



Chapter 9

Delivering High
Quality Housing

CHAPTER 9 - DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY HOUSING

- 9.1 Housing in Cambridge has an important part to play in supporting both the local and national economy as well as being critical in promoting well being and achieving positive health outcomes. It is important to increase the supply of all types of housing including affordable housing and maintain a mix of different types of sizes, types and tenures of housing to meet a wide range of housing needs. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the Cambridge Sub-region draws on a number of data sources and has been developed with a range of partners. It assesses the housing needs of the Sub-region as well as each district and helps to inform the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures that are required to meet the need.
- 9.2 The Council has also prepared a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This assesses the amount of land that might be available for new housing in the city over the next 20 years. The SHLAA identifies sites which may have potential for new housing, estimates approximately how many homes could be built on these sites and suggests a time frame for when these sites could be come available. It is a technical document, which forms part of the evidence base supporting the review of the Local Plan and has been prepared in accordance with national and best practice guidance.
- 9.3 This chapter sets out the housing issues for Cambridge and a number of options for addressing those issues. It is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Council’s Housing Strategy. A number of sources of evidence, including data collected through workshops held in early 2012, have fed into the development of options.

Key facts

- The average house price in Cambridge over the 18 months from September 2010 to February 2012 was £321,189¹, broken down as follows:
 - Detached: £580,092
 - Semi-detached: £339,204
 - Terraced: £317,982
 - Flat/Maisonette: £211,726
- The annual net need for affordable housing from 2014/15 onwards is estimated at 592² new homes per year;
- The average household size was 2.23 in 2001 (Census 2001);
- The number of people on the housing register for social housing in April 2012 was 8,204.

¹Source: Hometrack

²Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA): Chapter 27 – Cambridgeshire Horizons:
http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/housing/shma.aspx

- The number of applicants for intermediate housing across Cambridgeshire has increased and as of March 2012 there were 367 applicants living in Cambridge on the Homebuy Register for intermediate housing ;
- From 2001 to 2011, 5,372 gross residential dwellings were built³, 40% of which were 2 bed units;
 - 1 Bed: 1,768
 - 2 Bed: 2,157
 - 3 Bed: 824
 - 4+ Bed: 553
 - Unknown: 71
 - **Total: 5,372**
- The average rent for a one bedroom home is around £750 per month, and for a 2 bedroom home it is around £890 per month (as at January 2010).
- Around 1,200 (12% of) private rented tenants are receiving Local Housing Allowance (LHA) (a form of housing benefit), but LHA is not sufficient to cover the rents on homes in any part of the city.

Objectives

- To facilitate the delivery of good quality, well designed, energy efficient housing to meet housing needs;
- To ensure new developments make efficient use of land and create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses, supporting local facilities and transport networks;
- To set appropriate standards for residential dwelling space in order to provide high quality homes that provide a good quality of life;
- To provide an environment that is conducive to a high quality of life for residents;
- To make the best use of existing housing.

Housing Affordability

- 9.4 Cambridge has a thriving, prosperous and dynamic economy, with successful universities and a vibrant historic core surrounded by attractive and accessible green spaces. Whilst these factors contribute to the overall quality of life of residents, demand for housing is high, with high rents and high house prices.

³Source: Cambridgeshire County Council – Strategic Planning Research and Monitoring Group:
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/planning/policies/monitoring/Housing+development.htm>

- 9.5 Data on average house prices and average wage levels suggest that during 2011 the ratio or multiplier of average house prices to average incomes in the city was over 9 to 1. The ratio of lower quartile house prices (i.e. the cheapest housing available) to lower quartile earnings, which is more appropriate for first time buyers, was around 12.1 in December 2011, up from 8.2 in 2009.
- 9.6 The average cost of flat/maisonette in the City is £211,726, with the average cost of a terraced house standing at £317,982. Private rent levels are also high, with the average private rent for a one bedroom home at around £750 per month for a one-bedroom home and £890 per month for a two-bedroom home.
- 9.7 This highlights the continuing issue of housing affordability in Cambridge, both for first time buyers and for those wanting to move for other reasons – e.g. to buy a larger home or re-locate from less expensive areas.

Affordable Housing

- 9.8 Affordable Housing is housing provided for people whose income levels mean they cannot access suitable market properties to rent or buy locally to meet their housing needs. It includes: Social Rented; Affordable Rent; and a range of intermediate housing tenures (including shared ownership, equity share, and intermediate rent). Government guidance states that Affordable Housing should:
- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices;
 - Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative Affordable Housing provision.
- 9.9 The availability of Affordable Housing in Cambridge to meet housing need is a key issue. It is also vital in supporting economic growth, and promoting and improving the health and well-being of Cambridge residents. The Council's Housing Strategy 2009-12 identifies the need to maximise the delivery of new Affordable Housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures to meet a range of housing needs, as part of delivering balanced, mixed and inclusive communities. The Housing Strategy is currently being reviewed and will inform the development of and sit alongside the Local Plan.
- 9.10 The Strategic Housing Market Assessment sets out the annual need for 2, 140 new Affordable Homes between 2009/10 and 2013/14 to deal with existing and newly arising housing need and then 592 per annum thereafter up to 2027/28. The Affordable Housing need in Cambridge is therefore much greater than the level of housing that can ever be fully met
- 9.11 Affordable Housing in Cambridge is provided by the City Council and a number of Private Registered Providers (Housing Associations). Over the last fifteen to twenty years new Affordable Housing has been provided mainly by

Housing Associations (Private Registered Providers), but the Council has now agreed a programme to deliver its own Affordable Housing. Government grant has been secured for the Council to build 146 new Affordable Homes in a mix of Affordable Housing tenures over the next three years, and the Council has the potential to provide approximately 500 more new Affordable Homes in following years. This will include the replacement of old, unpopular and difficult to manage housing stock with more modern accommodation, as well as providing additional new homes.

- 9.12 In the provision of new Affordable Housing, the Council currently requires 40% to be provided as part of new residential developments which are either on sites of over 0.5 hectares or can deliver 15 or more dwellings. Whilst this approach has contributed to providing more Affordable Housing in Cambridge, and has been tested at appeal, the evidence suggests that there is still a need to provide more than this approach has achieved to date.
- 9.13 The NPPF states that where there is an identified Affordable Housing need, Councils should set policies for meeting this on-site unless off-site provision or a financial contribution can be justified. On this basis, a number of reasonable options have been put forward for consideration. These options include: continuation of the current approach; increasing the proportion of Affordable Housing required on relevant sites; or possibly lowering the threshold for provision.
- 9.14 The proportion of Affordable Housing required can only be increased if evidence suggests that it is viable to do so and it would not result in less housing being delivered on the ground. A lower threshold could potentially increase the overall supply of Affordable Housing but again this approach would be subject to viability.
- 9.15 Evidence from the draft Infrastructure Study 2012 suggests that 40% Affordable Housing is viable in Cambridge. However, further detailed viability work is required before a future approach is agreed and at this stage, lowering the proportion of Affordable Housing sought should not be ruled out. On the one hand, a lower proportion of Affordable Housing may allow other sites that were not previously considered by developers to be viable to be brought forward. However, on the basis of evidence of housing need in the city, this approach would not be considered acceptable on the basis that it would not provide additional Affordable Housing to help meet the overall need. The agreed policy could be a combination of the two.

Option 90 – 40% Or more Affordable Housing

One option could be to develop a policy (similar to policy 5/5 in the current Local Plan), which requires 40% or more Affordable Housing to be provided as part of new development.

This approach would ensure that a meaningful contribution of Affordable Housing would be provided as part of new developments coming forward, and in turn contribute to the overall need in the city. Developers and landowners know what is expected as it does not represent a step change in

provision This approach also allows for changes in market conditions to be taken into account over time. However, given the overall need, it may not go far enough.

Option 91 – Proportion of Affordable Housing - 50% or more

A second option could be to develop a policy which requires 50% or more Affordable Housing to be provided as part of new developments.

This approach would ensure that more Affordable Housing was provided as part of new developments coming forward and in turn contribute to the overall need in the city. This approach also allows for changes in market conditions to be taken into account over time. However, fewer sites may get released for development due to viability and impact on land values.

Option 92 – Proportion of Affordable Housing - 30% or more

A third option could be to develop a policy (similar to the policy requirement in the previous 1996 Local Plan), which requires 30% or more Affordable Housing to be provided as part of new developments.

Whilst this approach may encourage some developers and landowners to bring forward sites that were not considered previously to be viable, it would not go far enough in terms of contributing to the overall Affordable Housing need in the city and could not be justified given need. This approach also allows for changes in market conditions to be taken into account over time.

Option 93 – Lower Qualifying Threshold for Affordable Housing Provision

A fourth option could be to lower the qualifying threshold as part of a policy on Affordable Housing and require Affordable Housing provision on sites of less than 0.5 hectares or which would have less than 15 dwellings.

This approach would ensure that more Affordable Housing would be provided as part of new developments coming forward and in turn contribute to the overall need in the City. However, fewer sites may be released for development due to viability and impact on land values.

Option 94 – Maintain Current Threshold for Affordable Housing Provision

A fifth option could be to develop a policy which requires Affordable Housing to be provided on sites of 0.5 hectares or more or which have 15 or more dwellings.

This is similar to policy 5/5 in the current Local Plan and this approach would ensure that a reasonable amount of Affordable Housing would be provided as part of new developments coming forward and in turn contribute to the overall need in the city. Developers and landowners know what is expected as it does not represent a step change in provision. However, given the

need, it may not go far enough.

Questions

- 9.1 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?
- 9.2 Which option or mix of options do you prefer?
- 9.3 Should there be any other variants to this, for example, where schemes have less than 15 dwellings, the proportion of Affordable Housing sought might be less than 40%?
- 9.4 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

- 9.16 Given the limited land availability in Cambridge and the need to provide more Affordable Housing to meet a range of needs, it is important that the Council considers all reasonable alternatives at this stage in the review process. This includes consideration of whether it is appropriate for student accommodation to make a financial contribution towards affordable housing provision. The Council is committed to supporting the University of Cambridge, the Colleges and Anglia Ruskin University and acknowledges the important role that they play locally, nationally and internationally. The importance of and need for student accommodation is also recognised and supported, and the Council would not want to put future provision at risk. The current Local Plan does not include a policy of this nature, but in order to increase the provision of student accommodation for Anglia Ruskin University, it does identify specific sites where student accommodation could be provided in lieu of affordable housing.
- 9.17 It is important to note that student housing is not currently counted as a form of Affordable Housing provision. This is on the basis that it is not permanent housing, being provided only because an individual has chosen to study at a specific educational institution. It is recognised that this provision will however reduce pressure on the remainder of the city's housing stock.
- 9.18 Given the need for more Affordable Housing such an approach should not be ruled out prior to consultation. It is important to note that the viability of any such approach would need to be thoroughly tested before taking it any further. Detailed discussions with the University of Cambridge, Colleges and Anglia Ruskin University would also need to be undertaken.
- 9.19 On this basis, two options have been put forward for consideration:

Option 95 – Affordable Housing contribution for new student accommodation

One option could be to develop a policy which requires new student accommodation to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing. This could be through a financial contribution towards the provision of Affordable Housing off-site.

This approach would contribute to the overall need in the city. However,

this could have an impact on the viability of proposals for student accommodation and in turn lead to fewer proposals for student accommodation.

Option 96 – No Affordable housing contribution from new Student Accommodation

A second option could be to continue with the current approach and not require new student accommodation to contribute to Affordable Housing provision.

Whilst this approach does not contribute to Affordable Housing provision and the overall need in the city, it would continue to ensure the provision of student accommodation. It would also recognise that provision of new student accommodation can relieve pressure on the city's housing market, particularly in those areas of the city where there is a prevalence of houses shared by groups of young people.

Questions

- 9.5 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?
- 9.6 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?
- 9.7 Which option(s) do you prefer?
- 9.8 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered at this stage?

Tenure Mix

- 9.20 In accordance with the NPPF, the Council encourages a mix of tenures to be provided as part of new development. With high levels of need for rented housing identified through the housing register, the Council currently resolves to achieve that 75% of the Affordable Housing on qualifying sites should be Social Rented Housing and 25% Intermediate Housing. The national definition of Affordable Housing was revised in June 2011 and a new tenure type was added, Affordable Rent. Affordable Rents are not subject to the same prescriptive rent control as Social Rented Housing and Affordable Rents can be set by the Registered Provider at up to 80% of local market rents. Under current guidance, with very few exceptions, all new government grant for rented Affordable Housing allocated by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) from April 2011 to March 2015 will require housing to be let at Affordable Rents rather than Social Rents. Also the guidance is that HCA grant will not be available for new Affordable Housing delivered under section 106 planning agreements.
- 9.21 Research undertaken by Cambridge University Department of Land Economy on behalf of the City Council in March 2011 has shown that at 80% of local market rent, Affordable Rents would not be 'affordable' to the majority of

households who cannot afford lower quartile market housing. Therefore the Council has negotiated with the HCA to limit Affordable Rents to approximately 65% of local market rent. Coupled with fundamental reforms to the welfare system it is too early to assess the impact of the introduction of new Affordable Rents on the ability of tenants on low incomes to access different sizes, types and tenures of housing.

- 9.22 In order to make the Council's position on tenure clear, the Local Plan could include a policy setting out the tenure requirements but this would be difficult to assess with any degree of accuracy, and would potentially become out of date as local circumstances change. Whilst this approach would have some merits, the Council's position can be made clear in the Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing SPD. This approach provides flexibility for the Council to adapt to changes in housing requirements. Both of the following options are considered to be the only realistic ways of dealing with this issue.

Option 97 – Specified Tenure Mix

One option could be to develop a policy that specifies the tenure mix to be achieved in any development. For example, 75% Social Rented and/or Affordable Rented and 25% intermediate.

Option 98 – Tenure Mix

A second option would be to continue with the current approach and not specify the tenure mix in the Local Plan. Advice on this would continue to be provided through the SHMA and Affordable Housing SPD and these would be reviewed regularly.

This would continue to encourage mixed communities and social cohesion and would give the Council flexibility to adapt to any changes in housing requirements.

Questions

- 9.9 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?
- 9.10 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?
- 9.11 Which option do you prefer?
- 9.12 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Employment Related Housing

- 9.23 The pressures on the housing market in Cambridge can often lead to employers facing staff recruitment and retention difficulties and lead to unsustainable travel patterns. The need to seek affordable housing as a result of employment development has previously been discussed in both the Council's Affordable Housing SPD and in policy 5/6 of the 2006 Local Plan and

it was identified at the examination into the East of England Plan that there was an absence of convincing evidence that there were locally specific circumstances to require the delivery of affordable housing as a result of employment development. As a result of this, policy 5/6 was deleted from the Local Plan under the Secretary of State's direction in July 2009. This took place as part of the saving direction required for Local Plans following the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 9.24 Due to the high level of housing need in Cambridge and the need to support the economy and ensure vital services can be provided, it is important to explore the possibility of specific institutions and employers providing housing specifically for their staff.
- 9.25 Around 40% of workers are employed in the public sector and higher education in Cambridge, including working for the Universities, the NHS and the Police and fire services. The Council is aware that higher education sector has faced challenges for staff recruitment and retentions. The University has begun to address this issue through the provision of 50% of housing at North West Cambridge for University and College staff.
- 9.26 The Council also understands that the Colleges and Anglia Ruskin University continue to face problems with recruitment and retention, with many workers living outside of Cambridge.

Option 99 – Employment related housing

This option considers the development of a specific policy which encourages the provision of key worker housing for specific institutions in Cambridge.

A key issue to be considered by such a policy would be which institutions / employers should the policy be applied to and how should they be arrived at. A list of eligible key workers at institutions / employers could be determined through consultation on the plan, or a set of criteria can be developed to be applied on a case by case basis through planning applications. Whether an institution / employer met the policy could be determined by the benefit they provide to the high tech Cambridge economy and / or whether they provide a key service to the local population.

Any provision would need to demonstrate that there exists a proven need that has not been met through the housing market and that this market failure jeopardises the running of their business or the provision of their service.

Residential development under this policy would be for schemes comprising 100% housing for eligible institutions / employers, this would be secured through a section 106 agreement.

Questions

9.13 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.14 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be

added (perhaps even an entirely new option?)

9.15 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered at this stage?

Housing Mix – Size and Type

- 9.27 In accordance with the NPPF, it is important that new housing developments provide a good mix of size and type of dwellings in order to meet a range of needs. This also helps to create mixed, balanced and inclusive communities, which can remain sustainable in the long-term. For the purposes of this section house size relates to the number of bedrooms and house type refers whether it is a house; flat/apartment; bungalow maisonette.
- 9.28 Two reasonable options have been put forward for consideration. One of these is based on the current approach of having a general policy relating to housing mix and the other would be more specific. Both options are considered to be the only reasonable options and will ensure that a mix of dwelling sizes and types will be provided, adding to the overall choice available and to meet a range of needs.

Option 100 – Housing Mix – General Policy

One option could to develop a general policy setting out that a mix of dwelling sizes and types will be required on sites providing new housing. Advice would continue to be provided through the SHMA and an updated Affordable Housing SPD.

This approach would be similar to policy 5/10 in the current Local Plan and would continue to encourage mixed and balanced communities with social cohesion. It would also allow the character of the area, site characteristics, and the market and housing need to determine the appropriate mix on each site and adapt to any changes in housing requirements identified through the SHMA. Good design is also central to this approach.

Option 101 – Housing Mix – Specific Levels Policy

A second option could be to develop a policy which specifies the mix of housing sizes and types to be achieved on sites providing new housing. For example, Annex 2 to the Affordable Housing SPD currently specifies that for affordable housing, the following size mix should be followed and, where appropriate, should help guide the provision of market housing:

50% 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings, but with no more than 10% 1 bedroom Dwellings;

50% 3 bedroom or larger dwellings, but with no less than 20% 3 bedroom dwellings.

This approach would continue to encourage mixed communities and social cohesion, and meet a range of housing needs, although may not provide as much flexibility as option 100 and allow the Council to easily adapt to any

changes in housing requirements identified through the SHMA.

Questions

9.16 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.17 Which option do you prefer?

9.18 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

9.19 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Housing Density

- 9.29 The density of residential development describes the number of houses or flats that are developed on a site. Density can be measured a number of ways, but is typically calculated by the number of dwellings per hectare (dph).
- 9.30 By increasing density, land can be used more efficiently and can play an important role in delivering much needed housing and employment and support local facilities and services as well as public transport.
- 9.31 Higher density creates challenges in delivering high quality development and in successfully accommodating functional aspects of a scheme such as bins, bicycles, cars and private and public open space. The juxtaposition of high density developments next to low density ones has the potential to adversely affect the character of lower density areas. As a consequence, high density development may not be appropriate in some contexts. High density may also have an impact on providing sustainable surface water management on the basis that higher density sites can often require more complex and costly solutions.
- 9.32 Very high-density schemes can result in a predominance of flats rather than larger family homes and affect the delivery of mixed and balanced communities and affordable family homes.
- 9.33 Cambridge is a compact city and the efficient use of land has been actively promoted for many years. Appendix C shows the densities of 10 established housing areas across the city and demonstrates how they vary significantly⁴. Residential densities are around 63 dph in the Victorian ‘Parkside’ area of the City Centre that encompasses Portugal Street and St John’s Road (Area 4 - Market Ward). Other Victorian developments just outside the City Centre have net densities of 60 dph in Petersfield (Area 6) centred on Sturton Street to 50 dph in Newnham around Grantchester Street (Area 5). Lower density suburban developments on the outer areas of the city were typically associated with suburban interwar and 1950s and 1960s developments.

⁴Density measurements based on research undertaken by Cambridge City Council in March 2012. Studies included the 10 areas selected to provide a variety of ages, geographical locations and densities.

Densities in these areas range from 14 dph in a post war development towards the south of the city encompassing Beaumont Road and Netherhall Way (Area 10 - Queen Edith's Ward) to 26 dph around Langham Road (Area 8 - Coleridge Ward) in south east Cambridge.

- 9.34 The Southern Fringe area of major change, identified in the Cambridge Local Plan (2006), has been planned to have an average density of around 50 dph across a number of developments. The Clay Farm development has an overall average density of 50 dph with density ranges of 30 to 110 dph across different parcels. Higher densities have presented design challenges in respect to the storage of cars, bins and bicycles on the Trumpington Meadows development, due to the need for significant areas of rear courtyard parking. New developments here and at Clay and Glebe Farm have, however, responded positively to these design challenges.
- 9.35 The current Local Plan does not set out a minimum density for housing. However, reference is made to the benefits of building densities of a minimum of 30 dph in the supporting text to Policy 3/1 which relate to sustainable development.
- 9.36 Previous national guidance encouraged higher density development as a means of maximising land efficiency and supporting local facilities and public transport. The NPPF does not set minimum density requirements, but instead requires Councils to set out their own approach to housing density to reflect local circumstances. Given this, a number of reasonable options have been put forward for consideration and comment.

Option 102 – No specific density policy or requirements – design led approach

One option is to assess new development on a case-by-case basis against local character, and other design and sustainability policies. Such an approach may encourage the sustainable use of land along with the ability to take local context into account.

The advantage of this option is that a site is assessed entirely on its own merits in respect of a suitable density target. This would allow for a range of development proposals to come forward to suit the market demands of the day for a given site specifically and for the city more generally. It would also potentially allow for taller buildings across all parts of the city, assuming it follows that a higher level of density results in higher building heights to accommodate that many more units.

The main disadvantage of this option is that developers may try and be overly ambitious with achieving the highest possible number of units on any site, regardless of its location or surrounding context. This could lead to considerable uncertainty over the likely value and development potential of a given site in the market as well as protracted negotiations about the appropriate development (and so too the yield of number of units) on sites.

Option 103 – Establish minimum threshold densities in the City Centre

A second option could be to develop a specific policy setting a minimum average density threshold (for example 60 dph) within the City Centre boundary.

The policy would help to encourage higher density in a sustainable location, which can support higher densities as a result of the presence of existing services and public transport links.

In other areas, proposals would be judged on a case-by-case basis, measured against design and contextual criteria established under other design and sustainability policies within the Local Plan. This option could also be used in combination with Option 104.

A disadvantage of a minimum density in the city centre is developers might take a minimum threshold as a "prompt" of sorts to maximize development opportunities on development sites in all cases, which in turn could ultimately be to the detriment of the special historic character of the city centre.

Option 104 – Establish a minimum threshold of average net density within 400m of District and Local Centres on high quality public transport routes and transport interchanges

A third option could be to develop a specific policy which sets a minimum threshold of average densities (for example 50 dph) in the following areas:

- Within 400m walking catchment of District and Local Centres on high quality public transport routes.
- Within 400m walking catchment of transport interchanges on high quality public transport routes.

50 dph has been used as an average density across the Southern Fringe sites and broadly equates to the density of a number of Victorian/Edwardian inner suburbs of Cambridge. This option builds upon the concept of 'walkable neighbourhoods' typically based on 400m (5 minute walking time) catchments.⁵

This option would promote efficient land use and is likely to support existing local facilities and the use of public transport by creating a density profile, which increases around Local Centres. However, it would not leave opportunities for context driven design and could result in character changes to existing areas that are typically low density.

In other areas, proposals would be judged on a case-by-case basis, measured against design and contextual criteria established under other design and sustainability policies within the Local Plan. Alternatively this

⁵Urban Design Compendium (2000) Paragraph 3.1.2 describes the principles of 'The Walkable Neighbourhood' describing what facilities should be within a 5 and 10 minute walk of home.

option could also be used in combination with Option 103.

Option 105 – Minimum density of 30 dph for all new development sites

A fourth option could be to develop a policy that would set a minimum density of 30 dph for all new development sites across the city.

This option would ensure that low-density developments are prevented ensuring the efficient use of land whilst leaving scope for higher density in appropriate locations. However, the option does not take a specific context or design driven approach nor does it actively push higher densities in sustainable locations such as the City Centre or around District and Local Centres or on key public transport routes. It also doesn't allow for one-off low density development if required in exceptional circumstances.

Questions

9.20 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.21 Which option or combination of options do you prefer?

9.22 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

Residential Space Standards

- 9.37 The provision of sufficient space within new homes is an important element of good residential design and new dwellings should provide sufficient space for basic daily activities and needs. If homes are to have a long and sustainable life, they must offer functional and adaptable spaces that meet the needs of families, children, older people and disabled residents.
- 9.38 Furthermore, the pressure for housing along with other competing uses, increasing density and the built up nature of the city means that internal and external space is an important factor that needs to be considered through the Local Plan review process. In previous years, there have been an increasing number of applications for studio, one and two bedroom developments. 73.04% of all new homes completed between 2001-2011 in Cambridge were one and two bedroom properties (1,768 (32.91%) one-bedroom, 2,156 (40.13% two-bedroom dwellings).⁶ Whilst these smaller units contribute to the mix and range of housing in Cambridge, they should not be developed at the expense of adequate internal space and provision of outdoor amenity space.
- 9.39 Historically, there has been very limited national guidance on the issues connected with space standards within and around the home. However, Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) did provide support for the development of residential space and layout standards although none are explicit about

⁶ Cambridgeshire County Council Research 'Housing Development in Cambridgeshire 2001-2011' August 2011 [<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/892D5EAA-5258-42C5-A116-EC2EE7285BBA/0/ReportHousingDevelopmentInCambridgeshire2011.pdf>]

what such guidance should contain. The National Planning Policy Framework states that Local Planning Authorities should plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as families with children, the elderly and people with disabilities).

- 9.40 A number of other Local Authorities have started to set out their own space standards; The Draft London Housing Design Guide, and the Ashford Borough Council Residential space and layout SPD include standards which are based on existing Lifetime Homes standards and basic furniture and activity spaces derived from HCA's Housing Quality Indicators. Most of the Local Authorities which are already using space standards are those located in the London Boroughs, these are again derived from existing HCA standards, but one notable exception is the Mid-Sussex District Council which has produced standards based on those originally adopted by English Partnerships.
- 9.41 The Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) National Affordable Housing Programme continues to operate according to the space standards contained within the Housing Quality Indicators⁷ (HQI) Form, which were inherited from the Housing Corporation⁸ Design and Quality Standards. The current Local Plan does not include a policy setting out specific internal and external space requirements. However, the Council's current Affordable Housing SPD specifies affordable housing 'should meet Housing Corporation Design and Quality Standards or any future replacement.'⁹
- 9.42 The Housing Health and Safety Rating System was introduced in April 2006. The system is an approach to the evaluation of the potential risks to health & safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. The underlying principle is that any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor. A dwelling should be designed and constructed to ensure that it is free from unnecessary and unavoidable hazards. The HHSRS concentrates on threats to health & safety, it is generally not concerned with matters of quality, comfort and convenience.
- 9.43 Practical guidance explains and provides a scoring matrix to 29 possible hazards that may be or have the potential to be present in any property. This allows an element of flexibility of approach and solution to housing problems. When assessing a hazard under the HHSRS, regard must be given to the Operating Guidance issued under s.9 of the Housing Act 2004. Once the assessment is carried out, the hazard will be assigned a Band from A – J.
- 9.44 Identified hazards are deemed to be either Category 1 (more severe in band A,B or C), or Category 2 (less severe in bands D–J). The Local Authority has a duty to take action when Category 1 hazards are established and a power (not a duty) to take action on Category 2 hazards, at their discretion.

⁷The National Affordable Homes Agency, 721 Housing Quality Indicators (HQI) Form, Version 4 (for NAHP 08-11) published Map 2007 and updated April 2008.

⁸Design and Quality Standards – April 2007 – Housing Corporation.

⁹Cambridge City Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, January 2008, Paragraph 26, Page 10-11.

- 9.45 Using the HHSRS to assist in planning and design would minimise hazards at the building stage and at occupation for example an appropriate mix of insulation, heating and ventilation would minimise the opportunities for condensation related black mould growth. The prevention of this type of hazard may help prevent ill health for example rhinitis or asthma depending on the individual.
- 9.46 Other common hazards that can be designed out include:
- Ensuring that there is adequate natural light and ventilation to all habitable rooms.
 - Provision of adequate internal and external space including bedroom sizes and kitchens that have adequate circulation space for the anticipated use and that there is sufficient recreational space ¹
 - Minimising noise disturbance by ensuring that bedrooms are located on the aspect furthest from a known regular noise generating sources including busy roads and railway lines. This may be less costly than installing additional sound insulation.
- 9.47 Any assessment taken under the HHSRS is solely about the risks to health & safety. The feasibility, cost or extent of any remedial action is irrelevant to the assessment.
- 9.48 One of the Council's Housing Strategy objectives is around making best use of existing homes. Older people and other households wishing to down-size, thus freeing-up family-sized housing, can often be discouraged from doing so if they don't consider the new home to be of a reasonable size.
- 9.49 The introduction of new policy for space standards will help align private market housing with that of affordable housing in Cambridge, and help to make better use of existing homes. However, it is acknowledged that such a requirement may impact upon the viability of developments and developers and landowners may have concerns.
- 9.50 Given the above, a number of reasonable options have been put forward for policy development on the basis that they outline the most appropriate way to address this issue. These options are based on national guidance and research undertaken looking at policies set by other local planning authorities. Comments on each option are sought along with any points on detail.

Option 106 – Minimum standards based on the level of occupancy (bedspaces)

One option could be to develop a policy, which sets out requirements for minimum standards for all new residential developments and conversions of existing dwellings to residential use.

Minimum space standards would dictate the gross internal area of the dwelling, area and dimensions of living spaces (including cooking/eating/living spaces) the area within bedroom spaces, the number

of bathrooms, internal and external storage requirements (including garage parking dimensions), private amenity spaces and refuse storage space.

Space standards would be based on the level of occupancy (bedspaces) and dwelling types rather than solely on the number of bedrooms within the dwelling. As such applicants would be required to declare the designated occupancy of the dwellings in the planning application.

Minimum standards could be calculated by using Lifetime Homes and basic furniture and activity spaces derived from HCA's Housing Quality Indicators.

Bedrooms should comply with the 1985 Housing Act¹⁰ requirements for overcrowding and have a minimum internal floor area of 6.5m² for a 1 person bedroom and 10.22m² for a two person bedroom. In addition to Part X of the Housing Act 1985 which is a useful rule of thumb, Councils must also use the HHSRS hazard of Crowding and Space when assessing overcrowded housing conditions as part X set a low and prescriptive standard which includes living and dining rooms as often being suitable as sleeping rooms. HHSRS allows the use of modern day standards. The GLA 'London Housing Design Guide' July 2009 (see appendix 2) uses similar minimum space standard for bedrooms.

This option would assist in delivering good quality, well designed homes that are sensibly planned and functional; designed to meet the demands of everyday life, and provide enough space to enable residents to live comfortably and conveniently.

However, it may result in some constrained sites being undevelopable due to viability. It would be necessary for all planning applications to demonstrate how they meet these space standards. In addition, developers would need to provide information on the intended number of bedspaces the dwelling will accommodate, as minimum required floor spaces and amenity areas depend on this information.

Option 107 – Minimum space standards based on a range of dwelling types.

A second option could be to develop a new policy outlining the minimum internal floor space and storage space (in terms of gross floor area) for a range of dwelling types. This approach would not refer to the level of occupancy – i.e. not the number of bed spaces. This option would be developed for all residential developments and conversions of existing dwellings to residential use.

The policy would include a list of bedroom/dwelling types and their corresponding minimum internal floor area. Figures would refer to the area contained within the building measured to the internal face of the external walls, including space taken by stairs, partitions, chimney breasts, flues and

¹⁰Housing Act 1985 Part X Overcrowding – 326 The Space Standards, Table II. (Standards have been converted from square feet to square metres). <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1985/68/section/326>

all circulation spaces etc, but would exclude external storage areas, porches and lobbies open to the air. Space standards for internal storage would also be included but would exclude car parking and external storage areas (i.e for cycle parking and refuse storage).

This approach could use the Space Standards developed by English Partnerships (now part of the HCA) Quality Standards (Nov 2007, page 16).

Guidance relating to storage space requirements would use the English Partnerships recommendation for 5% of the gross internal floor area to be provided in or adjacent to the home.

Guidance relating to garage dimensions, cycle storage and refuse storage would be covered within existing Policy contained in the *Cycle Parking Guide for New Residential Developments* (Feb 2010) and the *RECAP (Recycling for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) Design Guide* (Feb 2012).

Floor areas would need to be measured in line with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors for Gross Internal Floor Area (GIFA) and defined as the floor areas contained within the building measured to the internal face of the external walls.

This option would assist in delivering good quality, well-designed homes that are sensibly planned and functional; designed to meet the demands of everyday life, and provide enough floorspace to enable residents to live comfortably and conveniently. Having minimum dimensions for a range of dwelling sizes avoids the need to show room dimensions in a floor plan or provide details of the intended occupancy level. As such it would be simpler for officers to calculate and determine which dwellings have insufficient floor space/storage space.

The imposition of standards may result in some constrained sites being undevelopable. The assessment of gross floor space within the home does not give a true indication of the usability of the space. The policy would not provide specific space standards and dimensions for individual rooms and there could be uncertainty as to whether room dimensions will be sufficient to be able to accommodate essential furniture items.

Option 108 – Minimum space standards for private outdoor amenity space only

A third option would be to develop a policy setting out minimum space standards for private outdoor amenity space only. This would be based on the number of bed spaces within the dwelling and would exclude parking areas and turning spaces.

Standards would include a minimum area for the amenity space (such as the balcony, roof garden, glazed winter garden, ground level patio or garden area) and the minimum depth for the amenity space (for both balconies and gardens).

These standards for gardens could be informed by establishing the space

requirements for seating, clothes drying, outdoor storage, planting and activities and in relation to the number of occupants as well as minimum depths to maintain a reasonable privacy distance between properties. This approach has been used for the GLA 'London Housing Design Guide, July 2009' and the Ashford Borough Council 'Residential Space and Layout SPD' – (Appendix D).

Minimum depths for balconies could be informed by the English Partnerships (now part of the HCA) Quality Standards (Nov 2007) which states balconies should have a minimum depth greater than 1.5m and provide space of 5-9 sq m to allow for a table and appropriate number of chairs depending on designated occupancy.

This approach would ensure all new dwellings have adequate levels of private amenity space but may result in some constrained sites being undevelopable, and could therefore result in problems of achieving higher density developments.

Option 109 – General provision of outdoor amenity space

A fourth option would be to introduce a policy outlining that all new residential development (both private and affordable) should seek to provide an area of outdoor private amenity space in the form of gardens, balconies, patios and roof terraces. However, no specific space standards would be proposed.

This option would not be as specific as the other approaches and could be open to interpretation, making applications difficult to assess.

Option 110 – No space standards specified

A fifth option is to retain the use of HCA standards as referred to in the Council's Affordable Housing SPD for all affordable housing developments in Cambridge and not develop a specific policy.

It is unlikely that this option would assist in delivering good quality, well designed homes that are sensibly planned and functional; designed to meet the demands of everyday life, provide enough space and facilities such as private amenity space and storage, to enable residents to live comfortably and conveniently. This would also result in the continuation of a different approach between the standards for market housing and affordable housing.

Questions

9.23 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.24 Which option(s) do you prefer?

9.25 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

- 9.26 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?
- 9.27 Should a threshold or minimum unit numbers be used to apply these standards?

Lifetime Homes

- 9.51 Current building regulations require new developments to have a minimum standard of accessibility to and into the entrance level of a building. However some consider that these minimum statutory standards provide only limited usability within the home for a disabled person.
- 9.52 The Lifetime Homes Standard (November 2011¹¹) is a widely used national standard, which uses technical advice to ensure that the spaces and features in new homes can readily meet the needs of most people, including those with reduced mobility. The Government's strategy requires all new housing built with public funding to meet the Lifetime Home standard by 2011. In London, the London Plan requires 10% of all new homes to be built to be easily adaptable to become fully wheelchair accessible.
- 9.53 Having homes built to the Lifetime Homes Standard helps to ensure that housing suits householders' needs and changing circumstances. For example, recent research carried out by Shelter found that older people who feel that their home is or is likely to become difficult to manage want to live in housing that is safe, warm and accessible.¹²
- 9.54 However, as noted by the Lifetime Homes website, whilst lifetime homes can accommodate or adapt to the needs of many wheelchair users, the standards does not match the enhanced accessibility provided by a property constructed to the Wheelchair Housing Design Standard.
- 9.55 The Council's current Affordable Housing Policy Guide requires at least 2% of new Affordable Housing to be fully wheelchair accessible, and a further 8% to meet other specialist needs as required. It also requires all new Affordable Homes to be built to the Lifetime Homes standard as a minimum.
- 9.56 Requiring all new housing development to meet these standards would help to provide a flexible and adaptable supply of housing to suit the needs and changing circumstances of all members of the community. However, such an approach may be overly prescriptive and may place unreasonable costs on the development industry undermining the viability of development. Based on this, and national guidance, two reasonable options have been put forward for consideration.

Option 111 – Lifetime homes standard applied to all new development

One option could be to develop a policy which requires all new private and affordable housing development to meet Lifetime Homes standards.

This option would help in providing flexible and adaptable housing to suit a

¹¹ www.lifetimehomes.org.uk

¹² Shelter: A Better Fit? Creating Housing Choices for an Ageing Population (2012)

range of needs and changing circumstances for all, and would provide more options for older people wanting to move to homes that would better suit their needs. However, it could be overly prescriptive and not viable in certain circumstances.

Option 112 – A proportion of new homes to meet lifetime homes standard

A second option could to develop a policy which requires a proportion of new housing to meet lifetime homes standards. The current approach generally applied at the moment is for a minimum 15% of new homes to meet the standards. This proportion could be taken forward or alternatively a higher proportion could be explored but with a requirement that all new Affordable Housing should be to lifetime homes standards.

This option would help in providing flexible and adaptable housing to suit a range of needs and changing circumstances for all and would not be an onerous requirement to comply with.

Option 113 – A proportion of new homes that meet the Wheelchair Housing Design Standard

A third option could to develop a policy, which requires a proportion of new housing to meet Wheelchair Housing Design Standards, along with the requirement to make new houses in accordance with Lifetime Home Standards. For example, 10% of all new housing could be designed to be wheelchair accessible, or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users.

This option would help in providing adaptable housing to suit the needs of wheelchair users. However, it could be overly prescriptive and not viable in certain circumstances.

Questions

9.28 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.29 Which option do you prefer?

9.30 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

9.31 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Small scale residential development and infill development in the rear of gardens

- 9.57 Small scale housing developments and infill developments in the rear of gardens make an important contribution to the overall housing supply in Cambridge and add to the housing stock in ways that are sustainable and which meet identified local housing need.

- 9.58 Whilst the Government has removed the specific national policy requirement to build at a minimum density, there is still the need to make more efficient use of land especially in areas such as Cambridge where there is limited land available for development and there is a need for more housing. In recent years, the issue of infill developments in the rear of gardens (sometimes known as ‘garden grabbing’) has become a contentious issue in Cambridge.
- 9.59 In some cases, development on gardens may be regarded as appropriate as it:
- Reduces the need to extend development into the countryside;
 - Create new homes without the need for significant increased infrastructure provision;
 - Provides better utilisation of land in areas where people no longer demand large gardens due to lifestyle changes; and
 - Provides small sites appropriate for local developers who employ local people.
- 9.60 However, gardens represent an important part of the character and amenity value of many parts of the city. They can be visually important where they contribute to the streetscene or to the openness and character of an area. They are also important to biodiversity and contribute to the overall network of much loved green spaces within the city. Other arguments against developing on gardens include:
- Increased building mass;
 - Loss of or change in local character;
 - Increased population density;
 - A gradual associated increase in demand on local infrastructure;
 - Loss of green space and paving over gardens;
 - A reduction in habitats and biodiversity; and
 - An increased risk of flash flooding due to increased run off.
- 9.61 In accordance with national guidance and local circumstances, two options have been developed. The first acknowledges the importance that small scale residential development and infill development in rear gardens can play in increasing housing supply in Cambridge subject to certain factors. The second outlines the possibility of resisting development in the rear of gardens.

Option 114 – Criteria based policy for small scale residential development and infill development in the rear of gardens

One option could be to develop a policy permitting small scale residential development and infill development in rear gardens. This could include the following criteria:

- Development can satisfactorily be accommodated on site, providing

adequate living and amenity space in both existing and new development in accordance with relevant standards;

- It does not result in a significant adverse impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy, loss of light, an overbearing sense of enclosure;
- It does not lead to the generation of unreasonable levels of traffic or noise nuisance;
- It provides adequate vehicular access arrangements and parking spaces for existing and new properties (in accordance with relevant standards);
- It does not detract from the prevailing character and appearance of the area taking into account the density of the proposed development and its design in terms of scale, height, mass and external treatment;
- It does not adversely affect trees, biodiversity or architectural features of local importance located within or close to the site; and
- It does not prejudice the comprehensive development of a wider area of which the site forms a part.

This option covers sites where:

- the existing buildings are demolished (residential or non residential) and the plot(s) sub-divided in order to make way for residential development; and
- an existing house is retained and new dwellings are erected in the garden area or curtilage.

This option would allow appropriate sites to be developed for housing and contribute to the overall housing supply in Cambridge. It also allows consideration of amenity value, the character of the area and other important factors such as the biodiversity. The criteria would allow inappropriate development to be resisted.

Option 115 – Policy to restrict infill development in rear gardens

A second option could be to develop a policy that does not permit the infill development in rear gardens and develop a standalone policy (similar to option X) for small scale residential development on derelict sites or where existing buildings have been demolished.

Whilst this option is in accordance with national guidance and may be appealing in areas where there have been recent cases of gardens being lost to development, very specific local circumstances would need to be developed in order to justify any such approach. In addition, it does not provide a balanced approach recognising the contribution such developments can make to the overall housing supply in Cambridge.

Questions

9.32 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.33 Which option do you prefer?

9.34 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps a new option)?

9.35 Are there any other reasonable options that should be considered?

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

9.62 A House in Multiple Occupation is defined in the Housing Act 2004. This statutory definition is a complex one, but in basic terms a House in Multiple Occupation is a flat or house that is occupied by more than one household who share basic amenities for example kitchen, bathroom or W.C., which they occupy as their main residence. There are certain forms of shared accommodation which are excluded from this definition in the Act, such as houses shared by only two unrelated persons, owner occupiers who take in up to two lodgers, certain occupation by religious communities, buildings that are managed by educational establishments, etc. The Act also defines what a single 'household' means in this context.

9.63 The 2004 Housing Act requires that all larger HMOs are licensed. These are properties that are three storeys or more and occupied by five persons or more in two or more households. There are 268 licensed HMOs in Cambridge.

9.64 In planning terms, HMOs are split into two different use classes, based on the number of occupants:

- A small HMO - This is a shared dwelling house which is occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. This falls into Use Class C4 under the Town and Country Planning Uses Classes Order (2010).
- A Larger HMO – This is when there are more than 6 unrelated individuals sharing basic amenities such as a kitchen or bathroom. This falls into the sui generis class under the Town and Country Planning Uses Classes Order (2010).

All HMOs must meet certain standards of amenity and fire safety.

9.65 Changes to the planning system in 2010 have extended permitted development rights to allow a change of use from a dwelling house (C3) to a small HMO (C4) without the need for planning permission. Large HMOs remain unclassified, falling under the sui generis class and require planning permission

- 9.66 According to Cambridge City Council’s Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009¹³, there are approximately 5,000 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)s in the city, making up 12.6% of the housing stock compared with the national average of just over 2%. Just over 1,000 of these are thought to be occupied by students.
- 9.67 Petersfield, Market and Romsey Wards have the greatest number of HMOs in the city due to their central location, which is popular with students and young professionals.
- 9.68 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are an important part of the housing market in Cambridge. With high houses prices and private rents, and a relatively young population, HMOs add to the housing mix and play an important role in meeting a wide range of housing needs, and in helping to prevent homelessness. The demand for this type of accommodation may increase further as reforms to the welfare system take effect, particularly amongst under 35s who will no longer be entitled to claim Local Housing Allowance (a form of Housing Benefit) at the single-room rate.
- 9.69 However, it is recognised that issues can sometimes arise if there are high concentrations of this type of accommodation. Issues can include:
- Additional need for parking provision;
 - Inadequate bin storage space with associated difficulties when refuse is collected;
 - Anti-social behaviour and consequential impact on other residents and the local community where properties are poorly managed;
 - Poor internal conditions such as poor amenities and overcrowding, which can often have an adverse impact on the health, safety and welfare of occupiers.
- 9.70 Given the potential issues associated with HMOs, it is considered reasonable to include an option outlining the factors that need to be taken into consideration when making decisions on relevant planning applications. This does not restrict or limit HMOs and is consistent with national guidance and the current approach set out in the 2006 Local Plan.

Option 116 – Criteria based policy for HMO’s

One option could be to develop a policy permitting the development of large HMOs. This could include the following criteria:

- Consideration of potential impact on the residential amenity of the local area including noise from concentrations of these uses;
- Suitability of the building or site including any outbuildings and whether appropriate bin storage, cycle and car parking and drying

¹³ Cambridge City Council House Condition Survey 2009:
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-research.en>

areas can be provided;

- Proximity to bus stops, pedestrian and cycle routes, and shops and other local services;
- Appropriate management arrangements are in place in order to reduce anti- social behaviour and any adverse impact on local residents.

This policy would be similar to policy 5/7 in the current Local Plan only would only apply where an application for planning permission is required for a large HMO.

This option recognises the contribution that HMOs make to the overall supply of housing in Cambridge and set out key criteria to assess relevant planning applications against. It is also considered to meet the objective of creating and maintaining sustainable, inclusive mixed communities

Questions

9.36 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.37 Which option do you prefer?

9.38 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

9.39 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Specialist Housing

- 9.71 One of the objectives in the Council’s Housing Strategy is to ensure that housing meets the needs of people who are in some way disadvantaged, and supported housing, in a range of tenures, adds to the mix and range of housing to meet a variety of needs. It is therefore important that the Local Plan accommodates the provision of housing that may be designed in a particular way or has staff office or staff night-time facilities when staff are needed to support the people who are living in the housing. This housing can often demand a larger plot or building ‘footprint’ and is often termed as ‘supported housing’, although in some cases, such as fully wheelchair accessible housing, the person living in the property may not need support to live independently. Such housing should be provided across the city, as opposed to being concentrated in certain areas, to enable people moving into such accommodation to remain in their local area.
- 9.72 Specialist housing can be developed with particular groups of people in mind such as older people (including the frail elderly and those with dementia) , people with physical and sensory disabilities, those with learning difficulties or acquired brain injury, young people at risk, people with alcohol or drug dependency, those requiring refuge from harassment and violence, and others who may, for a variety of reasons, be excluded from the local community.

- 9.73 Specialist housing is intended to enable people to live as independently as possible, but is designed so that support can be provided to them (and often to others in the wider community) from on-site. Examples may range from a small scheme of cluster flats with additional facilities for support staff, to much larger extra care schemes enabling older people to live in their own self-contained accommodation but with care and support on-site. Where possible, such housing should be designed flexibly so that it can be adapted to meet alternative housing uses as needs change in the future.
- 9.74 Although some groups will continue to require specialist housing, this needs to be balanced with the current general direction of travel for health and social care commissioning, which includes enabling people to remain in their own homes wherever possible, and being able to retain their independence for as long as possible. This is reflected in the Cambridgeshire Supporting People Commissioning Strategy, which aims to reduce the amount of adult social care funded services in specialist accommodation, in favour of supporting people in their own homes where possible.
- 9.75 Extra care housing for older people is an example where local health and social care commissioners remain supportive of specially designed housing. Extra Care provides self-contained housing, but with other facilities provided on-site where people can receive care and support but still retain their independence, as opposed to residential care homes where occupants do not have their own tenure or ‘own front door’. The Cambridgeshire Extra Care Commissioning Strategy 2011 outlines the extra care housing priorities for Cambridgeshire. A current issue for local health and social care commissioners is where private market care homes for older people achieve planning approval without reference to the demands they will place on local care and health revenue budgets.
- 9.76 The NPPF sets out the importance of planning for a mix of housing to meet different groups in the community. However, the location of provision needs careful consideration and should be in accordance with locally identified need. On this basis, only one reasonable option is considered appropriate at this stage.

Option 117 – Specialist housing

This option would allow for a specific policy relating to all types of specialist housing, including extra care provision for older people, to be developed. When assessing the suitability for supported care housing and care homes, the following will be taken into consideration:

- The location of such provision, including the proximity of the site to public transport facilities, the provision of a safe and secure environment and the convenience of the site’s location in relation to local shops, services and community facilities;
- The location of such provision in relation to other similar accommodation;
- The provision of an adequate level of amenity space which is safe and

suitable;

- The demonstrable need is in accordance with the Council's Housing Strategy, Cambridgeshire County Council and local Health commissioning strategies and, where appropriate the Extra Care Commissioning Strategy for Cambridgeshire.

This option allows specific proposals to come forward in accordance with local need

Questions

9.40 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.41 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

9.42 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Other opportunities to provide new housing

- 9.77 Given the need for housing in Cambridge, it will be important for the Local Plan to ensure that opportunities to provide new housing are explored and that the risk of losing housing to other uses is minimised. For example, whilst the sub-division of large properties into additional dwellings makes a useful contribution towards the overall housing need in the City, it does lead to the loss of family accommodation. There is a need to ensure that any proposals would result in satisfactory living environment, without overcrowding. Around 37% of existing private sector homes in Cambridge do not currently meet the national Decent Homes standard¹⁴.
- 9.78 Ensuring satisfactory living arrangements is also a factor when considering the retention or redevelopment of existing housing along with any opportunities to return appropriate buildings back to their original housing use. Whilst it is important to retain existing housing wherever possible, this needs to be balanced against other objectives and priorities including the need for other uses across the City e.g. employment and community facilities. In some cases it will be appropriate to replace poorly designed housing or housing that is no longer cost-effective to repair and maintain with housing that meets current day standards of design; layout and energy efficiency.
- 9.79 The current Local Plan includes policies relating to the conversion of large properties, housing lost to other uses and the loss of housing. In accordance with national guidance, it is considered reasonable to continue with this approach on the basis that it is the most appropriate way of ensuring that opportunities to provide new housing are explored, the risk of losing housing to other uses is minimised and suitable living environments are achieved.

¹⁴ Cambridge City Council Private Sector House Conditions Survey 2009

Option 118 – Opportunities for Providing New Housing

This option would allow for the development of a series of policies which address the following:

- Conversion of large properties;
- Loss of housing;
- Loss of housing to other uses.

This approach is consistent with national guidance and helps to maximise opportunities to increase housing supply in Cambridge to meet need. However, a balanced approach must be taken and consideration given to the needs to other uses.

Questions

9.43 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.44 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

9.45 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Provision for Gypsy and Travellers

- 9.80 Gypsies and Travellers make up almost 1% of the population in Cambridgeshire, and together make up the largest ethnic minority group in the county i.e. Gypsies and Travellers can come from different ethnic groups.
- 9.81 Gypsies and Travellers recognise travelling as part of their cultural heritage, but not all of them actually travel. Gypsies and Travellers can experience disadvantage in a number of ways, and poor housing conditions, or lack of appropriate accommodation with access to services, can make these issues worse. Many experience lower life expectancy, lower physical and mental health outcomes than the settled population, and poorer access to preventative care than the general population. Life expectancy is 10-12 years less than that of the settled community, and infant mortality is higher than in the settled population. Children are between 1.5 and 2 times more likely to die in the first year of life than children in the settled community, and one in five Gypsy and Traveller mothers will experience the loss of a child, compared to one in a hundred in the settled population.
- 9.82 Educational achievement at all Key Stages is lower than amongst the population as a whole. Many families want to be able to settle whilst their children are at school, to enable them to get a good education.
- 9.83 Whilst some Gypsies and Travellers give up the travelling lifestyle for health or educational reasons, many find it difficult to settle in bricks and mortar housing, away from established family support structures.
- 9.84 In March 2012, the Government released national guidance on planning for Gypsies and Travellers sites. The guidance requires that Councils set pitch

targets to address the likely need, working collaboratively with neighbouring authorities. The guidance has a requirement to maintain a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites against their locally set targets and requires Councils to develop criteria based policies to guide site allocations and planning applications for Gypsies and Travellers.

- 9.85 There are currently no authorised Gypsy and Traveller sites in Cambridge although there are a number in South Cambridgeshire, some of which are on the edge of the city. There are no unauthorised sites in Cambridge, but small groups of Gypsies and Travellers do sometimes stop by the roadside or on other land in the City whilst passing through or wanting to access services. In 2011, a review of the 2006 Cambridge Sub-Regional Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment was undertaken. For Cambridge, it identified that 1 permanent pitch was needed between 2011 and 2031. This is related to the natural growth of Gypsies and Traveller family groups identified as already in Cambridge. For example, there will be more living in bricks and mortar, some of whom may be seeking site provision, but not identified. In addition to this, there is a need to consider transit or emerging stopping provision for Gypsies and Travellers in the Cambridge area.
- 9.86 Land supply in Cambridge is limited and there are a number of competing demands. Given the juxtaposition of the built up area alongside the tight administrative boundary, it is difficult to find land that is suitable for site provision. In order to help with this process, the Council needs to develop an appropriate policy in the Local Plan to guide the location of Gypsy and Travellers sites as well as identifying a site or sites suitable for provision. The Council is also working with South Cambridgeshire District Council to identify suitable land.
- 9.87 In accordance with national guidance, only one reasonable option has been put forward for consideration. This option sets out the criteria to guide the location of sites for Gypsy and Traveller provision. The criteria outlined are based on previous national guidance, and good practice guidance along with the current requirements sets out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Option 119 – Criteria based policy for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites

This option would allow for the development of a criteria based policy to guide the location of permanent, transit and emergency stopping provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites in Cambridge. This could include the following criteria:

- The site should be accessible to local services by public transport, on foot or by cycle;
- There should be safe and convenient vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access to the site;
- The site should provide an acceptable living environment and the health and safety including the public health of the residents should not be put at risk. Factors to be taken into account include flood risk,

site contamination, air quality and noise;

- There should not be an unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of nearby residents or the appearance or character of the surrounding area. The site should respect the scale of the surrounding area and appropriate boundary treatment and landscaping should be capable of being provided;
- Whether the needs of the residents of the sites could be met without putting undue pressure on local services;
- There should be adequate space for vehicle parking, turning & servicing, storage, play and residential amenity; and
- The site should be served or capable of being served by all necessary utilities including mains water, electricity, drainage and sanitation.

This approach is consistent with national guidance and allows for the basic needs of Gypsies and Travellers to be taken into consideration along with other factors including consideration of amenity of nearby residents. Without such an approach, the Council would not have an appropriate policy to assess any future proposals.

Questions

9.46 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.47 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

9.48 Are there any other reasonable alternatives that should be considered?

Sites for Gypsy & Traveller Provision

9.88 In order to make provision for Gypsy & Travellers in Cambridge and find an appropriate site, or sites, the Council has used the criteria listed in option 119 to guide the assessment of potential sites across the city. This approach is set out in the Gypsy & Traveller Provision in Cambridge – Site Assessment Process 2012. This document sets out relevant background to Gypsy and Traveller provision both nationally and locally, explains the methodology developed and includes information on all the sites that have been assessed as part of this process. This approach is consistent with the detailed approach the Council has taken to preparing the SHLAA and has resulted in a thorough assessment of land across the City. The sites considered fell into the following categories:

- HRA – Land owned by the Council – essentially for Council housing purposes - held within the Council’s Housing Revenue Account;
- Other City Council owned land excluding common land;
- County Council owned land within the city; and

- Sites that were considered suitable through the SHLAA. This was on the basis that if sites are considered suitable for residential development, then in theory and subject to other specific criteria they should be suitable for Gypsy and Traveller provision.

9.89 The assessment did not identify any appropriate sites within the built up area of Cambridge for Gypsy & Traveller provision.

Questions

9.49 Are there any other sites within the built up area of Cambridge that could be suitable for Gypsy and Traveller provision?

9.90 The assessment did not look at land within the Green Belt on the edge of Cambridge on the basis that previous national guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework consider that Gypsies and Travellers' sites are inappropriate development in the Green Belt and should only be approved in very special circumstances. Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances, only through the plan making process, and if to meet Travellers' needs sites should be allocated for Travellers only.

Questions

9.50 Should land in the Green Belt be considered for Gypsy and Traveller provision?

9.51 Are there any sites in the Green Belt that could be considered suitable for Gypsy and Traveller provision?

9.52 How else can the needs of Gypsy and Travellers be met?

9.91 Sites can vary in type and size, and can range from small private family sites on Gypsies' and Travellers' own land, through to large Council or Housing Association (Registered Provider) sites. Sites comprise a number of pitches, and caravans can be large and static ('trailers') or smaller mobile 'tourers'. There may also be more permanent types of accommodation on site, such as chalet-style bungalows. Utility blocks may also be included, which may include a small kitchenette and shower room.

9.92 Due to the interrelationship with land in South Cambridgeshire, the City Council is committed to working in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council in order to provide appropriate provision in suitable locations. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils have been successful in a joint bid to secure government grant funding for providing up to 10 Gypsy & Traveller pitches by 2015 and are working together to find suitable provision.

Residential Moorings

9.93 Residential moorings can contribute to the supply of housing in Cambridge. New moorings require planning permission. The moorings would require adequate services including water supply, electricity, and disposal facilities for sewage and rubbish. Access would also be required for emergency

vehicles and there should be no significant effect on the amenity, conservation and ecological value of the river. British Waterways have produced a useful document on residential moorings, 'Guidance for Development of new Residential Mooring Sites' (England and Wales) (2011) and the Council also has a Residential Moorings policy in place.

Option 120 – Residential Moorings

This option would allow for the development of a policy relating to new residential moorings on the River Cam. Any proposal would have to show that it complies with criteria such as:

- There would not be any conflict with British Waterways or Environment Agency requirements
- There would be adequate servicing and access
- Any car parking would be at an appropriate level
- There would not be any significant effect on the amenity, conservation or ecological value of the river.

Questions

9.53 Is there a need for a policy addressing this issue?

9.54 Should areas of potential new moorings be identified?

9.55 Do you know of any areas that may be appropriate for this use?

9.56 Are there any points which have been missed and you feel should be added (perhaps even an entirely new option)?

9.57 Are there any reasonable alternatives that should be considered at this stage?