

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 June 2024
5.32 - 11.05 pm

Present: Councillors Griffin (Chair), Robertson (Vice-Chair), Baigent, Gawthrop Wood, Lee, Martinelli, Swift, Thittala and Tong

Executive Councillors: Bird (Executive Councillor for Housing) and Holloway (Executive Councillor for Community Safety, Homelessness and Wellbeing)

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Diana Minns (Vice Chair), Harmony Birch, Diane Best, Mandy Powell-Hardy Justyna Ulman-Jaworska

Justyna Ulman-Jaworska left the meeting after the consideration of item 24/30/HSC.

Officers present in person:

Assistant Director, Housing and Homelessness: Samantha Shimmon
Assistant Director, Development: Ben Binns
Housing Strategy Manager: Helen Reed
Committee Manager: Sarah Steed
Meeting Producer: Boris Herzog

Others Present:

Head of Finance and Business Manager: Julia Hovells
Asset Manager: Will Barfield
Strategic Delivery Manager: Sean Cleary

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

24/21/HSC Apologies

No apologies were received.

24/22/HSC Declarations of Interest

Name	Item	Interest
Councillor Tong	24/26/HSC	Personal: Member of Unite
Councillor Baigent	24/26/HSC	Personal: Member of Unite.
Councillor Robertson	24/26/HSC	Personal: Member of Unite.
Councillor Bird	24/26/HSC	Personal: Member of Unison.
Diana Minns	24/26/HSC	Personal: Member of Unite.

Councillor Thittala Varkey	24/26/HSC	Personal: Member of Unite.
Councillor Holloway	24/26/HSC	Personal: Member of Unite.

24/23/HSC Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

24/24/HSC Co-option and introduction of Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives and appointment of Vice-Chair (Tenant/Leaseholder Rep) for 2024/25

The Chair welcomed new and returning Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives following the recent election process and the Committee noted their co-option onto Housing Scrutiny Committee

Diana Minns was appointed Vice-Chair Tenant Representative for Municipal Year 2024/25.

24/25/HSC Public Questions

Question 1 – Agenda item 8

- How much of this work is currently carried out by in-house staff? if so what work is this?
- What is meant by it is almost certain that there could be TUPE implications for the council in respect of staff and contractors currently working for Fosters Property Maintenance limited but is unlikely that former LGPS staff pensions will transferred to the new providers Why?
- Has an options appraisal exercise been done? Including consideration for an in-house bid for any of the work?
- Has an inhouse bid been considered? If we make an in-house bid we can develop the skills to maintain the new builds, securing future in-house jobs for a directly employed workforce.
- If not why?
- Has there been an outline business case carried out?
- Could you explain why there is a 11% variation on the estimated value of the contract £6m to £7m?

- What are the measures for 'social value will be in the contract? that past outsourced contracts have led to wages stagnating, lack of the Real Living Wage, poor health, and safety.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. None of this work was currently carried out by in-house staff. Contract management together with property surveys for some work streams were carried out by the Asset Management team in City Services. Actual delivery of the work was carried out by appointed contractors.
- ii. There were no staff who used to work for Cambridge City Council who now worked for Foster Property Maintenance, so there would be no TUPE involving the Council and the Local Government Pension Scheme. There could be staff employed by Foster Property Maintenance and their supply chain who had protection under the TUPE regulations.
- iii. The Estate and Facilities team developed a new Procurement Strategy in 2022 and this was used to develop the proposals in the report. This considered the size and scope of the proposed contract, contract term, procurement method and criteria. There was no current proposal for an 'in-house bid' for this work.
- iv. If a decision was taken to bring the work 'in house' this would be after a full business case demonstrated that this was the best solution and would offer value for money.
- v. The Council was currently undergoing a corporate transformation process. There were no current internal resources available to deliver this work. A lot of the work being tendered was specialist in nature and there was not always sufficient guaranteed volume to sustain an in-house delivery team.
- vi. There had not been a business case completed for creating an in-house team to deliver the work.

The following responses to questions were provided outside the meeting:

- i. This was a programme of work that would take place in the future, so could only provide estimated annual contract values within a range. This should be enough to provide bidders with information to help them to decide whether to bid, and it also provided the Council with flexibility when planning annual programmes of work.

- ii. The details of the Social Value requirements would be set out in the specifications for the contract. This was being finalised. Social Value would be part of the tender evaluation criteria and bidders were expected to make clear proposals regarding:
- apprenticeships and work placements;
 - reduction of waste and pollution;
 - creation of a thriving local economy;
 - reduction of energy, carbon emissions and water use;
 - increase of biodiversity.

Question 2 – Agenda item 6

The residents have lived in Ekin road for a number of years ranging from a few years to 40 + years as these buildings were built in the fifties and now it's 2024 the buildings are subsiding ,walls with no insulation, mould on the walls in all the rooms and windows, leaks in the pipes ,no lifts in the flats ,roads unsafe ,and people have lived in these conditions for years why has it taken this long to decide whether or not to pull it down this should have been done years ago . All the house's and all the flats are in serious trouble EVERY SINGLE PROPERTY should be demolished let Ekin Road have a new lease of life it's time this is 2024 .Cambridge is in need of more affordable homes so think about what is going on around us there are more and more homeless families plus with the Barnwell road development this would generate more homes more jobs and people be more happier living in a area knowing it's safer for there families places for children to play it doesn't matter if you live in the north south east or west of Ekin road the buildings need to come down I know the minority want to save their house's but think about the majority of the residents who live in Ekin road who want out.

They don't want there child to be the next casualty to be taken into hospital with pneumonia after in haling the spores from black mould this should not be happening are you going to risk the life's of many to suit 14 homes out of 122 homes do they not realise that they are causing suffering to the residents some have new born babies the mental health is now at breaking point. So after reading this my question is.

Why are the council not listening to the council residents and some home owners of Ekin road myself and my partner have been speaking to the residents and I am now speaking on there behalf you say you have spoken to us .but have you listened to the residents we have been telling you that it needs to be demolished and all we hear is yes we know but until you have

lived in one of the flats or houses that are in desperate need of repair you won't know what it's like to live in these conditions.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. The estate had undergone a thorough options appraisal process to review the opportunities for the future of the estate. It was important that this work was done carefully and thoroughly, as it impacted many homes.
- ii. Everything had been carefully considered, including the current condition of the estate, planning policy, financial viability and importantly feedback from the community.
- iii. There had been ongoing resident engagement since September 2021. The council had held events, conducted 3 x surveys, continuously offered confidential appointments, regularly held liaison group meetings, and knocked on all the doors on the estate to understand resident's needs.
- iv. There was a mixture of views on the estate and the council had listened and responded accordingly.
- v. Was aware of the conditions that many residents were living in, particularly in the flats and agreed it was important for a decision to be made. Wanted to thank all residents for being patient during this process and would continue to provide close support to everyone impacted by the proposals.

Supplementary Public Question:

- i. Questioned the ability of a councillor sitting on Housing Scrutiny Committee to support a particular viewpoint / group regarding a redevelopment proposal.

Post meeting note:

- i. At Housing Scrutiny Committee, it is the Executive Councillor (for this issue, Councillor Bird) who is the decision maker for the redevelopment report.
- ii. Members of the Housing Scrutiny Committee can discuss reports at the Scrutiny Committee and vote on a recommendation to the Executive Councillor, but the Scrutiny Committee members are not the decision makers.

Question 3 – Agenda item 6

As a freeholder in Ekin Road, I wholeheartedly approve the Council's plans to redevelop Ekin Road, and keep the 14 houses on the South side, even though this means my house will be demolished. I think this plan is a good compromise, balancing the need for redevelopment with the residents' opinions.

The flats, and many of the houses on Ekin road, are of poor quality and in urgent need of upgrading. They are quite simply not safe to live in.

The proposed designs create the much needed new family homes, increase parking, and make use of a lot of the wasted green space currently found to the east and west of the estate.

I believe the Committee should vote to approve the plans, anymore delay is an insult to the residents that have been in limbo for 3 years.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. Thanked the residents living in the houses and the flats on the Ekin Road estate, including council tenants and homeowners for being patient during this process. It was useful to hear from everyone throughout this process and hoped that a decision would mean that residents could plan for the future.

Question 4 – Agenda item 6

We are the Save Ekin Road community group, and we are writing to you regarding Cambridge City Council's proposals for Ekin Road. We are a group of 60 council tenants, leasehold and freehold residents. As done in the past, we wish to express our concerns regarding the investigation work and potential development of our estate.

We note Agenda Item 6 of this meeting, where the Council is now putting forward a proposal to redevelop a majority of the Ekin Road estate. We welcome a houses-led development of Ekin Road. We welcome the redevelopment of the flats and emergency Home-Link banding for those council tenants. We welcome the rehousing prioritisation of tenants whose living conditions are the worst on the estate.

However, although we welcome the retention of the 14 houses on the southern edge of the estate, we believe that this does not go far enough. We have repeatedly asked the Council to preserve all 32 semi-detached houses on the

estate; this proposal only preserves 14, which is less than half. We cannot accept this.

Having reviewed the proposal for the estate, and having consulted our members, we now wish to make the following three requests to the Council, which we believe are reasonable and justified, with reasons to follow below:

Request 1:

We request that the 6 semi-detached houses in the north-east corner of the estate (odd numbers 13-23 inclusive) be retained in the redevelopment of Ekin Road, in addition to those 14 houses on the southern edge of the estate (odd numbers 33-59).

Request 2:

We request that the Council prioritise rehousing all those council tenants from houses that are to be demolished into the retained Council-owned houses, making use of those which currently house temporary residents or are void.

Request 3:

We request that any refurbishment work done on any Council-owned retained houses on the estate is only to be carried out after a full and thorough consultation with the affected residents, to understand their concerns and the impact on them. And we request that any decision to proceed with such works is first brought back to this Housing Scrutiny Committee for approval.

- Our reasons for request 1 are as follows: The majority of the residents in those houses have expressed a strong desire to keep their homes, and some have been in theirs for over 40 years. These are well-loved family homes, and there are no intrinsic reasons to take them down.
- Several of the residents in those houses have physical, or mental, health issues, for which their house is their lifeline. To forcibly remove them from their home will substantially reduce their quality of life, in ways that, for many, will be irreversible. We will not articulate their (very personal) circumstances here; the Council has already been made aware directly from them.
- There is a strong sense of community even within those 6 houses. Many residents are very close, and have been family friends for decades. There is also a community connection to the remainder of the estate, with some of those residents having relatives who live in the retained 14 houses on the southern edge of the estate.

- As per page 6 of the BPTW document, full redevelopment of the north-east corner would only lead to a net gain of 3 houses compared with retaining those 6 existing houses and “building around them”. Thus, it is extremely wasteful and unnecessary to carry out so much demolition.
- The remainder of the design plans for the estate are undisturbed if those 6 houses in the north-east are retained. Again, as per page 6 of the BPTW document, all that would change is the layout of that north-east area, and nothing else.
- We are aware of various protected species which live in the gardens of the houses in the north-east corner, whose habitats would be destroyed if those houses are demolished.

Our reasons for request 2 are as follows:

- There is absolutely nothing wrong with the houses in the centre block and northern edge (numbering 12 in total). They are merely “inconveniently placed” for the redevelopment that the Council is proposing. As such, those residents are paying a significant personal price for the redevelopment that the Council wishes to carry out, and so should be assisted to the fullest possible extent.
- Several of those living in these houses as council tenants have been in them for decades, with the longest-standing council-resident having been in theirs for over 50 years. That's half a century where this person has made that their home, has diligently paid rent, and has cared for their home and raised their family in it. If these residents are to be forcibly moved from their longstanding homes, then the harm to them should be minimised by offering them a near-identical house on the same street, given that such housing is indeed available.
- Residents in those houses have strong ties to the area, and to the local community, including to those living in the 6 houses in the north-east of the estate, and the 14 houses on the southern edge. It adds insult to injury to not only take these people’s homes, but also take them out of the community they have known and adored for most of their lives.

Our reasons for request 3 are as follows:

- A refurbishment of any retained houses might be a significant undertaking, potentially leading to substantial changes to people’s family homes, as well as to a possible resident decant for a prolonged period.

- Such impact needs to be properly understood before any decision is made on whether, and how, to carry out such a refurbishment.
- It would be totally counterproductive for the Council to “save” several council houses on the southern edge (and in the north-east corner), for those residents to be then evicted from their homes anyway, potentially permanently.
- The severe impact this might have on residents therefore warrants further consideration by this committee before a final decision is made on any such refurbishment.

We hope the Council can see that our requests above are a significant concession from our group, as we are no longer calling for the retention of all 32 semi-detached houses on the estate, but rather for this reduced set of 20 houses. Having looked at the plans for the estate we believe that, with the changes outlined in Request 1 and the harm-minimisation actions outlined in Requests 2 and 3, this might become a proposal that our group can openly support. Unfortunately, as things currently stand, it is not.

We believe that our requests here are reasonable, and moreover implementable, without causing disruption to the overall plans for our estate. We simply want to be able to preserve our community and way of life, and these minor changes to the proposal would make that possible.

Kind regards,
Save Ekin Road

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. The need to keep the four groups of houses on the Ekin Road estate within the redevelopment had been carefully considered.
- ii. At this stage, a planning application had not been submitted and further work with the planning officers through pre-app meetings was still required.
- iii. The team were working to address the key issues, including the provision of enough open space across the new estate and the level of affordable housing that could be provided.
- iv. While the team worked to resolve these issues there would be further engagement with residents and the need to redevelop the whole of the area within the new red line would be kept under review. The current assessment included the six houses to the east of Ekin Road.

Supplementary public question:

- i. There were many aspects of the proposals which they liked, and they would have liked to have shown support for the proposal. However, they could not because of the proposed removal of the six houses in the northeast corner. Many of the residents who lived in that corner were distraught at the prospect of losing their homes and were some of the most fragile and vulnerable members of the community. To remove them from their homes would be devastating for them. Officers were being made aware of their personal circumstances.
- ii. The proposals were to demolish these six houses and replace them with nine houses. Of the nine replacement houses, 56% would be sold off (i.e. five houses to pay for the remaining four houses and three of the four houses would be social rent). Asked the council to reconsider the proposals as part of the design process and to leave these houses. Remained in opposition to the proposals to protect the residents living in the northeast corner.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. With reference to the six properties in the northeast corner. There were three freeholders who were willing to sell their properties. A meeting had taken place the night before the Scrutiny Committee meeting with the tenants, public speaker, officers, and Executive Councillor.
- ii. Understood that officers had advised that they would look to relocate the three tenants together so that they could still live as neighbours together.
- iii. The fourteen houses to the south were no longer being redeveloped.
- iv. The redevelopment proposals needed to include the six houses in the northeast corner. The decanting process awarded all affected council tenants with the highest priority on the housing register and one-to-one support throughout the process.
- v. Priority for shortlisting of council properties would be allocated based on severity of the damp, mould or condensation as well as the age and vulnerability of household members.
- vi. The regeneration team were committed to working with each household on a case-by-case basis and were happy to review moving options within or close by to Ekin Road, depending on availability and personal circumstances.

- vii. The council had a good track record of relocating neighbours together and appreciated the established communities within the estate.
- viii. The assumption within the JLL report was that the seven Council owned homes would be refurbished.
- ix. At some point the council would need to consider refurbishing the seven council homes to the south but there were no firm plans or a programme. Tenants would be consulted if refurbishment plans were considered.

Question 5 – Agenda item 6

Dear Councillors,

I live with my family in a house in the north-east corner of Ekin Road. I'm devastated that these plans will take away my family home and my safe space. Why are you taking away my home, and my local support network, where there is no need for it. Our homes are fine, but you want to take them anyway. Our little support network in that corner of the estate will be broken apart beyond repair. We rely on each other for so many aspects of our day to day lives, and that is all going to be taken away from.

Please leave our homes alone. We don't care what else you do on the estate. We just want to be left in peace, and the thought of losing what we have is unbearable.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. Officers considered so many factors in this process and appreciated the impact this would have to many households within the estate. The inclusion of the six houses to the northeast in the current plans were carefully considered, this had not been a simple task.
- ii. Understood that anyone facing redevelopment would have lots of questions and would continue to be available to discuss any concerns residents had and to support them throughout the process.
- iii. The Regeneration Team would be contacting effected households and were keen to provide support to all households.

Question 6 – agenda item 6

1. On the 23rd January and subsequently on the 12th of March, the Executive Councillor reported that of the 72 flats damp and mouldy on Ekin Road, 5 were vacant (void works) and 67 were occupied, could she

please update the meeting on how many are currently vacant and occupied.

2. Does the city council agree that making the decision on the redevelopment of Ekin Road at this meeting during a general election campaign is irregular and implies that the incoming labour government will have the same housing policy as the conservative one?
3. Does the city council agree that the issue of moving residents out of damp and mouldy flats should not be linked to the development of the estate and that irrespective of the development decision all flat residents should be rebanded to the highest priority on homelink immediately.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. Records showed that, out of the 72 flats, one was currently void.
- ii. The timeline for the project was published in October 2023, this project was considered business as usual.
- iii. It was proposed to award all impacted residents with emergency banding now irrespective of a phasing plan, so that they could move into a suitable property straight away, instead of waiting longer.

Supplementary public question:

- i. Did not feel it was appropriate for the city council to make a decision on this issue during the pre-election period.
- ii. In January and March 2024, it was reported that there were five vacant properties at Ekin Road and now it had been advised that there was only one. Asked whether residents had been moved back into four of the five vacant properties referred to.
- iii. When asked in January if you agreed with the Royal College of Practitioners report that damp and mouldy flats were dangerous for people's health and that people should not be living in these conditions, questioned why it had taken six months to put these residents at the top of home link banding.

The Executive Councillor for Housing responded:

- i. Homelink operated based on people's needs. The redevelopment proposals, if approved, would move residents up to urgent.

The Assistant Director (Development) responded:

- ii. The number of vacant properties referred to may change because of the use of these properties as temporary accommodation. Residents would not be moved into properties which were in a damp and mouldy condition.

Post meeting note: Whilst an area is being considered for re-development but a decision has not been made, our normal voids procedure will be followed and properties will be re-let that can be brought up to our voids standard. This explains the difference in the number of voids at Ekin Road between committee meetings.

Now a decision has been made to decant and demolish the homes at Ekin Road no further lets will be made through Homelink as general needs homes but where vacant properties can be made lettable without large financial outlay they will be utilised as temporary accommodation. This will assist with the Council's responsibilities around Homelessness and reducing the need for bed and breakfast accommodation as well as still receiving an income into the HRA on properties scheduled for demolition.

24/26/HSC Report on Ekin Road Stage 2 Options Appraisal

Matter for Decision

Report on the redevelopment scheme at Ekin Road.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Noted the completion of JLL Final Report (Stages 2 and 2b) of the options appraisal for Ekin Road.
- ii. Approved that a mixed tenure scheme be brought forward, and a planning application submitted in line with the emerging design proposals set out in the officer report for the redevelopment of the Ekin Road estate excluding the 14 houses to the south of the estate. The development of the proposals to include further engagement with residents of the estate.
- iii. Authorised the Chief Operating Officer (COO) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing to approve variations to the scheme including the number of units, tenure, mix of property types and sizes outlined in the officer's report.
- iv. Authorised the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Executive Councillor to approve the transfer of the land known as Ekin Road and

- Ekin Walk (excluding nos. 33-59 odd Ekin Road and 1 – 6 Ekin Close) and shown edged red on the attached plan in Appendix 1, to Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) for redevelopment. The transfer would be at a value provided by a further independent valuation.
- v. Authorised the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Executive Councillor to approve an Affordable Housing Agreement with CIP for the purchase of 64 affordable homes. This agreement would be at a value provided by an independent valuer.
 - vi. Approved draw down of a budget of £19,859,734 from the budget approved for the delivery of new homes, to fund the purchase of the affordable homes and associated development costs including on costs, the purchase of freehold and leasehold properties and the costs of decant for residents of the estates.
 - vii. Approved giving 82 affected council tenants required to decant the highest priority on the Council's choice-based lettings system (Home-Link). The emergency banding status would be applied to all existing secure tenant applications from 18 June 2024.
 - viii. Delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer to take steps preparatory to the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) in respect of any Leasehold and Freehold properties required in order to deliver the scheme.
 - ix. Delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer to make a CPO in respect of any leasehold or freehold interests that cannot be acquired by private treaty within a reasonable timescale and at a reasonable cost subject to the Chief Operating Officer being satisfied that there is a compelling case in the public interest for the use of compulsory purchase powers, and that all legal and policy requirements for the making and confirmation of a CPO have been met;
 - x. Delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer to serve initial Demolition Notices under the Housing Act 1985.
 - xi. Delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer to investigate and approve a scheme of works to improve the seven Council owned properties that would be retained.

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 Assistant Director (Development).

The Assistant Director (Development) and Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. The Council would continue to apply for grant funding from Homes England. The success of the 500 homes programme was based on less stringent grant arrangements compared to grant arrangements which were in place now. Detail was included within the officer report around what it was believed the rent levels would be. There was a chance to try and increase the number of affordable homes on the development. Further work was required with the Planning Department.
- ii. The fourteen homes along the south were the more straight forward to remove from the application site. Within the middle of the officer report and as part of the appendix to the JLL report there was a separate summary by the architect which looked at the four clusters of housing and their constraints. The scheme needed to balance the right mix of homes, open space, and other associated planning considerations.
- iii. The council learned things from every redevelopment scheme. For this scheme it was important to consider the impact of the redevelopment proposals on the community as a whole and not just the residents included within the 'red line' development site. 'Place based' communication was key as well as genuine and meaningful engagement and consultation. Difficult choices had to be made when considering redevelopment of the council's housing stock.
- iv. Consultants were employed to provide independent and specialist advice.
- v. Tenants had a statutory legal right to return to the estate following any redevelopment. In previous experience it was found that most tenants didn't return as moving twice in a short period of time was a lot.
- vi. If redevelopment was approved, then construction traffic would be controlled via the planning system.
- vii. Where major refurbishment works were required to council properties and it was not possible for residents to remain in the property whilst works were undertaken, tenants could be decanted temporarily into alternative accommodation. There was financial assistance available in these circumstances to help with the temporary move, but this was different to the statutory home loss payment, which would not apply.

- viii. Officers had met with three council tenants the previous evening and would work with them to keep them together should redevelopment be approved.
- ix. As far as officers were aware on previous redevelopments where decanting had taken place, only one council tenant had advised that they would want to return if redevelopment took place.

Cllr Tong proposed the following amendments to recommendations, deleted text ~~struckthrough~~, additional text underlined.

Councillor Martinelli seconded the amendments to enable votes to be taken on the amendments.

Amended recommendations

2.2 Approve that a mixed tenure scheme be brought forward, and a planning application submitted in line with the emerging design proposals set out in this report for the redevelopment of the Ekin Road estate excluding the 14 houses to the south of the estate and the 6 houses on the north-east corner of the estate. The development of the proposals to include further engagement with residents of the estate.

2.3 Authorise the Chief Operating Officer (COO) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for housing, Chair and Spokes to approve variations to the scheme including the number of units, tenure, mix of property types and sizes outlined in this report.

2.4 Authorise the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Executive Councillor, Chair and Spokes to approve the transfer of the land known as Ekin Road and Ekin Walk (excluding nos. 33-59 odd Ekin Road, 13-23 odd Ekin Road, and 1 – 6 Ekin Close) and shown edged red on the attached plan in Appendix 1, to Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) for redevelopment. The transfer will be at a value provided by a further independent valuation.

2.5 Authorise the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Executive Councillor, Chair and Spokes to approve an Affordable Housing Agreement with CIP for the purchase of 64 affordable homes. This agreement will be at a value provided by an independent valuer.

2.8 Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to take steps preparatory to the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) in respect of any Leasehold and Freehold properties required in order to deliver the scheme. ~~Has~~

2.10 Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to serve initial Demolition Notices under the Housing Act 1985.

~~2.11 to serve initial Demolition Notices under the Housing Act 1985.~~

2.12~~1~~ Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer to investigate and approve a scheme of works to improve the ~~seven~~ eleven Council owned properties that will be retained.

The proposed amendments to the recommendations were lost by:

2.2 – 1 vote in favour, 6 against and 2 abstentions

2.3 – 3 votes in favour, 6 against

2.4 – 1 vote in favour, 6 against and 2 abstentions

2.5 – 1 vote in favour, 8 against

2.8 – 1 vote in favour, 8 against

2.10 – 1 vote in favour, 8 against

2.11 – 1 vote in favour, 8 against

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendations:

i. 2.1, 2.7 and 2.12 unanimously

ii. 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11 by 8 votes in favour, 0 against and 1 abstention.

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.

24/27/HSC Compliance Update

Matter for Decision

The report provided an update on the compliance related activities delivered within the City Services Compliance Team, including a summary on gas, electrical, fire, lifts, legionella and asbestos.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Noted the progress of the compliance related work detailed within the 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 Strategic Delivery Manager.

The Strategic Delivery Manager and the Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Noted the concerns raised regarding timescales for action / responses by the Council included within the Damp Condensation and Mould (DCM) Policy and advised would look into whether these were realistic and achievable. Noted concerns which had been raised by a Tenant Representative that these had not been achieved when a concern had been raised by them.
- ii. Commented as a social landlord there was a requirement to promote ways in which tenants could complain if they were not happy with the way the council delivered services. It was noted that there was an internal complaints system [Compliments, complaints and suggestions - Cambridge City Council](#) and also complaints could be made to the Housing Ombudsman [Home | Housing Ombudsman Service \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](#).
- iii. Further data regarding DCM issues had started to be collated by officers and would be included within future reports. This included information regarding why DCM had arisen, the seriousness of it and the effectiveness of measures taken to remove it.
- iv. Confirmed that 'live' figures for DCM and how the cases were being dealt with would be included in future reports.
- v. Confirmed that responsive repairs would continue to be undertaken for any cases of DCM reported for Ekin Road properties.

The Executive Councillor for Housing advised in response to a question about whether the DCM Team was appropriately resourced that officers had advised that the Team covering this area of work was appropriately resourced at the current time.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

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.

24/28/HSC Procurement of Planned Maintenance Contractor**Matter for Decision**

The Council had two long-term planned maintenance works contracts in place. One was with Foster Property Maintenance Limited, and one is with TSG Building Services. The contract with Foster Property Maintenance Limited was due to expire in September 2025. It was proposed that the Council carried out a procurement exercise to award a replacement contract so planned maintenance service delivery could continue uninterrupted at the end of the current contract.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Approved the issue of tenders and, following evaluation of tenders, authorise the Director City Services to award a contract(s) to a contractor(s) to carry out planned building maintenance works and associated services to Council housing and other buildings for a period of five years from September 2025 to September 2030, with an option to extend for one or more year(s) up to a maximum extension of three years.

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 Asset Manager.

The Asset Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Any potential bidders for the maintenance contract would need to set out how they would meet the requirements set out in the detailed specification document as part of their bid.
- ii. Noted concerns raised by members regarding the current contract and that issues had arisen with the use of sub-contractors who may not be aware of the council's ethos.

- iii. There were monthly meetings held with the current contractor and there were key performance indicators (KPIs) that their performance was assessed against. Customer feedback was also collected.
- iv. Noted member's request to be provided with more information about the key performance indicators. In terms of the flexibility to undertake repairs, work at the weekend was usually restricted to 8-12 noon on a Saturday as it could cause disruptions on estates. Urgent work would be carried out as required.
- v. Took on board the Committee's concerns regarding supply chain management and that the council needed to ensure the full supply chain was engaged.
- vi. There were specific rules which governed a procurement process which must be followed. Existing contractors could not be excluded from submitting a bid for the new contract.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

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.

24/29/HSC Rent Regulation Errors - Update Report

Matter for Decision

The report provided an update on progress in respect of the project to recalculate and correct rents and refund any overpayment for properties affected by either of two identified rent regulation errors.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Noted progress in respect of the correction and quantification, calculation and repayment of any overpayments resulting from the two identified rent regulation errors.

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 Head of Finance and Business Manager.

The Head of Finance and Business Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Noted concerns raised about the impact of repayments to those in receipt of universal credit and that this could affect their universal credit payment. Each repayment would be calculated on an individual basis but could be in the region of thousands of pounds for some tenants.
- ii. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had expressed concern about repayment being made back to tenants directly, where they would be responsible for paying this money back to the DWP as there was no mechanism for the DWP to recover this money back from the tenant. There was legislation which allowed the DWP to demand the money back from the Council directly, even though payment of the rent had been paid by the tenant themselves.
- iii. Reassured the Committee that housing benefit refunds could be made directly back to the DWP and acknowledged Tenant Representative's concern that some people could struggle to manage their finances. Further discussion with the DWP was required to explore whether direct repayments could be made with regards to universal credit as legislation stated that it was the DWP's decision which approach was adopted.
- iv. Officers were communicating with tenants about the refund payment and the impact of this on any threshold of income considered for benefits. Tenants had also been advised that the refund payment could be used to pay off any other debts that they may have.
- v. In response to a question about the 'anonymous' tenants detailed in section 4a of the report. Advised that the Housing Management Renting System had the GDPR function switched on which meant that tenant's information was deleted (in accordance with data protection rules) 6 years after they ceased to be a council tenant and when there was a 'nil' balance. This created problems for repayment as the council could calculate how much a tenant had paid but information about the person who lived in the property was not held. Former tenants were able to provide information to support any claim for a refund of overpaid rent.

The Committee unanimously resolved to endorse the recommendation.

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.

24/30/HSC HRA Outturn Report 2023/24**Matter for Decision**

The report presented for the Housing Revenue Account:

- A summary of actual income and expenditure compared to the final budget for 2023/24 (outturn position)
- Revenue and capital budget variances with explanations
- Specific requests to carry forward funding available from both revenue (confirmation of in principle decisions made in March 2024) and capital budget underspends into 2024/25.
- A summary of housing debt which was written off during 2023/24.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Approved carry forward requests totalling £562,600 in revenue funding from 2023/24 into 2024/25, as detailed in Appendix C of the officer's report.
- ii. To recommend to council to approve carry forward requests of £12,507,000 in HRA and General Fund Housing capital budgets and associated resources from 2023/24 into 2024/25 and beyond to fund re-phased net capital spending, as detailed in Appendix D and the associated notes to the appendix in the officer's report.
- iii. To recommend to council to approve a revised capital financing structure for 2023/24, utilising £8 million of capital reserves set-aside for either debt redemption or re-investment, in place of borrowing and direct revenue financing of capital. This recognises the current high interest rates for borrowing and the need to maintain a prudent level of revenue reserves following the requirement to allow for payment of rent refunds arising from the rent regulation error.

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 Head of Finance and Business Manager.

The Head of Finance and Business Manager said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Would feedback to officers the concerns raised about the underspend on smoke detectors; officers would need to consider how to resolve access issues into properties which prevented the smoke detector work being undertaken.
- ii. Some of the rephased funding for the capital programme would be rephased into future years as it was recognised that continuing to rephase funding into the following year, could create difficulties for contactors if they did not have sufficient capacity to deliver potentially 2 years' worth of work in 1 year.
- iii. The 30-year investment programme would be revisited as part of the medium-term financial strategy which would be considered by the Committee in November.
- iv. Confirmed that future gross and income charts would include the total expenditure and income within them.
- v. The public loan rate was 5.5% but assumptions within the budget were made at approximately 4% so the loan rates were higher than had been planned for.
- vi. Noted concerns raised about the underspend on disabled facilities grants (DFGs) and commented that this service was 'demand-led' and therefore dependent on people applying for the grant. Also noted comments about sign-posting people to appropriate resources. Processes were in place to sign-post / assist applicants and officers were currently making sure that Policies were published on the Council's website.
- vii. Noted that DFGs were for people who did not live in council accommodation. Adaptations for council tenants had a separate process.

Post meeting note: In response to a question raised at the meeting about how long people stayed in temporary accommodation before they were able to move into permanent accommodation. The average stay in temporary accommodation was currently around 206 days. The number of households who were in temporary accommodation on the date of the committee meeting was 169 households.

The Committee resolved to endorse the recommendations:

- i - by 10 votes to 0 against with 4 abstentions.
- ii and iii by 6 votes in favour 0 against and 3 abstentions

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.

24/31/HSC Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029

Matter for Decision

The report sought approval of a revised Housing Strategy for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils for 2024 to 2029, to replace the existing Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Approved the overarching vision for the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029 (attached as Appendix A to the officer's report): "Affordable, Healthy, Safe and Sustainable: Homes and Communities for All".
- ii. Approved the objectives laid out in the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029 (attached as Appendix A to the officer's report):
 - a. Building the right homes in the right places that people need and can afford to live in.
 - b. High quality, low carbon, energy and water efficient homes.
 - c. Settled lives.
 - d. Building strong partnerships.
- iii. Approved the priorities laid out in the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029 (attached as Appendix A to the officer's report):
 - a. Increasing the supply of new homes, including affordable housing, contributing to healthy and sustainable communities.
 - b. Enabling the housing market to meet a wide range of local housing needs and to support sustainable growth.
 - c. Mitigating and adapting to climate change through good design and quality of new homes.
 - d. Improving housing conditions, management, safety and environmental sustainability of homes, and making best use of existing homes.

- e. Promoting health and wellbeing, tackling poverty, and promoting equality and social inclusion.
- f. Preventing homelessness.
- g. Working with partners to innovate and maximise resources.
- iv. Approved the updated Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029 document itself (attached as Appendix A to the officer's report)
- v. Approved the new and updated policy annexes to the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029 (attached within Appendix B to the officer's report):
 - a. Annex 1: Housing for specific groups.
 - b. Annex 2: Affordable Housing Requirements.
 - c. Annex 3: Clustering and distribution of affordable housing.
 - d. Annex 4: Affordable Rents policy.
 - e. Annex 5: Build to Rent Policy.
- vi. Noted the content of the non-policy related annexes to the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029 (attached within Appendix B to this report):
 - a. Annex 6: Summary of Evidence.
 - b. Annex 7: Glossary.
 - c. Annex 8: Key Achievements 2019-2023.
- vii. Approved the Year 1 action plan attached as Appendix C to this report.
- viii. Subject to Executive Councillor approval of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029, Annexes, and Year 1 action plan (attached at Appendices A, B & C to this report), gave delegated authority to the Assistant Director of Housing & Homelessness to agree any minor changes which may subsequently be required.

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 Housing Strategy Manager.

The Housing Strategy Manager, Joint Director for Planning, Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Used to have an Older Persons Housing Strategy several years ago, as well as other separate housing related strategies, but had moved towards having one Housing Strategy (as well as a statutory Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy) which covered all different groups of people.
- ii. The requirement for a proportion of home ownership in terms of affordable housing delivery had been in Council policy for several years. Under the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in 2006 which required 75% of new affordable homes on larger developments to be rented homes, the remainder would be of an intermediate home ownership tenure. National Planning Policy requires at least 10% of all homes on new developments of 10 or more dwellings to be affordable home ownership. For the Council's new policy it was not being specified that this had to be shared ownership, but that shared ownership was the preferred tenure when considering intermediate tenures, although it was recognised that there may be areas within Greater Cambridgeshire where this was not deliverable. For example, since the last strategy was introduced, a new First Homes Policy had been introduced by the Government. A First Homes Statement had been published on the Council's website to explain why First Homes did not really work in a high value area like Cambridge. Also, some Housing Associations were able to cross subsidise the delivery of shared ownership properties to be able to deliver affordable rent properties.
- iii. There was evidence provided through the work carried out on the emerging new Local Plan which gave a starting point for the sizes of affordable homes which might be required. There was a separate set of individual criteria which is considered when each individual site comes forward including the number of applicants on the Housing Register and how many homes are becoming available in that area. Acknowledged that there could be differences between City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council need. Will also look at the size of properties required by people coming through the homelessness route and any house size requirements through existing Section 106 Agreements across the wider development. For example in large scale developments it might be more appropriate to develop smaller houses in one phase of the development and take this into account when looking at the next phase of development to try and get a balance across a development. The affordable housing mix will be considered taking into account the overall housing mix proposed for the development.

- iv. The Housing Strategy was to be read in parallel with the National Planning Policy Framework and would be used to shape third party new development. The strategy was a facilitator alongside Planning Policy which would look to customise the housing format, tenure split etc based upon locality and circumstances. It would then be put in front of the Planning Committee for their final judgment on the point of balance.
- v. With reference to Annex 5 (Build to Rent) a minimum of 20% of homes in developments of 10 or more homes would be required to be provided as affordable private rent and the rent should be set at least 20% below market rent. At the moment there was no evidence to suggest that more than 20% could be delivered. Including a higher target figure within the strategy would need to be considered in the context of the national planning guidance which set those figures.
- vi. One of the other elements in the Build to Rent Policy was that when large scale developments came forward with several different tenures, then the council would seek 40% affordable housing across the whole development. Whether this was achievable or not would have to be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- vii. The affordable private rent levels for Build to Rent housing schemes as a percentage of market rent had to be determined through the Local Plan process. The way that the affordable private rent process is delivered is through the regulatory framework provided by the Town and Country Planning Act.
- viii. The design of new homes would be dealt with via the planning process and would be bound by the requirements in the Local Plan and any Supplementary Planning Documents. The Local Plan process was subject to independent examination, so the policies (and requirements within them) were appropriately tested. The Housing Strategy was a material planning consideration but was not subject to the same examination process and could not be used to set planning policy. However, the Housing Strategy was the appropriate document to contain guidance on affordable housing mixt, tenure, and form.
- ix. Noted that the number of comments made on the draft Housing Strategy during the consultation period were low in comparison to the number of residents in Cambridge and corporately the council was looking at how it can engage with residents better.
- x. When development applications came forward if they were unable to meet requirements set out in the Housing Strategy, they would need to provide evidence why.
- xi. Had tried to set out within the Strategy that there could be differences in certain areas of the strategy between Cambridge City Council compared to South Cambridgeshire District Council. A Cambridge City Council

specific annex on a particular theme could be developed. However consideration would need to be given to any impacts of this for example where developments straddled the two authority's boundaries.

- xii. It was noted that requirements which were dictated by the National Planning Policy Framework and national guidance and those which could be set by the council could be made clearer within the strategy.

The Committee resolved by 6 votes to 0 against with 3 abstentions 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.

24/32/HSC Update on New Build Council Housing Delivery

Matter for Decision

The report provided a regular quarterly update on the City Council's new housing delivery and development programme.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Noted the continued progress on the delivery of the approved housing programme.
- ii. Approved the updated Regeneration Policy as outlined in Paragraph 11.1 and appendix 2 of the officer's report.
- iii. Noted that negotiations on commercial leases at Arbury Court would now take account of the need to consider future options for a District Centre.

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 Assistant Director (Development).

The Assistant Director (Development) updated their report and advised that properties at Brackyn Road were no longer being considered for potential

redevelopment as part of the Davy Road site. The properties that were under consideration for redevelopment were 2-28b Davy Road, and the Council garages on the site. A consultation with residents would be undertaken after the pre-election period was over, with a view to providing a recommendation to the Committee in September 2024.

The Committee resolved by 6 votes in favour to 0 against with 3 abstentions 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.

24/33/HSC Report on Stanton House

Matter for Decision

Report on building safety at Stanton House and future use of the building.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Housing

- i. Noted the cost of essential Compliance related works required to Stanton House at £635,000.
- ii. Noted the options appraisal for Stanton House carried out by Rock Townsend Architects LLP and agreed in principle that it was no longer viable to retain the building in its current form.
- iii. Approved removing Stanton House from the Councils operational Housing portfolio, which would include the planned decanting of all existing residents in line with the Regeneration Policy which included information on statutory home loss and disturbance payments.
- iv. Approved a capital budget of £333,000 to cover the decanting payments to residents of Statutory Home loss and Disturbance payments. This budget would be drawn down from the existing budget approved for investment in the delivery of new homes.
- v. Agreed that there will be further consideration of the redevelopment options for the Stanton House site that will be brought back to this committee in September 2024 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 Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness.

The Assistant Director for Housing and Homelessness said the following in response to Members' questions:

- i. Noted concerns expressed regarding the potential loss of sheltered housing and replacement with family homes. The Council was looking to bring forward an additional sheltered housing scheme which had 8 units, acknowledged this was smaller than Stanton House and that repairs were currently being undertaken to the property. Commented that the Council needed to understand what the older persons housing need was as currently there didn't appear to be a high demand for sheltered accommodation. However, there could be a need that the council was not aware of.
- ii. Noted ward councillor's preference for the retention of social housing on the site. Options for the site (refurbishment / redevelopment) were being considered afresh. Considerations would include viability and what (if any) grant funding may be available.

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.

The meeting ended at 11.05 pm

CHAIR