agreed process of the Sharing Prosperity Fund. The remaining variance is due to under activity as a result of priority given to other projects.	(38,075)	Jo Dicks
Other		(2,454)	
Total		(40,529)	
Total for Housing Portfolio		(402,476)	

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Revenue Budget 2017/18 - Carry Forward Requests

Request to Carry Forward Budgets from 2017/18 into 2018/19 and future years

Item		Request £	Contact
	Housing General Fund		
1	Community Housing Fund Grant awarded for promoting / developing community-led housing. A carry forward is requested to allow CLT East to work with community groups and to allow the award of grants to community groups to take projects forward.	41,920	Helen Reed
2	Flexible Homeless Grant and the Administrative Burden Grant are ring-fenced grants awarded to allow the authority to prepare for and meet the statutory demands resulting from the new Homeless Reduction Act. This funding will be required across a number of financial years to meet the requirements under the Act..	306,200	David Greening
	Environment - Environmental Health		
3	No carry forward requests	0	
	Total Carry Forward Requests for General Fund Housing Portfolio	348,120	

General Fund Housing Portfolio / Housing Committee

Capital Budget 2017/18 - Outturn

Capital Ref	Description	Lead Officer	Original Budget £000	Final Budget £000	Outturn £000	Variance - Outturn compared to Final Budget £000	Re-phase Spend £000	Over / (Under) Spend £000	Variance Explanation / Comments
SC597 - 100048 (38282)	Empty Homes Loans Fund	Y O'Donnell	200	200	0	(200)	200	0	This is a holding account which is recycleable where empty property home owners borrow the loan to bring the property into occupation and then and repay it back. There were no applications to borrow out of this fund in 2017/18.
PV664 - 100022 (38039)	Clay Farm Community Centre Phase 2 - Construction	D Kaye	2,895	2,895	3,151	256	0	256	The community centre project is now complete, has been handed over and is now operational. The scheme overspent in total at completion due to a number of contractual and technical issues experienced during the project.
Total Provisions			3,095	3,095	3,151	56	200	256	
Total for Housing			3,095	3,095	3,151	56	200	256	

Changes between original and final budgets may be made to reflect:

- rephased capital spend from the previous financial year
- rephased capital spend into future financial periods
- approval of new capital programmes and projects

and are detailed and approved:

- in the June/July committee cycle (outturn reporting and carry forward requests)
- in September (as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, MTFS)
- in the January committee cycle (as part of the Budget-Setting Report, BSR)
- via technical adjustments/virements throughout the year



Item

NEW SOCIAL HOUSING, COMMUNITY CENTRE AND COMMERCIAL UNITS AKEMAN STREET

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by:

Mark Wilson of Housing Development Agency

Tel: 01223 – 457940 Email: mark.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Arbury

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The City Council has agreed a devolution deal with government to deliver 500 new Council homes over 5 years. These will be delivered as rented housing, let in accordance with the Council rent policy (where rent and service charges together do not exceed Local Housing Allowance levels). Homes will be owned and managed by Cambridge City Council and let on Cambridge City Council tenancies.
- 1.2 In 2016 the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee approved the setting up of the Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) as a mechanism for the Council to bring forward assets for development to provide sites for the delivery of new homes. This partnership brings with it the advantage of the experience and resources of the development partners and was established in January 2017.

- 1.4 At the Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Committee held on 9th October 2017 a mechanism for the development and delivery of sites with CIP was agreed and is being adopted for a number of sites.
- 1.5 The City Council has alternative procurement and delivery options which it is currently exploring and utilising for the delivery of affordable housing on sites in the City.
- 1.6 This report provides a revised scheme, with increased density, for the HRA site at 74-82 Akeman Street. The first iteration of the scheme, delivering 10 residential units was presented to Housing Scrutiny Committee in January 2016, with updates as part of the HRA Budget Setting Report and Development Programme in January 2018.
- 1.7 The development was approved in principle in January 2016; with a commitment to return with a revised scheme once the outcome of the Community Centre provision review was available, ensuring that account was taken of any need for community facility provision in the area.
- 1.8 The report seeks approval for the delivery route and a revised capital budget for the scheme based on the indicative capacity study which has been undertaken for the site and the outline appraisals referenced in this report.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the indicative mix of the proposed scheme to include a mix of affordable housing (8 one bedroom flats and 6 two bedroom flats), 3 replacement commercial units and a replacement community centre.
- 2.2 Note the replacement of 82 Akeman Street with a City Council managed centre which was approved as priority as part of the Community Centres Strategy as the evidence base supports it being a strategically important centre due to its area of high need for outreach

- 2.3 Approve the indicative capital budget for the scheme of **£3,731,180** to cover all of the construction costs, professional fees and associated fees to deliver a scheme that meets an identified housing need in Cambridge City as well as re-providing the community spaces and commercial units. An indicative budget of £4,118,680 was included in the Housing Capital Investment Plan approved in January 2018, recognising the desire to be in a position to proceed with the higher density scheme.
- 2.4 Approve that the site is offered to CIP to progress for development to deliver a scheme which will meet the strategic aims of the Council in the delivery of new social housing. The scheme will be developed in accordance with the CIP process which was approved at Strategy & Resources Committee on 9th October 2017.
- 2.5 Note that the Executive Councillor has a delegated authority to approve the transfer of land to CIP for the redevelopment of the site at a later date. This will be subject to CIP demonstrating that its development proposal meets the Council's strategic aims for the site and the development and delivery milestones are in accordance with the CIP Approvals Process agreed at Strategy & Resources Committee on 9th October 2017.
- 2.6 Approve the cost of the community centre re-provision in line with Local Plan policy 5/11 (Protection of Existing Facilities), to be met from the HRA as part of the overall scheme cost, as there will be a planning requirement (as part of the Local Plan) to re-provide this to allow the housing development to proceed.
- 2.7 Approve the cost of the commercial provision to be met from the HRA, as the existing commercial offering on the site is HRA owned, with the assumption that the ongoing revenue stream will also fall to the HRA to replace that lost through the vacation and demolition of the existing provision. Consideration has been given to the General Fund acquiring the commercial units either at the outset or in the future, and this report recommends this option is considered in the future, if deemed appropriate, with all the required transactions and resulting impact between the two funds fully quantified

3. Background

3.1. There are a number of the Council's key Corporate Objectives that this development opportunity addresses:

3.1.1 **Tackling the City's housing crisis.** As the main provider of social and affordable housing in Cambridge, the Council has established a new build programme to:

- a) Provide additional social housing to meet housing needs in Cambridge and to replace social housing lost through Right to Buy.
- b) Replace existing council social housing that no longer meets current expectations or is becoming less popular with residents due to size or being hard to heat (increasing the impact of fuel poverty).
- c) Build new house types that will better meet the overall mix of Affordable Housing needed in the future.
- d) Improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing.

3.1.2 **Delivering sustainable prosperity for Cambridge and fair shares for all.** The inclusion of replacement community facilities ensures:

- a) The review of community based activities and facilities is delivered against to support those in the greatest need.

3.1.3 **Protecting essential services and transforming council delivery.** As well as delivering much needed new homes, this development includes replacement commercial property that achieves:

- a) The opportunity to generate more income from the property portfolio through investment.

3.1.4 **Tackling climate change and making Cambridge cleaner and greener.** All new developments achieve sustainability standards that support the residents and users in keeping energy use as low as possible.

- a) Investment in sustainable construction assists with reducing fuel poverty and reduces CO² emissions.

- 3.2 As part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority devolution deal, the Council now has funding to support the delivery of 500 new Council rented homes.

Officers have identified potential sites which could be developed to provide social housing and have categorised new schemes opportunities in terms of land ownership as follows;

- a. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land with existing housing
- b. HRA garage and small in-fill sites
- c. General Fund sites
- d. Sites owned by other public sector bodies
- e. Sites in private ownership

As part of the devolution deal Cambridge City Council has committed to providing 500 new homes over 5 years; developing the site at Akeman Street will deliver affordable housing which will contribute to reaching this target.

The site at Akeman Street is identified in the Development Programme under category a) above. The new social housing which it is proposed will be delivered on the site has been assessed as being for rent at Affordable Rents set at rent no greater than the Local Housing Allowance levels.

- 3.3 The potential to redevelop this site was first highlighted by Property Services in 2015, when some of the leases for the commercial units had expired and negotiations would be required if new leases were to be considered. As one of the units was already void, with significant maintenance work required to the block and the garden areas it was deemed more economical to redevelop the site and increase the housing provision in the area. The parade of shops suffers from a lack of footfall, with difficulties letting vacant shops and ongoing issues managing the gardens and store areas at the rear of the shops.

Further discussions have taken place with housing officers and local Councillors, confirming the area does experience some anti-social behaviour and that a redevelopment of the site would enhance the environment locally. There was some concern regarding the community facility, which is well used by local groups. The main limitation with the current community facility, is the constraint brought about by it being located over 2 floors and not being fully accessible.

In conclusion, it is deemed that both the commercial units and the flats are no longer fit for purpose and would be costly to bring up to minimum standards required for future letting.

A replacement scheme would need to incorporate a new community facility, located entirely on the ground floor; commercial space of a similar size and quantity as currently let and a net gain of affordable housing. **Appendix 1** provides a location plan of the site.

3.4 Local Housing Need

There is a recognised need for more affordable housing across the city. The table below demonstrates the number of households on the Housing Needs Register as of January 2018. There are currently 2231 households in need of a 1 or 2 bedroom property across the city; progressing this scheme will help in meeting the needs of those on the waiting list.

Cambridge City	1bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
	1585	646	184	49

Located in an area of existing housing stock, the development would bring some smaller units to the area to support sustainable communities.

4. Site Details

4.1 Site Constraints and Opportunities



- The site is 0.21 hectares in size (2100m²)
- There is currently a route to the perimeter that provides access to an electricity sub-station and therefore any proposals will need to consider this in the design and layout and must be retained.
- The site is surrounded by existing dwellings. Those hatched purple on the above plan are in CCC ownership and those hatched green are privately owned.
- There are 2 No. businesses currently operating from the site and negotiations will be required to locate alternative premises as required.
- The community centre currently on site will need to be provided in a temporary location for the duration of the works.

4.2 The following surveys and investigations have been undertaken as part of the feasibility work for investigating the viability of the site for development:

Air Quality
 Arboricultural Impact Assessment
 Flood Risk
 Ecology – including bat survey
 Flood Risk
 Party Wall matters

Underground Services Transport Assessment

The key issues identified from these investigations confirm the need for further invasive ground and soil investigations as well as more detailed examination of the existing building for potential asbestos, following vacant possession and prior to any demolition. Following early identification of the issues there are strategies in place to manage and mitigate the impact on timescales and costs.

4.3 Planning Feedback

Early advice was sought from planning consultants in relation to the planning opportunities and constraints on this site including, but not limited to flood risk, highways, residential amenity and heritage considerations.

Issues arising from the planning appraisal undertaken are noted below:

- The site is identified as a local retail centre in the 2006 Cambridge Local Plan and therefore there is likely to be resistance to the loss of this amenity.
- Consideration needed of ecological issues including potential for roosting bats in current buildings and the number and types of trees and hedges located on the site perimeter.

Following Pre-app meetings held between the HDA team and the planners the following feedback has been received:

- Inclusion of the community facility and commercial space and additional residential development is considered acceptable for the site.
- Consideration needs to be given to building heights and scale.
- Additional work to ensure incorporation of bin stores, bike storage and car parking to serve the new properties.

The HDA team is also working with County Council Highways officers to explore the existing informal parking to the front that serves as visitor parking for the commercial units and community centre and includes a disabled access space.

4.4 Site Options

As part of the feasibility study and options analysis work undertaken in assessing the viability of delivering affordable housing on the site, a number of options were considered which are set out below.

4.4.1 Retain as existing

- Currently 2 No. commercial units are void (1 long term) and 2 occupied with low rental income.
- Commercial properties require significant work to improve the standard of accommodation that may increase the demand and to meet energy efficiency standards that became more onerous from 1st April 2018.
- Reduced foot fall in the area impacts on sustainability of the current shops and in relation to the proximity to the local centre on Histon Road.
- There are only two City Homes tenants on the site currently.

4.4.2 Develop for HRA housing only

- Addresses the housing need identified in an area of existing housing stock, delivering units which will contribute towards the devolution funded new build programme.
- Increasing the housing stock and rental receipts provides a financial platform to support future development opportunities for the City Council's HRA stock.
- A scheme that delivers 100% housing would displace the existing community facility that has been identified as an important local service and is well used. If this is not incorporated within the development an alternative location would need to be identified in the vicinity.
- The loss of commercial units from the scheme would need approval from the planners due to the designation as a local centre. Feedback from planners suggests that this would be strongly opposed.

4.4.3 Develop as a mixed tenure Scheme

- Addresses the housing need identified in an area of existing housing stock, delivering a net gain of units which will contribute towards the devolution funded new build programme.
- Delivers a purpose built community facility entirely at ground level to meet an identified need in the local area, with associated private outdoor space, a significant improvement on current facilities.
- Provision of modern commercial accommodation to replace the existing units, including A5 (hot food takeaway) premises that will meet and exceed the new minimum energy efficiency standards for the longer term benefit of the council.

From the options considered in this section, option 4.4.3 is the most viable and supportable and responds directly to the corporate objective of tackling the city's housing crisis and delivering our planning objectives.

4.5 Design and Sustainability

An affordable housing scheme would be based on the Council's adopted design standards and the Cambridge Sustainability Housing Design Guide (link [here](#)). CIP has adopted these design requirements as its minimum standard.

There is a need to develop in accordance with the current and emerging Local Plan. Therefore, to ensure sustainability of communities the preservation of commercial units has been identified as a requirement for this scheme to be considered further. The current 2006 Local Plan states:

“District and Local Centres serve an important function, providing the ability to shop close to where people live and work. They help to meet day-to-day needs, thus reducing the need to travel and dependence on the private car. Additional development in these centres should cater mostly for current users and other local people, increasing the viability of the local centre. It should not be of a scale to significantly increase traffic or have any detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the City Centre.”

5. Financial Implications

Developing for HRA Housing

5.1 Site Abnormal Costs

There are some site specific abnormal costs which need to be considered:

- Additional expenditure is required in the land assembly to address decant costs for tenants and compensation for commercial tenants. Anticipated to be in the region of £40,000 in total.
- Potential costs to cover the provision of community space in alternative locations. This could be hiring third party facilities locally or the use of alternative premises for the duration of the works. Anticipated costs of £20,000 have been assumed.

5.2 Development and Delivery Options

As part of the scheme viability appraisal, consideration has been given to the alternative options available to the HRA in order to achieve the delivery of new affordable housing as identified in 4.4.3 above.

5.2.1 Procurement of a contractor through a traditional tender process to be employed on a JCT Design and Build Contract

In accordance with Cambridge City Council's procurement requirements, a tender process would be conducted through Due North.

- It is anticipated that this will take in the region of 6 months from receipt of a planning approval until a contractor is identified and appointed.
- The up-front milestones and costs associated with obtaining a planning approval will need to be allowed for and met by the council.
- Planning Permission is expected to take a minimum of 4 months from submission and validation. It is unlikely that work will start on site for a further 6 - 8 weeks after the appointment of the contractor, to allow for the discharge of pre-commencement planning conditions and contractor's mobilisation.
- Assuming a planning submission was made in July 2018 and factoring in the timescales referred to above a realistic start on site could be June 2019 for demolition.

5.2.2 Procurement of a contractor using the South Cambridgeshire District Council Framework

SCDC have a framework in place of approved contractors that could be approached to tender for this development opportunity. However, timescales are likely to be similar to procuring through Due North. It should be noted that a framework does not guarantee that suitable submissions will be made or there will be sufficient interest and therefore timescales are indicative only.

5.2.3 In-house construction by Estates and Facilities

Estates and Facilities have recently completed construction of 2 No. 2 bed houses on a site at Uphall Road. An additional site at Kendal Way has been identified and works are expected to start at this scheme in spring 2018.

- The process of achieving planning permission would still be up to 4 months and would need to be managed with additional professional input and associated professional fees.
- Assuming a planning application was made in July 2018 a start on site could possibly be achieved in March 2019.
- This delivery option is not considered to be appropriate at this time for the Akeman Street site due to the complexity and size of the development, which is significantly larger than other schemes currently being progressed through this route.

5.2.4 Offer the site to CIP for development

In accordance with the CIP Process approved at S+R Committee on 9th October 2017, sites can be considered for development with the Council's Investment Partner, subject to Executive Councillor approval. The benefits of this process are highlighted below.

- It is anticipated economies of scale will be achieved when multiple sites are developed in succession/concurrently and delivered as a bundle of sites with a phased delivery. CIP is currently working on the development of 5 other HRA sites, adding this site to the delivery programme could contribute to a reduction in overheads and prelims costs across the programme.

- There are programme benefits to be considered as schemes developed with CIP will utilise existing supply chains and reduce delivery timescales.
- Developing schemes with CIP shares risk and creates an opportunity to progress detailed design whilst a scheme is still in the planning system.
- A target date for the submission of a planning application for the site is July 2018. Based on a planning determination period of 13 weeks from validation it is likely that a start on site can be achieved in January 2019 for demolition.
- Time constraints and the need to expend both Right to Buy receipts and progress with Devolution funded development create significant programme and delivery challenges. Working with CIP to deliver the scheme provides a development and delivery vehicle which will mitigate potential programme risks and expedite the financial spend.

5.3 Budget / Funding

The indicative capital budget of £4,118,680 approved as part of the HRA Budget Setting Report in January 2018 is sufficient to meet the full cost of the revised scheme presented in this report, including the residential, commercial and community provision.

In addition to the construction costs the sums below include pre and post statutory planning fees, professional consultant fees, survey and site investigation costs and other associated costs, including HDA fees and SDLT where required. Allowance has also been made for additional costs of site specific abnormalities (total £60,000) mentioned above in 5.1.

Residential:

The total scheme costs for the provision of the residential element of the development are £2,913,712.

It is proposed that this element of the investment will be met from a combination of Right to Buy receipts of £743,246, (30% of the total indicative scheme costs, less decant and re-provision costs for the 2 replacement residential units), Devolution Grant of £1,734,240 (70% of the total indicative scheme costs, less decant and re-provision costs for

the 2 replacement residential units The costs of decant and re-provision of £436,226 will need to be met from HRA resources.

Community Centre:

The total scheme costs for the re-provision of the community centre are £391,856, which will be met by the HRA to ensure that planning requirements for the site are met.

There will continue to be costs associated with the running of a community facility, as currently expended, including staffing costs, which will continue to be met by the General Fund. The new facility will have the benefit of reduced maintenance and running costs which should offer some savings in the immediate future. As the new building will be purpose built there is an opportunity to increase income through additional hire charges. The inclusion of a sprung floor space will make the room suitable uses including dance and fitness classes.

Although a reduction in costs and an increase in income may be generated from reduced running costs and increased bookings, this will be of benefit to the General Fund and not the HRA.

If the HRA meets the cost of the up-front investment to comply with planning requirements, this investment can't be separately appraised, but is instead treated as an unavoidable cost associated with the delivery of the new homes.

Commercial Units:

The costs for the re-provision of the commercial spaces are £425,615, which will also be met from the HRA initially to ensure continued receipt of the ongoing revenue stream for the commercial units.

Assuming a rental income of £210 per square metre per annum can be achieved (equivalent to £10,500 per unit for 3 commercial units) the scheme has a financial payback in year 15 with a yield of 7.4%. This makes the investment financially viable for the HRA, and falls within the parameters for approval.

If the Council were to consider acquisition of the commercial units by the General Fund as an alternative option, the yield falls within the parameters of viability for Invest for Income and therefore would be suitable for addition to the General Fund portfolio.

The recommendation for the HRA to re-invest in the commercial units is borne from the desire to replace the revenue stream lost through vacation and demolition of the existing commercial units on the site, and to use the positive contribution to the HRA business plan to help offset the unavoidable, yet valuable, cost of the re-provision of the community facility.

Property Services will work with existing commercial tenants and prospective tenants to agree pre-let arrangements on the new units where possible.

Consolidated appraisal:

A consolidated appraisal of all three tenures shows that the commercial and residential elements of the development financially subsidise the delivery of the new community centre to a degree, giving an overall scheme payback of year 42 years (measured excluding the use of Devolution Grant). This is outside the usual parameters for an entirely new build site, but is to be expected when any element of re-provision is required. The consolidated appraisal assumes commercial rent of £31,500 for the site and rental income for the affordable homes at the local housing allowance of £129.83 for a 1 bedroom property and £149.31 for a two bedroom property to include all service charges.

5.4 Value for Money / CIP Programme Delivery

There is an overriding focus on achieving an effective and timely spend on both the devolution funding and RTB receipts. The offer of this site to the CIP delivery programme will provide the opportunity to manage development with an established team to contribute to the overall target of 500 new homes.

5.5 Temporary Provision of Community Facility during delivery

It has been identified that the Akeman Street community facility is an important and well used space that serves and supports a number of local community groups. Whilst redevelopment of the site will ensure a purpose built facility is provided to meet this demand, it is important that the needs of the community are maintained during construction. Consideration has been given to how this is best achieved and options including hiring a temporary building, utilising existing facilities locally from third party providers and making use of a vacant HRA property in the immediate vicinity have all been considered. All of these options

have a cost associated and a budget of £20,000 has been allocated within the scheme budget to cover this expense.

A property has been identified at 39 Akeman Street that would be suitable to be adapted to meet the needs in the interim. Managed by City Homes, the property is currently vacant. The works required include the following:

- Installation of fire doors throughout
- Installation of an access ramp and other accessibility works, including wheelchair accessible WC
- Replacement flooring and decorations.

These costs have been allowed for within the financial appraisal, as well as any works required at the end of the development to reinstate the property to ensure it is suitable for rent again. This is considered the most viable option to ensure continuity of service at this time.

5.6 Commercial Unit Exit Strategy

The development is proposed to include 3 commercial units at 50m² each to replace the units already on the site (whilst there are only 2 units occupied currently, there was a further commercial tenancy that ended in April 2018). There has been one long term void property, empty in excess of 2 years, that it has not been possible to re-let and therefore re-provision of this unit has not been included. It is proposed to work with current commercial tenants and advertise before works commence and during construction to negotiate pre-let agreements where possible. The development is proposed to offer flexible commercial space that could be let as smaller units, or combined into larger spaces. Should there be no demand, each unit is the equivalent of a 1 bed property and therefore could be converted to residential use, subject to planning permission for change of use. This would only be implemented if it can be demonstrated that there has been no demand for the commercial tenancies.

6. Implications

(a) Staffing Implications

The development scheme will initially be managed by the Housing Development Agency following liaison with City Homes; Community Services;

Property Services; Estates and Facilities, Finance and the 3Cs Legal Services Team.

Subject to approval, and in accordance with the principles for developing a site through the CIP process which are set out in earlier sections of the report; all matters relating to the development of this scheme are managed by CIP including the provision of staff. The costs associated with this are managed as part of the CIP business. Staff from both investment partners (CCC and Hill Investment Partnership) work collaboratively to achieve successful outcomes for the partners. A benefit of the Investment Partnership is the provision of experienced professional resources from both partners to support delivery and meet the partners' objectives.

The HDA has been working in conjunction with the Community Services Team to ensure they are involved and informed in the development options for the site. There has been regular communication to date and the team is aware of the proposals and staff continue to work with the development team and City Homes colleagues to identify options to ensure continuity of services within the community during construction.

There are no other significant staff implications.

(b) Equality and Poverty Implications

A series of EQIAs have been undertaken for the Council House Programme, the Housing Development Service and for individual schemes. The EQIAs mainly highlight the benefits of the Council retaining direct control of new housing development itself to ensure a focus on the delivery of housing that meets a diverse range of housing needs. Part of the assessment underlines the need for Affordable Housing to help those most likely to suffer poverty as well as ways in which new Affordable Housing will directly save money for tenants, such as energy saving measures and reducing the impact of fuel poverty. The inclusion of a new community centre and commercial spaces in this development will support local services and the community with established links with those services currently being delivered on this site.

(c) Environmental Implications

The social housing will be built in accordance with the Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide, which equates to the equivalent of code Level 4 for sustainable homes as a minimum. The commercial units must have a minimum EPC rating of A to E to be compliant with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) Regulations.

(d) Procurement Implications

It is proposed that the site will be offered to Cambridge Investment Partnership for development in accordance with the agreed process. This provides an opportunity to achieve delivery in a timely manner using a programme approach to manage spend of devolution and RTB monies in accordance with prescribed timescales.

(e) Community Safety Implications

There are no recognised implications on Community Safety with the proposed developments. The redevelopment provides an opportunity to review CCTV arrangements and community engagement in an area with identified issues.

6. Consultation and communication considerations

As part of the Community Centre review, clear commitment was made to ensure that any potential changes to service would receive community engagement. Two drop-in sessions were held at the existing facility in April 2018 attended by user groups and local residents, giving an opportunity to consider and comment on the proposals for the new community centre. The key themes of the feedback from these events are detailed in Appendix 2.

The HDA continues to liaise closely with colleagues in City Homes, Community Services and Property Services to ensure timely and accurate information is made available to all affected by the proposals. Property Services are working with the commercial tenants to support them in the provision of alternative or temporary accommodation.

7. Background papers

None

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Site Location plan and red line of proposed transfer

Appendix 2 – Community Centre Consultation Feedback

9. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Mark Wilson, Housing Development Agency, tel: 01223 457940, email: mark.wilson@cambridge.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Site location



Appendix 2 – Community Centre Consultation Feedback

Two public consultation events were held at the existing facility:

Wednesday 11th April 2-6pm

Saturday 14th April 10am-1pm

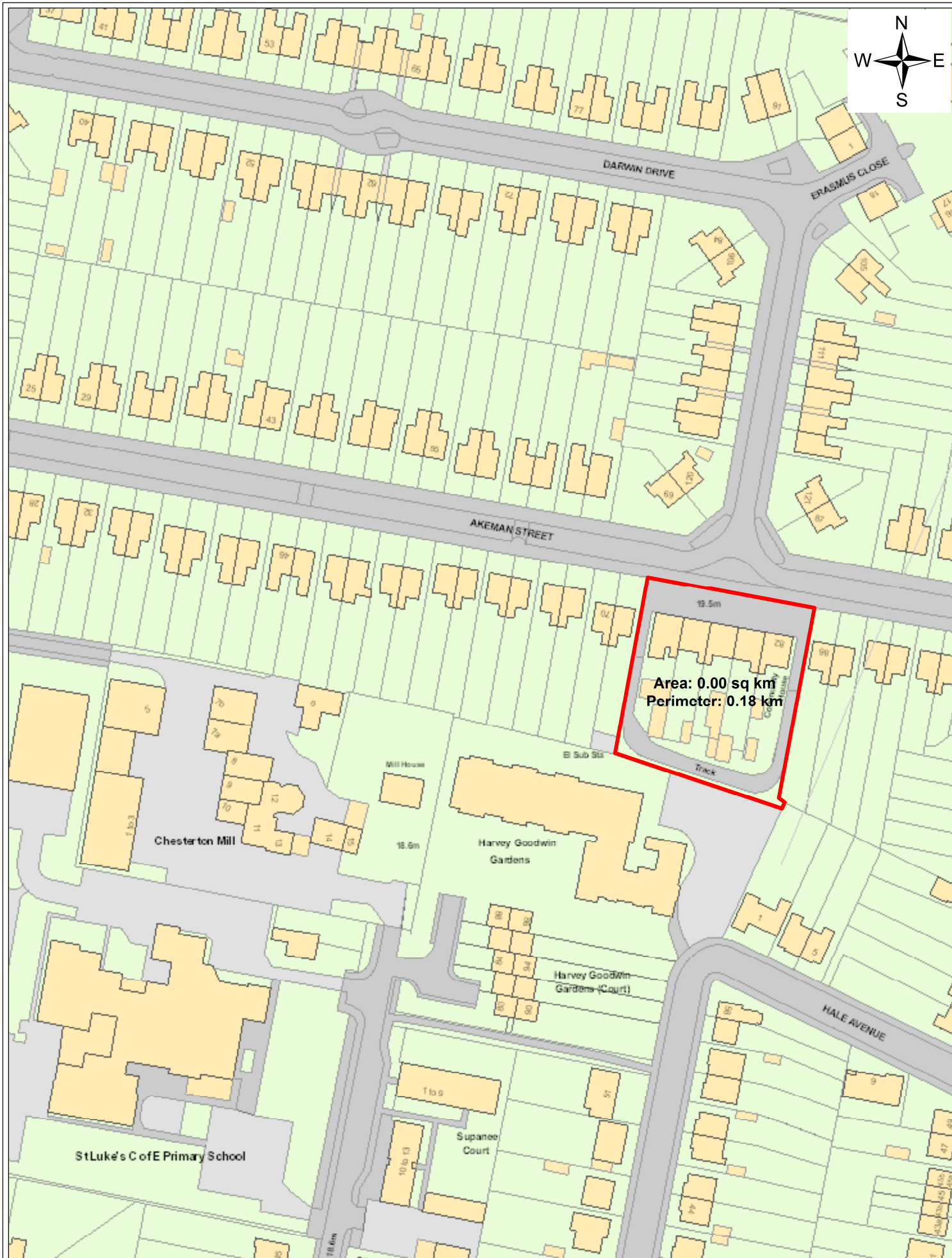
A total of 36 people attended over both events. The proposed layout for the new centre was on display and visitors were invited to comment on suitability and/or changes they think should be incorporated into the new facility.

Attendees were positive about the purpose built centre and were pleased that an alternative location had been identified to continue services during construction.

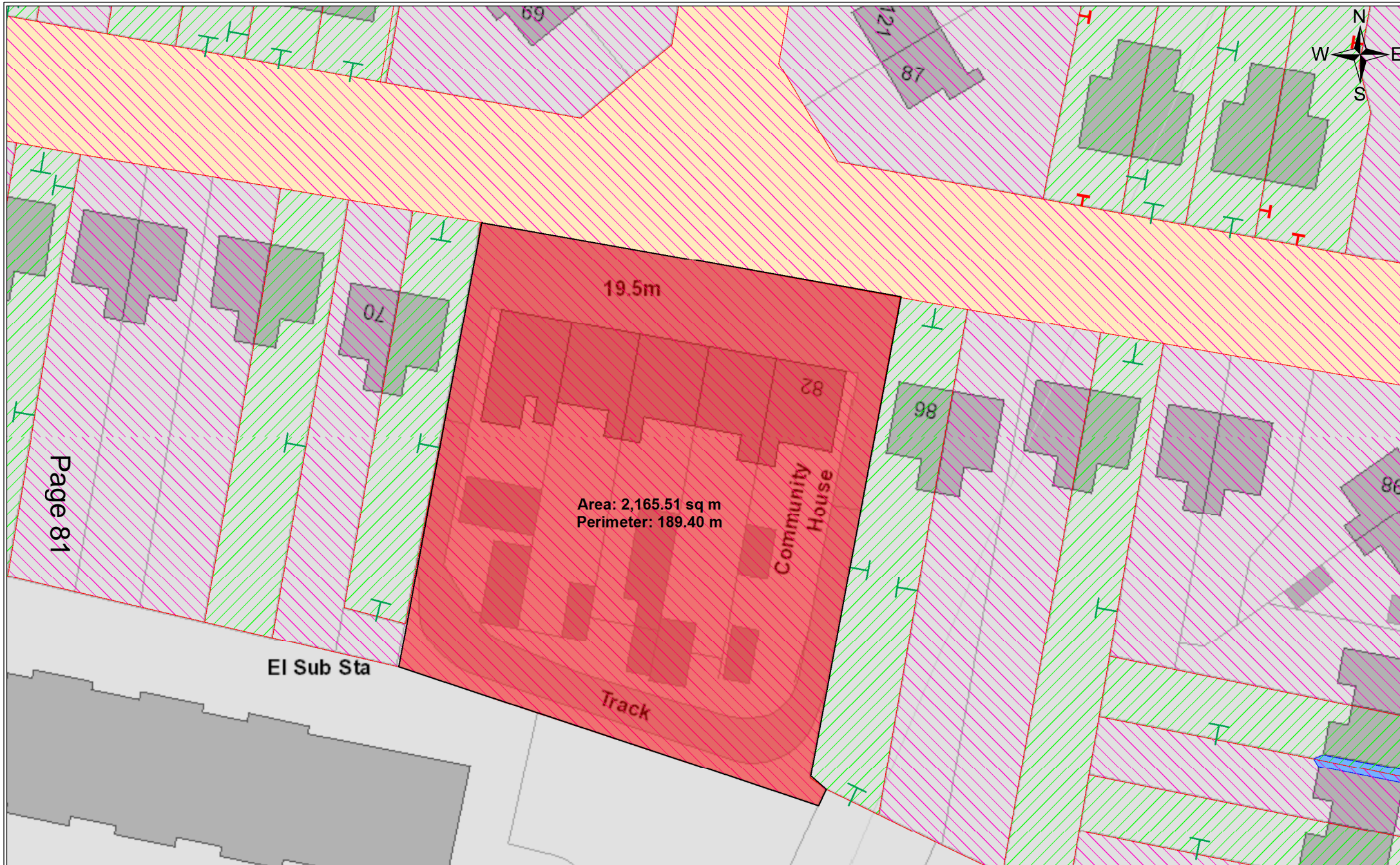
Specific comments made included:

Parking Availability and roads	The parking will remain as existing to the front of Akeman Street. All matters relating to highways will be considered through the planning process by the County Highways team as a statutory consultee.
Kitchen facilities should be connected to a meeting space	The proposal allows for a separate kitchen so that it is available to all users if required.
Concern over poor lighting	Natural lighting and artificial lighting will be considered in more detail in the design stage. There will be large windows facing onto Akeman Street as well as each meeting room having large windows and access to the rear garden.
Inclusion of a shower room	This has been provided in other centres and are generally not well used. It is felt the space would be better used in the provision of meeting rooms etc.
Security/Lighting/CCTV	These will be included within the

	detailed design. The layout of the centre allows for some natural surveillance of Akeman Street from the office and lobby areas.
Potential expansion at the mosque community house on Darwin Drive	CCC is looking to see if there is any opportunity to work collaboratively on future proposals to reduce the impact on local residents.



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Item:

Investing in Affordable Housing

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by:

Julian Adams, Suzanne Hemingway

Tel: 01223 457461. Email: Julian.adams@cambridge.gov.uk
suzanne.hemingway@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the way in which commuted s106 funds, paid by developers in lieu of affordable housing, can be spent.
- 1.2 The council's existing policy on spending housing related s106 developer contributions dates back to 2005. The policy needs to be updated so that any available funds can be spent appropriately to meet strategic priorities.
- 1.3 This report proposes that the Council utilises housing capital receipts to increase the supply of affordable housing. The sums received should be made available, initially, to provide new affordable housing via Council's own new-build programme.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Agree that decisions around spending of developer contributions earmarked for new affordable housing are generally made based on the following order of priority:
- A) To help fund new affordable housing as part of the council's own house building programme;
 - B) To enable the council to purchase new homes to meet affordable housing needs;
 - C) To help fund affordable housing to be developed by other Registered Providers.
- 2.2 To agree that exceptions to recommendation 2.1 may apply in specific circumstances – e.g. if a home is needed for a disabled applicant and it can be provided more appropriately or cost-effectively by another Registered Provider; subject to Executive Councillor approval.

3. Background

Page: 2

- 3.1. The Council's current policy for off-site spend was approved by the Executive Councillor for Housing & Health back in 2005.
- 3.2 The current policy allows for off-site contributions to be provided as grant to approved development partners to develop new housing, and to be used for the direct purchase of properties to meet specific needs.
- 3.2 Since then, the provision of affordable housing has changed significantly. For example:
- 3.2.1 Council priorities have changed and the council now has its own development programme.
 - 3.2.2 Councils can now spend a proportion of Right to Buy receipts on new Affordable Housing, although there are restrictions. For example: no more than 30% of the cost of a new home can be paid for through Right to Buy receipts; they cannot be used in combination with Homes England (formerly Homes &

Communities Agency) grant; they need to be spent on new supply rather than replacing existing homes; and they have to be used within three years of receipt.

3.2.3 With Local Plan policy requiring most affordable housing to be delivered on site, rather than through commuted sums, the council is now less likely to receive contributions in lieu of Affordable Housing than might have been the case previously. On the other hand, the council has started to include other ways of securing funding from developers through s106 agreements. E.g. through 'overage' payments, where the anticipated developer profit from a site has been exceeded because of a rapidly increasing housing market.

3.3 Section 106 contributions have already been used to fund the building of Jane's Court as part of the council's development programme. Approval of the recommendations in this report would provide a stronger framework for decision-making going forward.

3.4 Whilst officers are recommending that the council's own development programme should take first priority – including where funding is needed to replace homes demolished as part of the programme - there may be circumstances where other use is more appropriate, for example:

3.4.1 Where the terms of the s106 are such that the funding has to be spent within a certain period of time, and it is unlikely that the council will be in a position to make best use of the funds in a timely manner.

3.4.2 Where factors restricting the use of a combination of different funding sources will affect funding decisions.

3.4.3 Where specialist accommodation –e.g. for an identified disabled person - could be provided more easily or cost-effectively by another Registered Provider.

3.4.4 Where a Registered Provider is planning a scheme which would not be viable without the council contributing financially, or where keeping rents at or below Local Housing Allowance levels would

present viability issues. In these circumstances the council would need to be adequately satisfied as to the non-viability of the scheme; and the scheme would have to clearly meet the council's strategic housing objectives.

- 3.5 Resources will be identified in the twice-yearly council budget setting reports, and decisions on spending of contributions on the council's own programme will form part of the formal decision making process for each development.
- 3.6 Any proposals for allocating funding to other Registered Providers would need to be approved by the Executive Councillor on a case by case basis as part of the Housing Scrutiny Committee cycle.
- 3.7 The funding currently available to the Council for spending on affordable housing amounts to £1.75m, received as an 'overage' payment in relation to development on Rustat Road. There is no requirement to spend this within a particular period of time, which gives the council time to consider how to make best use of it. No further receipts are currently anticipated in the short term.
- 3.8 Officers will actively monitor developer contributions and ensure that arrangements are in place for them to be allocated appropriately and in a timely manner.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are no additional financial implications.

(b) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

The recommendations support the provision of affordable housing for those on low incomes. Also for those with disabilities who need bespoke accommodation to meet their needs.

(d) Environmental Implications

There are no direct environmental implications

(e) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications.

(f) Community Safety Implications

There are no community safety implications.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

No consultation or communication has been carried out.

If approved, Registered Providers operating locally will be advised of the arrangements.

6. Background papers

Investing in Affordable Housing – report to Executive Councillor for Housing & Health, July 2005 Community Services Scrutiny Committee cycle.

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Julian Adams, Growth Projects Officer, tel: 01223 457617, email: julian.adams@cambridge.gov.uk.

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Item

Discharging Homelessness Duties in the Private Rented Sector

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Housing Scrutiny Committee 19/06/2018

Report by:

David Greening, Head of Housing

Tel: 01223 - 457997 Email: david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

All

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In June 2013, in response to the Localism Act 2011, the Community Services Scrutiny Committee approved a policy of discharging the full housing duty to homeless households by way of a private rented sector offer. A further element of that policy was that an offer outside of the city may be considered suitable, subject to certain tests, so long as the accommodation was located within the Cambridge or Huntingdon broad rental market areas (BRMAs).
- 1.2 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into effect on 3 April 2018, now places major new duties on authorities to relieve or prevent homelessness. These changes are summarised in Section 3 below and set out in detail in the appendix accompanying this report.
- 1.3 So that the Council can respond appropriately to the opportunities and challenges the new Act introduces, this report seeks Member approval for a more flexible policy when we assist homeless households into the private rented sector. If adopted, the new policy will see us make

greater use of the private rented sector in a wider range of locations. Critically, the application of this greater flexibility will be subject to a general needs assessment informing a strict test of suitability. Under the new Act there is also a right to review at several key stages of a case. These safeguards are summarised in Section 3 below and set out in detail in the appendix accompanying this report.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the report in relation to the additional demands engendered by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 2.2 Adopt the policy on sourcing housing options in the private rented sector and discharging homelessness duties, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report

3. Background

- 3.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, which came into effect on 3 April 2018, is the greatest single change in how authorities are required to deal with homelessness since the broad framework was first set out in 1977.
- 3.2 Key aspects of the new Act are that a homelessness prevention or relief duty is now owed to all applicants threatened with homelessness within 56 days, in contrast to the former 28-day duty. Furthermore, authorities now owe this duty to a far wider range of people than formerly. (A full description of the changes introduced by the Act can be found in Part 1 of Appendix 1).
- 3.3 As the accompanying code of guidance makes clear, the Act requires authorities to take a significantly different approach to statutory homelessness than has been the case hitherto. In a three-stage process, an authority will begin by trying to save the existing home; moving on to assisting households to find a new home should prevention fail (priority need households will be owed an interim duty – temporary accommodation - at the point of homelessness) ; then on to the full homelessness duty for priority need households should relief fail. Under the former legislation only this latter duty existed.
- 3.4 For this authority, much of this is not entirely new in practice: the Council has for some time been taking the approach the Act prescribes, preventing and relieving homelessness for 1240 households in 2017-18, for example. What is new is that prevention and relief are now a part of our *statutory* duty, leading inevitably to a large increase in

households presenting as statutorily homeless. We, therefore, need to reformulate our policy on the use of private rented sector if the application of the new Act is not to produce unwanted outcomes.

- 3.5 Should we remain tied to our current policy, one such unwanted outcome is that in the absence of any corresponding increase in the availability of social housing in the short and middle-terms, we run the risk of having a housing register dominated by homeless applicants. This will lead, in turn, to an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, and the pressure will rise still further as a result of the new 56-day duty prevention and relief phases. More people will be in temporary accommodation for longer and costs will increase.
- 3.6 Temporary accommodation is generally an unsatisfactory option for households, especially families, and any rise in its use will be poorly received by government: the new Act requires us to use our 'best endeavors' to house people and to show we are exploring new options and putting these before customers.
- 3.7 For a number of households these options will inevitably be in the private rented sector. However, as Part 3 of Appendix 1 shows, privately-rented accommodation in Cambridge is expensive and likely to be beyond the means of many, if not most, households presenting to the Council for assistance. Accordingly, while it will always remain an objective to help local people to stay in or near to Cambridge city, so long as this is their preference, if we wish to avoid the unwanted effects already referred to we will need to take a more flexible approach to the locations people might consider in order to resolve their homelessness. This mirrors the kind of adjustment to the market which local people have had to make when, for example, looking to buy a home. The code of guidance advises similar realism, saying that "a plan which limited the search for accommodation to a small geographic area where the applicant would like to live would be unlikely to be reasonable if there was little prospect of finding housing there that they could afford".
- 3.8 A further reason for changing our current policy is that it restricts us to considering accommodation within geographical boundaries (Cambridge and Huntingdon BRMAs), some parts of which have transport links to Cambridge that are far less good than equally affordable locations outside these boundaries. The proposed new policy takes a more practical 'travel time' approach, bringing these new

locations into consideration, while placing a limit of 50 miles on the distance from the city locally-connected people may be housed (unless that location is their choice).

3.9 As mentioned, this proposed policy change includes a stringent test of suitability. The factors to be considered are fully set out in Parts 1 and 4 of Appendix 1, but in summary we must consider:

- a) vulnerability, especially with regard to people having a 'protected characteristic' under the Equalities Act 2010, those at risk of hate crime and those at risk of domestic violence;
- b) travelling time - it is proposed that for those with a frequent need to travel to and from the city, a commuting time greater than 60 minutes would not be suitable, and that the cost of transport must be part of any test of affordability;
- c) disruption to household members' employment, caring responsibilities or to the education of children at critical key stages; and
- d) proximity to medical facilities and other essential support.

The test of suitability is further strengthened in that we need to agree a personal housing plan (PHP) with an applicant. The PHP is subject to a right to review. Additionally, for any household falling into a 'priority need' group (i.e. the most vulnerable) any accommodation secured must meet 'enhanced' suitability standards (as if the property was being offered in discharge of the full housing duty).

3.10 The proposed more flexible policy aims to achieve the best possible housing outcome for people, with the maximum of individual choice, in a housing market that constrains options for most people. As a way to give practical and genuine expression to this objective, we have introduced, or are in the process of developing, a number of initiatives to be funded from the new flexible homelessness grant and other sources, as follows:

- a) HB+ which tops up housing benefit for a period of one year (for singles) and two years for families, enabling people to afford better accommodation closer to the city.
- b) Rent deposit and rent in advance loans.
- c) A guarantor scheme for people lacking a conventional work or credit history.

- d) An enhanced homelessness prevention fund to enable people to remain in their existing accommodation.
- e) Removal expenses when people need to relocate.
- f) Grants or soft loans to ease higher travel expenses.

3.8 We will, meanwhile, continue to maximise opportunities for local people to remain housed in the city through arrangements with landlords such as free management of properties, empty homes initiatives and arrangements with registered providers to lease low demand and miscellaneous properties.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

Funding is required for the initiatives set out at 3.7 above. HB+ will be funded through targeted use of discretionary housing benefit payments where possible, and otherwise through the flexible homelessness support grant (FHSG). Rent deposits and loans will continue to be funded by the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government homelessness grant. The rent guarantor scheme and other initiatives will be funded through the FHSG. The FHSG award to this authority is as follows:

2017-18: £282,835

2018-19: £320,266

2019-20: £457,336

(b) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications arising directly from the proposals set out in this report.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Please see the EqiA attached as Appendix 2

(d) Environmental Implications

Rated +L. All rented properties used by the council to support the schemes detailed in this report will need a valid Energy Performance Certificate (EPC).

(e) Procurement Implications

None

(f) Community Safety Implications

None

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The Council has consulted with external partners via the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Partnership (HSIP) on the policy for sourcing private rented sector options and internally with Revenues and Benefits, the housing strategy manager, Environmental Health and City Homes. HSIP partners involved in the consultation were:

Cyrenians, Jimmy's Cambridge, Cambridgeshire County Council, Wintercomfort, Riverside Care and Support, Citizens Advice Bureau, Change, Grow, Live.

The policy makes provision for individual households to be consulted on offers of accommodation on a case-by-case basis as part of the suitability assessment.

6. Background papers

No background papers

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: "Sourcing accommodation in the private sector for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness".

Appendix 2: Equalities impact assessment.

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact David Greening, Head of Housing, tel: 01223 - 457997, email: david.greening@cambridge.gov.uk.

Policy & Procedure	Sourcing accommodation in the private sector for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness
Team	Housing Advice Service
Department	Customer & Community Services
Date	June 2018
Reviews	After the first year of operation, then bi-annually

1	Background
1.1	The Community Services Scrutiny Committee approved a policy of discharging the full housing duty to homelessness households, by way of a private rented sector offer, in June 2013. This decision was taken in response to the Localism Act 2011, which introduced the power to discharge into the private rented sector (PRS), without the need for the applicant to agree to the offer.
1.2	In the ensuing 5 years, the Housing Advice Service has been able to achieve this in only 3 cases. This is mainly due to the inability of many homeless households to afford private rents in the relatively restricted geographical area defined by the policy (Cambridge and Huntingdon Broad Market Rental Areas only).
1.3	From 3 rd April 2018, all local housing authorities were subject to new statutory duties, to help with the prevention and relief of homelessness. These duties are owed to all applicants who are threatened with homelessness within 56 days, or who are already homeless. The duty exists, regardless of priority need, and regardless of any behaviour which may have led to the homelessness. It is expected that many households will have their homelessness prevented or relieved at an earlier stage, thus reducing the number of cases where a 'traditional' full housing duty is owed.
1.4	The relief duty, introduced by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires that the local housing authority agrees 'reasonable steps' to ensure that new accommodation is found for all households who are homeless. Where a household is threatened with homelessness within 56 days, and the current accommodation cannot be sustained, the authority must take reasonable steps to assist the household into fresh accommodation during the 56-day prevention period.
1.5	The requirement will be to source accommodation of various sizes, as there will be increasing numbers of single people who need help in preventing or relieving their homelessness (although not necessarily in priority need).
1.6	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 imposes a duty on certain public bodies to refer households that they believe to be threatened with homelessness to the local housing authority of the household's choosing. Although not all referrals will result in a homeless application being required (or a prevention/relief duty owed), a much wider range of solutions will be needed.

1.7	There cannot be an immediate or significant increase in the availability of social housing in the City. Therefore, even if Housing Advisors work with applicants to try and maximise their position on the social housing register, there will be insufficient stock to meet the increased demand. Central Government expects local councils to assist applicants into private rented property, wherever possible.
1.8	With regards to the development of Personalised Housing Plans, which outline the reasonable steps to prevent or relieve homelessness, the draft Homeless Code of Guidance says: “a plan which limited the search for accommodation to a small geographic area where the applicant would like to live would be unlikely to be reasonable if there was little prospect of finding housing there that they could afford. The plan might instead enable the applicant to review accommodation prices in their preferred areas as well as extending their home search to more affordable areas and property types.”
1.9	Although the prevention and relief duties are owed regardless of priority need, if a household does fall within a priority need group, any accommodation secured for them must meet ‘enhanced’ suitability standards (as if the property was being offered in discharge of the full housing duty).
1.10	The Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012 , as amended by The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, specifies what constitutes suitable accommodation in this context. In summary, we must consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) distance from the City; b) disruption to household members’ employment, caring responsibilities or education; c) proximity to medical facilities and essential support; d) proximity to transport and amenities.
1.11	There are other factors which must be considered, including the physical condition of the property & electrical, fire, gas and carbon monoxide safety. The landlord must be an appropriate person, who has not been involved in certain offences nor has practised discrimination. The tenant must be given an acceptable tenancy agreement.
1.12	Chapter 17 of the Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 has further guidance on suitability of accommodation, and the authority will have regard to this guidance at all times.
1.13	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 also amends S193 of Housing Act 1996, so that a private rented sector offer, made in discharge of the full housing duty, can be for 6 months duration (rather than a minimum of 12 months). However, most private sector tenancies continue beyond the initial period and an authority continues to have a duty for two years after a private sector discharge.
1.14	In order to increase the potential for finding affordable private rented accommodation which is of an acceptable standard, it is necessary to widen the geographical search area, whilst always being mindful of the impact on affected households.

1.15	This Policy and Procedure lays down a framework for achieving that aim. The policy and related procedure is effective in line with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
2	Policy Overview
2.1	<p>This document relates to the policy and procedural arrangements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) taking reasonable steps to help an applicant to secure that suitable private rented accommodation becomes available for the applicant's occupation for at least 6 months; b) discharging statutory homeless duties into the private rented sector.
2.2	<p>The policy will comply with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; • Housing Act 1996 Part 7, as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act and other earlier legislation; • Equality Act 2010 (including compliance with the public sector equality duty) • Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation (England) Order 2012 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) • Case law around suitability of out-of-borough accommodation • Cambridge City Council's Lettings Policy
2.3	<p>The policy outlines what must be taken into account by the Housing Advice Service before the following actions can be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommending to a homeless or potentially homeless individual or household that they seek a private rented sector housing solution; • Securing a private rented property for occupation by a homeless household (as a 'relief' option); • Discharging a full homeless duty (owed to an unintentionally homeless household in priority need), into a private rented sector property.
2.4	The location of the accommodation will be an overriding consideration in determining the suitability of the property as an option for the household.
3	Policy Aims and Objectives
3.1	<p>The policy aims to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homelessness is prevented or relieved in the maximum number of instances; • Solutions recommended to, or sought on behalf of homeless applicants are sustainable for them, and maintain or improve their quality of life; • Scarce social housing resources remain targeted at those whose housing choices are the most limited; • There is sufficient flexibility to meet a range of needs and aspirations; • Applicants are encouraged to explore suitable options that they may not have previously considered, but meets their needs; • There is a consistent approach to creating Personal Housing Plans across the Service; • When households require temporary accommodation, this is for shortest

	possible period of time, and they are able to move on quickly into a more permanent solution.
4	Key policy considerations
4.1	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 heralds a new approach to combatting homelessness. Central Government wishes to see housing advisors becoming 'negotiators' rather than 'assessors'. Housing advisors will work collaboratively with applicants to find acceptable solutions, rather than imposing solutions upon applicants. However, this will require a more flexible and innovative approach.
4.2	At the prevention and relief stages, the Council is committed to taking 'reasonable steps' to help the applicant to secure that accommodation does not cease to be available for the applicant's occupation (or to help the applicant to secure fresh accommodation). The applicant has a right of review of whether the steps in their Personal Housing Plan (PHP) are 'reasonable'. Although flexibility is needed in each individual case, it is also important to have a basic framework for what might be considered to be reasonable in the district (bearing in mind the prevailing housing market and the shortage of affordable housing).
4.3	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 includes provisions which allow the local housing authority to bring their prevention or relief duty to an end, if the applicant deliberately and unreasonably fails to co-operate with attempts to assist them.
4.4	Although the 'enhanced suitability test' need only be applied where an offer is being made to relieve homelessness for a household in priority need, it should be an aspiration that all accommodation sourced on behalf of applicants is of a suitable quality and value for money. The Council will therefore make location, standard and cost the overriding considerations in assessing the suitability of any accommodation that can be found.
4.5.1	Location: People in a position to purchase property often have to travel some distance in order to be able to afford to buy, and the private rental market is similar. In the spirit of the Act, Housing Advisors will work collaboratively with applicants to help them to find solutions in the areas the applicant would like to live in. However, if the affordability of the preferred areas is going to be an issue, advisors will open up a discussion with them about settlements in better value areas.
4.5.2	As mentioned, our present policy restricts a private sector discharge of duty to locations within the Cambridge and Huntingdon BRMAs. There are, however, relatively affordable locations outside of these BMRAs with better transport links to the City than within the Cambridge and Huntingdon BRMAs, for example, certain locations in North Hertfordshire and West Suffolk. Rather than restrict ourselves to geographical boundaries, it seems more sensible to take a more practical 'travel time' approach, bringing these additional locations into consideration. Accordingly, it is proposed that for those needing to return to the City, a travel time of up to one hour in normal conditions is the practical limit, and that no such household will be

	located more than 50 miles from the City unless a further distant location is their choice. However, not everyone who moves outside of the City will need to return to it on a daily basis, but there will be those who will (see 4.5.4 below).
4.5.3	The cost of transport will be factored into the assessment of affordability.
4.5.4	When considering the changes, it needs to be emphasised that applicants and advisors will be working together to find the most suitable solution according to the needs of the individual household. It is fully appreciated that there will be households that need to be accommodated within, or close to, the City in order to access professional and other support or services. It is these households which will likely trigger the 'enhanced test of suitability' referred to at 1.9 above. However, for that group of households without these needs (which the new Act will bring our way in larger number) it is reasonable to assume that new arrangements with nurseries, schools, child minders, GPs and other services can be made in new location if this is necessary in order to secure appropriate, affordable accommodation.
4.5.5	It is also recognised that certain educational stages are critical and must be considered in the test of suitability. Key stages 4 and 5 – effectively the period when a child will follow GCSE and 'A' Level courses - are pivotal to a child's education. Disruption to education will be a key consideration when households contain a child who is within, or approaching, these stages.
4.6.1	<p>Affordability:</p> <p>The strategy to find appropriate affordable accommodation will be used in conjunction with other tools to improve affordability. Examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Access Scheme' (rent deposit guarantee scheme); • Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs); • 'HB Plus' and 'HB Family Plus'. These tools provide cash top-ups to Housing Benefit for limited periods to individuals or families who are committed to improving their work prospects. More information about HB+ is here. • Homeless Prevention fund <p>However, officers must consider the duration of these solutions – for example, DHPs can be made for a limited time, and cannot be seen as a means for discharging the full housing duty into the private sector, without there being a plan for ensuring the longer-term stability of the tenancy.</p>
4.6.2	Appendix 3 provides a table of median private rents in some of the local authority areas surrounding the City (effective January 2018), for guidance and comparison.
4.6.3	The affordability assessment used is based on housing costs being no more than 40% of household income. Housing Advisors must take into account any regular, unavoidable commitments, when calculating available income. For example, loan repayments, childcare costs and child support payments may reduce the amount available to pay rent.
4.6.4	This being said, applicants will be expected to prioritise their housing costs above non-essential items. If necessary, Housing Advisors should refer the household for

	specialist support with budgeting.
5	Equalities
5.1	From April 3 rd 2018, duties are owed to homeless or potentially homeless people who are not necessarily in priority need groups. This means there will be greater opportunity to help secure accommodation for people who are not in any way vulnerable, or who may not have any dependents. However, particular account will be taken of the impact of this policy on those households who do have a member or members with one or more Protected Characteristic (as defined in the Equalities Act 2010). A full equalities impact assessment is attached as Appendix 2.
5.2	The Council will arrange an OT assessment, whenever there is at least one household member with a physical disability (and where an OT assessment is not already available). The advice of the OT will be taken into account in assisting the household into accommodation. Where adaptations are required, the practicality of arranging these during a fixed term private sector tenancy will be considered. Equally, mental health issues or learning difficulties/disabilities may give rise to specific considerations around the type and location of the private rented sector offer.
5.3	The Council will consider the potential risk of violence or harassment of individuals in particular locations. In particular, account will be taken of the risks posed to those who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transgender, or due to undergo gender reassignment; • Gay, bisexual or lesbian; • From ethnic minority backgrounds; • Of a particular faith, religion or belief; • Practising an alternative lifestyle.
5.4	For applicants who are already victims of violence, harassment, or hate crime, or at greater risk of becoming so, the council will take into account the location of accommodation, in relation to perpetrator(s) who may pose a current risk.
6	Procedure
6.1	This procedure covers applications received after 3 rd April 2018. Applications received before that date will be subject to the previous policy for discharging the full housing duty into the private rented sector (dated 1 st September 2013).
6.2	The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 S189A(2) requires authorities to assess every eligible household's housing needs, if they are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days. This Needs Assessment must cover what accommodation would be suitable for the applicant, their household and anybody who might reasonably be expected to live with them. The assessment will be carried out by the applicant's Housing Advisor, as soon as possible after the Housing Advisor has satisfied him or herself of the applicant's eligibility and (threatened) homelessness, but within 10 days at the most.

6.3	This Needs Assessment must address any information that might affect the suitability of any private sector options explored with the applicant. This must be recorded promptly in the relevant case management system, and a written copy provided to the applicant.
6.4	The Housing Advisor must develop a Personal Housing Plan (PHP) based on the identified needs, taking into account the steps that both the applicant and the authority should take, in order to prevent or relieve homelessness. The Housing Advisor must provide this to the applicant in writing.
6.5	The steps must be 'reasonable', and must take into account all of the factors discussed in the policy above. For example, if an applicant is wholly dependent on daily support services that are available within Cambridge City and nowhere else, and has no transport of their own, it would not be reasonable to ask the applicant to pursue private rented sector solutions at a distance to the City, even if this would be the only way that private rent would be affordable to them.
6.6	Unless identified as being 'suggested' steps, the applicant will be expected to follow the agreed steps outlined in the plan. Failure to do so without good reason may result in the prevention or relief duty being brought to an end under Housing Act 1996 sections 193B or 193C.
6.7	If the Housing Advisor fails to reach agreement with the applicant about the reasonableness of the steps, based on the application of the policy, the Housing Advisor should use the 'Suitability Assessment Tool' to review their assessment (see Appendix 4).
6.8	If the Housing Advisor remains satisfied that the steps are reasonable, they must record the reasons for disagreement on the case management system, and notify the applicant of their right of review.
6.9	When homelessness is not successfully prevented or relieved (despite co-operation with the PHP steps), if the household falls into a priority need group, and the homelessness is not intentional, a full housing duty will be owed under Housing Act S193.
6.10	Meeting the full housing duty can be achieved through a private rented sector offer. However, the following needs to be considered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirement for any private rented sector offer to meet 'enhanced suitability standards' (see 1.9 -1.13 above); • Any particular factors which confer priority need on the household, and the possibility that those factors would make a private rented sector offer unsuitable; • Any other reason why it has not been possible to prevent or relieve homelessness into the private rent sector thus far, in this case.
7	Reviews
7.1	All applicants have a right of review of decisions made by Housing Advisors. This now includes decisions about the suitability of accommodation secured in order to

	prevent or relieve homelessness (if the duty is due to be ended as a result).
7.2	If an applicant makes such a review request, a Senior Housing Advisor will use the Suitability Assessment Tool mentioned in 6.7, to decide whether he or she considers the offer to be suitable, or whether it should be withdrawn, and the prevention or relief duty continued.
7.3	If the Senior Housing Advisor concludes that the property was not suitable, it will be as if the offer has not been made, and the offer will not feature in any future considerations of deliberate non-co-operation by the applicant.

Appendix 2 – Main settlement journey times

Settlement	Distance from CB1	Journey time by road (minutes)	Return cost by road @ 20p per mile	Fastest public transport to Cambridge City Centre (mins)
Aldreth	20.8	36	£8.32	48
Babraham	5.3	9	£2.12	31
Balsham	8	14	£3.20	58
Beck Row	26.4	36	£10.56	62
Bedford	37.6	55	£15.04	81
Biggleswade	22.6	44	£9.04	90
Bishop's Stortford	29.4	37	£11.76	76
Bourn	18.8	27	£7.52	41
Braintree	41	47	£16.40	95
Brandon	33.5	41	£13.40	62
Bury St Edmunds	28.2	38	£11.28	39
Cambourne	18.5	26	£7.40	25
Chatteris	23.5	44	£9.40	100
Chittering	13.6	23	£5.44	41
Cottenham	12.6	23	£5.04	37
Downham Market	39.3	60	£15.72	70
Earith	22.9	37	£9.16	62
Ely	21	35	£8.40	57
Exning	14.7	21	£5.88	58
Fen Ditton	3.2	11	£1.28	19
Fordham	16.8	25	£6.72	58
Fornham All Saints	27.2	33	£10.88	70
Fulbourn	6.5	24	£2.60	21
Girton	6.3	24	£2.52	22
Great Abington	6.8	12	£2.72	31
Harston	6.1	18	£2.44	39
Haslingfield	7.7	22	£3.08	20
Haverhill	16.9	27	£6.76	69
Henlow	25.9	49	£10.36	81
Hinxton	9.9	16	£3.96	54
Lakenheath	27.8	37	£11.12	59
Letchworth Garden City	26.2	48	£10.48	54
Little Ouse	31.6	47	£12.64	NONE
Little Thetford	18.8	31	£7.52	47
Littleport	26.3	43	£10.52	23
Longstanton	16.3	25	£6.52	24
Luton	39.1	60	£15.64	101
Melbourn	11	26	£4.40	32
Meldreth	12.2	29	£4.88	16

Mepal	23.9	40	£9.56	62
Mildenhall	23.4	31	£9.36	45
Milton	8.6	16	£3.44	14
Newmarket	13.3	24	£5.32	21
Oakington	14.7	23	£5.88	20
Outwell	38.5	61	£15.40	89
Papworth Everard	20.5	27	£8.20	39
Ramsey	34	55	£13.60	116
Red Lodge	19	25	£7.60	50
Royston	18.1	28	£7.24	15
Saffron Walden	13.8	21	£5.52	90
Sandy	23.2	45	£9.28	64
Sawston	5.9	13	£2.36	39
Sawtry	33.3	43	£13.32	96
Shepreth	9.2	24	£3.68	15
Six Mile Bottom	7.6	13	£3.04	48
Snailwell	15	22	£6.00	51
Soham	19.7	29	£7.88	54
Somersham	25.5	43	£10.20	74
Southery	33.1	51	£13.24	126
St Ives	23.7	37	£9.48	35
St Neots	26.2	36	£10.48	51
Stilton	38.9	48	£15.56	93
Stretham	17.2	28	£6.88	47
Sudbury	33.9	57	£13.56	140
Swaffham Prior	9.5	18	£3.80	33
Swavesey	19.1	30	£7.64	28
Thetford	33.7	43	£13.48	44
Warboys	29.5	47	£11.80	68
Whittlesey	49.2	62	£19.68	53
Wicken	20.6	29	£8.24	59
Wimblington	33.3	53	£13.32	76
Wissington	37.4	57	£14.96	NONE
Witchford	19.7	32	£7.88	46
Woodhurst	26.6	41	£10.64	64
Wyboston	27.8	36	£11.12	45
Yaxley	40	50	£16.00	87

Appendix 3

Monthly median private rents as at December 2017

Source of rent data: Cambridgeshire Insight

Local authority area	1 bedroom	Minimum annual income*	2 bedrooms	Minimum annual income*	3 bedrooms	Minimum annual income*	4 bedrooms	Minimum annual income*
Cambridge	£897.00	£26,910.00	£1,157.00	£34,710.00	£1,347.67	£40,430.00	£1,794.00	£53,820.00
East Cambs	£758.33	£22,750.00	£771.33	£23,140.00	£897.00	£26,910.00	£1,399.67	£41,990.00
South Cambs	£749.67	£22,490.00	£892.67	£26,780.00	£849.33	£25,480.00	£1,399.67	£41,990.00
Forest Heath	£671.67	£20,150.00	£749.67	£22,490.00	£1,096.33	£32,890.00	£1,339.00	£40,170.00
St Edmundsbury	£650.00	£19,500.00	£749.67	£22,490.00	£892.67	£26,780.00	£1,196.00	£35,880.00
Huntingdonshire	£598.00	£17,940.00	£723.67	£21,710.00	£849.33	£25,480.00	£1,148.33	£34,450.00
Fenland	£572.00	£17,160.00	£624.00	£18,720.00	£723.67	£21,710.00	£797.33	£23,920.00
Peterborough	£572.00	£17,160.00	£650.00	£19,500.00	£749.67	£22,490.00	£992.33	£29,770.00

*minimum annual income assumes no abnormal regular commitments (based on housing costs being 40% of income)

Appendix 4 – Suitability Assessment Tool



Copy of England
Excel Suitability 17 fin

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment

Completing an Equality Impact Assessment will help you to think about what impact your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service may have on people that live in, work in or visit Cambridge, as well as on City Council staff.

The template is easy to use. You do not need to have specialist equalities knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgements based on evidence and experience. There are guidance notes on the intranet to help you. You can also get advice from David Kidston, Strategy and Partnerships Manager on 01223 457043 or email david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk or from any member of the Joint Equalities Group.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service:

Policy for sourcing private rented sector options

2. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

To set a framework for Housing Advisors to source appropriate housing options for people who approach Cambridge City Council when they are homeless, or threatened with homelessness. It helps Housing Advisors decide what are suitable options for applicants to pursue, and what are suitable properties to offer in discharge of a full housing duty (where applicable).

3. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick those that apply)

☒ Residents

☐ Visitors

☒ Staff

A specific client group or groups (please state):
All client groups who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days.

4. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this? (Please tick)

☐ New

☒ Revised

☐ Existing

5. Responsible directorate and service

Directorate: Customer & Community Services

Service: Housing Advice Service

6. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

☒ No

☐ Yes (please give details):

7. Potential impact

Please list and explain how this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could **positively** or **negatively** affect individuals from the following equalities groups.

When answering this question, please think about:

- The results of relevant consultation that you or others have completed (for example with residents, people that work in or visit Cambridge, service users, staff or partner organisations).
- Complaints information.
- Performance information.
- Information about people using your service (for example whether people from certain equalities groups use the service more or less than others).
- Inspection results.
- Comparisons with other organisations.
- The implementation of your piece of work (don't just assess what you think the impact will be after you have completed your work, but also think about what steps you might have to take to make sure that the implementation of your work does not negatively impact on people from a particular equality group).
- The relevant premises involved.
- Your communications.
- National research (local information is not always available, particularly for some equalities groups, so use national research to provide evidence for your conclusions).

(a) Age (any group of people of a particular age, including younger and older people)

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

The Policy recognises its duty to adhere to the Equality Act 2010 legislation

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have an age-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that single people under 25 years tend to be disproportionately represented among the homeless, who have limited choices in the housing market. Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, local housing authorities have new duties to help prevent and relieve homelessness, including amongst non-priority groups, such as healthy single people, and this policy will equally cover priority and non-priority groups. This is a clear positive for younger people. However, non-priority single people may be more likely to be affected by the new policy because they are less likely to have strong reasons to remain in the city (other than due to inflexible work commitments at unsociable hours). They are likely to be more mobile and adaptable. Whenever there are vulnerabilities or extenuating circumstances, however, these will be taken into account in the application of the policy.

(b) Disability (including people with a physical impairment, sensory impairment, learning disability, mental health problem or other condition which has an impact on their daily life)

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

The Policy recognises its duty to adhere to the Equality Act 2010 legislation. The Council will arrange an OT assessment, whenever there is at least one household member with a physical disability (and where an OT assessment is not already available). The advice of the OT will be taken into account in assisting the household into accommodation. Where adaptations are required, the practicality of arranging these during a fixed term private sector tenancy will be considered.

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have an disability-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that applicants with mental health issues are likely to be disproportionately represented among homeless applicants. They may also be the client group that is most significantly affected by change and disruption. Although adequate safeguards are in place to consider support needs and vulnerabilities in the application of this policy, some undiagnosed or dormant mental health problems may go undetected by Housing Advisors.

Accommodation which is not suitably adapted will not be offered to people with disabilities. However, people developing mobility issues during a tenancy may find that a private landlord may not give permission for adaptations.

(c) Gender

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have an gender-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that young single mothers are disproportionately represented among those who present as homeless or at risk of homelessness. Victims of domestic abuse tend also to be predominantly female. The policy seeks to ensure that applicants remain within a reasonable travelling distance of meaningful family support networks, or, conversely, at a safe distance from perpetrators of violence or abuse.

(d) Pregnancy and maternity

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a pregnancy and maternity-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that it may not be suitable to relocate expectant mothers in the later stages of pregnancy. Furthermore, there is potential for expectant and new mothers to become isolated if located away from family support networks and friends. This needs to be taken into account in assessing suitability. Will also need easy access to health and maternity services.

Design of property selected also needs to take into account additional accessibility challenges for this group.

(e) Transgender (including gender re-assignment)

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a transgender-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that those undergoing gender reassignment may need to remain close to medical and other support services. We are also conscious that there appears to be a higher risk that transgendered people may be the victims of physical and verbal assault compared with the general population, but there is no clear local evidence of a locational higher risk once population is adjusted for.

(f) Marriage and Civil Partnership

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

NEGATIVE: No obvious negative impact.

(g) Race or Ethnicity

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a race or ethnicity-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that consideration should be given in relation to assessing the risk of, and providing protection for, tenants from ethnic minority backgrounds, including Eastern Europeans and Gypsy & Traveller communities.

In creating and reviewing a Personalised Housing Plan with an applicant, Housing Advisors must be mindful of the reasonableness of accepting a private rented sector letting, where there is any risk that a particular landlord may discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against applicants with specific racial characteristics.

(h) Religion or Belief

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration. Each person will receive a comprehensive needs assessment and a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), and thus each case will be considered on its individual merit. The PHP will be delivered in writing, so all considerations will be transparent. The PHP will be continually reviewed during its life, and so will be adjusted to meet a person's changing needs. There is a statutory right of review of the reasonableness of the steps that are encapsulated in the Personalised Housing Plan.

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a religion or belief-related negative impact.

(i) Sexual Orientation

POSITIVE: The policy aims to ensure that ALL applicants will receive fair and consistent consideration under the policy, and each case will be considered on an individual merit. This implies that individuals regardless of sexual orientation will be treated equally.

NEGATIVE: There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a sexual orientation-related negative impact. We are conscious that there appears to be a higher risk that LGB people may be the victims of physical and verbal assault compared with the general population, but there is no clear local evidence of a locational higher risk once population is adjusted for.

(j) Other factor that may lead to inequality (please state):

Accessibility of policy and related guidance e.g. by blind/partially blind or hard of hearing, and those with low levels of literacy.

Those with limited or no access to the internet may be restricted in their ability to bid for properties.

People from some of the above groups may be disadvantaged at the end of the tenancy period if appropriate proactive support is not available to them in finding alternative accommodation.

8. If you have any additional comments please add them here

In relation to protected characteristics a, c, g, h and i, it should be emphasised that reference to any negative impact the new policy may have is included to point up a potential risk only, albeit risk we are rightly alert to. Hard information about unlawful discrimination and criminal acts directed against people with protected characteristics is difficult to interpret in terms of geographical location - the most important impact of this proposed new policy. Looking at our own information, there is no indication from customer complaints that people with a protected characteristic have experienced any greater difficulty if assisted into accommodation outside of Cambridge than a person without that characteristic, although our sample is fairly small at present. Our commitment, as outlined in the action plan, is that we will continuously monitor and sample, building in safeguards and making adjustments as necessary.

9. Conclusions and Next Steps

- If you have not identified any negative impacts, please sign off this form.
- If you have identified potential negative actions, you must complete the action plan at the end of this document to set out how you propose to mitigate the impact. If you do not feel that the potential negative impact can be mitigated, you must complete question 8 to explain why that is the case.
- If there is insufficient evidence to say whether or not there is likely to be a negative impact, please complete the action plan setting out what additional information you need to gather to complete the assessment.

All completed Equality Impact Assessments must be emailed to David Kidston, Strategy and Partnerships Manager, who will arrange for it to be published on the City Council's website. Email david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk

10. Sign off

Name and job title of assessment lead officer: James McWilliams, Housing Advice Service Manager

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted:

Ruth Trown, Policy & Performance Officer

Date of completion: 31st May 2018

Date of next review of the assessment: 1st June 2019

Action Plan

Equality Impact Assessment title:

Date of completion: 31st May 2018

Equality Group	Age
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have an age-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that single people under 25 years tend to be disproportionately represented among the homeless, who have limited choices in the housing market. Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, local housing authorities have new duties to help prevent and relieve homelessness, including amongst non-priority groups, such as healthy single people, and this policy will equally cover priority and non-priority groups. This is a clear positive for younger people. However, non-priority single people may be more likely to be affected by the new policy because they are less likely to have strong reasons to remain in the city (other than due to inflexible work commitments at unsociable hours). They are likely to be more mobile and adaptable. Whenever there are vulnerabilities or extenuating circumstances, however, these will be taken into account in the application of the policy.
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Regular monitoring of complaints data and the incidence of requests for statutory review of the reasonableness of PHP steps, and the suitability of accommodation offered in discharge of the full housing duty
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Quarterly (ongoing)

Equality Group	Disability
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	<p>Liaison with groups representing those with mental health issues;</p> <p>Refreshing of training in the symptoms, identification and impact of common mental health problems.</p> <p>Full consideration of mobility issues as part of the PHP. and strict monitoring of disability issues arising in the course of a tenancy.</p> <p>.</p>
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Ongoing - report quarterly

Equality Group	Gender
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	<p>There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have an gender-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that young single mothers are disproportionately represented among those who present as homeless or at risk of homelessness. Victims of domestic abuse tend also to be predominantly female. The policy seeks to ensure that applicants remain within a reasonable travelling distance of meaningful family support networks, or, conversely, at a safe distance from perpetrators of violence or abuse.</p>
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Regular monitoring of complaints data and the incidence of requests for statutory review of the reasonableness of PHP steps, and the suitability of accommodation offered in discharge of the full housing duty
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Quarterly (ongoing)

Equality Group	Pregnancy and Maternity
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	<p>There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a pregnancy and maternity-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that it may not be suitable to relocate expectant mothers in the later stages of pregnancy. Furthermore, there is potential for expectant and new mothers to become isolated if located away from family support networks and friends. This needs to be taken into account in assessing suitability. Will also need easy access to health and maternity services.</p> <p>Design of property selected also needs to take into account additional accessibility challenges for this group.</p>
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Regular monitoring of complaints data and the incidence of requests for statutory review of the reasonableness of PHP steps, and the suitability of accommodation offered in discharge of the full housing duty
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Quarterly (ongoing)

Equality Group	Transgender
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	<p>There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a transgender-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that those undergoing gender reassignment may need to remain close to medical and other support services. We are also conscious that there appears to be a higher risk that transgendered people may be the victims of physical and verbal assault compared with the general population, but there is no clear local evidence of a locational higher risk once population is adjusted for.</p>
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Regular monitoring of complaints data and the incidence of requests for statutory review of the reasonableness of PHP steps, and the suitability of accommodation offered in discharge of the full housing duty
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Quarterly (ongoing)

Equality Group	Marriage and Civil Partnership
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	None at present
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Race or Ethnicity
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	<p>There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have an race or ethnicity-related negative impact. However, we are conscious that consideration should be given in relation to assessing the risk of, and providing protection for, tenants from ethnic minority backgrounds, including Eastern Europeans and Gypsy & Traveller communities.</p> <p>In creating and reviewing a Personalised Housing Plan with an applicant, Housing Advisors must be mindful of the reasonableness of accepting a private rented sector letting, where there is any risk that a particular landlord may discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against applicants with specific racial characteristics.</p> <p>.</p>
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Liaison with Housing Standards, to share information about landlords who may be a risk
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Quarterly (ongoing)

Equality Group	Religion or Belief
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a religion or belief-related negative impact.
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Regular monitoring of complaints data and the incidence of requests for statutory review of the reasonableness of PHP steps, and the suitability of accommodation offered in discharge of the full housing duty
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Quarterly (ongoing)

Equality Group	Sexual Orientation
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	There is insufficient evidence at present to say whether or not the new policy might have a sexual orientation-related negative impact. We are conscious that there appears to be a higher risk that LGB people may be the victims of physical and verbal assault compared with the general population, but there is no clear local evidence of a locational higher risk once population is adjusted for.
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Regular monitoring of complaints data and the incidence of requests for statutory review of the reasonableness of PHP steps, and the suitability of accommodation offered in discharge of the full housing duty
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Housing Services Manager - Housing Advice
Date action to be completed by	Quarterly (ongoing)

Other factors that may lead to inequality	
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	None identified
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

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Item

Rough Sleeping Report

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Report by:

Suzanne Hemingway

Tel: 01223 - 457461 Email: Suzanne.hemingway@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In early 2018, Cllr Bick and County Councillor Nicola Harrison, carried out an investigation into rough sleeping, and its impact on Cambridge. They produced a report with recommendations for the City Council, County Council, Police and other partners.
- 1.2 Cllr Bick has requested that the Housing Scrutiny Committee consider his report.
- 1.3 This covering report provides an officer response to the recommendations.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to

- consider the report, and endorse the work already being carried out by the Homelessness team and our partners in delivering services to rough sleepers;

- Request that officers actively engage in the county Council review of supported accommodation, to seek to ensure an outcome that supports vulnerable people and prevents rough sleeping.

3. Background

- 3.1. Rough sleeping has been of concern in Cambridge for some time. The Council works with statutory and voluntary partners to co-ordinate services which seek to prevent the need for rough sleeping, and to support people in need to find appropriate accommodation. The Council and its partners also provide emergency accommodation and support. These services, and our joint work to tackle rough sleeping, are outlined in the Council's Homelessness Strategy and Action plan:
https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/homelessness_strategy_action_plan_-_names_redacted_0.pdf
- 3.2 In early 2018, Councillor Bick and County Councillor Harrison carried out an investigation into rough sleeping, which involved interviews with a significant number of staff from both Councils as well as partner agencies. They shared their draft findings with contributors, and have released a report with recommendations (attached).
- 3.3 A point-by-point response to recommendations is outlined below:

Y	Recommendation	Repr ref	Lead Organisation	Officer response	Rationale	Current position
1	A Cambridge Charter	4.6.1	City Council	Not recommended to accept	Resources to develop charter as described would be considerable.	The Council engages widely with a range of partners and community groups with an interest in rough sleeping. This includes proactive engagement with church groups, students, street pastors and others. We accept that there is a need for ongoing community education and engagement, to continue to develop the shared sense of purpose agreed with other agencies in our Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.
2	Further promotion of the Street Aid scheme	4.4.4	City Council	Accept	Council has plans in place to widen promotion of Street Aid	By March 2019 we intend to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek agreement to use existing resources such as video feeds and social media accounts to promote facts and challenge myths. ▪ Establish a contactless giving facility for Street Aid permitting on-street contactless giving at any time. ▪ Work with the City's two major retail centres to achieve a higher visibility for Street Aid, leading to an increase in public donations and increased public awareness of the facts around rough sleeping and begging.
3	Develop a Housing First Scheme using Council and privately rented homes	4.2.3	City and County Councils	Accept – but not in Council tenancies	City is already developing options for Housing First	The Council has an objective to increase its training flats from 2 to 10 and is working with the Counting Every Adult team at the County to coordinate this expansion. We are also planning to pilot a Housing First scheme based around new-build self-contained flats, inter-linked with a communal space, with an on site caretaker/ supporter. These units are not yet in development.

4	Develop Peer mentoring for rough sleepers	4.3.5	County Council	Not currently proposed to accept	peer mentoring is very resource intensive	Turnover of mentors can be high and there is a need for intensive training and support. The County Council is open to considering a range of future models of support including opportunities for community involvement.
5	Assess needs for supported accomm inc long-stay	4.2.1 4.2.2	County Council	For County	City will work with county on assessing/ meeting needs	County is already carrying out a review of supported accommodation in the light of national funding changes
Page 124 7	Re-organise Outreach services	4.3.2	County Council	For County	City is willing to work to achieve this	City Homelessness Strategy Action Plan commitment to Investigate, with partners, whether more joined-up support services can be developed to help customers through a housing pathway towards independent living.
	Improve joint work with Police as seen in Oxford	4.5	Police and City Council	We will work with police to improve joint work	There is already joint working but scope for improvements	The Police have recently initiated a monthly multi-agency operational meeting involving representatives from a range of services, and businesses to share intelligence, problem solve and plan to address a range of issues, including street life and drug dealing. We will review with the police whether there are further changes needed, and what we can learn from other cities.
8.	Appoint a problem-solving Police Officer	4.5	Police	Already in place	We are seeking funding to increase activity	The street life working group has submitted a bid to the Government's rough sleeping fund to conduct more out-of-office-hours street life work to tackle begging, tied in with an offer of support services and a guaranteed bed for the night.

9.	Extend outreach /enforcement to weekends and evenings	4.3.3	Police and city	Proposed – subject to funding		The bid to government as highlighted above pilots work in this area and the Council will be looking to evaluate the results carefully.
10	Expand floating support services as people move on	4.3.4	County	County to decide		The County Council is currently assessing tender bids for a reconfigured floating support service. The services will now cover a wider geographical area and thus there will be scope for more resilience across the service.
11	Provision of sharps bins and contact with WHO on safe syringes		City (+ county public health)	Accept, based on need	City has sharps bins in most public toilet cubicles	<p>Provision will be kept under review and extended to public toilets that don't currently have sharps bins, in response to evidence of need.</p> <p>The World Health Organisation (WHO) is recommending new “smart” syringes with features that prevent re-use and protect health workers from injuries and infections. The Council fully supports the WHO proposals and will work closely with relevant service partners to secure the adoption of smart syringes in Cambridge.</p>

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The recommendations made by officers do not incur any additional costs at this stage. The City Council will seek to work with the County Council and other partners to develop services that make best use of public funds.

(b) Staffing Implications ; no immediate staffing implications

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Officers have not conducted an EQIA on the report prepared by Cllr Bick. The Homelessness Strategy Action plan actions have been subject to EQIA.

(d) Environmental Implications; None identified.

(e) Procurement Implications: None identified.

(f) Community Safety Implications

Improved co-ordination with police, and enhanced out-of-hours support and enforcement activity should contribute to a decline in begging and antisocial behavior, especially in the city centre. Improved floating support for ex-rough-sleepers could increase their ability to settle constructively in a new environment, with a benefit for the wider community.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

This paper is a response to Cllr Bick's report. Actions to be taken forward will be developed in partnership with other stakeholders. The action on Street Aid includes a commitment to increased community engagement.

6. Background papers

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan:

https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/homelessness_strategy_action_plan_-_names_redacted_0.pdf

7. Appendices

Cllr Bick's report attached – Appendix 1

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Suzanne.Hemingway@cambridge.gov.uk or 01223 457461.

Rough sleeping and street life issues in Cambridge

An enquiry

Cllr Tim Bick
Cambridge City Council
tim.bick@btinternet.com

Cllr Nichola Harrison
Cambridgeshire County Council
222harrison@gmail.com

Market Ward, Cambridge
February 2018

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Executive Summary

As local councillors, we know that local residents are distressed and concerned about the increase in rough sleeping and street life issues in Cambridge in recent times. They want to understand what is going on, what is being done about it and what more could be done - and this report tries to offer some answers.

In our enquiry, we talked with many people working in this field locally and elsewhere, as well as with people who have experience of living on the street. They told us about the range of problems that drive homelessness, including mental illness, substance misuse, family breakdown, domestic abuse, financial loss and debt. They explained how the increasing severity of mental illness and drug addictions among people on the street is making it more difficult for those individuals to engage positively with support and recovery services. We also learned how the growth in expensive drug addictions is fuelling street begging and our report considers how our community might respond to that.

We found a wide range of local services aimed at enabling people on the street to take up accommodation and access other support and treatment. The organisations involved include charities, housing associations, the councils, the NHS and others, working as a loose partnership on many issues. We found a strong spirit of commitment and collaboration among them, not least within the numerous front-line outreach services on the street.

Substantial basic welfare support is available, but many services focus particularly on progress and recovery rather than help that might only sustain the status quo. On this principle, much effort is applied to engaging with people who find it hard or are reluctant to make changes in their lives. Gone are the days when a bed at a night shelter was all rough sleepers could expect – these days support is aimed at meeting the overall needs of the person, to give them the best chance of maintaining progress and avoiding a recurrence of homelessness.

Accommodation provision in the city operates as a 'pathway' - from assessment and short-term accommodation, through supported accommodation to independent tenancies. The pathway has some flexibility for people who find its requirements difficult to accept, but, nevertheless, some people do not manage to stay on track and others are unwilling to engage at all. Whether that choice can be seen as a rational expression of free will, or only a by-product of desperate personal problems, must be judged case by case. We considered other ethical and practical questions like this, such

as whether giving money to beggars is a productive way to help and whether rough sleeping can ever be eradicated.

Cambridge people are generally tolerant of non-conformity and their main concern is about the welfare of people on the street. However, many are also concerned about anti-social behaviour and problems like discarded drug injecting needles, and we consider these issues in the report.

1. Introduction

1.1 About this enquiry

As local councillors for Cambridge's city centre ward, we have seen for ourselves what many residents have raised with us – that rough sleeping, begging and other street life issues have increased in our local area in recent times.

People tell us how distressed they are to see such suffering and deprivation occurring on our streets. They worry for the individuals concerned and are concerned for a society where it is normal to walk past beggars and people huddled in doorways. They want to know what is going on, what is being done about these problems and what more might be done.

Finding no simple way to provide answers, we decided to carry out an enquiry and this report is the result. It is by no means a text book and will make no-one an expert about this very complex group of issues, but we hope it will help ordinary people make sense of the situation and develop their thoughts on the subject. We hope also the numerous organisations working to address these problems will find our analysis credible and our recommendations thought-provoking.

We have taken as our subject a problem as it is perceived by the general public: there are people sleeping on the streets and there are people sitting on the streets. To the observer they do not look very different from each other and sightings of both have gone up, so it is not unreasonable to assume they are two sides of the same coin. We decided it was right to base our enquiry around this perspective, but were and are conscious of the risk of conflating separate issues. In this report, we seek to disentangle the issues where that is appropriate. For example, it has become very clear to us that not all rough sleepers are beggars and not all beggars are rough sleepers.

Language matters in subjects like this. We use the phrase 'street life' to describe a group of behaviours, but it is no way to describe people. For that we use the phrase 'people with a street-based lifestyle' or for short: 'people on the street'; these have limitations, but are the best we have found. We avoid the common phrase 'street life community', because we think it unlikely many people on the street would identify themselves in that way. And when we refer to 'street life issues', we do not include problems like the behaviour of drunken revellers or the dropping of litter on the street, which may be no more or less acceptable, but they are not covered here.

1.2 Scope

We have consciously limited our enquiry by focusing on only one aspect of homelessness – rough sleeping - which is a particularly desperate version of a broader problem, marked out for its implications for individuals' health and security and its impact on the broader community. We feel it cannot simply be treated as the tip of the broader homelessness iceberg because, for many of those involved, it is about much more than just housing.

During this cold winter, the local, national and international media have been full of news and opinion about rough sleeping. This report, however, does not go into the economic and political context and certainly not into the debate over who might or might not be to blame for the problem. This is because, as local councillors, we want to concentrate on the local situation and how the effort, resources and powers that are available locally can be used to improve matters.

We should also mention that although we tend to indicate who pays for the services and initiatives described here, we have not attempted to look at how much they cost. This is obviously a very important matter, but to do it justice is beyond our means.

1.3 Acknowledgements

This enquiry has been a challenging task because the subject is complex and we are amateurs, peering into a mass of information, jargon and ideas, and needing often to question our own values and preconceptions. We have been helped by many people, locally and in other parts of the country, and are extremely grateful for the time, knowledge and ideas they have shared with us. We have been deeply impressed and touched by the extraordinary dedication of so many people working in this difficult field and by their determination to find ways to make things better. We also thank the Wintercomfort service users who took the time to give us an invaluable first-hand insight into their lives, problems and opinions. We have done our best to ensure that this report is accurate and fair, but in any event, we take full responsibility for it.

The organisations we met with are listed in the Appendix. This also includes links to many of the services referred to in the report and to some general reading.

2. Who is on the street and why?

2.1 Basic numbers

Rough sleepers are counted in a national scheme in the middle of one night each November, and on 3 further occasions as a local initiative. The definition of rough sleeping is tightly drawn: to be counted a person must actually be bedded down when seen by the counting team.

Cambridge's figures grew from 6 in 2010 to 18 in 2015, followed by a dramatic increase to 40 in 2016. The 2017 count, which we participated in, saw a substantial fall to 26, a welcome bucking of the national trend. It is open to debate why the number was so large in 2016 and why it declined so fast again afterwards. A number of measures put in place in the aftermath of November 2016 have been positive, although the local count in May gave a figure of 22 - before these measures had time to bite. The figures themselves are one-night snapshots of course, and they underestimate the problem, because it is never possible to find every person sleeping rough and (as we observed during the recent count) some will not be bedded down when the count takes place. To tell us something, the figures need to be interpreted across a longer timeline. Even if the 2016 number is an isolated high, we are still left with a current level that is higher than any previous year and local quarterly counts are consistent with this. On this basis, it is probably premature to assume a downward trend has been established.

There is no equivalent count of people engaged in other street life activities like begging or on-street drug and drink consumption. We wondered whether the rough sleeper figures are a reasonable proxy, but have become convinced that this is not the case; rough sleepers do not necessarily beg or take drugs, and not all beggars or street drinkers are homeless. People on the street are not all the same.

This is nicely illustrated by a project started a year ago, when outreach workers identified a group of 20 people on the street with particularly chaotic lifestyles and in need of intensive support. Only 20-30% of these were homeless, with the rest known to be housed in hostels or more permanent accommodation. This was surprising to us, but we got a similar picture from other interviewees. One told us he estimates that on a typical day, 10% of people seen on the street are waiting to enter the hostel system, 10-20% are rough sleepers who will not engage with services, 30% are housed people who go onto the street to beg, and the rest are housed, but spend time on the street for more general reasons, for example, they get bored or lonely at home. Like many other estimated figures given to us and repeated in this report, these figures should not be

treated as gospel, but they do serve to emphasise that people on the street are not a community or in any sense a unified group.

2.2 A changing profile

People find themselves homeless and on the street for many reasons. The slide from a stable home, a job, friends, family and good health towards sleeping rough in desperate circumstances can happen quickly and to anyone. Common triggers include mental illness and substance abuse, domestic abuse and family breakdown, debt and major financial loss. Some groups of people are known to be at particularly high risk of rough sleeping, including young people leaving care, people leaving prison and single low-skilled foreign migrants.

These factors probably remain constant, but the profile of rough sleepers and other people on the street has seen change over the last decade or so. Rough sleepers used typically to be older British men, often alcoholics, ex-offenders or ex-military, homeless for long periods, inclined to bed-down in out-of-the-way places and with a nomadic way of life, though night shelter accommodation was available on a more or less unconditional basis for those who wanted it. Some of the people who were sleeping rough then will no doubt have returned to a settled life; others will certainly have died, given the low life expectancy amongst rough sleepers (in the mid-40s for patients at the Cambridge Access Surgery).

By comparison, people on the street now tend to be somewhat younger and more, though still a minority, are women. They are more likely to be from the local area, with currently around 60% of people entering the hostel system having a 'Local Connection'. Debt is often a contributory factor. The nomadic way of life is less frequent, but migration is substantial from other parts of the UK (perhaps 25% of rough sleepers) and from abroad, mainly European countries (perhaps 25%). We spoke to a group of EU migrants, who told us that they normally sleep in a car or tent in quiet spots on the edge of the city. Some were working – often in intermittent, low paid jobs - but prefer not to rent accommodation because they want to send money home. In cold winter weather, they may go to the Cambridge churches' winter shelter, as they had done the night before we met them.

2.3 Mental illness and substance misuse

Substance misuse and mental illness have increased amongst people on the street, both separately and in combination, and figures from 2016 show that 77% of people on the streets in Cambridge were in this position. Deaths from illicit drug use are at a record high nationally and locally. We heard that around 60% of people using the Wintercomfort day centre suffer from one or both of these problems, and all 20 of the Street Life Working Group's hard-to-engage individuals are crack cocaine and/or heroin users.

As well as the cases of more serious mental illness, many other rough sleepers have mild to moderate mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. These may pre-date being on the street or may develop as a result of the sheer hardship of being there. In some cases, these problems may resolve without specific treatment if and when the individual's life becomes more stable.

The city appears to be seeing a reduction in street drinking by groups of people, though many people on the street do consume alcohol. We have been told whilst an individual's alcohol consumption might at one time have been considered a primary problem, it may now be over-shadowed by the seriousness of a drug problem.

The city is seeing an increase in the use of crack cocaine and crack and heroin combined, together with a wide range of other drugs. The increase in chaotic behaviour seen on the street is at least partly explained by the fact that these drugs tend to cause extreme highs and lows and erratic, agitated behaviour. The word "chaotic" is not ours, but was heavily used by many interviewees. Some of these drug users may need a fix numerous times a day, leaving little time or energy for engaging with the support workers who could help them access treatment and other services.

Substance abuse and mental health problems can make it difficult for people to find the motivation to engage with support services, which places the individual at even greater risk. We have heard of people who have refused to be taken to hospital in a crisis, and of others unwilling to claim the benefits they are entitled to, preferring to receive charity or do without. We have ourselves talked to people who will not accept a hostel place, preferring to sleep outside even in winter. Some individuals bounce on and off the street, moving between a friend's sofa, a car and the street. Sometimes people enter the hostel system, but cannot settle there. For others, unacceptable behaviour or a failure to cope leads to eviction from hostels and other accommodation and a return to rough sleeping. One-third of people entering the Jimmy's assessment centre are 'returnees' for one reason or another.

2.4 Visibility and begging

The increase in street life activity is clearly real, but it may also be that these activities have become more visible to us. This may be partly due to the closing off of old haunts with gates and the use of security patrols, leading people to cluster in the city centre. It may also be the case that people feel safer in busy paces covered by CCTV cameras (although during the annual street count last November, we saw rough sleepers who had clearly sought out quieter places). We understand that the rate of attacks on rough sleepers in Cambridge is considered low compared to other cities.

A growth in begging is certainly adding to the visibility of street life activity because, by definition, begging needs to be seen by passers-by. Beggars tend to choose areas of high footfall in the city centre, varying their locations between daytime and evening/night-time to reflect the different activities of the public. We understand that at weekends people come into the city to beg, 'displacing' those who occupy locations on the street during the week.

The increase in begging is at least partly explained by the need to feed expensive drug habits. Public health data show that in 2015, the typical heroin user spent around £1,400 per month on drugs and the Police have given us a current figure of £60-80 per day. Several interviewees told us about the strong correlation between drug addiction and begging.

Drug users need to buy their drugs and there has been a rise in drug dealing in streets, alleyways and parks, often by dealers paying flying visits to the city from elsewhere. There has also been an increase in drug consumption in public places, which may be partly explained by the rise in serious drug addiction and the loss of uninhibition this can entail. As would be expected, this is leading to a rise in the number of discarded needles in public areas. The incidence of needle finds has doubled in Cambridge since 2013, and in our own city centre ward finds have trebled, though not all these were found in public places.

2.5 Progress

The population of people on the street, or at least of rough sleepers, is far from static – for example, only 2 of the 40 rough sleepers counted in November 2016 were also counted a year later. And this turnover can take place over quite short periods, as shown by data from this winter's Cambridge churches shelter. Of the 33 people who used the service during the first two months, 9 have moved into hostels or tenancies or have returned home, with 1 going to prison.

This turnover may be explained in various ways. Some, as the churches' figures show, take up accommodation in the city's hostel system or other housing; some move in and out of homelessness, staying with friends or family and going on the street when the bed space is needed by others; some may come to Cambridge intending to stay only a short time; and others are reconnected to their home area through the 'local connections' policy.

Even people with severe and entrenched problems can make progress: 7 individuals from a group of 20 hard-to-engage rough sleepers identified around a year ago have now been removed from that list.

However, for an uncomfortably large number of people, progress is slow or rocky or non-existent. A 2016 figure showed 75% of rough sleepers refusing to engage with outreach services at that time. Some people enter the hostel system, but cannot tolerate the conditions and return to rough sleeping, while others manage the supported housing system, but do not cope with a move to independent housing.

3. How does the system work today?

3.1 INTRODUCTION

We have found an extensive range of services and initiatives provided in relation to rough sleeping and street life issues in Cambridge, often interrelating and overlapping with each other. After a brief look at the framework in which they are operating, we describe them below in three categories:

- Housing
- Welfare and recovery
- Public realm management

3.1.1 Partnership working

One of the first things we learned in our enquiry was how much commitment, patience and ambition it takes to help people with complex problems to turn their lives around. We saw how hard the people working in this field are working to this end, and how they work together in a strong spirit of co-operation and collaboration. This partnership approach is particularly evident at the coal face, with outreach workers from different organisations sharing information and ideas around individual cases on a day-to-day basis. The partner agencies also operate a shared database, *In-Form*, to aid communication and keep records. Higher level operational decisions are made through numerous working groups that are either wholly or partly focused on rough sleeping and street life issues.

3.1.2 Shared principles

We found substantial agreement within the partnership about how these problems should be addressed - an approach encapsulated by one of our interviewees as:

“Always assume people will engage.”

This seems to us a respectful and optimistic principle and we have found it to be embedded in the way that services are delivered for people on the street. This approach is a progression or recovery model, in which steps are taken along a pathway to address the factors standing between them and a sustainable, healthier lifestyle. Consistent with this, we found a widespread view that support should come first and always be available, while disciplinary or enforcement action should take place only

where the public interest genuinely demands it - and then in ways that are compatible with the individual's best interests.

3.2 HOUSING

3.2.1 Homeless families

The housing needs of homeless families are generally addressed under the City Council's specific statutory responsibility to locate and place them directly into temporary accommodation. They rarely need to sleep on the streets and are not addressed in this report.

3.2.2 Single homeless

Single homeless people are assisted with housing advice from the City Council. Where housing is the only need, the guidance given will assume the person is able to take ownership for their situation and negotiate their next steps for themselves. They will be guided to entry points to mainstream housing, typically in the private rented sector. If on a low income or housing benefit, they are likely to have to move outside the city, where rents are more affordable. For those with a clear need to remain in the city, the Council has procured a small number of rented houses, which it manages on the landlords' behalf and lets out as shared tenancies that are affordable within housing benefit levels.

People with one or more non-housing needs that present obstacles to gaining access to mainstream housing are more complex to assist and in general less able to resolve their own situation. These individuals are guided towards assessment of their housing and other needs. Most rough sleepers will fall into this group.

3.2.3 The housing pathway

Accommodation for those with significant non-housing needs which prevent them from accessing the mainstream housing market, is operated as a pathway. As they progress along the pathway, individuals are provided with support to overcome the problems which are preventing them from gaining regular accommodation. The assumption is that almost all individuals can achieve this progression and ultimately take a place within mainstream housing. In practice, success and speed in achieving this are a

function of the complexity of an individual's needs, their willingness and capacity to undertake change sustainably and the availability of the necessary support.

3.2.4 Sleeping rough

People wholly without accommodation and therefore sleeping rough in Cambridge are likely to fall into one of these categories: those who are waiting to gain access to Jimmy's; those who have dropped out or been evicted from Jimmy's or another hostel and have not yet re-entered the pathway; those who are unwilling to accept an offer of accommodation; and those without recourse to public funds (usually non-UK nationals without formal employment). In addition, of course, there are people for whom tonight is the 'first night out' – who are at the very outset of the homelessness problem and are as yet unknown to the support services.

The Cambridge Mental Health Street Outreach Team, commissioned by the City and County Councils, is likely to be the first to discover a new face sleeping rough. Its four outreach workers scan the city's hotspots in early morning patrols and draw on reports passed to them from members of the public and other agencies, such as the Police. Since their primary objective is to help people access accommodation, they are an important facilitator to the housing pathway, seeking to engage with the individual in order to make a first level assessment of housing need and other factors which might have to be addressed. They will signpost people to Wintercomfort for basic welfare support, and for accommodation and assessment at Jimmy's. Where needed, they will seek to engineer contact with other more specialist support. In exceptional cases where it is evident that Jimmy's is an inappropriate option, they may recommend - with justifications - to the City Council that an individual be referred directly into the hostel system, by-passing an assessment and stay at Jimmy's. Where an individual has no local connection to the city, the team will assist with reconnecting them to their home area by identifying accommodation there and helping with travel arrangements.

3.2.5 Winter shelter

During nights of severe winter weather, Jimmy's offers 30 open access beds in addition to those described above, which are sanctioned and funded by the City Council through an annual grant. The scheme is known as SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Provision) and is open to anyone who would otherwise be sleeping on the street, i.e. it is not limited to those who are eligible for housing benefit, although those who are eligible are expected to claim and have it paid directly to Jimmy's. A further 3 beds are provided on the same basis within Riverside's hostels.

The Cambridge's Churches Homeless Project is open every night from 1st December to 31st March, accommodating up to 15 individuals at nightly rotating city centre churches. 56 different individuals used the provision in 2016/17. Access is by initial referral from Jimmy's and includes an evening meal. This provision is supported entirely by voluntary effort and charitable resources. It sits formally outside the overall housing pathway, but it does adhere to the progression approach in that it provides advice, encouragement and information and a number of its users move on successfully. During the first two months of the current season, 9 out of 33 users had moved on to Jimmy's, tenancies or back home. The scheme operates a light touch regime, but expects individuals to arrive by 7.30pm to ensure that users get the benefit of welfare support and advice as well as a bed.

3.2.6 Jimmy's

The charity Jimmy's, located at East Road, is commissioned by the City and County Councils as an Assessment Centre and is therefore normally the first step in the housing pathway. Obtaining a place there generally requires an individual to present to them on a daily basis until a place is available: the wait was quoted to us recently at 2-3 days. Accommodation costs are met from the individuals' housing benefit.

The assessment centre can accommodate 22 individuals in private, en suite, rooms for up to 28 days, during which period the assessment takes place and a plan is defined (typically over the first 5 days) and executed (typically over the remaining 23 days) for a move-on to longer term accommodation, potentially the supported housing or hostel system, according to the level of need. Jimmy's is the main access gateway to that system, making referrals to these providers. Individuals who have no local connection (some 40% of those who enter Jimmy's) are helped to re-connect to the town or city where they do have a connection.

As part of an agreed strategy, Jimmy's ceased to be an open access 'night shelter' in 2012, a move that was consistent with a desire to accentuate the 'progression' or 'recovery' model in the provision for single homelessness. In this spirit, quite tight conditions are imposed on residents, such as an 11pm curfew and a rule against drug and alcohol consumption on the premises, which requires people to hand these items into a store on entry and potentially to undergo a body search. The case for Jimmy's high threshold in these respects is that admitting potentially unknown individuals from the street carries a high risk to staff and other residents, and also that people using

Jimmy's to enter the housing pathway are assumed to be willing to make some changes to their existing lifestyle.

These conditions are more stringent than the house rules of some of the move-on hostels to which individuals may be referred after a stay at Jimmy's. As we have heard direct from several rough sleepers, and from Jimmy's themselves and other accommodation providers, this regime proves to be too strict for some people, who either leave or get evicted for breaking the rules – or refuse to apply based on reputation.

Jimmy's itself is trying to address this problem through its own street outreach worker, as are other services. In addition, two pragmatic 'work-around' solutions were introduced in 2017. First, Jimmy's re-introduced 4 additional beds, known as 'red beds', with lower conditions of entry and more flexible house rules, available for a 28-day period (or occasionally longer) in which support is given to help people move into the main Assessment Centre. An outreach worker is typically instrumental in introducing individuals to these additional beds, from among those recognised as the most entrenched rough sleepers. Second, the City Council has created a procedure whereby, on an exceptional basis, individuals who are assessed as unlikely to meet Jimmy's gateway requirements can be referred direct to one of the hostels, without first going through the assessment centre. As far as we can ascertain, these initiatives are achieving good outcomes.

3.2.7 The supported housing system

The housing pathway continues with a variety of short and medium term residential accommodation with support workers - each establishment specialising in a particular level, type and stage of need; some of these are known as hostels. Most of these are provided by the not-for-profit sector, funded partly by contracts with the County Council and partly by the transfer of individuals' housing benefit payments, and supplemented to varying degrees from other charitable sources. Riverside and the Cyrenians are the largest organisations in Cambridge offering this accommodation, each operating at a number of different locations in the city.

Cambridge Cyrenians provide 45 units of accommodation in several shared houses to support single, vulnerable adults who are homeless. These meet a range of needs and levels of support. A further 16 units are provided, which are currently funded by the Cyrenians themselves. The Cyrenians also run the Jubilee Project, commissioned by the County Council, providing 10 supported places specifically for ex-offenders, taking referrals from the prison system and the probation service amongst others.

Cambridge Housing Society provides 6 flats at Corona House for homeless women.

Riverside provides 3 homeless hostels: Willow Walk with 20 beds for those with complex support needs; Victoria Project with 30 beds for those with medium/high needs; and The Springs, with 24 beds for those with low to medium needs who are ready to engage with education, training or employment. Riverside also provides 29 units of accommodation for those with low to medium needs who can live in the community with visiting ('floating') support.

Other third sector organisations, including Jimmy's, provide additional supported 'move-on' accommodation, which is not commissioned by local councils, but funded from other charitable and grant sources.

The commissioning contracts for the hostels generally assume that individuals will remain there for a maximum of two years until they are ready to move on to more mainstream accommodation and such accommodation becomes available. There is an expectation of individual progression, and progression does indeed occur, creating vacancies for new entrants, though the need for some exceptions to the target timescales is accepted. The performance of the hostels in relation to the move-on targets is monitored by the commissioning organisation.

3.2.8 Move-on to mainstream housing

Individuals ready to move on from supported housing will normally enter the mainstream local housing market through tenancies in the private rented sector or social housing. Most people doing so are without work or on low wages and, in practice, an individual private sector tenancy in the city will not be affordable to them and securing one will mean moving out of the city. The City Council has established a discretionary scheme of housing benefit top-up awards for 25 people per year. The top-up makes affordable a median private sector rent for an appropriate housing type in the city. The key criterion for such cases is readiness for employment, as awards are predicated on ability to pay the whole rent within 12 months.

For social housing, after going on the Housing Register people may bid for Council and housing association accommodation through the local Homelink service. As homeless people, they are by default ascribed a priority rating of 'band B or C', which means quite a long wait or even failure. As a means of accelerating progression, the local social housing providers, through the Housing Allocation and Resettlement Panel (HARP),

have agreed to enable up to 40 individuals a year living in the hostel system to receive a discretionary 'band A', which is effectively a guarantee of a social tenancy. The cases are selected from caseworker referrals, on the basis of a demonstrated commitment to progress and the need for social housing as opposed to a private sector tenancy.

3.2.9 Training Flats

There are currently two 'training flats' in the city and one in South Cambridgeshire, provided by Cambridge Housing Society. These are social tenancies reserved for allocation to individuals with a chaotic lifestyle who are already receiving support from the County Council's 'Counting Every Adult Team'. The scheme has operated since 2008 and aims to normalise individuals into mainstream housing, with tapering levels of support. The flats should more correctly be called 'tenancies' because they are not fixed properties, but tenancy arrangements on properties that may come in and out of the scheme as new individuals enter it. On a small sample, the scheme is considered successful and we have learned of ambitions to significantly increase the number of flats involved.

3.2.10 Long term supported accommodation

In some cases, individuals continue longer in supported housing than the normal 2-year target period. Some longer term supported housing is provided in the city by housing associations and the city council, most providing mental health support, but amongst them Jimmy's manage a 6-bed project for older, entrenched alcoholics. As we understand it, there is no long term supported housing for people whose primary problem is drug addiction.

3.3 WELFARE AND RECOVERY

Several of our interviewees stressed to us that "homelessness is not just about housing". Many homeless people have problems which do not go away just because they get a roof over their head and, if these are not addressed, they may lead to renewed homelessness - a pattern that can repeat in a highly damaging cycle. To reduce this risk, many people on the street need a variety of welfare and rehabilitation support, sometimes over a long period, and the services available in Cambridge are described here.

3.3.1 Crisis support

At the extreme, a crisis may occur on the street at night-time; perhaps someone newly arrived in the city, exhibiting chaotic behaviour, cold and without the basics for life. There are no specialist homeless services in this situation and it may well be a member of the public who makes the first contact and decides whether to try to help.

The role of the emergency services is limited. If a person is judged to have mental “capacity”, they are entitled to refuse help, for example from an ambulance. The Police have powers under S136 of the Mental Health Act to remove a person to a place of safety (such as Fulbourn Hospital or the person’s home) if they believe that a person is mentally ill and has need of care and control. We understand that this power can only be used where a person is exhibiting behaviour that may endanger themselves or other people.

Primary mental health services can assist if the individual wishes to accept help. The NHS’s First Response Service (FRS) - available 24 hours a day, every day, by dialling 111 and selecting Option 2 - provides advice and support and potentially a referral to other services including the Cambridge Sanctuary. The Sanctuary, run by the charity Mind, is a physical safe space in the city for individuals experiencing an emotional or mental health crisis, offering a few hours’ practical and emotional support 7 days a week from 6pm to 1am.

The FRS also operates within the Cambridgeshire Constabulary control room, assisting the Police to take the most appropriate pathway with people in mental health crisis. A call to 999 regarding the chaotic behaviour of someone on the street may elicit the involvement of this team.

3.3.2 Welfare support

We found that there is a general welfare and advice element to almost all of the rough sleeping and street life services in the city, even where the service is primarily dealing with specialist issues like housing, mental health, addictions or anti-social behaviour. This makes sense to us, as progress with complex and entrenched problems is unlikely if basic needs are unmet.

It also makes sense that welfare is not just about a meal or a warm coat, but about building relationships and developing trust. Many individuals on the street are isolated and unable to trust other people or the ‘system’, and turning that problem around requires time, energy and compassion on the part of people trying to help. A man we met at Wintercomfort used the word ‘friend’ again and again when singing the praises of a specialist outreach worker helping him to address his mental health and substance

abuse problems. Friendship allowed him to make progress, and progress allowed him to make a friend – a virtuous circle indeed.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising to find that a wide range of local services are putting a lot of time into welfare support, often through outreach on the street.

The charity Wintercomfort plays a vital role in providing and hosting welfare services for homeless and vulnerably housed people. Its 7-day a week day centre at Victoria Avenue is open to all-comers for breakfast, a shower, clean clothes, internet access and a chat. The charity also organises outings and social activities. It is obvious to any visitor that the warmth, food, social interaction and cheerfulness of the staff at Wintercomfort are massively sustaining to the people who go there. Last year, the day centre received an average 76 people a day (160 individuals in total), 50% of whom were homeless (rough sleeping, sofa surfing or camping) and the rest housed in hostels, supported accommodation or their own housing.

As well as the basics, Wintercomfort is commissioned to provide learning and development support and it operates a social enterprise cleaning business offering training and employment opportunities. We spoke to a man who has progressed from a voluntary training role into employment with the business – he still attends the day centre for general support and camaraderie when he is not working.

Wintercomfort is also an important resource for many other service providers - providing a physical space where workers can meet up with clients, or make contact with new people, away from the street. Services like the St John Ambulance foot care team also attend.

Other sources of general welfare support for people on the street include:

- the Cambridge Churches Homeless Project provides an evening meal and friendly conversation with volunteers;
- The Salvation Army and Jimmy's collect and supply items including clothing and food;
- The Cambridge City food bank operates from various locations;
- Many local citizens and students in the city provide volunteer effort at Jimmy's and the other voluntary services, and we understand that citizen groups also organise help out on the street, such as hot food, clothing and bedding in the winter months.

3.3.3 Medical and rehabilitation services

The Cambridge Access Surgery is the city's GP practice catering specifically for people who are homeless or vulnerably housed, providing a drop-in morning service and appointments in the afternoon. Rough sleepers and people who misuse drugs or alcohol tend to suffer poor general health as well as increased risk of mental illness and addiction, and the surgery staff have the skills and capacity to attend to these high needs. Staff from the primary care mental health service attend the surgery, as does the Inclusion drug and alcohol service, which sees around 60 drug and alcohol clients at the surgery.

Drug and alcohol services in Cambridge are delivered by Inclusion on behalf of the County Council, providing advice, diagnosis and treatment programmes. Reflecting the prevalence of substance abuse among people on the street, Inclusion employs a drug and alcohol street outreach worker to help people access the help they need. Treatments include the prescribing of substitute medications like methadone, and range from first stage talking therapies through to structured care plans and, in a very small number of cases, residential rehabilitation at Fulbourn Hospital or out of the county. Inclusion also operates the local needle exchange programme for injecting drug users (the needles themselves are issued and collected through participating pharmacies).

Clinical mental health services are provided through the county's NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT) and charities such as Mind. In addition to the First Response crisis serviced described above, the CPFT operates the PRISM primary care service which makes community psychiatric nurses available to every GP practice, with the goal of improving access to services for patients with mild to moderate mental health problems. For people with more serious and enduring problems, secondary care services are provided by CPFT Locality Teams who offer pharmacological interventions and medication management, psychological therapies and other support. For crisis situations, tertiary (in-patient) care is provided at Fulbourn hospital (and occasionally in specialist facilities elsewhere), where the so-called 3-3-3 model aims to enable patients to return to outpatient care as soon as possible. The long-term trend towards providing outpatient mental health care means that mental illness is more visible within the community than in earlier times.

Others with a role in the mental health field include the Street Outreach Team, and the Cyrenians have 4 years lottery funding for a mental health nurse to work with people living in their hostels - a scheme which may help them take on more high-needs individuals.

The Dual Diagnosis Street Outreach Team (DDST) is new project aimed at helping people on the street who are suffering from a combination of serious mental illness and substance misuse problems. It is recognised nationally that people with a 'dual diagnosis' find it difficult to access the treatment and rehabilitation they need, because mental health services often refuse to treat people while their substance misuse is unmanaged, and drug and alcohol services are unable to make progress with rehabilitation while mental illness is untreated. These people also find it hard to access and sustain housing, so it is not surprising that people with a dual diagnosis are among the most chaotic and entrenched of rough sleepers.

The DDST includes four differently qualified practitioners who, through referrals from other agencies and using outreach on the street, assess the person's needs, provide short term interventions and develop care plans, with the aim of preparing people for access to mental health supported accommodation. We understand that the service is achieving significant success with accessing mainstream mental health services and housing for these individuals. We met two DDST clients who explained to us how the service had changed their lives by ensuring they got a correct diagnosis of their illness and appropriate treatment – progress that, according to them, was not achievable before the DDST was created. The service aims to work with around 45 people per year and is currently funded as a pilot scheme for only two years.

The Counting Every Adult Street Life Project also started in 2017, offering intensive, personalised support to high-needs individuals through a single project worker. Since its primary focus is on support for people engaged in anti-social behaviour, we describe it in Section 3.4 on public realm management.

3.3.4 Tenancy/Floating support

Many formerly homeless people need support to make a success of living independently and in particular to sustain their tenancy. Tenancy or 'floating' (floating as distinct from being attached to a supported housing scheme) may include claiming or appealing for benefits, paying the rent and bills, taking care of the property or behaving as a good neighbour. It could also include helping arrange a social care package or help with making and keeping medical appointments. Support workers who are focused on these practical problems will also be well-placed to spot more personal problems, such as mental illness or substance abuse, that need specialist help. The County Council commissions these services from Centra Care and the CHS Group. Accommodation providers including Jimmy's, Riverside and Cyrenians also provide in-house support of this kind to their residents.

3.3.5 Cambridge Street Aid

The Cambridge Street Aid charitable fund was set up a year or so ago to give people wishing to help individuals on the street an alternative to handing over cash, because of fears that cash handouts can sometimes sustain a street-based lifestyle and hinder progress towards positive outcomes.

The fund aims to help people get off and stay off the streets by providing grants of up to £750. Of £25,000 raised in the first year, £17,000 has been paid out to 65 vulnerable people for uses including:

- paying the advance rent to help someone move into a new home;
- buying essential household items for people moving into in new homes;
- paying for a bicycle to help a formerly homeless person travel to a new job;
- buying new clothing for someone to wear in his new volunteering role;
- helping towards start-up costs for two people who had been on the streets to set up their own small businesses.

3.4 PUBLIC REALM MANAGEMENT

Sleeping rough and a street-based lifestyle are expressions of need that demand quality responses from housing and support services, which we have examined in the two previous sections. We now look at services focused on the management of public spaces for the benefit of the whole community. In general, these are not specifically designed for dealing with issues raised by rough sleeping and the street-based lifestyle, though some more specific or targeted interventions do exist.

We know of little appetite among city residents for a crack-down approach to people with a street-based lifestyle: the general assumption is that these people need help. However, it is clear that problems that occur in the public realm, such as aggressive or intimidating begging, open drug taking and dealing and the discarding of drugs paraphernalia, human and other waste, are of concern for the general public and these concerns require a range of responses from the authorities.

As we understand it from many of our interviewees, efforts to challenge anti-social behaviour can also be in the best interests of the individuals concerned. Allowing life on the street to continue without any conditions or expectations of behaviour may merely sustain people in an unhealthy or positively dangerous lifestyle, giving them no incentive to change. Appropriate challenge and pressure, backed up by the ultimate threat of enforcement action, can be productive in nudging the individuals concerned towards engaging with the housing and other support services they need to help them move away from the street. This makes sense to us – we all need a prod sometimes.

To ensure that the challenge is, indeed, appropriate and proportionate, it is clearly important the agencies involved with public realm management and enforcement issues work closely on a case-by-case basis with the housing and other support agencies. It seems to us that this kind of collaboration does occur within the overall service partnership.

3.4.1 Street Life Working Group

This is a forum of representatives from all the organisations involved in street life issues in the city, which meets fortnightly to monitor the overall situation and agree priorities. It is convened by the City Council's Safer Communities Team and includes representatives of the Police, the council's housing and environmental enforcement services, Jimmy's and other accommodation providers and various outreach and support services.

The group pools information on individuals in the street life community who are contributing to anti-social behaviour or are personally vulnerable. Its overall priority is to address the situation so far as possible through engagement with accommodation options and with support services where there are obstacles to accessing accommodation. Engagement necessarily is the choice of the individual. The priority – and the experience - is that some will quickly engage through the offers and signposting that are routinely available. The working group focuses on individuals who do not spontaneously engage and are more entrenched in their behaviour, and it co-ordinates more proactive and customised inter-agency approaches to increase the chances of engagement succeeding in these cases. This could include more specific account of mental health or addiction needs in the approach to engagement. In some cases, it could, if justified, involve an enforcement role in providing a 'nudge' towards the preferred outcome of engagement, based on likely alternative enforcement action. The working group maintains, monitors and updates an evergreen list of 20 individuals for this customised approach. In cases where all support-based approaches have

consistently failed, the only effective intervention to their behaviour may be Police enforcement action where this is justified by actual behaviour.

3.4.2 Police

The Police are the primary organisation with powers to back up requests and warnings to individuals with processes leading to penalties, although some powers can also be exercised by councils and some require collaboration between the two.

Having said this, the Police's powers of formal intervention are limited to cases where people are breaking or may be about to break the law. Their remit is not to prevent people acting or looking unusual, if no harm is occurring, and they are obliged to act in relation to behaviour, rather than to type of person.

With the generalised authority of their uniform, the Police can and do challenge patterns of behaviour by request and may succeed in disrupting them by this means. It is clear to us that they are sensitive about punishing individuals for what may be the direct result of social misfortune, in situations where harm to the general community is not completely clear. The fact that many individuals on the street have little stake in the community often leaves non-custodial penalties lacking impact - and custodial penalties achieving little, whilst incurring high costs. In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that, although begging is a criminal offence under the 19th century Vagrancy Act, 'passive begging' generally does not result in formal Police action, while 'aggressive begging' is likely to be acted on.

Recent experience has indicated the value of Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) in successfully disrupting street life behaviour which is problematic to others. CBOs are a court disposal provided in the 2014 Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, but need to be applied in the context of a conviction for a criminal offence, and can be in addition to a sentence or be a part of a conditional discharge. They bind a perpetrator to or from a line of conduct, in situations where their prosecuted behaviour causes harassment, alarm or distress to others and a CBO would be likely to prevent it. Its application is for the culmination of a series of documented anti-social incidents on the part of an individual and requires assembly of evidence that the behaviour is persistent despite requests to desist. Over the past two years, 8 CBOs have been obtained, typically for begging offences and the outcomes have been considered generally effective. At the time of writing, a further 5 similar cases are awaiting court dates.

Outside an emergency situation, the Police's impact is limited by the presence and availability of the neighbourhood policing team. The team for the city centre and north of the city includes two Police Constables who, while performing general duties, have become specialised on issues related to the street-based lifestyle. Until 2015 the City Council subsidised the presence of an additional Police Constable dedicated to street life issues, who would be mainly free of general duties.

3.4.3 City Council Safer Communities Team

This team includes 3 Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Officers who perform a broad problem-solving and policy role in relation to anti-social behaviour, both in support of the Council's own role as a landlord of its social housing estate and in the public realm in general. They also do the complex case work around street life issues particularly where legal enforcement is appropriate.

In 2017 the team obtained civil injunctions against 9 individuals whose rough sleeping was problematic. This included 4 individuals behind Parkside Pool and 5 in Council garages where there was rough sleeping and associated drug related activity and ASB. Individuals were offered support and accommodation options. The four individuals behind the pool were successfully accommodated as a result of this approach.

They carry out site visits and engage with individuals on the street, have issued warnings and arrange to meet individuals with their support workers to discuss the issues or the consequences of ongoing behaviour. They also liaise with those affected, including the business community. The balancing existence of the Street Aid initiative has helped get the buy-in needed from the community to tackle these issues.

ASB officers also link in with support agencies and will arrange to speak to residents who may be moving on to their own tenancies to advise how ASB can have an impact on them in the future – the aim being to prevent this happening again by ensuring they know how they can report concerns themselves if need be.

The team does not routinely patrol the streets but brings together other relevant services to co-ordinate a response to more complex and intractable situations, including those involving street life issues. In doing this, it responds to city residents highlighting issues and sometimes attends neighbourhood meetings to understand from residents and formulate action plans.

The team, among other organisations including the Police, can issue Community Protection Notices (CPN) under the 2014 Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act. In this context CPNs would be directed at individuals who are responsible for ongoing problems or nuisances, which would typically be littering with drug paraphernalia, obstructing entrances or abuse. A notice requires the individual to take reasonable steps to ensure the specified behaviour does not happen again. It must be preceded by a written warning allowing time to comply. It is subject to appeal to the Magistrates Court. Breach of a CPN is a criminal offence which can be disposed by a £100 Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecuted with a fine of up to £1,000. In applying this measure, the team (or other organisation) needs to be satisfied that the behaviour is persistent, unreasonable and detrimental to the community's way of life; in some possible cases evidence of community detriment is hard to evidence from the public. Since April 2017 the team has issued 11 CPN warnings to individuals but no actual follow-on notices, in some instances because, together with support offered, the problematic street presence reduced. However, 4 of the individuals are being considered for escalated action via Police prosecution and 2 for injunctions.

In 2015 the City Council established a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) to prohibit drinking of alcohol in certain areas close to Mill Road. Although there has not been any incident resulting in enforcement action, drinking does appear to have reduced in these areas, though this may have been displaced to other places nearby.

3.4.4 Counting Every Adult

The Counting Every Adult (CEA) Street Life Project was created with City Council funding in 2017 in recognition of the increasingly chaotic and anti-social behaviour exhibited by some people on the street in Cambridge. The broader CEA service works across the county with vulnerable 'chronically excluded' adults, using a 'truly person-centred' approach that builds trust and confidence by respecting and working with the client's own life choices. The new street life co-ordinator is attached to the Street Life Working Group and takes the lead on around 10 cases selected from the group's rolling list of 20 individuals – people with a poor record of engagement and whose anti-social behaviour is causing concern. The service helps clients to navigate the range of specialist services available, advocating for them and supporting them in areas like housing, health and criminal justice issues. In its first year, the service has worked with 17 individuals, all rough sleepers who beg to feed a drug habit. 13 have mental health problems and in 15 cases their drug habit is unmanaged and untreated. 11 are locally connected to Cambridge and 9 are claiming benefits.

3.4.5 City Council environmental response

The City Council's enforcement team addresses a wide range of environmental issues in public places, such as littering, fly tipping, dogs, 'A' Boards and punt touting. After ceasing its subsidy to the Police, the Council appointed an additional patrolling officer to this team to specialise on street life issues, particularly associated with waste and left belongings. The officer interacts regularly with individuals in this community, and has limited enforcement powers, namely for the removal of abandoned possessions from the street in accordance with a recently introduced City Council procedure.

The procedure involves placing stickers on the items, giving 3 hours' notice to remove, after which time the items may be removed by officers and stored for 28 days. A notice is left at the site from where the property is removed, explaining that the property has been taken and by whom, and that it will be stored and can be reclaimed. It gives two contact phone numbers for arranging for the property to be returned to them and there is also information about other services available in Cambridge.

In a few cases, the enforcement team has also instigated the cutting back of vegetation on public land in close proximity to people's homes, where this become a habitual location for the accumulation of waste and abandoned items.

Discarded injection needles present a safety hazard over and above other abandoned items and the City Council undertakes to safely remove these where found and notified by members of the public within 2 hours, and routinely when they are found in the course of routine street cleaning and ground maintenance. Sharps deposit boxes are provided in a number of public toilets around the city. The needle exchange programme enables injecting drug users to return their needles to pharmacies, but nevertheless over 10,000 needles were collected and disposed of by the City Council in 2017, though this figure also includes collections from within buildings.

4. Is there potential for change?

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this section we comment on various aspects of the system as we found it, and identify some practical suggestions for change. We group these as follows:

- Housing options
- From welfare to recovery
- Approaches to begging
- Coordination of enforcement activity
- Making this a community effort

4.2 HOUSING OPTIONS

The housing pathway aims to move people towards independent housing, with tenancy or 'floating' support to help people stay housed. We are convinced that this progression model is generally the right approach to moving people away from a street life and towards independent living, and that the pathway concept is useful for creating and measuring that progress. Move-on figures from the accommodation providers indicate that the Cambridge pathway works well for many people, though we understand that the rate of progress along it is sometimes limited by the availability of appropriate move-on accommodation.

4.2.1 Getting the housing mix right

We have not found it easy to get a full picture of the range of accommodation that makes up the Cambridge housing pathway, but our observation is that the type, mix and overall quantity of provision is not necessarily what it would be if the system was designed from scratch today. Indeed, it would be surprising if that was the case, because the individual accommodation projects have started up and operated more or less independently alongside each other over a long period. That leads us to wonder whether, for example, the increasingly complex needs of people on the street means there is now a mismatch between low-needs housing and high-needs clients.

We appreciate that the city's network of supported housing is not in the hands of a single provider or commissioner – and we do not hanker after such an arrangement. However, it is very important that the system is as efficient as it can be, avoiding over- or under-provision of the different accommodation types. We therefore feel there it

would be valuable for the two councils, the accommodation providers, and perhaps others to work together on an assessment of both need and capacity for all types of supported accommodation, with a view to identifying how the provision can be adapted, over time, to respond to changing circumstances. Such adaptation is presumably partly about adjusting the type and level of support provided by staff within the accommodation, and we are aware that the County Council has recently reviewed its support for supported housing. However, it is also important to consider overall quantity in order to meet future predicted needs. In doing so, it is important to take into account losses that have occurred in the system over the years, for example where refurbishment programmes have produced smaller quantities of higher quality accommodation in keeping with modern standards.

SEE RECOMMENDATION 5 (with below)

4.2.2 Open-ended supported accommodation

We recommend that the need for and supply of open-ended supported accommodation is included in the review proposed above. Pragmatic work-around solutions are being applied to help some people in the early stages of the housing pathway and we wonder whether the system could also benefit from increased pragmatism towards its end, to give fuller recognition to the fact that, for some individuals, progress may grind to a halt before fully independent living is achieved. These may primarily be older people who have intractable drug addictions and other complex problems, or who have become institutionalised through stretches of imprisonment. Living independently may create loneliness and exacerbate substance misuse and mental illness, may leave the person constantly hovering on the edge of eviction, and may give rise to a particularly horrible form of exploitation – that of ‘cuckooing’ by ‘mates’ who take control of the property for sleeping or drug dealing and consumption.

We have discussed with several interviewees what provision there is and should be for people like this, for whom totally independent living is not a realistic or appropriate goal and who need a permanent form of supported housing. We have described what we understand to be the accommodation currently provided in this category, but our impression is that this provision goes somewhat under the radar, in that there may be move-on targets that are quietly ignored. Whether this is because it is seen as a failure of the progression model, we do not know, but we feel it would be better to acknowledge the need for open-ended supported accommodation, quantify it and look at how it can be met. We think this is important for two reasons: firstly, it may create better living conditions for this cohort of people and, secondly, it may free up capacity

for other people to make timely progress along the pathway.

SEE RECOMMENDATION 5 (with above)

4.2.3 Housing First

We have examined an approach to provision for the single homeless called 'Housing First', which is applied in a variety of forms in the US and European countries, including several places in the UK, two of which we have visited. The concept is about giving individuals an ordinary tenancy and 'their own front door', combined with personalised intensive support from an assigned visiting support worker, not time-limited, but likely to taper over time with need. This is a significant deviation from the progression model in which independent housing is the successful outcome at the end of the housing pathway.

Although the purest form of Housing First is about the immediate and unconditional provision of independent housing to prevent a 'second night out', in practice in the UK it is used for entrenched rough sleepers who are known to have repeatedly dropped out or been evicted from the hostel system. Greater Manchester has recently announced plans to provide 270 homes to entrenched rough sleepers "who have regularly slept rough over the past two years and/or are well known to homelessness services – over a three-year period". We found a similar approach when we visited Camden. In other words, Housing First is not in practice a first resort housing option, but a special option for people who cannot make progress on the usual pathway. All the UK examples of Housing First that we heard about are complementary to a hostel-based pathway system.

Housing First is quoted as being less expensive to provide than hostel provision because there are no communal facilities to manage; and support – although intensive and personalised – is provided on a visiting basis rather than on-site 24 hours a day as is found in hostels. It is held up as a successful way for individuals to progress to lower and then zero visiting support. To us, it makes sense that while living among peers may be a successful formula for many individuals, for others it is not. In those cases, the security and perceived autonomy of their 'own front door', together with the lack of rules necessary for more institutional living, may be what creates the environment in which they are ready to engage with other support. From what we heard, this approach does succeed in settling individuals who have confounded other approaches, and the level of support required does in general decline over time, for many to zero.

The prerequisites for a Housing First scheme in Cambridge seem to us to be the supply of homes available for this approach and the commitment of resources for assigned visiting support. Camden commissions this overall service from a third sector provider, which procures private sector tenancies and supplies the visiting support. Housing benefit levels mean that the tenancies are in other parts of London; likewise, private sector tenancies would not be affordable in Cambridge. The options here would include utilising private sector tenancies outside the city, or assigning social tenancies within. Funding for visiting support would need identifying, but we consider it essential that funding is sufficiently secure to honour the implied commitments undertaken. There is the potential for overall costs to the public purse to reduce in the long run.

A further issue to be addressed is how to combine Housing First for some people, allowing an individual to 'skip' the usual housing pathway, with retaining the pathway model for others. Some see the pathway model as being grounded in the idea of individual accommodation as a reward for progression and worry about the potential to undermine the commitment to it that many individuals buy into. We feel this is to treat Housing First as only about the provision of accommodation and to ignore the necessary acceptance of personalised support that is integral to it. We note that Camden and other cities do manage to contain a plural approach.

Cambridge's two 'training flats' are held up as examples of a local Housing First approach, which could be embryonic for a broader initiative. In some senses this is the case, although a larger scheme would need to be part of a more holistic referrals process. We would also suggest that it should be rebranded to avoid its rather patronising label.

We understand that a bigger commitment to Housing First is already being discussed, but so far without result. We believe this should be accelerated. The City Council should be willing to consider firstly, assigning a number of its total stock (which is to be increased by 500 units owing to its devolution grant from government) to a Housing First approach and, secondly, the procurement of some private sector tenancies outside the city; the City and County Councils should place on their agendas options for the funding of visiting support for these tenancies.

SEE RECOMMENDATION 3

4.2.4 Open-access night shelter

One of the most basic questions that ordinary people ask about rough sleeping is: can it be eliminated? We have seen that many people are being helped into housing, but if there are people who have no housing options at all, an end to rough sleeping seems

out of reach. We consider a group of people for whom this appears to be true in the section following this one.

As we have seen, among those who are entitled to accommodation within the pathway, a substantial number do not take up the offer or do not sustain it permanently. This may be a matter of choice – and we have met rough sleepers who fall into this category. Or there may be desperate personal problems which make it very difficult to accept help - and this report has tried to describe what the service providers try to do for them. One way or another, this leaves some people out on the street, which is potentially dangerous for them and a matter of grave concern to the public.

We feel we should therefore air the question of whether special facilities should be provided for these people. Such facilities would presumably take much the same form as the night shelter project already provided by the Churches project for part of the year – easy to access and free to use.

This is a really hard question. On the one hand, it seems obviously better that people do not have to sleep rough. On the other, a year-round night shelter is a pure welfare service that could reduce motivation to embark on the progression pathway, with all its conditions and demands. As such, it could draw people out of sofa-surfing and other substandard housing situations and draw new people to the city because night shelters are few and far between these days.

Of course, the same reservation is applicable to the Churches winter project and SWEP system. However, the former is open for only four months of the year, and that may reduce its drawing power, whilst the latter is even more limited in operation. In any event, the imperative of getting people off the street in the coldest weather will be regarded by most people as an overriding one.

As we understand it, most of Cambridge's homelessness professionals would oppose the creation of a year-round night shelter. They would argue that this kind of provision would simply fill up and would increase the already difficult task of getting very entrenched rough sleepers to engage with services. On balance, we have to agree with this viewpoint. The progression model is a hard route, but an effective one for most people. We see that some flexibility is needed – indeed our proposals are an acknowledgement of that need - but we recognise that a return to the night shelter approach would fundamentally undermine the system, and we cannot support that.

Some people will no doubt disagree with this view because it implies that some people may be left with no option but to sleep rough, but we hope it is helpful to present the arguments.

4.2.5 People left out

Approximately 25% of the rough sleepers in Cambridge are regularly identified as having 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) because of their nationality and status in the UK. Despite the majority of these being from other countries in the European Economic Area, we understand they mostly comprise individuals who cannot claim welfare benefits because any employment they have fails to give them worker status or a record of that, so they are unable to prove habitual residency.

As any earnings they have are probably low and from the informal economy, these people have the double jeopardy of being unable to afford market housing or qualify for social housing, and of lacking the pre-requisite to hostel accommodation, namely housing benefit. We are told that in any case some people with NRPF prefer to send what money they do earn back home, rather than spend it on accommodation.

NRPF individuals can access to the Wintercomfort day centre and the Churches winter night shelter and SWEP severe weather beds where, since they have no other accommodation options, it is not surprising that they make up more than 25% of the numbers. They can also get emergency medical attention. There is hardly any assistance for their progression, but equally not much evidence of high needs that would require it. Those taking advantage of the temporary overnight accommodation with the Churches or Jimmy's (through SWEP) are offered help to establish or re-establish their worker status if they are willing to co-operate.

We are told that those with NRPF are not much represented amongst street beggars or those involved in anti-social behaviour. They are said to accept offers of generally available help, but do not otherwise present needs on the system and are not very visible much of the time.

This group's access to public funds appears to have become more and more restricted over recent years, as rules have been tightened as part of the debate over EU membership and immigration generally. It can be said that there is a certain amount of free choice in their situation, which applies less to others. Brexit may at the same time stop this group from growing and leave a residual group with even fewer rights, potentially raising future questions about the need for a concerted project to regularise

their status. As we have said above, we do not believe it would be beneficial overall to return to providing a full scale open access night shelter. In these circumstances we have to acknowledge that we can offer no suggestions that would improve the lot of people with NRPF.

4.2.6 The Homelessness Reduction Act

This act of Parliament comes into force from April this year. For the first time it gives local authorities a statutory responsibility in the avoidance of homelessness for single people, as previously existed only for households. It also increases emphasis on early assistance in cases of threatened loss of existing accommodation. A formal application process will be in place for 'Prevention' (up to 56 days ahead of loss of existing accommodation) and 'Relief' (for up to 56 days after loss of accommodation or after application). More council resources are being deployed to process applications for support and provide advice through Personal Housing Plans.

The impact of this on rough sleeping remains to be seen. In Cambridge the Act is considered to be confirming the support for rough sleepers that is already in place on a non-statutory basis, rather than causing new things to happen. It is unlikely to change the core challenge among rough sleepers of refusal to engage with help provided. The main positive potential could come from success achieved with preventing homelessness.

4.3 FROM WELFARE TO RECOVERY

4.3.1 Getting the balance right

Many workers in the field have stressed to us the importance of finding the right balance between welfare support and recovery support. A reliance solely or chiefly on welfare interventions is considered to provide sustenance to a passive, dependent and self-destructive lifestyle. It is also likely to inflate the client population in Cambridge, by drawing people in from other areas. Recovery, on the other hand, is obviously a positive goal, but cannot be simply handed out – it requires a choice by individuals, sometimes a very hard one. If life on the streets is too comfortable, or is perceived as being endorsed by the support services, some individuals may find it even harder to motivate themselves towards change. Having said this, it is important to make clear that everyone we spoke to believes that, irrespective of people's choices, a welfare safety net must be in place.

To have confidence in this approach, it is necessary to be sure that when individuals are encouraged to choose the recovery path they will get all the support and services they need to succeed. Without this, welfare would be the only valid option and it would be unreasonable and uncharitable not to maximise it. Although we think there are areas for potential improvement, we have concluded that that the recovery option in Cambridge is a real one and ought be relied on.

4.3.2 Organisation of outreach services

Outreach workers face real challenges in trying to build trust and productive relationships with people who may have lost trust in society and people. Good relationships can take a long time to achieve and need to be maintained as people progress along the pathway. We have heard how important this is from support workers and Wintercomfort service users.

In light of this, we have asked ourselves whether front line services are organised in the best possible way. We found in our enquiry that, especially in terms of its substantial outreach element, the organisational structure of the city's street life services is complex and fragmented. We question whether respective roles within this system are clear enough, and whether effectiveness could be improved by reconfiguring services to provide a more fully person-centred, as opposed to institution-centred, form of support that endures along the recovery pathway.

The various components of the system have arrived at different times and we are unsure to what extent it would be designed as it is, if there was a fresh start with a clean sheet of paper. We are aware of the very strong spirit of partnership and collaboration amongst workers, which produces some great results to the credit of all the staff involved, but it is natural to ask whether in such a differentiated structure there is too great a dependence on working relationships and whether a better design would make the time and effort spent even more productive, not least in building trusting, lasting individual relationships with service users.

Given that overall recovery is strongly connected with progression through the housing pathway, we are interested to explore whether individual support could be more oriented to that journey, rather than to individual steps within it. We feel that a user has to tell and re-tell his story many times to many different people as he passes from the street to Jimmy's, from Jimmy's to a hostel, and from a hostel to move-on accommodation and mainstream housing. That is the simple, ideal progression, but the most problematic cases experience many false starts and U-turns on the journey. So, we

ask whether a partial reconfiguration of resources is imaginable, whereby a support worker could follow an individual along the whole journey, with all the dividends that this implies.

We are not in a position to answer such questions, but we do suggest that they should be investigated. In this eventuality, we would suggest that person-centred methodology of the Counting Every Adult Street Life Project may be a good model.

SEE RECOMMENDATION 6

4.3.3 Evening and weekend services

Front-line services including the street outreach team and the City Council's environmental enforcement service do not currently operate at weekends in the evenings, when levels of street life activity and general shopping and leisure activity both tend to be high. We feel outreach workers could make useful contact with people sleeping or spending time on the street during these times and suggest their hours of operation be extended. We suggest the same in relation to the City Council environmental enforcement team's street life officer role, as extended coverage of this service would benefit the general public.

RECOMMENDATION 9

4.3.4 Floating/tenancy support

We are convinced that floating support is a key element to the progression model. We understand that the availability of floating support may have reduced in Cambridge over the years, not least in that it falls away too quickly after people move into mainstream housing. Like other preventative social and health services, investing in floating support will tend to save public money in the long run. We believe that expanding the capacity these services is therefore an important priority.

RECOMMENDATION 10

4.3.5 Peer mentoring

There is evidence that the influence of peers can be a powerful one in various contexts and we have discussed with some interviewees whether a centrally co-ordinated peer mentoring scheme might strengthen the overall service provision for people on the street. This could help bring people to the point where they are ready to engage with formal services and could also help provide continuity in relationships for individuals as they work to rebuild their lives.

SEE RECOMMENDATION 4

4.3.6 Issues around injecting drug users

Some issues around injecting drug users arose during our enquiry. Firstly, we are aware that discussion is going on about where sharps bins should be located. We think all public toilet cubicles should have such bins and we hope that such a step could be taken quickly by the City Council.

The second issue is whether a safer syringe system could be issued to drug users through the needle exchange programme. Discarded syringes/needles in the city are a direct health risk to the public and there are also potential indirect impacts, such as parents keeping their children inside the house rather than letting them run around in parks and recreation grounds. The City Council has focused on the collection and disposal of needles and that is clearly important, but we believe other options should also be considered. In 2015, the World Health Organisation called for research into a form of syringe that “has the potential for re-use”. We take this to refer to a syringe with a retracting mechanism that can be reversed to permit re-use, but which would be retracted at the point of disposal. Such a design would appear to meet the requirements laid down by drugs experts that syringes must be re-usable on grounds of safety for drug users. We absolutely support measures that protect drug users. However, we feel the interests of the general public in this matter have been undervalued in the past. Our recommendation is that NHS and/or County Council public health teams contact the WHO to express support for taking this idea forward.

RECOMMENDATION 11

We are also interested in whether a supervised drug injecting room along the lines found in European countries and, as we understand it planned for Glasgow, could work in a scaled down form in Cambridge. Such a scheme might reduce the immediate risk of infection and provide a platform to engage with users about recovery. We would like the public health team to monitor its effectiveness in Glasgow.

4.4 APPROACHES TO BEGGING

In a society like ours where freedom of choice is valued, the moral dilemmas that begging presents are significant - some people choose to beg for money and some people choose to give it. In strict terms, begging is illegal, but the Police tend to target this behaviour only where it is aggressive or persistent. The law does not tell us everything about what is right and wrong - we rely also on our judgement.

However, we can try to make objective judgements, and we offer some thoughts based around three questions: Why do people beg? Is it productive to give money to beggars? And are there other ways to help?

4.4.1 Why do people beg?

With the exception of people with 'no recourse to public funds', rough sleepers and people staying in hostels are entitled to claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), currently £73.10 per week for a single person over 25. Various support agencies will help rough sleepers make claim benefits and set up a bank account, even if the individual does not wish to go into accommodation.

ESA is intended to provide for the basic needs of claimants. In addition, free meals are provided daily at Wintercomfort. Homeless people can apply to the Cambridge City Food Bank, and Jimmy's and the Salvation Army holds stores of clothing and other necessities.

When they go into accommodation, including at Jimmy's and other hostels and move-on accommodation, individuals can claim Housing Benefit (which is paid direct to the housing provider) and will be housed whilst the claim is processed. Accommodation providers in Cambridge also levy a service charge of £10-12 per week, with the expectation that this is paid out of ESA.

The placards displayed by some beggars stating that money is needed for a hostel bed are therefore simply incorrect. It seems to us that, in terms of benefits, the state provides equally for people on the street as for other people in the UK. Whether that means begging is necessary is a matter of personal judgement.

As we understand it, what does make begging essential for many people is substance abuse; one estimate shared with us is that 90% of begging in the city is to fund substance drug and/or alcohol addictions. The trade in illegal drugs is massively exploitative to the types of vulnerable individuals often seen on the streets and is clearly driving much of the street begging that we see. It obviously important that the Police continue to treat this as a high priority, although we tend to the view that the wholesale outlawing of drugs itself fuels criminal activity, and street begging is just one feature of this.

4.4.2 Is it productive to give money to beggars?

We have heard people say that they give to beggars because it feels wrong to walk past someone who is appealing for help; that it is better to give money to someone who doesn't need it than to fail to give to someone who does. Giving is a natural and positive instinct and it is natural too to hope that something good comes from the help we give.

Giving food, drink and basic necessities is clearly a simple act of kindness and some people who have no recourse to public funds, and do not have employment to sustain themselves, are dependent on charitable aid of this kind. It is true that untouched items of this sort are sometimes left behind on the street because people are given more than they need, but that does not feel like a serious problem.

When it comes to handing money to people on the street, the issue becomes more complicated. In this situation it seems important to weigh up the pros and cons – the benefit of enabling someone to go shopping for themselves and the risk that the money will be spent on something the giver would not consider productive.

The latter is a very real risk if we take seriously the claim that the majority of money raised through begging in this city is spent on buying drugs. We have queried and challenged this claim during our enquiry, but we feel forced to conclude that the professional people working in this field who have given us this advice, know what they are talking about and have no reason to mislead us.

4.4.3 Our advice on this issue

On this basis, we feel we must use this report to encourage members of the public, whether local residents, students or visitors to the city, not to give money directly to beggars. As a community, we surely do not want to be the agents of drug addiction; we want to help people to recover from these problems by accepting the professional support that, as we have described, is available to help them do so.

We want to emphasise that we have come to this conclusion with real difficulty. It is our assumption that, like anyone, we ourselves could fall into such desperate circumstances that we would be prepared to beg, and we hope people would help us. But we also hope that the help given would be in our true best interests, rather than to sustain us in an unhealthy and dangerous lifestyle.

Many service organisations have to work with the consequences of begging. Medical services have to try and manage the drug habits fed by it; workers trying to help people

get off the street find their task more difficult because begging makes the street an attractive place to be; and in some cases, the Police have to devote precious resources to tackle it. And all of us have to live with the fact that successful begging means more begging. If that changed, lives might be changed for the better and the resources saved could be used more productively.

4.4.4 Are there other ways to help?

Yes! There are loads of ways to help homeless people and other people who live part of their lives on the street. Some people will be able to give practical help, volunteering at Jimmy's, Wintercomfort, the Churches project or many other charities in this city. Some will want to give money to national homelessness charities like Crisis and Shelter.

And some will want to give to the **Cambridge Street Aid scheme**, which provides an opportunity to give to people on the street without giving money directly to beggars.

We are clear from talking with our local residents that public awareness of the Street Aid scheme remains low, as is any appreciation of the disadvantages of giving money directly to beggars. We are very concerned about this and would like to see a much more intensive public awareness campaign to promote the scheme and explain why it is a better way to help people on the street than giving money to beggars. This is not just about press releases, but bringing the community on board. For example, retailers could be asked to help with this by putting notices in shop windows. It may be that the 'Bristol SOS – Safer off the Street' scheme is an example to follow, including its street-based contactless giving points, which provide an extra way for 'in the moment' giving.

SEE RECOMMENDATION 2

4.5 CO-ORDINATION OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

We have already referred to a consensus among agencies that support to people on the streets should come first and always be available, and disciplinary or enforcement action should take place only where the public interest genuinely demands it and then in ways that are compatible with the individual's best interests. We have also noted that a prod can be beneficial if it helps people confront choices. These observations underline how challenging enforcement interventions are. It is important that they are effective in their purpose, consistent and in particular joined-up.

This view was reinforced through our visit to Oxford, where we noted an attempt at achieving an integrated approach between the city council safer communities team and

the Police, in the context of co-ordination with support services, and that this included the definition of a unified 'enforcement pathway', to which both agencies contribute. We certainly saw elements that already occur in Cambridge, but we believe that the degree to which this has been jointly articulated in Oxford deserves closer examination.

We feel that the specialised street life Police officer position which exists in the Oxford, located within a problem-solving team, is one that could usefully exist in Cambridge and could strengthen partnership working. Restoration of the City Council funding that was withdrawn in 2015 might assist in achieving this. The alternative use of that money, to provide an extra Environmental Enforcement officer has certainly been beneficial, and should now be maintained, but is not addressing the same need.

When we visited Peterborough, we were impressed by the creation there of co-located neighbourhood policing and council enforcement activities, with potential to create a single management structure. Attempting something of this kind for Cambridge would be a longer-term exercise, which would also need to include some County Council functions. We do believe a significant gain might be possible and we advocate a serious examination of this at the point when the relocation of the Police presence from Parkside is being planned.

RECOMMENDATIONS 7 and 8

4.6 MAKING THIS A COMMUNITY EFFORT

4.6.1 A Cambridge Charter

We have made a lot of suggestions in the previous sections, but we are conscious that none of them really addresses the reason for starting out on this enquiry – to help answer the questions our residents are asking about rough sleeping and street life issues.

Of course, we hope this report will help a bit, but it is not the last word and anyway it will be out of date before long. We think the City Council should work with all of its partners, together with the public and a user group made up of former rough sleepers, to develop a Cambridge Charter for Rough Sleeping and Street Life Issues that sets out this city's mission and goals, and the principles and methods it will use to achieve them. It should be supported by an annual review that would help both the service partners and the public to understand what progress is being made and what issues are arising.

We recognise that a Charter must not be about increasing bureaucracy or tying service providers up in knots; flexibility and creativity are vital in addressing complex problems, and we see that the partnership is strong because of the variety of organisations within it and the positive spirit in which it operates. These must not be put at risk by heavy-handed strategy.

We feel that a Charter can avoid that danger and could add valuable community-wide energy and effort into tackling rough sleeping and street life problems. It could do this in several ways:

- It would enable the public to get on board and share a sense of common purpose, rather than remaining uninformed and often unhappy by-standers as, essentially, they are expected to do at present. We think this would be productive, whether people just want to understand the issues, or want the money they give or time they volunteer to achieve goals they support, or want to use the ballot box to influence priorities for public spending;
- It could create involvement for the people at the heart of these issues – the people who are on the street or have been there in the past - in the design of the system that operates around them;
- It could foster an increased sense of direction and common approach among the wide range of people and organisations who are working in this field.

The Charter idea is not a novel one – Brighton and Hove Council and Manchester City Council have charters for rough sleeping and Oxford is developing one. These could be useful as guides for a Cambridge charter, but this city will want to build its own, based on our own values and circumstances.

SEE RECOMMENDATION 1

5. Conclusions

It dawned on us soon after we began our interviews and reading for this enquiry, that we had got a really tough nut to crack. The subject is complex, involving a wide range of profound problems that demand a multi-dimensional response; and it is difficult - or at least we have found it so - because at every turn it tests your values, preconceptions and judgement.

We see now that there are few simple answers. People who sleep rough or live out part of their lives on the street are not all the same and helping them means providing a wide variety of support and working at whatever pace is required. As we heard: *“For some people, progress will just be about making eye contact after 6 months. For others move-on is reachable.”*

We would describe the approach that we have found in Cambridge to address these issues as a progression model comprising housing and recovery pathways, with a welfare safety net, and it looks like the right one to us, with further improvements both needed and possible.

Whatever the model, there is an issue of free will in this matter that we cannot escape. We are all entitled to make choices, including bad ones. It may be disturbing to walk daily past people on the street, who look and behave outside our norms, but unless mental capacity in the legal sense is lacking or behaviour is causing actual harm, how people look and behave is their freedom and no outreach worker, no housing provider, no Police officer can prevent it. Living in a society that values freedom is precious, but not always comfortable.

We would like to see the wider community involved in the debate about all these issues, and are therefore proposing the development of a Cambridge Charter for Rough Sleeping and Street Life Issues. This could bring the community and the partnership of organisations working in this field together to make a shared commitment for the future. The Charter should be underpinned by the values, principles, bottom lines and red lines that our city holds dear. During our enquiry we have gathered some thoughts about these and offer this list as a starter for ten:

- No-one should have to live their life on the streets
- We have a duty to enable people to effect positive change in their lives
- We have a duty to act in people’s genuine best interests

- We will seek to meet the whole range of people's needs
- We will always assume that people are able to change
- We will tolerate unconventional behaviour where there is no actual harm

And it in that spirit of positive action and togetherness that we end this report by asking ask you to do something right now. Please, get out your mobile phone and

Text CAMB16 £3 to 70070 to donate £3 to Cambridge Street Aid!

6. Recommendations

1. A Cambridge Charter (Section 4.6.1)

We recommend that the City Council leads on the development of a Cambridge Charter for Rough Sleeping and Street Life issues to create a community-wide sense of shared purpose.

2. Street Aid scheme (Section 4.4.4)

We recommend that the City Council conducts a more intensive public awareness campaign to promote the Street Aid scheme and set out the implications of giving money directly to beggars.

3. Housing First (Section 4.2.3)

We recommend that the County and City Councils develop a Housing First scheme using homes from the City Council's social housing stock and private rented homes close to the city, with provision of associated support.

4. Peer mentoring (Section 4.3.5)

We recommend that the City Council sponsors a peer mentoring scheme among former rough sleepers.

5. Supported accommodation (Sections 4.2.1 and 4.2.2)

We recommend that the County and City Councils make an assessment of the types, mix and overall quantity of supported accommodation provided and needed in Cambridge, including open-ended supported accommodation.

6. Outreach services (Sections 4.3.2)

We recommend that the County and City Councils consider whether outreach and hostel-based support would be better organised to provide a more person-centred service that endures along the progression pathway.

7. Joint Working between the Police and City Council (Section 4.5)

We recommend that the City Council and Cambridge Police assess the joint working between their counterparts in Oxford and Peterborough, and consider adopting any lessons from these in Cambridge.

8. Dedicated problem-solving Police Officer (section 4.5)

We recommend the creation of a Police officer post specialised in street life issues, and alongside this reconsideration of the ending of grant funding from Cambridge City Council to help enable it.

9. Weekend/evening street services (Sections 4.3.3)

We recommend that outreach services and the street life environmental enforcement service are extended to weekends and evenings.

10. Floating support (Section 4.3.4)

We recommend that floating/tenancy support services be expanded to maintain a high-quality service for people after they move into mainstream housing.

11. Drug use issues (Section 4.3.6)

We recommend: a) that sharps bins are provided in all public toilet cubicles and b) that contact is made with the World Health Organisation regarding a safer syringe design.

Appendix: SERVICES AND GENERAL READING

a) Organisations interviewed for this enquiry

In Cambridge

Jimmy's Cambridge

Cambridge Cyrenians

Riverside Housing

Willow Walk hostel

Cambridge Street Outreach and Mental Health Team

Dual Diagnosis Street Team

County Every Adult Street Life Project

Cambridge Access Surgery

Wintercomfort for the Homeless

The Wintercomfort Forum

Cambridge Churches Homeless Project

The Bishop's office for homelessness

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust

- Mental health social work team
- Adults and specialist mental health team

Inclusion Drug and Alcohol Service

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Cambridge Neighbourhood Policing team

Cambridge City Council

- Housing services
- Safer communities/anti-social behaviour team
- Environmental services/public realm enforcement

Cambridgeshire County Council

- Public health/drugs and alcohol commissioning
- Adult safeguarding/Counting Every Adult
- Communities and safety
- Mental health commissioning

Outside Cambridge:

Homeless Link

London Borough of Camden – Housing Commissioning and Partnerships team

Oxford Constabulary

Oxford City Council – Trailblazer team

Peterborough City Council – Communities and Safety team and Enforcement service

b) Links to services in Cambridge

- Cambridge Street Aid <http://www.cambscf.org.uk/cambridge-street-aid.html>
- Wintercomfort <http://wintercomfort.org.uk/index.php>
- Jimmy's Cambridge <http://www.jimmyscambridge.org.uk/>
- Cambridge Street and Mental Health Outreach Team
<https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/cambridge-street-mental-health-outreach-team-csmhot>
- Cambridge Churches Homeless Project
https://www.hopecambridge.com/Groups/227058/Hope_Cambridge/Partners/Cambridge_Churches_Homeless/Cambridge_Churches_Homeless.aspx
- SWEP <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/severe-weather-emergency-provision-guidance.pdf>
- CPFT Cambridge <http://www.cpft.nhs.uk/>
- CPFT First Response
<http://www.cpft.nhs.uk/about-us/mental-health-crisis.htm>
- CPFT Dual Diagnosis Street Team <http://www.cpft.nhs.uk/services/dual-diagnostic-street-outreach-team.htm>
- Counting Every Adult Street Life Project
- Inclusion Drug and Alcohol service <https://www.inclusion.org/services/inclusion-cambridgeshire-cambridge/>
- Riverside Housing <https://www.riverside.org.uk/in-your-neighbourhood/cambridge-2/>
- Cambridge Cyrenians <http://www.cambridgecyrenians.org.uk/>
- Cambridge City Council homelessness services
<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/homeless-people>
- Cambridgeshire County Council Counting Every Adult service
<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/news/ground-breaking-service-tackling-homelessness-to-join-national-project/>
- Cambridge Street Outreach and Mental Health Team
<https://www.changegrowlive.org/content/cambridge-street-mental-health-outreach-team-csmhot>
- The Sanctuary
<http://www.cpslmind.org.uk/what-we-do/the-sanctuary/>
- Cambridge City Centre policing team
https://www.police.uk/cambridgeshire/CamCity_Cambridge_City/

c) General reading

- House of Commons Briefing on Rough Sleeping, 2017
<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN02007>
- Crisis - Homelessness Knowledge Hub
<https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/homelessness-knowledge-hub/>
- Homeless Link - research publications
<https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research>
- Shelter
<https://england.shelter.org.uk/>
- Housing First: Homeless Link
<https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/national-projects/housing-first-england>
- Housing First: Greater Manchester <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/article/229/greater-manchester-comes-together-to-tackle-rough-sleeping-in-unique-partnership>
- Homelessness Reduction Act https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Homelessness%20Reduction%20Act%20Briefing%20Nov%202017_0.pdf
- Manchester Homelessness Charter <https://charter.streetsupport.net/>
- Brighton and Hove Homelessness Charter <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/housing/general-housing/rough-sleeping-strategy>
- Drugs Impact on Cambridge
https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/sites/default/files/agenda-item-7-cambridgecity201718q2_v1.0.pdf
- World Health Organisation – call re potentially re-usable syringes
<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2015/injection-safety/en/>
- Glasgow drug consumption facility
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=38604&p=0>
- Begging in UK Cities <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Responses%20to%20Begging%20Dec2016.pdf>
- Nottingham Begging Strategy 2018
<http://committee.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/documents/s67043/DD3044%20Nottingham%20Begging%20Strategy%202018.pdf>



Item

Extension of Mandatory Licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation

To:

Councillor Kevin Price, Executive Councillor for Housing

Housing Scrutiny Committee June 19th 2018

Report by:

Yvonne ODonnell : Environmental Health Manager

Tel: 01223 - 457951 Email: yvonne.odonnell @cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

Abbey, Arbury, Castle, Cherry Hinton, Coleridge, East Chesterton, King's Hedges, Market, Newnham, Petersfield, Queen Edith's, Romsey, Trumpington, West Chesterton

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In December 2017 the government announced that it would proceed with extending mandatory property licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).
- 1.2 Having gained Parliamentary approval, the necessary regulations will be brought into force on 1st October 2018.
- 1.3 In Cambridge it has been estimated from existing sources of information we hold that we would have in the region of 1450 properties that will fall within the scope of Mandatory Licensing.
- 1.4 The impact on the public sector is that local authorities will be obliged to licence more HMOs than they currently do. The Council may take account of all its costs of running the licensing scheme (under Part 2 and Chapter 1 of Part 4 of the Housing Act 2004) when setting the licensing fee. The fee should be transparent, accountable and reflect the actual cost of licensing on a full cost of recovery basis.

- 1.5 In order to comply with these additional requirements that extension of Mandatory Licensing will impose it has been necessary to review the current licence fee to ensure that it reflects the actual cost of licensing and associated up to date/current officer costs.
- 1.6 Following this review it has been determined the additional staffing resource needed to comply with the requirements will be:
- two additional enforcement officers
 - one additional licensing support officer

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:
- agree the increase to the HMO licence fee as outlined in Appendix A
 - agree to the recruitment of additional staffing resources as detailed, namely
 - Two enforcement Officers
 - one licensing Support Officer

3. Background

- 3.1 The Housing Act 2004 introduced a national licensing scheme which is mandatory for all three or more storey houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) occupied by five or more unrelated persons in two or more separate households. The legislation was enacted on 6th April 2006 and requires landlords to apply for a licence in respect of HMOs that they own and operate.
- 3.2 In December 2017 the government announced that it would proceed with extending mandatory property licensing of HMOs, In February of this year it was laid before Parliament and will come into force on 1st October 2018.
- 3.3 “The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018” Statutory instrument 2018 No.221 changes the prescribed description of HMOs that are required to be licensed by Local Housing Authorities in England. This instrument has the effect of extending the scope of mandatory HMO licensing in England It will apply where certain HMOs are

- occupied by five or more persons in two or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys.
 - It also applies to purpose built flats where there are up to two flats in the block and one or both are occupied as an HMO by five or more persons.
- 3.4 The government initially indicated that there would be a grace period of six months. This is now not the case. All owners of property that falls within the mandatory licensing regime must apply for a license by 1st October 2018. Although licences cannot start before this date.
- 3.5 Across England, it is expected that an extra 160,000 HMOs will need to be licensed. Information held on the Northgate M3 database utilised by Environmental Health indicates that within Cambridge City there will be at least an additional 1080 properties that fall within the extended scope of licensing bringing the overall figure of licensed properties to approximately. 1450.
- 3.6 One of the reasons that the Government have announced their intention regarding extension of mandatory licensing is owing to the fact that they have stated that there is evidence that landlords are choosing to rent out smaller HMO's to avoid the need to licence under limited mandatory licensing criteria as well as avoiding the attention of enforcement authorities.
- 3.7 HMOs often have poorer property/management standards than other privately rented properties and due to how they are occupied may have greater risks in terms of hazards an example of this is fire. The increased demand for HMOs has been exploited by opportunist rogue landlords, who feel the business risks for poorly managing their accommodation are outweighed by the financial rewards.
- 3.8 Although properties do not need to be inspected before the license is issued to ensure standards are being achieved and maintained it is desirable that all properties should be inspected during the license period and this has been factored into the license fee.
- 3.9 A property licence can last between 1 and 5 years, although commonly they will last 5 years. The fee is chargeable regardless of the duration of the license. A short licence is normally only considered if the authority has concerns over management of the property.

- 3.10 With the upcoming changes the Council has reviewed its fees for licensing houses in multiple occupation to ensure it reflects the current cost of processes and enforcement. The hourly rate has not been previously charged to include direct/indirect overhead costs. Under the review this has been updated to include these costs and thus be accountable and reflect the actual cost of licensing on a full cost of recovering basis (Appendix B).
- 3.11 Currently the cost of licensing a new HMO is £580 for up to 9 rooms with a renewal cost of £452 and £640 for over 10 Rooms with a renewal cost of £518. The new proposal is a flat rate of £950 for all new licence applications with a 10% discount upon renewal provided licence arrangements do not lapse and renewal of licence is applied for in a timely fashion. It is envisaged that the additional staffing requirements can be funded through the new fee.
- 3.12 The fee comprises the cost of inspection per 5 year licence to assess compliance with necessary housing standard requirements and licence conditions. Including any written recommendations, annual proactive monitoring, enforcement and the administrative time spent processing the licence application and issuing the licence.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The revised license fee is aimed at ensuring we have a self- funding scheme, and take into account current up to date charge out costs.

(b) Staffing Implications

The recruitment of two additional enforcement officers and an additional Licensing Support Officer will prevent an increased workload to existing staff.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An EQIA has been completed and accompanies this report.

(d) Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications linked directly with the increase of the HMO licence fee or the recruitment of additional staffing resources to facilitate this.

(e) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

(f) Community Safety Implications

There are no direct community safety implications associated with the change in the licence fee, however facilitation of extension of mandatory licensing with assistance of the new staffing resource will improve living conditions within Houses of Multiple Occupation throughout the city and this will safeguard the health safety and wellbeing of occupiers.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

No consultation has been carried out as the extension of licensing is a mandatory statutory function, The local authority has discretion to set the licence fee which will be communicated to landlords and agents via the Council website following the committee.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

- The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/221/made>
- Housing Act 2004
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents>
- Houses in Multiple Occupation and residential property licensing reforms Government response.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/670536/HMO_licensing_reforms_response.pdf

7. Appendices

- (a) New Fee table
- (b) Licence fee figures

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Claire Adelizzi Residential Team Manager , 01223 457724 ,email: Claire.adelizzi@cambridge.gov.uk

Appendix A

Fee Structure

New Application

Existing Fee	New Fee
£580 Up to 9 rooms	£950.00
£640 10 rooms and over	

Renewal of Licence

Existing Fee	New Fee
£518	10% discount on new licence fee if the licence does not lapse. (£855)

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Cost

Enforcement Officer Grade 6 with on costs (top of grade)

Cost Of Licensing Admin Officer (Grade 4) (top of grade)

Cost of Officers Per Year

Income

Cost of licence

Renewal of licence

Balance

Cost for 5 years to Council

£1,322,380.00

Number of Officers	including direct/indirect	Per year
2	£91,998	£183,996.00
1	£80,480	£80,480.00
		£264,476.00

Cost of Licence	Number of Dwellings	Per year
£950.00	1070	£203,300.00
£855.00	380	£64,980.00

Income from Licence	Balance
£1,341,400.00	£19,020.00

5year
£919,980.00
£402,400.00
£1,322,380.00

5year
£1,016,500.00
£324,900.00

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Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)



Please fill this out on the computer as a Word document or complete the form on SurveyMonkey – find the link on the Intranet.

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223 457046. Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking. For advice on consulting on equality impacts, please contact Graham Saint, Strategy Officer, (graham.saint@cambridge.gov.uk or 01223 457044).

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service:
Extension of Mandatory Licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation

2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
N/A
3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
<p>In December 2017 the government announced that it would proceed with extending mandatory property licensing of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).</p> <p>Having gained Parliamentary approval, the necessary regulations will be brought into force on 1st October 2018.</p> <p>In Cambridge this will result in an increased number of properties that require a license and the need for additional staffing resources to deal with this. It will be necessary to increase the licence fee to recover costs of the extension of Mandatory licensing.</p> <p>The HMO licensing regime exists to ensure standards are maintained in these types of properties which historically show poor standards both in the way they are maintained and managed. Licence holders must meet a “fit and proper” person test to hold a licence. HMO licensing brings about the raising of housing standards in the HMO sector, and the results benefit to the health and safety of occupying residents. It also improves the performance of property landlords, and ensures they comply with legal responsibilities in operating such properties.</p> <p>The new mandatory requirements are that all properties will need to be licenced if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occupied by five or more persons in two or more separate households, regardless of the number of storeys. • purpose built flats where there are up to two flats in the block and one or both are occupied as an HMO by five or more persons.
4. Responsible Service
Residential Team – Environmental Services

5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick those that apply)

- ☒ Residents of Cambridge City
- ☐ Visitors to Cambridge City
- ☒ Staff

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

- Landlords
- Managing agents
- Tenants in the Private Rented Sector

6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this? (Please tick)

- ☒ New
- ☐ Major change
- ☒ Minor change

7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)

- ☐ No
- ☒ Yes (Please provide details): Licensing Team

8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?

It is due to go on the 19th June 2018 Housing Scrutiny Committee

9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

Cambridge City Council has an existing mandatory obligation to licence Houses in Multiple Occupation . We currently have over 330 properties that are licensed within the City. Although the new requirements extend the scope of properties that need licensing the processes remains much the same. With regard to this we have been able to use existing data to calculate the likely effect of extending mandatory licensing and calculate additional resources that will be needed.

The current license scheme has not identified any specific equality impacts, although there is no formal way of recording this information.

The Council may take account of all its costs of running the licensing scheme (under Part 2 and Chapter 1 of Part 4 of the Housing Act 2004) when setting the licensing fee.

A benchmarking exercise has also been carried to ensure that Cambridge City Councils fee remains comparative to that of other local authorities.

10. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Any group of people of a particular age (e.g. 32 year-olds) , or within a particular age range (e.g. 16-24 year-olds) – in particular, please consider any safeguarding issues for children and vulnerable adults

Licence Holder The requirement to licence and the increased licence fee could affect any adult who owns a House in Multiple Occupation that becomes licensable or is already licensable regardless of their age. The affect is equal across those who may be affected as the licensing fee is not specific to age group. There is no evidence to suggest it would raise safeguarding issues based on the current scheme. The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability .Children will not be affected as they would not be a licence holder.

HMO – Residents There is no reliable data on the age of occupants within licensed HMOs. Anecdotally, single, younger persons aged 20-40 will typically be found in these properties. However, with high housing costs within Cambridge this type of accommodation is widely used. Licensing aims to improve the health and safety of occupants, which would have a positive impact for people occupying HMOs of all protected characteristics. It is possible that instances of safeguarding may reduce with improvement of property standards.

(b) Disability - A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

(b) Disability - A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Licence holders - There is no evidence under the existing mandatory licensing scheme to suggest that the extension of mandatory licensing will have any specific greater effect on a person with a disability .The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability .

HMO Residents There is no information available with regard to disability and occupiers of HMOs. However licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants, which may help prevent disability and long-term illness caused by poor housing conditions.

(c) Sex – A man or a woman.

Licence holders - There is no evidence under the existing mandatory licensing scheme to suggest that the extension of mandatory licensing will have any specific greater effect on either men or women. The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability.

HMO Residents There is no evidence of people of a particular sex being more or less likely to reside in a licensed HMO. However licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants, which would have a positive impact for people occupying HMOs of all protected characteristics.

(d) Transgender – A person who does not identify with the gender they were assigned to at birth (includes gender reassignment that is the process of transitioning from one gender to another)

Licence holders -There is no evidence under the existing mandatory licensing scheme to suggest that the extension of mandatory licensing will have any specific greater effect on the transgender community. The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability

HMO Residents - There is no specific information available regarding transgender people living in Houses of Multiple Occupation. However licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants, which would have a positive impact for people occupying HMOs of all protected characteristics.

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(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Licence holders. There is no evidence under the existing mandatory licensing scheme to suggest that the extension of mandatory licensing will have any specific greater effect during pregnancy and maternity, existing mandatory. The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability.

HMO Residents There is no specific information available regarding pregnancy or maternity of people living in Houses of Multiple Occupation. It is likely some expectant mothers will live in HMOs throughout the city. However licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants, which would have a positive impact for people occupying HMOs of all protected characteristics.

(f) Marriage and civil partnership

Licence holders - There is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific greater effect for people who are married or in a civil partnership. The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability.

HMO Residents - There is no specific information available regarding people who are married or in a civil partnership living in Houses of Multiple Occupation. However licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants, which would have a positive impact for people occupying HMOs of all protected characteristics..

(g) Race - The protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Licence holders- There is no evidence under existing mandatory licensing scheme to suggest that the changes will have any specific greater effect for people who are of a specific race/ethnicity. If language barriers are identified the relevant officer will ensure that steps are taken such as offering translated information or an interpreter where this is deemed appropriate. The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability.

HMO Residents – We do not hold information on how HMOs are occupied in Cambridge in terms of breakdown related to race. National statistics show that housing of black and minority ethnic people live in tends to be of lower quality, especially among households of Pakistani origin, and overcrowding is more common, particularly among households of Bangladeshi origin. (Reference Cabinet Office (2017), 'Race Disparity Audit: Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website. The changes to HMO licencing will improve the quality of HMOs so may have an especially positive impact on BAME people. If language barriers are identified the relevant officer will ensure that steps are taken such as offering translated information or an interpreter where appropriate. Licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants.

(h) Religion or belief

Licence holders- There is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific greater effect for people who are of a specific religion and there is no evidence of this under existing mandatory licensing scheme. The effect of the extension of mandatory licensing will be the requirement to pay a licence fee or an increased licence fee on properties that fall within the criteria. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability. Officers would ensure they offer appropriate support, considering when to make appointments, where specific religious events, festivals or prayer have been identified.

HMO Residents – We do not hold information on religions of Occupiers of HMOs in Cambridge, Licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants. Officers would ensure they offer appropriate support, considering when to make appointments, where specific religious events, festivals or prayer have been identified.

(i) Sexual orientation

Licence Holders -The cost of the licence will affect all licence holders. Some properties may also require additional work to improve safety and suitability .We do not require information on the sexual orientation of licence holders, so do not have equalities monitoring data related to this protected characteristic, but there is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific greater effect based on the current scheme.

HMO – Residents There is no specific evidence relating to sexual orientation of Occupiers of Houses in Multiple Occupation In Cambridge. However Licensing aims to improve the health and safety of all occupants.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular – please consider the impact of any changes on low income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty

Impact on low income tenants - Although it is yet unknown it is possible that licence fees may be passed on through rent. However licences will generally last for 5 years. In the worst case scenario if the entire amount of the licence was shared between the minimum of 5 tenants which is the point at which the property becomes licensable it would equate to approx. £3.17 per month per tenant. However some HMOs are operated by rogue landlords who exploit their vulnerable tenants, by renting sub-standard, overcrowded and dangerous accommodation. Poor practice can include: housing illegal migrants; failing to meet the required health and safety standards; permitting overcrowding; and ineffective management of tenant behaviour. The mandatory extension of licensing will address these issues to ensure that continued improvement of property standards.

Impact on low income landlords – The extension of licensing is a mandatory requirement for all properties that fall within the extended criteria in England. The increase in the licence fee has been identified to cover the costs to the Council that the additional requirements will bring. Many licence holders are property professionals. In most cases properties will be licensed for the maximum period that is permitted under legislation of 5 years meaning the fee is only due every 5 years. A reduction will be made to licence holders who re apply for renewal of licence before expiry of their existing licence.

11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqlA accordingly.)

- The Licence fee will continually to be reviewed annually.
- Housing inspections are already routinely carried out and will continue under the extension of licensing.
- The Residential Team will still reactively investigate complaints from those housed in HMOs including licensed HMOs.

12. Do you have any additional comments?

The biggest change within the scheme will be to landlords and property managers. The licence fee will be raised on renewal for existing properties that fall into the scope of licensing, and will come in to use on the 1st October 2018 for properties which will come into the scope of licensing. Many landlords who may have been able to operate without a licence will now need to apply.

It is generally not disputed that licensing has been largely successful in improving management and safety standards in those HMOs and on this basis tenants within Cambridge will see an improvement in some properties which become licensable and may otherwise not have been maintained to the correct standard. It is estimated in the region of 1100 additional properties will come under the scope of mandatory licensing.

There is no change to how existing staff will be required to carry out the role, the scheme will require additional staff to meet requirement of licensing additional properties.

13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment: Claire Adelizzi

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted: Philip Winter

Date of EqlA sign off: 30th May 18

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: 1 year

Sent to Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website (if known):

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Item

Adoption of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard

To:

Councillor Kevin Price Executive Councillor for Housing

Housing Scrutiny Committee 19th June 2018

Report by:

Yvonne O'Donnell, Environmental Health Manager

Tel: 01223 457951 Email: yvonne.odonnell@cambridge.gov.uk

Wards affected:

ALL

Not a Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The private rented sector currently comprises approximately 26% of the housing market within Cambridge. With the average house prices well above the national average figure the demand for rental accommodation remains high. It is vital therefore that the Council continues to focus on improving and indeed sustaining standards within this sector.
- 1.2 It is acknowledged that current private rented standards and guidance are outdated and that responsible landlords / property managers do not always understand which apply to the rental accommodation that they are responsible for. This leads to a reliance on Council Enforcement Officers from within the Residential Team, Environmental Health

Department Environmental Services to explain standards requirements upon receipt of service requests from them seeking compliance.

- 1.3 It is vital therefore that property professionals operating within Cambridge City are provided with clear and relevant information in order to assist them to comply with relevant legislation and accepted guidance standards and thus provide safe and suitable accommodation. This in turn will promote the wellbeing of their tenants, contributing towards the Council's vision of making Cambridge a great place in which to live.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the adoption of the Cambridge City Council Private Rented Sector Housing Standard, (a copy of the Standard document is attached as appendix a).

3. Background

- 3.1. Private rented sector standards and guidance produced by the Council in relation to rental accommodation within the City are outdated and have required review for a significant period of time. This has made it difficult to signpost landlords and other property professionals requesting this information. This in turn places an increased burden on Enforcement Officers within the Residential Team in terms of frequent explanation around the interpretation of current minimum requirements to stakeholders accessing the service.
- 3.2 A high proportion of the private rented sector within Cambridge City comprises Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) which are defined under the Housing Act 2004 to be those properties that are occupied by three or more persons in two or more households sharing a basic amenity within the dwelling e.g. kitchen facilities and / or bathroom facilities.
- 3.3 The Residential Team is currently aware of several thousand private rental properties that are occupied as HMO's, 340 of which are licensed to date under current prescribed mandatory HMO licensing criteria.
- 3.4 The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018 was made and laid before parliament in February 2018. This statutory instrument, the content of which is due to be implemented from 1st October 2018, increases the prescribed

description of HMOs that are required to be licensed by Local Housing Authorities within England. HMO licensing is a statutory function under the provisions contained within Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004.

- 3.5 It is anticipated that this proposed change in legislation will mean that an additional figure of in the region of 1100 properties will fall into the scope of mandatory HMO licensing criteria leading to increased levels of statutory duties for existing Enforcement Officers within the Residential Team for which we need to compensate where possible by reducing the burden on officer time.
- 3.6 Minimum national standards for HMOs are prescribed in Management Regulations under the Housing Act 2004. These relate to provision of bathrooms, WCs, kitchens, fire safety measures and heating within HMOs and seeking to ensure that properties occupied in this manner are safe and suitable to live in.
- 3.7 Additionally in line with the Government's changes to legislation in relation to the scope of HMO licensing national minimum room sizes in relation to rooms used for sleeping accommodation in HMO's have been proposed for which there will be a requirement that licences are granted with a condition stating the maximum number of persons who may occupy specified rooms as sleeping accommodation.
- 3.8 The Government have stated within their Houses in Multiple Occupation and residential property licensing reforms response released December 2017 that the prescribed national room size standards are the absolute minimum which will apply, but these can be built upon by Local authorities who can seek higher room size standards which reflect the layout, space and amenities in the HMO in question and more generally conditions of stock and housing need in their areas as part of their own recommended standards.
- 3.9 Indeed section 65 of the Housing Act 2004 makes provision for more detailed local HMO standards to be set reflecting local housing conditions, provided they do not fall below the national standards.
- 3.10 Following the cessation of the Property Accreditation Scheme at the end of March 2018 from which the staffing resource was moved over to assist with regards to housing enforcement, the Residential Team acknowledge that there is a continued need to support good Landlords and property managers operating within the City to provide safe and

suitable accommodation that is compliant with relevant national legislation.

- 3.11 The Residential Team recognise the importance of continuing to work with a range of Landlords and Property Managers to improve housing standards within private rented housing via a range of actions including offering informal advice and encouragement. It is anticipated that the proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard would assist a range of such stakeholders with in terms of continuation of this work.
- 3.12 The key content areas of the proposed standard are:
- the definition of house in multiple occupation (HMO) under the Housing Act 2004
 - HMO licensing criteria
 - fire safety standards
 - amenities standards
 - minimum space standards in terms of sleeping rooms.
- 3.13 Proposed minimum local standards are detailed against each of the key content areas within the proposed Standard document. In drafting the proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard regard has been had to existing national standards for HMO's as prescribed within Management Regulations where appropriate.
- 3.14 Please note that the proposed fire safety standards are based around the LACORS – Housing Fire Safety guidance criteria which is referenced as benchmark fire safety preventative and protective measures agreed between authorities within the current Memorandum of Understanding between Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- 3.15 Please also note that the following has been taken into account in terms of the proposed space standards within private sector rental accommodation for adoption within Cambridge in terms of sleeping rooms:
- The Governments proposed national minimum room size standards in terms of licensable HMO's.
 - Minimum bedroom size standards detailed within the Local Plan.
 - The nature of housing stock provision forming the private rented sector within Cambridge City.

- Housing demand for private rented sector accommodation and the associated need to prevent social exclusion.
 - The need to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of tenants renting within the private sector throughout the City.
 - The need for tenants to be provided with functional rooms in relation to their shape and layout.
- 3.16 A consultation aimed at anyone within the wider community who may be affected by the introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard was publicised and then launched on 8th May 2018 and was open for response until 29th May.
- 3.17 Consideration of the 57 responses received to this consultation from a representative sample of landlords, property agents / managers, private rented sector tenants and local residents has revealed that 'Space Standards' was the content area of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard that received the highest level of response as well as the majority of specific comments from respondents.
- 3.18 It is considered appropriate therefore for an options appraisal to be included within this report in relation to this matter.
- 3.19 The options for consideration in terms of approval in relation to this matter are as follows:

Option 1: Approval of the 'Space Standards' detailed on page 20 within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard 'draft' with no amendments:

One Person Units

Minimum 6.51 m² for a sleeping room occupied by 1 individual, (an adult or a child over the age of 10), where there is separate living space available within the dwelling in the form of a kitchen / diner and / or living room / dining room.

Minimum 7.5 m² for a sleeping room occupied by 1 individual, (an adult or a child over the age of 10), where there is no separate living space available within the dwelling other than a kitchen.

Sleeping Rooms & Children

Please Note: Within a licensable HMO a room with a useable floor area between 4.64m² and 6.51m² may be occupied as a sleeping room by 1 child under the age of 10.

Two Person Units

Minimum 10.22 m² for a sleeping room let to and occupied by 2 persons where there is separate living space available within the dwelling in the form of a kitchen diner and / or living room / dining room.

Minimum 11.5 m² for a sleeping room let to and occupied by 2 persons where there is no separate living space available within the dwelling other than a shared kitchen.

Option 2: Approval of the proposed 'Space Standards' currently detailed on page 20 within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard, appendix a to this report, that has been amended from the draft to include the following:

Within non-licensable HMO's of up to 2 story's that are rented to a defined group of up to 4 occupiers and where there is separate living space available within the dwelling - there will be an acceptance of one sleeping room for use by 1 individual of which the useable floor space measures less than 6.5m² but no less than 4.64m² as the absolute minimum.

Option 3: 'Space Standards' for inclusion within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard to consist of compliance across the board in relation to the national minimum room size standards for HMO's only, these being 6.5m² for a sleeping room occupied by 1 individual, 10.22m² for a sleeping room occupied by up to 2 individuals and a habitable room with a floor area between 4.64m² and 6.51m² may be occupied as a sleeping room by only 1 child under the age of 10.

Option 4: 'Space Standards' for inclusion within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard to consist of compliance in terms of licensable HMO's in relation to the national minimum room size standards for HMO's in terms of sleeping rooms occupied by 1 individual and those occupied by up to 2 individuals, (as detailed within option 3 above) as well as the addition of the following:

Within non-licensable HMO's of up to 2 story's that are rented to a defined group of up to 4 occupiers and where there is separate living space available within the dwelling - there will be an acceptance of one sleeping room for use by 1 individual of which the useable floor space measures less than 6.5m² but no less than 4.64m² as the absolute minimum.

- 3.20 Option 2 would be that preferred by Officers to be incorporated within The Private Rented Housing Standard. This option takes into consideration specific accepted comments made by consultation respondents in relation to this matter that also relate more generally to the conditions of housing stock and housing need within Cambridge City. This option also ensures that clear, consistent baseline minimum 'Space Standards' are set which take into account national minimum room size standards in relation to licensable HMO's and the reasonableness of space available to permanent occupiers within individual properties as a whole.
- 3.21 Taking into account the above information and the consultation responses obtained from the wider community as detailed within appendix b, it is recommended that The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard document, appendix a to this report, that has been amended to replace the draft standard is adopted by The Council thus ensuring that both licensable and non-licensable HMOs within Cambridge City provide a good standard of accommodation and facilities to occupiers and do not fall foul of national legislative standards / requirements.
- 3.22 Once adopted it is anticipated that The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard would be used for advice and enforcement purposes by The Council as necessary and in particular by Enforcement Officers within the Residential Team. Properties will continue to be considered case by case according to their own individual merit, with a degree of considered flexibility being applied where deemed appropriate / necessary.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are not anticipated to be any financial implications with regards to this proposal.

(b) Staffing Implications

There are not anticipated to be any staffing implications with regards to this proposal. Availability of the proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard should lead to a reduction in the burden on Enforcement Officers within the Residential Team in terms of volume of service requests for preliminary information regarding minimum acceptable private rented sector housing standards. This will enable increased concentration of focus on dealing with rogue landlords and pursuing enforcement action where necessary in terms of non - compliance.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Please refer to the EqIA, Background Paper (d).

(d) Environmental Implications

The proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard makes reference to private rented properties complying with correct standards for heating and insulation including current energy efficiency requirements and the provision of an Energy Performance Certificate where appropriate. This can only assist with regards to improving energy efficiency standards across the City.

(e) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications in relation to this proposal.

(f) Community Safety Implications

The proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard is a continuation of Cambridge City Council's work to protect the health, safety and general wellbeing of tenants within the private rented sector in particular by providing landlords / property managers with a clear and consistent local standard that will assist them in providing safe and suitable accommodation in compliance with relevant national legislation.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The Environmental Health Manager and the Residential Team including Project Officer and Enforcement Officers have been consulted and involved in the development of the proposed standard.

Proposed Space Standards from the draft Private Rented Sector Housing Standard were presented and discussed during the most recent Landlord Forum on 21st February 2018.

A public consultation regarding the proposed Standard was launched on the 8th May, running until 29th May 2018 from which views were sought from anyone who may be affected by the introduction of the new standard. As stated within paragraph 3.19 consultation responses have been considered prior to submission of this report to which the final proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard as well as Consultation Response are attached as Appendices a & b respectively.

Should approval be sought with regards to adoption of the Private Rented Sector Housing Standard the decision can be widely publicised via various means including: the Council website where the Housing Standard can be made available to stake-holders.

Launch of the standard can be announced via social media, press release as well as within a Landlord Newsletter due to be sent out towards the end of June 2018.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

(a) Housing Act 2004

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/34/contents>

(b) HMO (Prescribed Description) (England) Order 2018

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/221/made>

(c) Extending mandatory licensing of houses in multiple occupation and related reforms

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/extending-mandatory-licensing-of-houses-in-multiple-occupation-and-related-reforms>

(d) EqIA

7. Appendices

(a) Private Rented Sector Housing Standard

(b) Private Rented Sector Housing Standard Consultation Response

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Claire Adelizzi, Team Manager - Residential, tel: 01223 457724, email: claire.adelizzi@cambridge.gov.uk.

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The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard



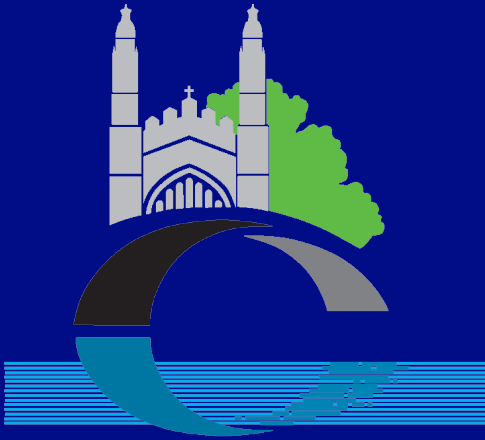


Cambridge City Council's
Private Rented Sector Housing Standard

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Cambridge City Council's

Private Rented Sector Housing Standard



CAMBRIDGE
CITY COUNCIL

Contact Details:

Residential Team—Env Services

Telephone

01223 457000

Email

Residential.eh@cambridge.gov.uk

The new Private Rented Sector Housing Standard has been designed to assist landlords, managing agents and developers to design and maintain properties to reasonable standard in line with relevant legislation and guidance standards. This standard will assist to clarify commonly asked questions including those relating to rooms sizes, minimum requirements for amenities, heating provision and fire safety.

The Council has a clear vision to lead a united city, 'One Cambridge - Fair for All', in which economic dynamism and prosperity are combined with social justice and equality creating a city in which it is a good place to live.

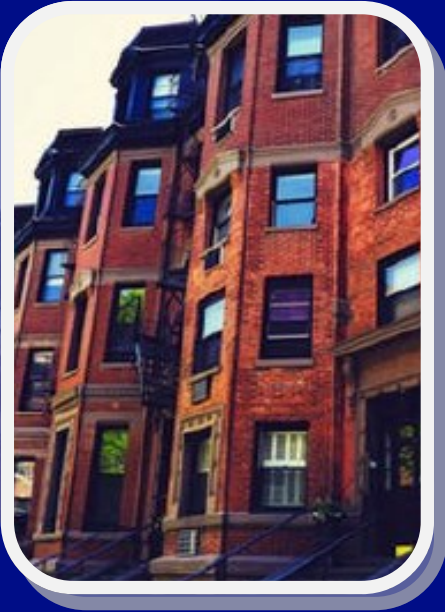
Cambridge has high levels of private renting with up to 26% of the city's households accommodated in this way. With house prices above the national average and the demand for housing high additional pressure is placed on the private rented sector, it is vital therefore that the Council focuses on sustaining the quality of this sector.

This standard has been subject to consultation by internal and external stakeholders and the wider community.

Claire Adelizzi

Residential Team Manger

Housing Standards



If

Landlords / property managers of a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) or single household property concerned that they may not be meeting the correct legal standards should contact the Residential Team, Cambridge City Council for advice/ assistance where necessary (details of how to contact us are contained within this guide).

Housing Definitions

Definition of House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) as per The Housing Act 2004

A property including houses and flats is a HMO where both of the following apply:

- At least 3 individuals live there, forming 2 or more households
- Occupiers share one or more basic amenity e.g. toilet, bathroom and / or kitchen facilities.

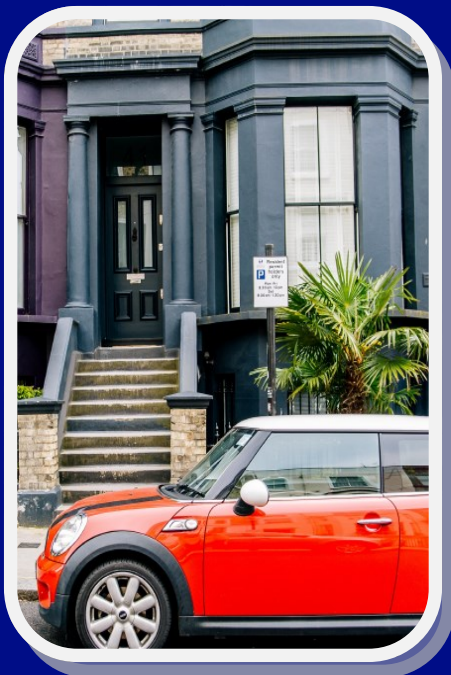
A full definition of HMO can be found in section 254 of the Housing Act 2004. Details of which relationships constitute a single household can be found in section 258 of the Housing Act 2004. The Act also gives the Council powers to deal with poor living conditions in HMO's.

Types of HMO

- A shared house HMO is one where all occupiers will normally share the same tenancy agreement and have access to all areas of the property, for example, a group of friends who know each other and occupied the property at the same time. There will be a strong element of communal living and there will be a shared living area.
- A bedsit type HMO is one where the individual occupiers rent a bedroom and have use of a communal kitchen and/ or bathroom. The tenants will not always know each other and will often have locks on their bedroom doors. Tenants in this type of HMO will have exclusive use of one bedroom.
- A Section 257 HMO which is a building or part of a building converted into self-contained flats where the standard of conversion does not comply with the appropriate building regulations and less than two-thirds of the flats are owner occupied.

if you are unsure of the classification of the rental property you own, live in or manage please contact The Residential Team at Cambridge City Council.

Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation



Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation

From the 1st October 2018 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) occupied by five or more persons not forming a single household will require a mandatory licence issued by the Council.

Clarification of whether a property you are responsible for within Cambridge City requires a licence can be sought by consulting the website link provided at the end of this page.

A person owning or managing a HMO, which is required to be licensed, must make a full application to the Council for that property.

The Council must grant a licence if it is satisfied that the proposed licence holder is a fit and proper person, and the HMO is reasonably suitable for occupation. The number of persons permitted under the licence will have regard to the minimum prescribed standards of amenities and space. These include the number, type and quality of shared bathrooms, toilets and kitchen facilities as well as room size standards. Further details can be found in the guide.

There is a fee for licensing and renewal of licences upon expiry.

Please note it is an offence not to licence a property that falls within mandatory licensing, for which enforcement against those liable may take the form of issue of a Civil Penalty Notice or criminal prosecution.

Further information about licensing can be found on the Cambridge City Council website.

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/licensing-of-houses-in-multiple-occupation>

Fire Safety Standards



Fire Safety Standards

Fire safety within the home is an extremely important issue, especially in mixed use premises (residential and commercial) or within HMO's where there are unrelated occupiers living independently and sharing common areas of the same building. Further information can be found in Lacors Housing—Fire Safety Guidance which gives detailed examples. This document can be accessed by the following web link to the Cambridge City Council Website

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/information-for-landlords>

Cambridge City Council follows this guidance in consultation with Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service where necessary to ensure an appropriate level of fire precautions.

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (England) Regulations 2015

If you have tenants in your property it is the law to provide a working smoke detector situated on each level of the property even if its occupied as a single family home. The alarm should ideally be mains powered and interlinked or where this cannot be achieved, install smoke detectors that have a 10 year battery life. A Carbon Monoxide detector must also be located in every room where there is a solid fuel burning appliance, examples of these may be an open fire, wood burner or solid fuel burning boiler. Failure to comply with these Regulations is an offence for which the Council may serve a legal notice on you should this requirement not be met.

Housing Act 2004, part1

All dwellings should be free from an increased likelihood of harm due to the hazard of fire therefore If your property is a HMO you will need to ensure that it has enhanced fire safety precautions, installed with regard to the design and layout of the property as well as the number of occupiers. If you are thinking of converting a property into a HMO please contact The Residential Team whom can advise you on this. If you already have an HMO and you are not sure that you have the correct fire safety precautions, you are also advised to contact us.

Fire Safety Standards



Fire Safety Standards

The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006

Under The Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006, there is a duty placed on every manager of an HMO to ensure that the premises are properly managed.

Regulation 4 places a duty on the manager of the HMO to take safety measures including those in relation to fire safety further details can be sourced within the Regulations. These Regulations can be accessed via the following website:
www.legislation.gov.uk

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005)

Fire safety in the common areas of HMO's, blocks of flats or maisonettes is controlled by Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The Order lays down the legal requirements which must be met. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 Guidance Note No. 1 will help you understand the Order. The responsible person in this instance will be the managing agent, or owner. If you are the responsible person, you must make sure you carry out a fire- safety risk assessment although you can delegate this task to a competent person. However, you will still be responsible, in law, for meeting the requirements of the Order. The Order is usually enforced by the fire and rescue authorities, Cambridge City Council regularly work in partnership with Cambridge Fire and Rescue Service.

Please note

Example scenarios have been provided on the following pages but the scenarios may not cover every type of property occupancy situation. Some properties will need to be considered on a case by case basis for which advice can be sought from the Residential Team.

Fire Safety Standards



Scenarios taken from Lacors Housing Fire Safety guidance standards. Further advice can always be sought by contacting the Residential Team.

Please note that any concealed 'perko' style self-closers need to comply with BS EN1154.

Minimum Fire Safety Requirements

Conventional Layout Shared House scenario – no more than 2 storeys

Please refer to page 3 for definition of a shared house HMO / Bedsit type HMO:

- Mains wired interlinked battery backup smoke detectors/ alarms in the common area (hallways, lounge/dining room) and basement/cellar and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6:2013 Grade D, LD3) See page 13 for alarm system definitions.
- Sound traditional construction to partition walls and ceilings.
- 30 minute fire resistant door installed and maintained in accordance with current British Standard(s), fitted with an overhead self-closer and rebated intumescent strips and smoke seals, in the opening between entrance hall and kitchen; or where the kitchen facilities are located off the rear of a living room or dining room that is accessed off an entrance hall, the requirement is for the fire door to be fitted in the opening between the living/dining room and the entrance hall.
- 30 minutes fire separation between kitchen and adjoining rooms (including ceiling).
- 30 minutes fire separation between basement/cellar and ground floor.
- Escape windows (to current building regulation standard) - where required.
- Good quality, solid core close fitting doors to bedrooms.
- Provision of a fire blanket no less than 1m x 1m to current British Standard located in kitchen.
- Dry powder fire extinguisher with a rating of no less than 34B recommended in the hallway, see page 15 for further information.

Fire Safety Standards



Scenarios taken from Lacors Housing Fire Safety guidance standards. Further advice can always be sought by contacting the Residential Team.

Please note that any concealed 'perko' style self-closers need to comply with BS EN1154.

Shared house scenario – 3 or 4 storeys

Please refer to page 3 for definition of a Shared House HMO / Bedsit type HMO.

- Mains wired interlinked with battery backup smoke detectors/alarms in the common area (hallways, lounge/dining room) and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6:2013 Grade D, LD3) See page 13 for alarm system definitions.
- 30 minute protected route is required. Travel distance must not be excessive. No requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units, but walls and floors should be of sound, traditional construction.
- 30 minute fire resistant door installed and maintained in accordance with current British Standard(s), fitted with an overhead self-closer and rebated intumescent strips and smoke seals, in the opening between entrance hall and kitchen; or where the kitchen facilities are located off the rear of a living room or dining room that is accessed off an entrance hall, the requirement is for the fire door to be fitted in the opening between the living/dining room and the entrance hall.
- 30 minute fire resistant doors installed to all risk rooms and maintained in accordance with current British Standard(s) overhead self-closer and rebated intumescent strips and smoke seals.
- 30 minute fire resisting structure to walls and ceilings separating habitable rooms from other habitable rooms, kitchens the common escape route. See page 14 for further information.
- 30 minutes fire separation between basement/cellar and ground floor.
- Provision of a fire blanket no less than 1mx1m to correct British Standards located in the kitchen.
- Dry powder fire extinguisher with a rating of no less than 34B recommended on each level, see page 15 for further information.
- Emergency escape lighting required on long or complex protected escape routes.
- Fire safety signage required on complex routes.

Fire Safety Standards



Scenarios taken from Lacors Housing Fire Safety guidance standards. Further advice can always be sought by contacting the Residential Team.

Please note that any concealed 'perko' style self-closers need to comply with BS EN1154.

Bedsit scenario – no more than 2 storeys

(cooking facilities located in a communal kitchen)

Please refer to page 3 for definition of a Shared House HMO / Bedsit type HMO.

- Mains wired interlinked battery backup smoke detectors/ alarms in common parts, basement/cellar and in all habitable rooms and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6:2013 Grade D, LD2) See page 13 for alarm system definitions.
- 30 minute protected route is required. Travel distance must not be excessive. No requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units, but walls and floors should be of sound, traditional construction. See page 14 for further information.
- 30 minute fire resistant door installed and maintained in accordance with current British Standard(s), complete with intumescent smoke seals and an overhead self-closing device (FD30S) to all risk rooms.
- Emergency escape lighting required only if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light. Conventional artificial lighting required.
- Escape windows (to current building regulation standard) - where required.
- Provision of a fire blanket no less than 1mx1m to correct British Standards located in the kitchen.
- multi-purpose extinguisher to each floor level recommended. See page 15 for further information.

Where cooking facilities are located within sleeping rooms the requirements will vary to include:

- Inter linked heat alarms with integral battery back up located in each bedsit;
- and additional non interlinked smoke alarm with integral; battery back-up located in each bedsit.

Fire Safety Standards



Scenarios taken from Lacors Housing Fire Safety guidance standards. Further advice can always be sought by contacting the Residential Team.

Please note that any concealed 'perko' style self-closers need to comply with BS EN1154.

Bedsit scenario – 3 or 4 storeys

(cooking facilities located in a communal kitchen)

Please refer to page 3 for definition of a Shared House HMO / Bedsit type HMO.

- Mains wired interlinked battery backup smoke detectors/ alarms in common parts/escape route, basement/cellar and in all habitable rooms and a heat detector in the kitchen (BS 5839-6:2013 Grade A, LD2) See page 13 for alarm system definitions.
- 30 minute protected route is required. Travel distance must not be excessive. No requirement for additional fire-resisting separation between units, but walls and floors should be of sound, traditional construction. See page 14 for further information.
- 30 minute fire resistant door installed and maintained in accordance with current British Standard(s), complete with intumescent smoke seals and an overhead self-closing device (FD30S) to all risk rooms.
- Fire escape signage where escape route is long or complex
- Provision of a fire blanket no less than 1mx1m to correct British Standards located in the kitchen.
- Conventional lighting is required. Emergency escape lighting maybe appropriate if the protected escape route is complex or there is no effective borrowed light.
- Simple multi-purpose extinguisher on each floor in the common parts recommended. See page 15 for further information.

Where cooking facilities are located within sleeping rooms the requirements will vary to include:

- Inter linked heat alarms with integral battery back up located in each bedsit;
- and additional Grade D, non interlinked smoke alarm with integral; battery back-up located in each bedsit.

Fire Safety Standards



Scenarios taken from Lacors Housing Fire Safety guidance standards. Further advice can always be sought by contacting the Residential Team.

Two-storey building converted into self-contained flats

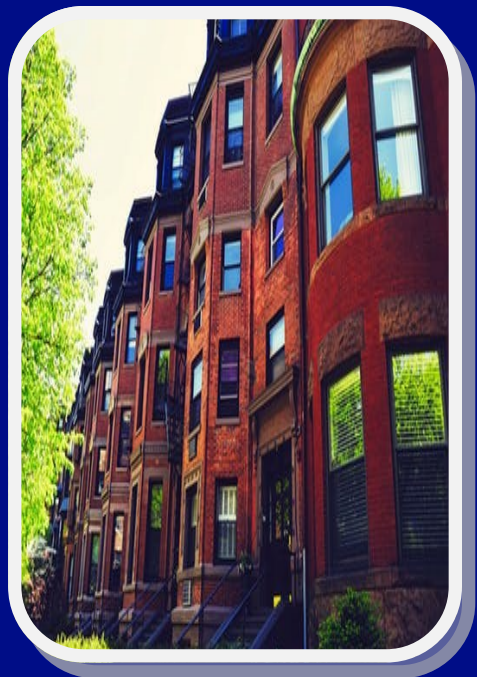
Houses or buildings converted into self-contained flats where the conversion did not (and does not) meet the building standards under the Building Regulations 1991:

- 30-minute protected escape route is required. See page 14 for further information.
- 30 minute fire resistant doors installed to rooms opening onto the escape route and maintained in accordance with current British Standard(s).
- No requirement for fire doors within flats, but sound, well constructed and close-fitting conventional doors are required.
- 30 minutes fire resistance between flats throughout is the ideal.
- Grade D: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat alarm in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat. See page 13 for alarm system definitions .
- Emergency escape lighting required if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light.
- Simple multi-purpose extinguisher on each floor in the common parts (ground floor hall way if no common parts on first floor) recommended .Fire blanket to be provided in each kitchen (good practice). See page 15 for further information.

Its worth noting

- **where the fire risk assessment identifies higher than normal risk additional detection will be required.**
- **that fire safety measures will vary for individual scenarios of flats in multiple occupation.**

Fire Safety Standards



Scenarios taken from Lacors Housing Fire Safety guidance standards. Further advice can always be sought by contacting the Residential Team.

Three or four storey building converted into self-contained flats

Houses or buildings converted into self-contained flats where the conversion did not (and does not) meet the building standards under the Building Regulations 1991:

- 30-minute protected route is required See page 14 for further information.
- 30 minute fire resistant doors installed to rooms opening on to the escape route and maintained in accordance with current British Standard(s) .
- No requirement for fire doors within flats, but sound, well constructed and close-fitting conventional doors are required .
- 30 minutes fire resistance between flats throughout is the ideal.
- Grade A: LD2 coverage in the common areas and a heat alarm in each flat in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route (interlinked); and Grade D: LD3 coverage in each flat (non-interlinked smoke alarm in the room/lobby opening onto the escape route) to protect the sleeping occupants of the flat. See page 15 for alarm system definitions.
- Emergency escape lighting required if the route is long or complex or where there is no effective borrowed light.
- Simple multi-purpose extinguisher on each floor in the common parts .Fire blanket to be provided in each kitchen.
- Final exit sign and signage along escape route if the escape route is complex.

It is worth noting that:

- where the fire risk assessment identifies higher than normal risk additional detection will be required.
- that fire safety measures will vary for individual scenarios of flats in multiple occupation.

Fire Alarm System Definitions



Fire Alarm System Definitions

Grade A system

This comprises a system of mains operated smoke and/or heat detectors which are linked to a control panel to give information on the location of any fire or any fault which may develop. The control panel must conform to current British Standard 5839 Part 4.

Grade D system

Fire alarm system to comply with current British Standard 5839 Part 6: Grade D This comprises a system of one or more inter-linked mains powered and/or heat detectors each with a standby battery and built in alarm.

LD 2: means

Detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route (typically in corridors and landings) and in rooms or areas that present a high risk to occupants. (High risk rooms include rooms used for living and/or sleeping and kitchens.

LD 3: means

The detectors are to be in all circulation spaces that form part of the escape route. Installation of fire alarm system is to be in accordance with BS 5839-6 and BS 5839-1 and should ensure that the alarm signal gives a sound level of 75dB(A) in sleeping rooms, measured at the bedhead with the bedroom door closed. 65dB(A) in all other rooms and areas .

Means Of Escape



Protected Routes

A protected route is designed to remain free from smoke and fire for a time adequate to allow occupiers of the building to pass safely along it to a place of safety. The level of fire separation required between the protected route and rooms presenting a fire risk is determined by the fire risk assessment.

BS 476 or BS EN 13501 details types of construction that will achieve 30 minutes fire resistance, examples of which being solid masonry walls or timber stud partitions of particular construction with adequately fixed 12.5mm plasterboard skins and skim coating.

Means of Escape in all Properties

It is important that the following rules are applied with regards to ensuring a safe means of escape:

- Escape routes comprising entrance hall, staircase and landing must be kept clear at all times and must not be used for any form of storage or contain any furniture
- Where means of escape from the rear of the property is down a side footpath, this route must be kept clear from obstructions at all times
- Locking devices on internal doors, external doors and garden gates etc must only be of a type that will permit a quick and easy 'keyless' exit from the room, property and garden without the need for a key. Devices such as night latch (excluding BS nightlatch), bolt, thumb turn etc. are therefore permitted. However mortice lock, BS night latch, padlock, rim lock etc. must be removed and the door and the frame made good



Fire Extinguishers and Fire Blankets

Fire blankets should:

- comply with BS 6575 or equivalent;
- be of 'light duty' type which are capable of dealing with small fires such as cooking fires or fires involving clothing; and
- be mounted on the wall approximately 1.5m high and closer to the room exit than the cooking facility.

A multi-purpose dry powder extinguisher should

- have a rating of at least 13A/34B
- is recommended on each floor in the common parts of HMOs and buildings containing flats.

Where provided, fire extinguishers should:

- comply with BS EN 3-7
- be maintained; and
- be appropriate to the risk.

Extinguishers should be located as follows:

- on a dedicated stand or hung on wall brackets with the handle approximately 1.0m from floor level;
- in the common parts in a position such that they do not obstruct the escape route;
- close to the exit position from each floor;
- not obstructed by opening doors and not in recesses out of sight; and
- away from heaters or areas where they may be subject to damage.

It may not be practical to train tenants in the use of these, but where extinguishers are provided basic advice should be offered at the start of each new tenancy.

Where provided, fire blankets and extinguishers should be checked periodically to make sure they are in place and available for use. Extinguishers must be tested and maintained on an annual basis in accordance with BS 5306-3 and with the manufacturer's instructions.

Amenities (applicable to HMOs)

Bathroom Facilities

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 requires that there must be an adequate number of bathrooms, toilets and wash hand basins suitable for personal washing for the number of people sharing those facilities



Bathroom Facilities		
Number of People	Bath-rooms	
Up to 5 People	1	There must be one bathroom this may contain a WC. If WC is separate it must have a designated wash hand basin.
6 to 10	2 sets	You may combine one WC and bathroom + additional separate WC and wash hand basin
10 Plus		In relation to larger properties the Council will advise on a case by case basis, please contact the residential team for advice where necessary .
Bedrooms with en-suites		<p>Where a room is provided with a complete en-suite facility (bath/shower, toilet and wash hand basin) for the exclusive use of that occupant then that occupant will be disregarded when considering the provision of bathroom facilities within the rest of the property.</p> <p>Example: Six occupants and one occupant has exclusive use of a fully equipped en-suite. The requirement for the remaining occupants would be for five people. If, however, the en-suite only provides one facility (either a bath/shower or a WC) then the occupant will not be disregarded in relation to the missing amenity.</p>

Please note that the table above is not exhaustive and alternate layouts will be considered where the local authority is satisfied that the arrangements are appropriate for the accommodations use .

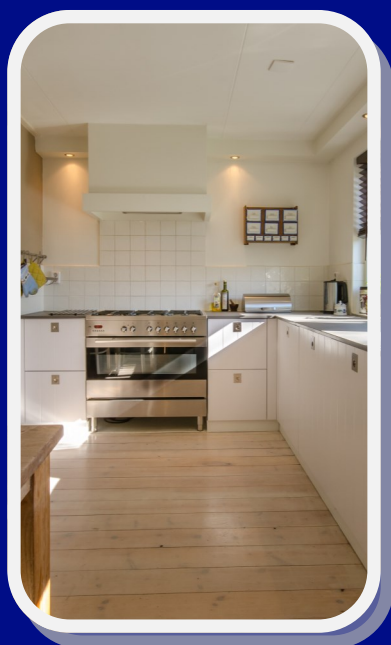
All rooms containing baths/showers, WC's and wash hand basins must be adequately lit ,ventilated and heated. Please note that electric bar heaters are not permitted. Appliances with taps to provide an adequate supply of cold and constant hot water.

Bathrooms must be suitably located and of an adequate size and layout.

Amenities (applicable to HMOs)

Kitchen Facilities

The Licensing and Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation and Other Houses (Miscellaneous Provisions) (England) Regulations 2006 requires where all or some of the units of accommodation within the HMO do not contain any facilities for the cooking of food there must be a kitchen, suitably located



in relation to the living accommodation. Kitchens should be provided no more than one floor away from any occupied rooms, unless a dining area is available as detailed.

Shared Kitchen Facilities

- A four ring gas or electric hob plus oven and grill (positioned so that the hobs are at worktop level) with 300mm of worktop either side of the hob.
- A sink and integrated drainer with a tiled splash back and supply of constant hot and cold running water.
- Adequate worktop with a minimum of 2000mm, of linear useable worktop and the standard depth of generally 600mm. NOTE: Please ignore 300mm on each side of the cooker and any inaccessible corners as useable food preparation space.
- A food storage unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume (0.08m^3) for each person.
- At least 4 double plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances. (e.g. microwave oven, refrigerator, washing machine etc.).
- Standard sized refrigerator providing sufficient space for the equivalent of approximately one shelf per occupier and with adequate freezer compartment or separate freezer.

Number of people	Sets of Kitchen facilities
3-5	1 complete set
6-10	2 complete sets and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500mm of additional worktop for every additional person over 5 tenants up to the max of 3000 mm. Alternative up to 8 tenants For up to 8 tenants a combination microwave is acceptable as a second cooker and a dishwasher is acceptable as a second sink.
Room with self-contained cooking facilities	Where a room is provided with a complete set of facilities that meet the exclusive cooking facility criteria the person may be excluded from the shared cooking facility criteria. e.g. if six occupants lived in the accommodation and one person had a set of exclusive facilities the requirements for the remaining occupants would be those for up to 5 people.

Please note that the table above is not exhaustive and alternate layouts will be considered where the local authority is satisfied that the arrangements are appropriate for the accommodations use.

Amenities



Self-Contained Kitchen Facilities

Where an occupier has integrated cooking facilities in their own bedsit they must be provided with at least:

- A two ring gas or electric hob plus an oven and grill (ideally positioned so that the hobs are at worktop level.).
- A sink and integrated drainer with a tiled splash back and an adequate supply of constant hot and cold running water for food preparation.
- Adequate worktop with a minimum useable space of 1000mm long and the standard depth of generally 600mm
- A single food storage unit of standard depth (300mm) and height (720mm) x 400mm width, or base unit (not a sink unit) of equivalent volume.
- Standard refrigerator with an adequate freezer compartment or a separate freezer .
- Adequate internal lidded rubbish bin.
- At least 4 plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances.
- Own exclusive supply of electricity , gas and water.

Please note: kitchens must be adequately lit ,ventilated and heated.

Space Standards



Living rooms / Dining rooms

To be provided where:

Bedrooms are not large enough for use as study/living rooms, or where large enough bedrooms are provided, and any room is more than one floor distance away from a designated kitchen.

Living rooms / dining rooms should be at least the following size:

1-3 persons at least 8.5m²

4-6 persons at least 11m²

Kitchen/diners

These are acceptable, where the dining area is separate from the food preparation and cooking areas and is still the correct size.

Kitchen

Kitchens of an optimum shape and layout should have at least the following circulation space

1-3 persons at least 5m²

4 persons at least 6m²

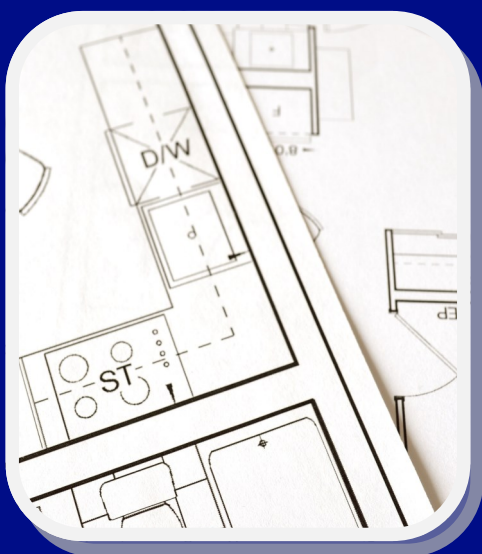
5 persons at least 7m²

6 persons at least 9m²

In some circumstances it may be necessary to have a larger space standard to ensure there is sufficient space to fit all appliances and maintain a safe circulation space for all occupants.

Space Standards

These measurements form the minimum standard that Cambridge City Council would accept and directly relate to the gross internal floor area / useable floor space of the room itself.



Please Note: No more than 2 persons should occupy any letting room for sleeping purposes irrespective of age. If there are two occupiers, they must be living together as partners, family members or consenting friends..

Space Standards

One Person Units

Minimum 6.51 m² for a sleeping room occupied by 1 individual, (an adult or a child over the age of 10), where there is separate living space available within the dwelling in the form of a kitchen / diner and / or living room / dining room.

Minimum 7.5 m² for a sleeping room occupied by 1 individual, (an adult or a child over the age of 10), where there is no separate living space available within the dwelling other than a kitchen.

Sleeping Rooms & Children

Please Note: Within a licensable HMO a room with a useable floor area between 4.64m² and 6.51m² may be occupied as a sleeping room by 1 child under the age of 10.

Two Person Units

Minimum 10.22 m² for a sleeping room let to and occupied by 2 persons where there is separate living space available within the dwelling in the form of a kitchen diner and / or living room / dining room.

Minimum 11.5 m² for a sleeping room let to and occupied by 2 persons where there is no separate living space available within the dwelling other than a shared kitchen.

Non Licensable HMO's of up to 2 Story's

Within non-licensable HMO's of up to 2 storeys that are rented to a defined group of up to 4 occupiers and where there is separate living space available within the dwelling - there will be an acceptance of one sleeping room for occupancy by 1 individual of which the useable floor space measures less than 6.5m² but no less than 4.64m² as the absolute minimum.

Bedsit Room With Cooking Facilities

Minimum 13 m² for a room occupied by 1 person with cooking facilities within the room .

Minimum 15 m² for a room occupied by 2 persons with cooking facilities within the room .

Space Standards



Space Standards

Associated Minimum Accepted Ceiling Height

Floor space with a ceiling height of less than 1.5m shall be disregarded for the purpose of measuring the gross internal useable floor area of the room as individuals would not have sufficient head room to use the room safely and comfortably. This space will however be considered as possible storage space.

Associated Additional Space

Any additional space provided by means of for example an en-suite facility / built in storage arrangement associated with individual sleeping rooms would be considered in addition to floor area measurement but could be viewed in terms of the reasonable suitability of the total space afforded on an individual case by case basis.

Doorway Openings / Entrance Walkways

Doorway openings / narrow entrance walkways associated with a sleeping room that do not constitute useable space will be discounted from the room size measurement.

Please Note: that in practice each dwelling will continue to be considered in relation to its own individual merits.

No staircase, landing nor any room which has been appointed as a kitchen or bathroom shall be deemed suitable for sleeping accommodation.

Ventilation Provision: - Sleeping Rooms

There should be natural or mechanical means for ventilation directly associated with sleeping rooms. The means provided should be controllable, properly installed and maintained and appropriate having regard to the particular part of the dwelling. Please note that owing to security it is acknowledged that occupiers may be reluctant to use door openings as a means of ventilation within ground floor sleeping rooms therefore an alternative window opening / means of mechanical ventilation should be available.

Services



Gas – All Dwellings

The Gas Safety (Installation and use) Regulations 1998 require that if the property has a gas supply then the entire gas installation (appliances, pipework and flues) must be maintained in safe working order. The gas installation must be examined and tested annually by a Gas Safe Registered contractor and a Landlords' Gas Safety Record obtained and a copy of this must be provided to all new tenants before they move in and to existing tenants within 28 days of the date it was issued. Landlords / agents must keep the gas safety certificate on record for at least two years. The local authority may also require issues with gas safety to be addressed under the Housing Act 2004 if they believe there is an associated hazard.

Electrical Safety - *Single Household & HMOs*

If the property is let to a single household the mains electrical installation in the property must be safe and should be regularly inspected by a competent electrician.

In the case of an HMO the mains electrical installation is required to be inspected at intervals no greater than once every 5 years. The Council may use the HMO Management Regulations to require you to provide an Electrical Installation Condition Report within 7 days to demonstrate this.

Please note that all dwellings must be free from an increased likelihood of harm due to the Hazard of Electrics .

The Council can also serve a notice on you requiring improvements under The Housing Act 2004 if you fail to maintain the electrical system.

As a general guide all properties should have

- 3 double sockets in each living / dining room
- 4 double sockets in the kitchen
- In addition, kitchens should have a designated socket for each fridge/dishwasher and fixed appliance
- Cookers should have a fixed point and be on an appropriate individual circuit.

Services



Radiator—usually forms part of a gas boiler wet system



Off peak electric storage heat with an boost function—hard wired



Portable Convection Heater—This is not suitable as a main heating source

Heating

Every rented property must comply with the correct standards for heating and insulation this includes current energy efficiency requirements and the provision of an Energy Performance Certificate where appropriate.

Dwelling must have a fixed heating system. The system can be gas or electric but must be fixed and have the following:

- Thermostat control, usually via a room thermostat
- Timer / Programmer
- Be economical to run

The system must be capable of providing and maintaining an adequate and controllable temperature at all times.

In particular the system shall be capable of maintaining the following internal temperatures when the external temperature is -1°C :

- Living room 21°C
- Bathroom 22°C
- Elsewhere 18°C

Examples of acceptable heating systems are:

- Wet system consisting of boiler and radiators
- Storage heaters which are powered by an off peak system. The Storage heaters should have the facility to be boosted during the day if necessary .

Contact Details

At Cambridge City Council we always try to work with landlords/property managers to get things right on an informal basis. If you already have a rental property or are thinking of becoming a landlord we will always be happy to talk to you and offer advice.

Telephone 01223 457000

Email Residential.eh@cambridge.gov.uk

Please Note:

Compliance with the standard does not negate the need for compliance with other statutory provisions, regulations and guidance some of which may be overseen by other Cambridge City Council service area's.

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Appendix (b)

The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard Consultation Response

Background

This document is in response to Cambridge City Council's consultation of The Private Sector Housing Standard that was launched on Tuesday 8th May 2018.

The consultation sought views from stakeholders on the proposed Private Sector Housing Standard document for Cambridge that contains proposed standards in relation to the following key areas associated with the provision of safe and suitable accommodation within the private rented sector in Cambridge City for adoption by Cambridge City Council:

The definition of house in multiple occupation (HMO) under the Housing Act 2004,
HMO licensing criteria,
fire safety standards,
amenities standards,
minimum space standards in terms of sleeping rooms.

This report details the specific responses to the consultation and sets out Cambridge City Council's final proposals in relation to this matter. Please note that this report should be read along-side 'The Housing Scrutiny Committee Report Item - Adoption of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard' and 'The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard' which forms Appendix a to the Committee Report.

Consultation Process

The consultation included a copy of the proposed draft Private Rented Sector Housing Standard and sought views from any stakeholders that may be affected by the introduction of this new Standard document.

The consultation began on 8th May 2018 and closed on 29th May 2018 this was primarily web based being advertised and accessed via the Cambridge City Council website with a link to the Survey Monkey consultation questionnaire.

Care was taken to notify a number of those individuals who may be affected by the introduction of the proposed Standard of the launch of the consultation.

Proposed Space Standards from the draft Standard document were presented and discussed during the most recent Landlord Forum on 21st February 2018.

The proposed draft Private Rented Sector Housing Standard document was presented and discussed during the most recent Landlord Steering Group meeting on 10th May 2018.

All Landlords and property managers / agents from the Landlord List held by Cambridge City Council were notified by e-mail / post accordingly with regards to the launch of the consultation.

A combination of closed and open questions were used to assist analysis of the responses.

Cambridge City Council would like to thank all interested parties for taking the time to respond to the consultation following which we have carefully considered your views.

Profile of Respondents

Cambridge City Council received a total of 57 responses to the Survey Monkey consultation questionnaire.

Respondents were made up of:

I am a tenant renting privately in Cambridge (26%, 13 responses);
I am a tenant renting privately outside of Cambridge (0%, 0 responses);
I am a Landlord with at least one property in Cambridge (42%, 22 responses);
I am a Landlord with no property in Cambridge (1%, 1 response);
I am a property agent / manager managing at least one property in Cambridge, (5%, 3 responses);
I am a property agent / manager managing property outside of Cambridge, (1%, 1 response);
I live in Cambridge, (13%, 7 responses);
I am resident outside of Cambridge, (0%, 0 responses);
Other, (1%, 1 response);
I would rather not say, (5%, 2 responses).

Please Note: two of the Survey Monkey responses registered, (#5 & #21), were 'test surveys' submitted via Claire Adelizzi, Team Manager – Residential, Environmental Services and have therefore been discounted from the final accepted total from which individual responses have been analysed.

A more detailed breakdown of the responses to selected questions in the consultation survey can be found at Annex A.

Issues Raised During Consultation

A variety of individuals responded to the consultation via on-line survey submissions. Respondents represented the views of Landlords, property agents / managers, private sector rental tenants and local residents.

The following is a summary of specific comments raised in response to consultation survey questions:

Q1

Having taken the time to consider the proposed Private Sector Housing Standard - Do you feel that the standard document provides clear information in relation to it's content areas, please tick where you agree and where necessary provide details in relation to areas for which you disagree:

Specific Consultation Comments to question 1 by Standard Content Area, (I disagree to clarity in some or all of these areas, I wish to make these specific comments:)

(please note that # = respondent number):

Housing Definitions

#8 - Housing definitions shared house / bedsit type HMO definition don't see a purpose in attempting to define a property in this way

#35 - The definition of an HMO is poor the implication is that a family of 5 taking in a lodger under the rent a room scheme would automatically fall under the requirements of licensing. It further confuses in that it implies that a couple with one lodger become an HMO.

#42 - I have a problem with very high quality HMO's let to young professionals being classed as 'bedsits' - a word that conjures up cheap and nasty accommodation with cooking facilities in bedrooms. In my opinion it is just plain wrong to assume that tenants on individual AST's are somehow higher risk than those who are all on one tenancy agreement. In many cases tenants on individual AST's are far more of a cohesive group than, for example, a 'group' of students who were completely unknown to each other prior to moving in but who are nevertheless on just the one tenancy agreement.

Improvement of the definitions: To ensure that lodgings landlords understand this applies to them also. To be clearer on the term 'bedsit type HMO' many landlords consider themselves to just be a 'shared house HMO' and not a 'bedsit type HMO'.

Licensable HMO's

#15 – For licensable HMO's making it 6 or more not 5

Fire Safety Standards

#20 – Extra clarity in terms of fire safety standards around fire extinguishers and protected

escape routes and what these entail in different scenarios

#38 - The requirement for 30 min fire separation between kitchen and adjoining rooms; does the adjoining room have to be habitable or does that include a toilet or a bathroom? Having met with a Fire Risk Assessment Officer this week, he informed me that a fire extinguisher was not fit for purpose! Why are these still being asked to be installed? You mentioned "overhead" door closers; does this mean the internally fitted ones are no longer permitted? In my experience, tenants are more likely to try and remove the overhead ones. There is no mention of complete door frames and furniture to have 30min fire protection as well as the actual door. Is this NOT a requirement then? That makes having a fire door pointless! Installation in accordance with appropriate British Standards.

#42 - If I understand the proposals correctly the suggestion is that a two storey HMO let to young professionals on individual AST's will have to have more stringent fire safety precautions (e.g. smoke detector in every bedroom) than a 3 or even 4 storey property let to a 'group' of students (where smoke detectors are only required in the common areas). That seems to make little sense. Having had many years experience as a Landlord of both tenant types I can assure you that in practice issuing tenants with individual AST's does most certainly NOT automatically put them into a higher risk category. Yes, they will probably be individual locks on their bedroom doors - but many if not most of the properties let to 'groups' will likewise have bedroom door locks.

#54 - Fire extinguishers: many properties do not have these as they have been advised they want people to leave and not tackle fires, and let fire doors etc. do their job.

#59 - Fire Safety Standards - What is classified as a all risk room?

Amenities

Amenities 4 double plug sockets seems excessive within a kitchen

#31 – Expectations as to no of sockets I believe is far excessive, especially if tenants have no complaints in relation to this issue.

#35 - There is a lack of clarity in the definition of the number of sockets required in a kitchen. As I understand it there is a requirement for 6 double sockets. Does that mean 12 plugging points and would single sockets and multiway extenders be permitted.

#37 - Omg insisting on how many double sockets are in a kitchen and going round with clipboard counting them is a bit much...

#59 - Services - How many double sockets do the bedrooms require?

Space Standards

#1 - Concern re reduction of choice and increase in rents. Some people's choice to save money and live in smaller accommodation.

#9 #11 – Additional Space provided by means for example of an en-suite facility / built in storage arrangement would be considered in addition to floor area measurement

#15 - Space Standards not to enforce minimum

#22 – I am a tenant in Cambridge ... I like my cheap room don't enforce minimum size

#25 – Please don't implement an additional licensing scheme that brings in new minimum room size to 4 or below tenants in a HMO

#26 – Don't bring in restrictive space standards.

#27 – We have a shortage of rented property in this country. So new rules will reduce supply of rental accommodation. Especially space restrictions.

#28 – No one is forced to rent a small room.

#32 – There is no comparison with the Government minimum space standards on pages 19 and 20.

#33 - No additional licensing is needed it's very severe. I've done a quick count on my comparables spreadsheet of 327 3 bedroom properties in this area for letting 96 (29.4%) have a third bedroom of less than 4.64m² and therefore be totally unlettable 63 (19.3%) have 3rd bedroom between 4.64m² and 6.51m² so can only be let to children under 10. Therefore 48.7% of all 3 bedrooms in this area could not be let to an adult. They are all marketed and priced as 3 bed letting. If the government thinks that it is so unreasonable for a child to sleep in a room under 4.64m² why don't they ban owner occupiers from putting their children in these rooms.

#34 - I am happy living in a smaller room sharing with 3 others. If you bring in additional licensing I will have to move and entail all the stress and expense that goes with it.

#35 - You appear to have increased the space standard by requiring rooms to be 100 sq feet and then requiring a communal area. In HMO's where everybody has a lock to their door mostly there is no demand for a communal area.

#36 - Minimum space standards should not apply to 4 or less rooms in a house.

#40 - Minimum bedroom size will reduce the number of Rooms available. So less housing for Cambridge which is a bad thing.

#48 - If a tenant and a landlord agree on a tenancy on a smaller room why, do the council have to get involved.

#49 - Space standards are too rigid.

#51- New build houses are allowed to get smaller in private sector to keep building costs down so to make affordable to buy. So why is private rental sector being picked on about space standards.

#56 - The clause about living room/ dining room must be provided if any room is more than one floor distance away from a kitchen, will affect our portfolio.

#57- There should be some sort of a provision for a 5th small room given that so many houses have them and that clearly there is a demand.

Services

#1 - Issue re temperature ambiguity raised on page 22.

General Comments

#1 – Tenant section / guide to be considered separately

#1 - Re standards/safeguards/ regulations applying to accommodation owned by educational institutions, councils, housing associations

#1 - Raising concerns section

#1 - Overnight visitors within a room and status re this regarding overall no's in occupancy

#10 – Application of the PRS Housing Standard being applicable to temporary accommodation

#16 – “The information provided is general and is not definitive, it is a guide and therefore every property will have slightly different requirements” this is very confusing

#23 – More regulations means rents go up

#24 – I will be forced to rent out the whole house as 1 unit

#41 - There is a Housing Shortage don't put your collective heads in the sand.

#43 - This will make the housing crisis worse and push up prices.

#44 - Keep Room prices down.

#45- I will be forced out.

#46 - House should be considered on it's own merits rather than setting minimum standards.

#47 - Keep the already inflated room prices down. This will make it worse.

#52 - It will make Cambridges rooms prices skyrocket.

#56 - It will make more Landlords sell up.

#58 - The requirements are clear but unrealistic. Especially with regard to ceiling heights, bin volume (155 litres?), double socket provision, kitchen circulation space, 2 hobs, 2

ovens and 2 grills for 6 people - really? plus requirements for mains operated fire systems (previously allowing for interlinked battery operated systems) and all this with an implementation date of 1 October 2018 which would be amusing, if not actually proposed.

Q2) Historically HMO's have largely been utilised as single occupancy rooms. However over recent years due to high costs associated with renting in Cambridge City demand for housing has increased in terms of co-habiting couples and families occupying such accommodation. For many people renting a room(s) within an HMO represents the only affordable housing option.

With this in mind and having had time to consider the Private Sector Housing Standard document do you feel that the proposed space standards associated with sleeping rooms to be adopted by Cambridge City Council offer reasonable floor space? (Please note an option to provide further specific comments re this question & the issue of space standards was made available under Q5, these comments follow further on in this report).

Specific Consultation Comments to question 2 were as follows.

(please note that # = respondent number):

#1 – Reduction of choice to groups of house sharers.
Smart ways of using smaller rooms.

#23 – I will have to move out of Cambridge as this means only large rooms

#24 – Too much interference on space standards – consistency.

Q3) Housing is a key determinant of health, and poor housing conditions continue to contribute to health inequalities. The stock condition survey carried out in 2015 estimated that 18% of properties within the private rented sector in Cambridge have a serious category one hazard associated with them.

We want to continue to improve living standards for our residents in the private rented sector whilst also supporting landlords and property managers via an informal approach wherever possible.

Do you feel that the proposed property standards will assist with regards to the following, please choose from the following options and provide any further specific comments you wish to make:

Improving standards for our residents within the private rented sector.

Supporting landlords and property agents to comply with legislation & associated regulations.

Specific Consultation Comments to question 3 (I disagree with one or both of these statements. I wish to make specific comments:) were as follows.

(please note that # = respondent number):

#26 – Standards will mean I'm homeless.

#27 – It was my choice a smaller room.

#28 – If it aint broke don't fix it.

#29 – Standard setting can only be in place if you have the enforcement to make it happen.

#32 - Cambridge City Council should focus on bad Landlords rather than enforcing the law to the letter on relatively minor issues with good landlords.

#33 – Stopping choice.

#35 - Having a room below the minimum size is not a category one hazard. There is no direct evidence that small rooms are defacto injurious to health . This is particularly true if the room is only intended for sleeping and short term use. The standards will make renting more difficult and reduce supply unless supply side steps are taken in conjunction with this to ensure the minimum room sizes when new builds are made. perhaps requiring the Parker _Morris standards be applied to all new builds. .

#36 - Not in regards to space standards for 4 or less HMO local stakeholder.

#37 - This proposal is letting officials meddle in my accommodation needs.

#38 - Unfortunately, you are still going to have greedy landlords who neither care for regulations or the welfare of tenants. Inspections by the council or trained associates, need to be carried out more thoroughly.

#40 - Some standards yes like Fire Safety but not Room size definitions it's too draconian.

#41 - Space enforcement will spiral an even worse crisis.

#42- As was found to be the case with the accreditation scheme it is the good Landlords who come forward. The really bad Landlords who operate 'under the radar' will continue to house tenants in poor quality / hazardous accommodation.

#43 - Don't cut off your nose to spite your face with minimum space requirements

#44 - Backdoor Economic Cleansing.

#45 - Don't bring in draconian space requirements when there not needed.

#46 - Improved living standards that cut rooms out of housing stock. It is like having improved food or no food at all and going hungry.

#47 – It will mean more rent money and less rooms.

#48 - Too controlling interference between a tenant and a landlord.

#51 – Penalising

#52 – Don't get rid of small rooms.

#56 - How to make Cambridge more costly for Rooms.

#57 - I'll have to seal off 5th room like Tutankamun Tomb for 3,000 years.

#58 - Supporting landlords - that is very funny I'm almost falling off my chair. Whilst thinking about your new proposals I am only calculating the addition rent increases and my long term exit from this business (which is no longer treated as a business by HMRC. Tenants can ill afford the price increases coming their way already - they may think you're helping them but you are not.

#59 - Providing Cambridge City Council supply support for Landlords with Legislation & Associated Regulations.

Q5) You answered NO to Q2, please provide specific details in relation to why you feel that the proposed space standards to be adopted by Cambridge City Council do not offer reasonable floor space associated with sleeping rooms?

The proposed space standards are too big

The proposed space standards are too small.

Specific Consultation Comments to question 5 (I wish to make specific comments.) were as follows.

(please note that # = respondent number):

#26 – I chose a smaller room as I was sleeping rough and managed to get a job. I can't afford bigger so will be forced to go back to old lifestyle.

#27 – This will further reduce supply and choice of rooms in relation to my budget. Cambridge does need extra licensing.

#28 – Size is in the price.

#32 – It is understood that the Cambridge City Council minimum standards are greater than those of Government. This does not take account of the requirements of tenants and will have the effect of social cleansing as poorer people are pushed out of town because they cannot afford the rent. Real life examples: Person who travels the world, spends little time in Cambridge just needing a base when at head office Lorry driver who would rather stay in a small room than use his cab. Student otherwise commuting from Bedfordshire area who cannot afford anything bigger.

#33 - No additional licensing is needed it's very severe. I've done a quick count on my comparables spreadsheet of 327 3 bedroom properties in this area for letting 96 (29.4%) have a third bedroom of less than 4.64m² and therefore be totally unlettable 63 (19.3%) have 3rd bedroom between 4.64m² and 6.51m² so can only be let to children under 10. Therefore 48.7% of all 3 bedrooms in this area could not be let to an adult. They are all marketed and priced as 3 bed letting. If the government thinks that it is so unreasonable for a child to sleep in a room under 4.64m² why don't they ban owner occupiers from putting their children in these rooms, (This is a repeat of this respondents answer to question 1).

#34 - Minimum bedroom size and kitchen size are unrealistic. Eliminates flexibility.

#36 - Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) believes it is impossible to define a bedroom by a minimum size for the purposes of the Bedroom Tax. However the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) appear to have done so, at least for the private sector. Keep it 5 or above.

#37 - Isn't room size to do with my landlord and I, why should the state interfere? My landlord put advert in, I responded to advert saw size of room, liked size and cheapness. Job done till now. Keep licence for bigger Houses in Multiple Occupation. Let me keep my room.

#40 – Housing stock will diminish.

#41 - It's taking rooms out of circulation, how is that a good thing.

#43 - I will be forced to give up work and claim housing benefit because room prices will increase as there will be less rooms.

#44 - It's Economic Cleansing. The poorer tenants of small rooms will be forced out of Cambridge.

#45 - So where will all us people happily living in rooms smaller than 6.52msq go when these rooms have to be permanently unlive in.

#46 - Take a house as a whole rather than getting out a tape measure in a bedroom and room is under by an inch and putting a big cross on a clipboard.

#47 - I will have to move out of Cambridge and try cheaper areas of UK. Less rooms more money.

#48 - If a tenant is on a tight budget or spends not much time in his/her room a smaller room is ideal.

#49 - The Parker Morris Standard was abandoned for public housing as bedroom sizes were deemed too big. So why is the private rental sector being punished and rooms that tenants like for renting to be forever closed.

#51 - New build homes are 20% smaller than homes built in the 1970's. So the private

developers/construction industry are allowed to build smaller. However the rental sector is going to be penalised for space and there is a Housing Crisis going on.

#52 - I am on minimum wage and will not be able to afford large room prices.

#56 - I see hostels are exempt. I was round Short St Hostel in Cambridge and there is 1 kitchen for 9 people, so it's ok for them. So pick on the private landlords for space standards and less rooms for us private tenants and more money eventually to pay.

#57 - I will have to have a cardboard cutout of an Environmental Health Officer in fifth empty room with clipboard to permanently check room remains empty to not have a licence hehe.

#58 - Nothing wrong with previous room sizes. As with all of these over-controlling and impacting-only professional landlords - type proposals; it removes the assumption that free market forces apply i.e. if a tenant doesn't like the space in a room they are under no compulsion to take the room and contract with the landlord. We are not providing accommodation for vulnerable groups in a care home settings, we are offering rooms-to-rent just as any shop or business offers their services/offers and clients/customers to choose whether to accept or not based on free market forces in this case; space, facilities, location, decor, landlord, other tenants etc. It is totally outside of the Council's remit to provide minimum standards on behalf of people (tenants) more than capable of deciding for themselves. This is just a veiled way of generating more revenue via licensing and nothing to do with putting more inspectors on the streets to police bad landlords who are flouting already over controlling systems. You admitted already to this happening so how are these proposals addressing this problem? Simply put - they are not. They are jeopardising future housing availability by alienating landlords out of the business and certainly increasing rents even further as a direct result. Please bear in mind that due to stamp duty changes, tax changes, loss of ability to charge administration costs of tenancies and additional data protection rules rents will be increasing by an average of £50 per head without inflation and assuming NO interest rate increases, which would add to this figure. Can tenants continue to pay this price increase, which is inevitable?

Q6) Optional, Please provide any further specific information that you wish to make us aware of in terms of the proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard?

Specific Consultation Comments to question 6 were as follows.

(please note that # = respondent number):

#16 - The requirement for a thermostatic control is unreasonable.

#16 - The requirement for heating systems to be capable of maintaining certain specified internal temperatures when the external temperature is 1C is unreasonable

#23 – Regulations too much

#26 – This will cause homelessness.

#27 – Keep my choice of Rooms and no extra regulation.

#29 – Enforcement must be strict and enhance public awareness of the new rules.

#32 - Clearly enforce Government minimum standards but apply Cambridge City Council standards as advisory.

#33 - No additional licensing is needed it's very severe. I've done a quick count on my comparables spreadsheet of 327 3 bedroom properties in this area for letting 96 (29.4%) have a third bedroom of less than 4.64m² and therefore be totally unlettable 63 (19.3%) have 3rd bedroom between 4.64m² and 6.51m² so can only be let to children under 10. Therefore 48.7% of all 3 bedrooms in this area could not be let to an adult. They are all marketed and priced as 3 bed letting. If the government thinks that it is so unreasonable for a child to sleep in a room under 4.64m² why don't they ban owner occupiers from putting their children in these rooms, (This is a repeat of this respondents answers to question 1 & 5).

#34 - Stop minimum bedroom, kitchen and lounge size restrictions on smaller HMOs.

#35 - There is no mention of the use of mezzanine floors which if properly used can increase space. A modification to letters sent would be useful. They are currently very aggressive in tone and will produce co-operation. The current letter should be used as a second step not a first. To reiterate the document is badly laid out all flash without the crucial information on what is part of the primary legislation and non ngeociable and what is part of the "improved" standards.

#36 - Try to be fair and consider 5 or above HMO for licensing, not 4 or less. Regards.

#37 - Dont meddle anymore than you have to with proposed law and make my housing needs more costly and harder to get or do the people (tenants) have no say.

#38 - The LACORS document you refer to is very outdated. I think we need to get in properly trained fire assessors to look at our HMOs and provide guidance on improvements, where necessary.

#40 - Don't damage Cambridge's Economy.

#41 - Don't let officialdom thrive.

#43 – Don't go down this route and cause unaffordable rooms.

#46 - I suppose common sense won't prevail and this will be pushed through.

#48 – Concentrate on fire safety standards.

#52 – Think of tenants on Minimum Wage.

#56 – Please don't make my accommodation more costly.

#58 - Please leave us good landlords alone to lick our already open wounds from all of the tax changes. Please bother the bad landlords by getting more people to police bad housing not create more paperwork and costs. Please! Please! Please!

Action in Relation to Common Themes & Further Proposals

Analysis of the consultation survey responses revealed that there were some common themes in terms of respondent's specific comments around particular content areas of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard as follows:

Housing Definitions

There appeared to be discontent with regards to the inclusion of the definitions in relation to the types of HMO's 'Shared House' / 'Bedsit Type' HMO's – These must remain as they are written within this content area of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard document as these defined types of HMO's remain accepted within LACORS Housing – Fire Safety from which fire safety standards within the standard document are drawn. Contribution was made to the writing of this document by industry professionals.

The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard does not contain an exhaustive list of definitions with regards to every type of HMO scenario that may be encountered the main occupancy types encountered by enforcement officers within Cambridge City are covered. It is specified that advice can be sought from the Residential Team within Environmental Services with regards to any uncertainty regarding a given occupancy situation.

Licensable HMO's

There appeared to be a degree of confusion from respondents in relation to Cambridge City Council bringing in 'additional licensing'. To provide clarity with regards to this point - Cambridge City Council is not bringing in additional licensing. Rather, from 1st October 2018 central government are implementing a statutory extension of the scope of the current mandatory licensing scheme. This means that as stated within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard document from 1st October 2018 all HMO's with 5 or more individuals living within and certain flats in multiple occupation with 5 or more individuals living within will require a mandatory HMO licence from the Local Housing Authority in which the property is situated.

Additionally Cambridge City Council are not permitted to set the number of individuals occupying a property at which point mandatory HMO licensing applies, the figure of 5 or more individuals has been set by central government.

Fire Safety Standards

The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard document has been amended to reflect the request for further clarity in relation to the terminology 'means of escape' and 'protected route' as well as in relation to alternative self-closing devices that would be accepted to be fitted to fire resistant doors.

An additional content area of 'Fire Fighting Equipment' has been included within the standard document and it has been made clearer within the text relating to fire extinguishers that under Cambridge City Council Fire Safety Standards it is a recommendation to provide these within private rented accommodation.

Amenities

The standard of ensuring provision of at least 4 double plug socket outlets in addition to those servicing major appliances, (e.g. oven, refrigerator, washing machine etc.) within an HMO shared kitchen have been drafted with reference to current National House Building Council's technical standards. Reference to the provision of a greater number of plug socket outlets within a shared kitchen occupied by 6 – 10 individuals has been removed from The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard.

Space Standards

It is clear from the summary of comments provided within this report as well as from the more detailed analysis of consultation responses' that forms Annex A to this report that this was the content area of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard that received the highest level of response as well as the majority of specific comments from respondents.

Taking into account specific comments made an Options Appraisal in relation to the issue of 'Space Standards' within privately rented accommodation and in particular floor area measurements relating to sleeping rooms within HMO's has been included into the Housing Scrutiny Committee Report which is an agenda item on 19th June 2018, please see the 'Next Steps' section within this report below for further details in relation to this.

There needs to be a baseline minimum sleeping room size requirement without which there is a danger that available room sizes within this sector will become smaller and smaller over time something that could ultimately affect the standard of private rented sector housing provision within Cambridge City and the health, safety and wellbeing of occupiers. The Government have acknowledged this with regards to them setting national minimum room size standards that will be conditioned onto HMO licenses issued from October 2018.

It is important to note that tenant's wishes will continue to be taken into account when determining appropriate enforcement action in individual cases.

Properties will continue to be considered case by case according to their own individual merit, with a degree of considered flexibility being applied where deemed appropriate / necessary.

Services

The issue re temperature ambiguity raised has been amended accordingly on page 22 within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard.

The standards within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard around 'Services' and in particular the controllability of heating systems have been put together in reference to the current accepted criteria contained within the Housing Health & Safety Rating System, HHSRS in terms of the hazard of 'excess cold' as well as accepted criteria contained within the CIEH Guidance on enforcement of excess cold hazards in England.

General Comments

For clarity The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard is primarily for reference / use by landlords and property agents / managers responsible for property within this sector in Cambridge City. It relates to properties that comprise an individual(s) permanent place of residence for which rent is paid.

Next Steps

This report will form appendix b to the Committee Report Item – 'Adoption of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard' that is an agenda item at Cambridge City Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee on the 19th June 2018.

Taking into consideration the 'Options Appraisal' included within paragraph 3.19 of the Committee Report that has been inserted following consideration / analysis of the consultation responses detailed within this report, the Executive Councillor for Housing is recommend to approve the adoption of the Cambridge City Council Private Rented Sector Housing Standard to include agreed 'Space Standards'.

It is anticipated that the Standard document would be used to inform consistent advice and enforcement by The Council where necessary in relation to ensuring that safe and suitable accommodation is provided to occupiers within the private rented sector in Cambridge City.

END

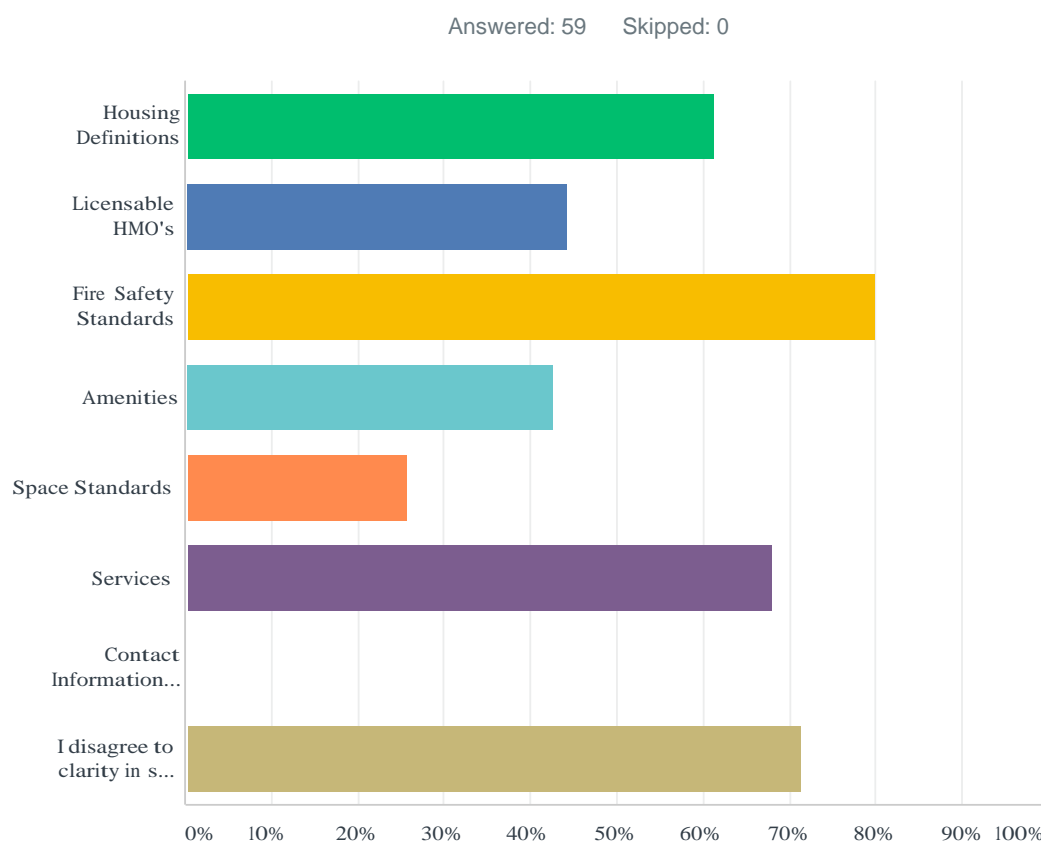
Claire Adelizzi
Team Manager - Residential

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Annex A

Breakdown of Question Responses – Private Rented Sector Housing Standard Consultation

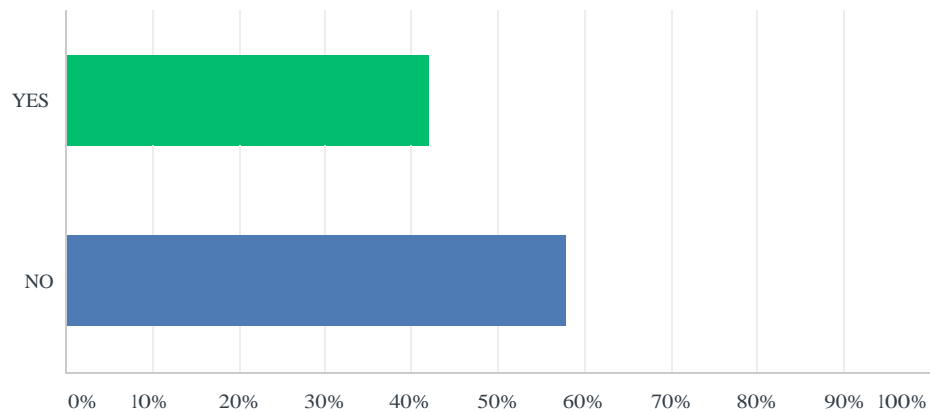
Q1 Having taken the time to consider the proposed Private Sector Housing Standard - Do you feel that the standard document provides clear information in relation to it's content areas, please tick where you agree and where necessary provide details in relation to areas for which you disagree:



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Housing Definitions	61.02%	36
Licensable HMO's	44.07%	26
Fire Safety Standards	79.66%	47
Amenities	42.37%	25
Space Standards	25.42%	15
Services	67.80%	40
Contact Information Provided	0.00%	0
I disagree to clarity in some or all of these areas, I wish to make these specific comments:	71.19%	42
Total Respondents: 59		

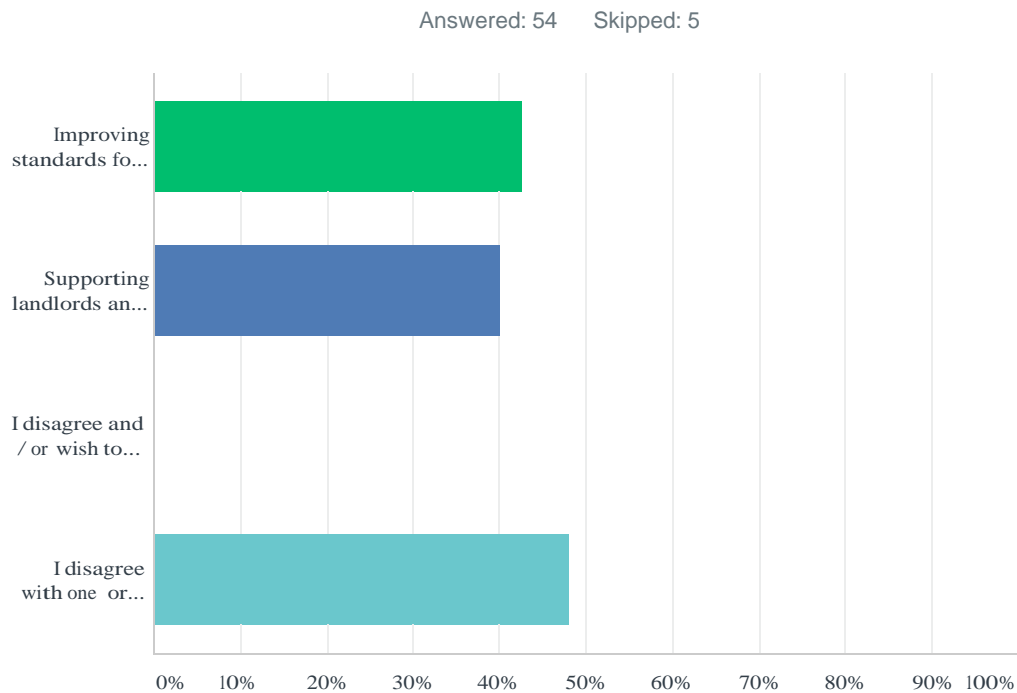
Q2 Historically HMO's have largely been utilised as single occupancy rooms. However over recent years due to high costs associated with renting in Cambridge City demand for housing has increased in terms of co-habiting couples and families occupying such accommodation. For many people renting a room(s) within an HMO represents the only affordable housing option. With this in mind and having had time to consider the Private Sector Housing Standard document do you feel that the proposed space standards associated with sleeping rooms to be adopted by Cambridge City Council offer reasonable floor space?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
YES	42.11%	24
NO	57.89%	33
TOTAL		57

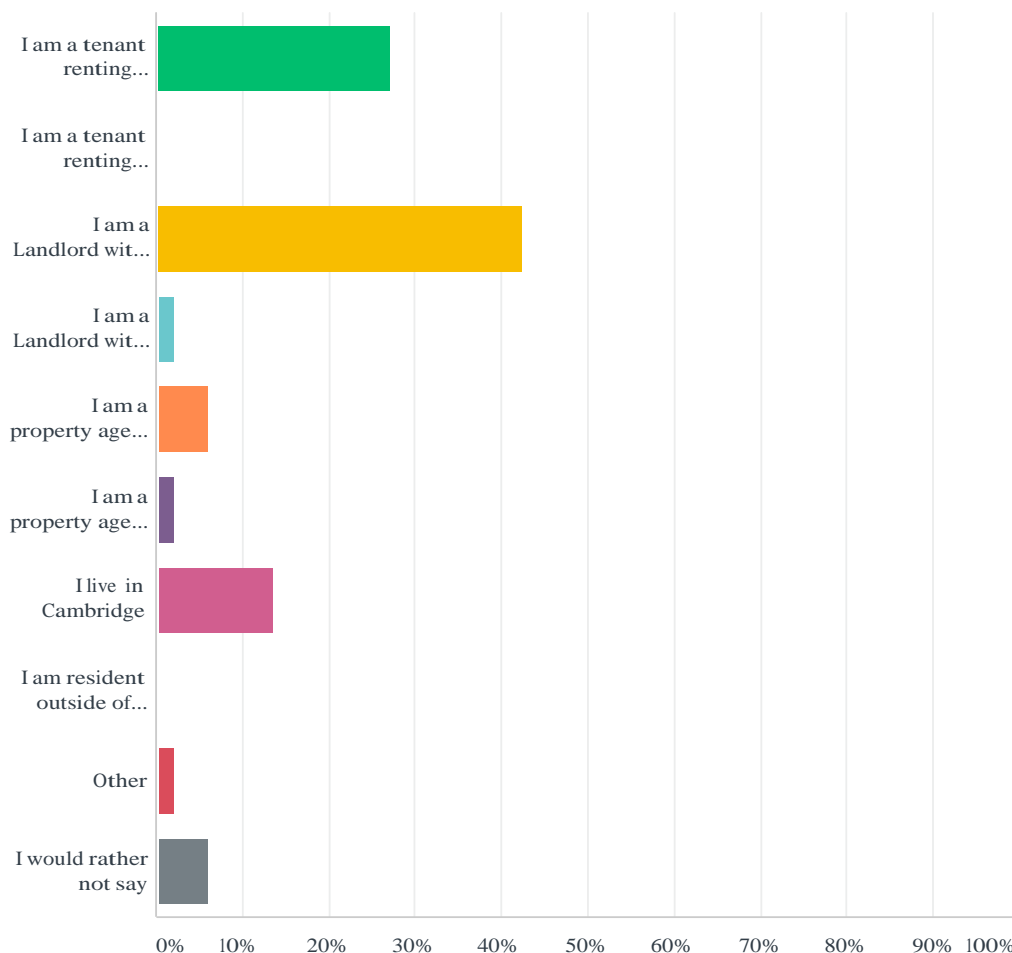
Q3 Housing is a key determinant of health, and poor housing conditions continue to contribute to health inequalities. The stock condition survey carried out in 2015 estimated that 18% of properties within the private rented sector in Cambridge have a serious category one hazard associated with them. We want to continue to improve living standards for our residents in the private rented sector whilst also supporting landlords and property managers via an informal approach wherever possible. Do you feel that the proposed property standards will assist with regards to the following, please choose from the following options and provide any further specific comments you wish to make:



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Improving standards for our residents within the private rented sector	42.59%	23
Supporting landlords and property agents to comply with legislation & associated regulations. I	40.74%	22
I disagree and / or wish to make the following specific comments:	0.00%	0
I disagree with one or both of these statements.	48.15%	26
Total Respondents: 54		

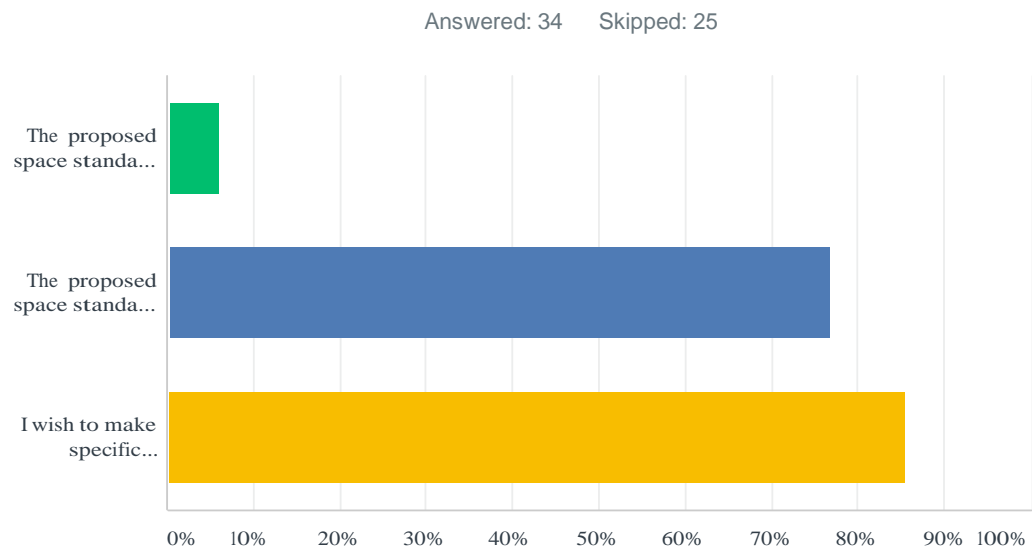
Q4 In order to ascertain that we are getting responses from a fair and mixed representation of those who may be affected by the adoption of the Private Sector Housing Standard please tick the most appropriate box from the following options:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 7



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I am a tenant renting privately in Cambridge	26.92%	14
I am a tenant renting privately outside of Cambridge	0.00%	0
I am a Landlord with at least one property in Cambridge	42.31%	22
I am a Landlord with no property in Cambridge	1.92%	1
I am a property agent / manager managing at least one property in Cambridge	5.77%	3
I am a property agent / manager managing property outside of Cambridge	1.92%	1
I live in Cambridge	13.46%	7
I am resident outside of Cambridge	0.00%	0
Other	1.92%	1
I would rather not say	5.77%	3
TOTAL		52

Q5 You answered NO to Q2, please provide specific details in relation to why you feel that the proposed space standards to be adopted by Cambridge City Council do not offer reasonable floor space associated with sleeping rooms?



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The proposed space standards are too small	5.88%	2
The proposed space standards are too big	76.47%	26
I wish to make specific comments:	85.29%	29
Total Respondents: 34		

Q6 Optional, Please provide any further specific information that you wish to make us aware of in terms of the proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard?

Answered: 26 Skipped: 33

Please Note - specific comments made in response to this and the other questions 1, 2, 3 and 5 are detailed within the Private Rented Sector Housing Standard Consultation Response.

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)



This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Guidance on how to complete this tool can be found on the Cambridge City Council intranet. For specific questions on the tool email Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer at equalities@cambridge.gov.uk or phone 01223 457046. Once you have drafted the EqIA please send this to equalities@cambridge.gov.uk for checking. For advice on consulting on equality impacts, please contact Graham Saint, Strategy Officer, (graham.saint@cambridge.gov.uk or 01223 457044).

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service:
Adoption of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard
2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)
N/A
3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?
<p>The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard to be adopted for reference / use in relation to baseline minimum standards within private rental accommodation throughout Cambridge City.</p> <p>The Standard document will be used to inform clear and consistent advice / enforcement action in relation to non- compliance with standards by The Council where necessary. Thus continuing work to ensure safe and suitable accommodation is provided to occupiers within the private rented sector in Cambridge City.</p>
4. Responsible Service
Residential Team, Environmental Services

<p>5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick those that apply)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residents of Cambridge City</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Visitors to Cambridge City</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff</p>
<p>Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. City Council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlords • Managing agents • Tenants in the Private Rented Sector
<p>6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this? (Please tick)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Major change</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minor change</p>
<p>7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (Please provide details):</p>
<p>8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?</p> <p>It is due to go to Housing Scrutiny Committee on the 19th June 2018.</p>

9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

In terms of 'Space Standards' within The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard the following have been taken into account:

- The Governments proposed national minimum room size standards in terms of licensable HMO's.
- Minimum bedroom size standards detailed within the proposed Local Plan.
- Working knowledge of the nature of housing stock provision forming the private rented sector within Cambridge City.
- Housing demand for private rented sector accommodation and the associated need to prevent social exclusion.

A three week consultation was launched on 8th May 2018 which included access to a copy of the proposed draft Private Rented Sector Housing Standard and sought views from any stakeholders that may be affected by the introduction of this new Standard document.

This consultation was primarily web based being advertised and accessed via the Cambridge City Council website with a link to the Survey Monkey consultation questionnaire.

However, care was taken to notify a number of those individuals who may be affected by the introduction of the proposed Standard of the consultation launch details.

Proposed 'Space Standards' from the draft Standard document were presented and discussed during the most recent Landlord Forum on 21st February 2018 which was well attended.

The proposed draft Private Rented Sector Housing Standard document was presented and discussed during the most recent Landlord Steering Group meeting on 10th May 2018.

Several hundred Landlords and property managers / agents from the Landlord list held by Cambridge City Council were notified by e-mail / post accordingly with regards to the launch of the consultation.

There was a press release regarding the consultation launch and Cambridge City Council social media feeds were requested to be updated towards the end of the consultation to advise the wider community that it was coming to an end.

Consultation responses were received from Landlords, property agents / managers, tenants and Cambridge residents.

10. Potential impacts

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.

(a) Age - Any group of people of a particular age (e.g. 32 year-olds) , or within a particular age range (e.g. 16-24 year-olds) – in particular, please consider any safeguarding issues for children and vulnerable adults

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers - The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard could affect any adult who owns / is responsible for private rented sector accommodation within Cambridge City regardless of their age. There is no evidence to suggest it would raise safeguarding issues based on the contents of the proposed Private Rented Sector Housing Standard document.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - There is no definitive data available in relation to the age of occupants within private rented sector accommodation within Cambridge. Anecdotally, single, younger persons aged 20-40 will typically be found within those private rented sector properties that are in multiple occupation. However, with high housing costs within Cambridge private sector rented accommodation is widely occupied.

The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation of all protected characteristics.

It is possible that instances of safeguarding may reduce with improvement of property standards e.g. the Government are introducing national minimum room size criteria including that in relation to the size of sleeping rooms that children can occupy this has been detailed within the 'Space Standards' section of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard.

(b) Disability - A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers - The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard could affect any adult who owns / is responsible for private rented sector accommodation within Cambridge City. There is no evidence to suggest that it will have a negative effect on those with a disability. We do not require information regarding any disability of those responsible for private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - There is no information available with regard to disability and occupiers within the private rented sector. The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics. This may also ultimately help prevent disability and long-term illness caused by poor housing conditions.

(c) Sex – A man or a woman.

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers - There is no evidence that the introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard will have any specific greater effect on either men or women.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - There is no evidence of people of a particular sex being more or less likely to reside within private rented sector accommodation. However the introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

(d) Transgender – A person who does not identify with the gender they were assigned to at birth (includes gender reassignment that is the process of transitioning from one gender to another)

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers - We do not require information relating to the gender of those responsible for private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge, so do not have equalities monitoring data related to this protected characteristic, but there is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific effect.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - There is no specific information available regarding transgender people living within the private rented sector. However the introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

(e) Pregnancy and maternity

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers – We do not require information on the pregnancy / maternity status of those responsible for private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge, so do not have equalities monitoring data related to this protected characteristic, but there is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific effect.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - There is no specific information available regarding pregnancy or maternity of people living within the private rented sector. It is likely some expectant mothers will live within this sector throughout the city. However the introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

(f) Marriage and civil partnership

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers – We do not require information on the marital status of those responsible for private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge, so do not have equalities monitoring data related to this protected characteristic, but there is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific effect.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - There is no specific information available regarding people who are married or in a civil partnership living within the private rented sector within Cambridge City. However the introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

(g) Race - The protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers - We do not require information on the race / ethnicity of those responsible for private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge, so do not have equalities monitoring data related to this protected characteristic, but there is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific effect.

If language barriers are identified the relevant officer will ensure that steps are taken such as offering translated information or an interpreter where this is deemed appropriate.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - We do not hold specific information on how all private sector accommodation is occupied in Cambridge in terms of breakdown related to race. National statistics show that housing of black and minority ethnic people live in tends to be of lower quality, especially among households of Pakistani origin, and overcrowding is more common, particularly among households of Bangladeshi origin. (Reference Cabinet Office (2017), 'Race Disparity Audit: Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website. The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard will seek to improve the quality of accommodation within this sector so may have an especially positive impact on BAME people.

If language barriers are identified the relevant officer will ensure that steps are taken such as offering translated information or an interpreter where appropriate.

The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

(h) Religion or belief

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers - We do not require information on the religion or belief of those responsible for private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge, so do not have equalities monitoring data related to this protected characteristic, but there is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific effect.

Officers would ensure they offer appropriate support, considering when to make appointments, where specific religious events, festivals or prayer have been identified.

The effect of introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - We do not hold information on religions / beliefs of occupiers of all private rented accommodation in Cambridge.

Officers would ensure they offer appropriate support, considering when to make appointments, where specific religious events, festivals or prayer have been identified.

The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

(i) Sexual orientation

Landlords / Property Agents / Managers - We do not require information on the sexual orientation of those responsible for private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge, so do not have equalities monitoring data related to this protected characteristic, but there is no evidence to suggest that the changes will have any specific effect.

Residents occupying private sector rental accommodation - There is no specific evidence relating to sexual orientation of occupiers of all private sector rented accommodation in Cambridge.

The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular – please consider the impact of any changes on low income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty

Impact on low income tenants – There is a possibility that the cost of required improvements to housing may be passed on to tenants within rental amounts however it is worth noting that certain items of work that may be required e.g. fire precaution works and the installation of a fire alarm system / fire doors involve a more significant financial out - going at the point of installation and once installed there are generally only then on-going routine servicing and maintenance costs associated with such works.

However there is awareness that some private sector rental accommodation within Cambridge is operated by rogue landlords who exploit vulnerable tenants, by renting sub-standard, overcrowded and dangerous accommodation. Poor practice can include: housing illegal migrants; failing to meet the required health and safety standards; permitting overcrowding; and ineffective management of tenant behaviour. The introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard aims to continue work to further improve safe and suitability standards of accommodation within this sector which will have a positive impact for people occupying such accommodation within Cambridge City of all protected characteristics.

Alongside this there are protections for tenants against “retaliatory eviction” under the Deregulation Act 2015 where they have a legitimate complaint about the condition of their property which the Residential Team, Environmental Services have the power to enforce where necessary.

Tenant wishes will continue to be taken into account in terms of determining the appropriate course of action in relation to individual cases where enforcement of required standards is being considered.

Financial Impact on Landlords, Property Agents / Managers – The effect of the introduction of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard on Landlords / property agents / managers will be that some private rented sector properties may require additional work to improve safety and suitability standards which may involve an associated financial outgoing.

Taking into account the nature and extent of the works that are required responsible individuals will be provided with a reasonable / realistic time period within which to carry out these works. In the majority of cases such improvement works can be carried out whilst the property is still occupied, (meaning retention of rental income), provided that occupiers are given notice of and made fully aware of the extent of any works and that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure minimal disruption to them whilst works are on-going.

11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqlA accordingly.)

The contents of the Private Rented Sector Housing Standard Document will be subject to review as necessary. Any impacts / issues with regards to the final standard document will be considered individually as they arise in liaison with appropriate colleagues / stakeholders as necessary.

12. Do you have any additional comments?

Relevant legislation and accepted guidance standards have been taken into consideration during the development of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard meaning that the Standard contains a number of required standards that those responsible for private rented sector accommodation within Cambridge will be required to ensure that their property complies with. Cambridge City Council will have a statutory duty to consider enforcement action in relation to flagrant non-compliance in line with the Enforcement Policy.

There is no change to how staff from within the Residential Team will be required to carry out their role in relation to ensuring safe and suitable accommodation is provided within the private rented sector within Cambridge City, they will continue to do this whilst having regard to The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard where necessary.

13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment:

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted:

Date of EqlA sign off:

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: In response to any impacts / issues arising upon implementation of The Private Rented Sector Housing Standard or in 1 years' time whichever is soonest.

Sent to Helen Crowther, Equality and Anti-Poverty Officer?

☒ Yes

☐ No

Date to be published on Cambridge City Council website (if known):

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