

Appendix A

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING STRATEGY

2012-2015

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Foreword

To Follow

Executive Summary

CONTEXT

Cambridge has a strong and rapidly growing economy which has been relatively well protected from the economic downturn. With a growing population, demand for housing, and subsequently housing costs, are high, and many find it difficult to access and retain suitable housing in the City. This Strategy, which continues on from our 2009-12 Housing Strategy, as well as demonstrating progress made since the previous Strategy, shows what the Council plans to do to over the next three years to meet the diversity of need for housing and housing-related services in the City.

The Strategy has been reviewed at a time of unprecedented change in national housing policy, including: the abolition of regional planning structures with a shift in emphasis towards more local decision making; reforms to how social housing is provided and allocated; fundamental reform of the welfare benefits system, including significant changes to Housing Benefit and a move towards single benefit payments through Universal Credit; the introduction of a new National Planning Policy Framework; and changes to how Health and Social Care is Commissioned.

The Strategy has also been developed within the context of a range of local strategies and policies.

ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE PREVIOUS STRATEGY **(further achievements are shown in the individual chapters)**

The Council has, working with partners, made some significant steps over the last three years, including the following:

- ✓ 410 new units of Affordable Housing have been delivered across the city, although progress has been slower than planned due to uncertain economic conditions.
- ✓ The Council has started its first new-build programme for over 20 years, with 8 new Affordable Homes for rent completed to date.
- ✓ Planning approval has been granted for phases of housing development on a number of major sites on the fringes of the City
- ✓ All the Council's own rented homes have been brought up to the national Decent Homes standard

- ✓ A range of energy efficiency works have been carried out, contributing to a significant reduction in carbon emissions and average energy costs across all tenures
- ✓ 123 homes in the private sector have been made safer through removal of serious ('Category 1') hazards
- ✓ Financial help has been given to 88 vulnerable owner-occupiers to carry out repairs and/or improvements to their homes
- ✓ 47 long-term empty homes in the private sector have been brought back into use.
- ✓ Around 700 households have been prevented from becoming homeless through the Council's intervention
- ✓ An Access Policy has been implemented to ensure that vulnerable applicants on the Home-Link housing register are able to bid effectively for available homes
- ✓ The redevelopment of Jimmy's night-shelter into self-contained accommodation for single homeless people with facilities to enable their needs to be assessed more effectively is almost complete.
- ✓ Further progress has been made in the Council's sheltered housing modernisation programme, including the development of a new extra-care scheme for older people (built to Level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes) and the refurbishment of another sheltered scheme, to provide modern, self-contained flats for older people
- ✓ Disabled Facilities Grants have been awarded to 212 households
- ✓ The Council has won the contract to continue to provide integrated care and support services at the Ditchburn Place extra care scheme

OUR STRATEGY FOR 2012-2015

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES:

- Increase the supply of good quality, energy efficient Affordable Housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures
- Create green, mixed and sustainable new communities which benefit existing communities
- Ensure homes are health, safe and energy efficient
- Make the best use of existing homes
- Promote community cohesion

- Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- Minimise use of temporary accommodation and maximise use of longer-term housing solutions
- Enable people to make informed choices about their housing
- Promote sustained and settled lifestyles and minimise social exclusion
- Ensure that housing and related services meet a range of specialist needs

A series of priorities has been developed to meet these objectives, and a more detailed action plan will be drawn up once consultation on the Strategy is complete.

KEY THEMES

INCREASING HOUSING SUPPLY

Growth

Cambridge is at the centre of an area of significant planned growth over the coming years. It is important that new housing and new communities are: of good quality; environmentally sustainable; safe; well-designed with appropriate services and infrastructure; and that they remain sustainable in the long-term. Housing needs to meet the needs of a wide range of people with a variety of incomes and needs.

A five-year supply of land suitable for housing has been identified. And following the removal of regional development targets, the total number of new homes planned to be built, and the standards to which they need to be provided, will be revised as part of the review of the Council's Local Plan.

As well as requiring a proportion of new housing to be provided as Affordable Housing (for rent or sale), the Council also continues to support appropriate development of purpose-built accommodation for the two Universities in the City.

The Council aims to ensure that existing communities can benefit positively from the planned housing growth, and that any negative impacts are kept to a minimum.

Whilst the Council will continue to promote sustainable new development, the building of new homes is very much driven by the market, and it needs to be recognised that there are limits to how much the Council can influence development – either of open-market or Affordable Housing.

Affordable Housing

In view of the high levels of housing need, the Council aims for 40% of new housing on larger sites to be provided as Affordable Housing (as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework). It is committed to ensuring that Affordable Housing is provided in a range of sizes, types and tenures to meet a wide range of needs.

Current plans should enable the completion of around 1300 new Affordable Homes between 2011 and 2015. Most of the housing planned for the City will be provided by Private Registered Providers (Housing Associations). However, as well as working closely with those providers, the Council has also embarked on a programme of developing its own Affordable Housing, and has secured grant to build around 146 new homes by 2015, either on infill sites or to replace existing homes which are no longer considered fit for purpose.

Ensuring the ongoing provision of new Affordable Housing is becoming increasingly challenging with the reduction in government grant available and greater reliance on providers to meet the shortfall through their own resources. With the requirement that new rented Affordable Homes provided with government grant be let at Affordable Rents (of up to 80% of local market rents), and high development costs, the Council aims for new Affordable Housing to remain as affordable as possible to local people.

The Council's Affordable Housing requirements will be re-evaluated as part of the review of the Local Plan

EXISTING HOUSING

Background

The Council has a significant role to play in relation to existing homes across all tenures. The quality and condition of the housing stock is recognised as an important factor in supporting the economy and promoting good health outcomes, and with limited scope for housing growth relative to the high demand for housing, the Council needs to ensure that best use is made of existing homes.

Council Homes

Unlike many other authorities in the country, the Council continues to own its own housing stock, and since April 2012 has been fully responsible for financing the management and maintenance of, and major improvements to, its housing, following the abolition of the national subsidy system. How this will be achieved is detailed in the Council's 30-year Housing Revenue Account Business and Asset Management Plans. Work to improve the environment around the Council's homes will continue in consultation with local residents.

Ensuring the Council's homes are energy efficient helps to minimise carbon emissions and keep tenants' fuel bills down, and work in this area will also continue, as well as seeking opportunities to introduce sources of renewable energy where appropriate.

We will review our approach to supporting people in moving to smaller homes where they wish to do so, particularly within the context of proposed reductions in housing benefit payable to those deemed to be 'under-occupying'.

We will also review: our Lettings Policy, in light of new flexibilities around deciding who can apply and who should have priority on the housing register; our approach to tenancy fraud; whether short-term tenancies should be offered in exceptional circumstances; and our approach to providing homes on a shared ownership basis, to ensure that we are making best use of the Council's homes.

Private Sector Homes

The Council has an important role in ensuring that conditions are maintained in private sector housing as well as in its own stock. We need to ensure that all homes are safe and free from major hazards, through a combination of support to home owners and landlords and enforcement where necessary. We also need to ensure that long-term

empty homes are brought back into use (although this is not such a issue as in some other parts of the country), and that occupants are aware of and have access to schemes available to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

The private rented sector is an important, and growing, part of Cambridge's housing market, and we need to continue to use the powers at our disposal to ensure that housing is safe for people to live in, and that overcrowding is tackled effectively. We also provide a Property Accreditation scheme to support landlords in improving the management of their homes, and are now offering financial support for landlords registered with the scheme to carry out energy efficiency works in their rented homes.

We will continue to provide grants and loans to vulnerable owner-occupiers to carry out home improvements, including safety and home-energy works, and to commission a Handyperson and Safer Homes scheme carrying out minor repairs and adaptation works for older people.

We will continue to monitor and use existing enforcement powers to deal with poorly managed HMOs.

We will continue to improve our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour, including seeking opportunities to work with health and social care commissioners and providers to try to ensure that vulnerable people are getting the support they need, and through engagement with landlords and letting agencies.

HOUSING ADVICE, HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING OPTIONS

Homelessness Prevention

Over recent years the Council has shifted its resources from responding to homelessness, to active measures to help prevent homelessness from arising.

Although the Council has successfully reduced the use of temporary accommodation over recent years, demand for and length-of-stay in temporary accommodation has recently begun to rise again.

To help prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation, the Council needs to try to find new ways of making use of the private rented sector to find housing solutions for these groups.

Payment of housing benefit to tenants rather than direct to landlords will be a challenge if we are to make more use of private rented housing and we will work with the Department of Work and Pensions to try to ensure that vulnerable people can continue to have their benefits paid direct where appropriate.

We will review the priority and extent of choice given to homeless households on the housing register.

Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping in Cambridge as in other towns and cities is on the rise again, and is expected to increase further as the economic downturn continues and spending cuts and welfare changes take hold. The Council needs to continue to work with partners to try to find suitable alternative housing solutions for adults who are chronically excluded from society and homeless or at risk of homelessness, to help this group to find and retain suitable employment, and to ensure that they are supported to remain in their homes – whatever tenure they live in. We also need to continue to try to reconnect rough sleepers from outside of the area with the areas from whence they came, and ensure that ex-offenders being released from prison receive the support they need.

The Council, with its sub-regional partners, is exploring the option of employing a sub-regional Single Homelessness Co-Ordinator to co-ordinate work across the housing sub-region and into Peterborough.

Ensuring a Range of Housing Options is Available

Demand for housing through the housing register is continuing to rise, with 8,210 applicants on the register at April 2012, and the Council is reviewing its Lettings Policy to establish what level of priority should be given to different groups. The cost of intermediate tenure housing is also high, and there are over 300 applicants living in Cambridge and applying for intermediate housing on the Homebuy Register.

It is therefore important that the Council supports people in finding suitable housing options.

Internal reorganisation of the Council's Housing Advice service should help to provide a more effective and seamless service to customers, and we will consider whether to continue with our Employment Advice service longer-term to help people to access work and training opportunities.

SPECIALIST HOUSING, SUPPORTED HOUSING AND SPECIALIST NEEDS

The Council recognises that local people have a wide range of housing needs, and that different groups and individuals with different needs need to be able to access housing and related services. This chapter shows the Council's approach to meeting the needs of people who are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable, or disadvantaged. (Many people will belong to more than one of the following groups).

Older People

The Council's Older People's Housing Strategy outlines the Council's housing vision for older people. The Council will ensure that the needs of older people are considered in the development of new Affordable Housing and any new extra care schemes – including people with dementia - and try to ensure that rents are as affordable as possible (within the context of the new Affordable Rents regime), to enable older people to down-size if they wish to do so.

We will continue to signpost older people to appropriate services through our Sixty-Plus project, and bid for the Supporting People contract to continue to provide support services in our sheltered schemes.

Younger People

This group is one suffering particularly from the shortage of housing in Cambridge. As well as increasing provision of Affordable Housing we also need to ensure that younger people are aware of the housing options and services available to them and that we can communicate appropriately with them in this area.

Disabled People

The Council aims to continue to top-up Disabled Facilities Grant funding, subject to funding available from Right to Buy sales.

We will review our requirements around the Lifetime Homes standard for new Affordable Homes, the percentage of wheelchair accessible homes on new developments, and how we can ensure that new homes are designed in a way that disabled adaptations can easily be fitted in the future if required. We will continue to identify the need for specialist housing for people with physical and/or sensory disabilities, and explore, in the longer term, how better use can be made of the private sector in helping disabled people to access appropriate housing.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups and Migrant Workers

Cambridge has a relatively high proportion of BME residents compared to many other districts. Many of these residents are highly qualified and are not disproportionately disadvantaged in accessing housing and services, but for those who need extra help and support the Council will continue to monitor the extent to which they are accessing services, and promote engagement with those groups for specific projects. There has been an increase recently in the number of European migrant workers having to be housed temporarily in homeless accommodation, and we are exploring why this might be.

Gypsies and Travellers

The Council has actively influenced the development of a county-wide Traveller Strategy, and a review of the sub-regional Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment. We are working with South Cambridgeshire District Council to try to identify land for site accommodation for this group. The Council has developed some criteria to assess the suitability of land, and has been using this criteria to try to identify some land for a site or sites. Consultation on this criteria, and on any pieces of land identified, will be carried out as part of the issues and options consultation on the Local Plan.

Other Vulnerable Groups

The Strategy also outlines the Council's approach to other groups who may need special consideration, including those with mental health issues, victims of domestic violence, single homeless people, those on welfare benefits, and people from the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender community.

Housing Support and Health and Social Care Commissioning

With ongoing cuts in public spending, including reductions in the amount of money available for care and support services for vulnerable people in their homes, the Council will continue to work with Health and Adult Social Care Commissioners to ensure that the importance of housing to health and well-being is fully recognised and given priority. The Council needs to try to ensure that residents of Cambridge get the home-based care and support they need to live independently.

The Council is working to influence the Health and Well-Being Strategy for Cambridgeshire which is currently being developed, and will strengthen engagement with the newly emerging commissioning partnerships as new arrangements develop.

RESOURCING AND NEXT STEPS

Some public consultation on this Strategy has been carried out through a series of questionnaires, the results of which have been used to inform the draft Strategy. Consultation on the draft Strategy document is also being carried out and results of that will be used to inform the final Strategy.

How the various elements of this Strategy will be resourced is detailed in the Council's Medium Term Strategy.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Need for A Housing Strategy

Cambridge and its surrounding area has a strong local economy and is recognised as one of the fastest growing and most dynamic areas in the UK, with a major increase in the number of homes planned between now and 2021 even in a time of financial uncertainty. This planned growth presents a number of opportunities as well as challenges.

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

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

As well as new homes it is important that we continue to invest in the existing homes in the City. The Council has a role to play in ensuring that people of all ages can live in safe and decent housing conditions across all tenures, and that best use is made of the existing homes within the City - again taking into account the need to tackle climate change. It is also important that existing communities can benefit from the planned growth in and around Cambridge.

Pressure on existing housing means that homelessness and rough sleeping have historically been an issue for Cambridge, something which is becoming even more prominent during the current economic downturn. We must continue to develop measures to help to prevent people from becoming homeless, and ensure that people have access to a range of housing options to suit their needs.

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

We must rise to the challenge presented by the downturn in the economy and the radical programme of reforms that the coalition government has introduced. We need to continue to find ways to meet our housing priorities within the resources available to us, including maximising access to external funding opportunities.

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

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

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

It has to be recognised that there are limits to the amount of control local authorities can have on issues such as housing delivery, affordability of housing, balance of tenures etc. However, Cambridge City Council is committed to using the powers and resources it has to aim to meet the City's housing needs.

Progress Since Our Previous Strategy

We have made significant progress in meeting our strategic objectives since our previous Strategy was published, details of which are shown in the following chapters.

Our Revised Strategy

This Housing Strategy replaces our previous one which ran from 2009-2012. The general direction of the Strategy has not changed

significantly from previously. Many of the issues Cambridge faces in relation to housing remain the same, and our consultation on this Strategy has confirmed that our strategic objectives continue to be the right ones for Cambridge.

The main change taking place since the previous Strategy has been the significant national reforms which have been introduced by the coalition government since 2010. Our Strategy has been reviewed within the context of the drive towards more local decision-making, and major reforms in social housing, planning, welfare and health & social care commissioning.

Chapter 2: National, Regional and Local Policy Agenda

This Housing Strategy is set within a wider context of national, regional and local strategies, policies and plans. This chapter outlines and links to some of the main ones. Others that are directly relevant are referred to elsewhere in the document.

National Policy Context

This Strategy has been developed in a period of significant national policy change, which is unprecedented both in the scale and pace at which change is being implemented. The coalition government has introduced a raft of reforms which will have a significant impact on the Council's approach to housing, with localism and the need to reinvigorate the economy being central themes. Some of these reforms are already in place, but many are either in the process of implementation or still being planned. These changes introduce both opportunities and challenges in ensuring that our Strategy is consistent with national policy as well as meeting local needs. As part of this Strategy the Council will need to continue to monitor and respond to the impact of these changes on local residents.

Housing Strategy for England

In November 2011 the government published a new national housing strategy, *Laying the Foundations*.¹ It is aimed at investing in housing for the purposes of social mobility, health and well-being, and to stimulate economic growth. It includes a number of key initiatives, some of which were already under way when the strategy was published. These include:

- The introduction of new **Affordable Rents**, to be set at up to 80% of local market rents. The additional revenue raised will be re-invested in the provision of new Affordable Housing. To access Affordable Housing grant through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Registered Providers will be required to let the new homes at Affordable Rents. Existing homes may also be converted to Affordable Rents when they are re-let, subject to agreement with the HCA. It is expected that Affordable Rent homes will attract a wider range of people who may not have

¹National Housing Strategy:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingstrategy2011>

considered applying for social housing in the past, and it will be important to monitor the profile of people moving into these homes.

- New flexibilities enabling Registered Providers to offer **fixed term tenancies**, rather than having to offer tenants security of tenure.
- A new duty for Local Authorities, in their strategic housing role, to produce a **Tenancy Strategy**, outlining the issues Registered Providers must take into account in deciding on the type and length of tenancy to offer, and deciding whether fixed term tenancies should be renewed
- The power for local authorities to **house homeless households in the private rented sector** in order to discharge their homelessness duty
- More freedom for Local Authorities to decide who should be accepted onto to **housing needs registers**, and who should have priority for rehousing
- An end to the **Housing Revenue subsidy system**, with stock-retaining local authorities taking on responsibility for paying for the management and maintenance of their own housing through their own rental income, in exchange for taking on a proportion of the national housing debt.
- The reform of **social housing regulation**, giving social tenants more powers to hold their landlord to account.
- Increases in discounts for those purchasing under the **Right to Buy**, which whilst under government plans the likely increase in sales may enable one-for-one replacement to be funded across the country, could lead to a reduction in the number of Affordable Homes available locally for rent.

Welfare Reform

Fundamental reforms are being introduced to the welfare benefits system with the aim of reducing expenditure on welfare benefits and getting people back into work. These include:

- The capping of Local Housing Allowance to tenants in the private rented sector, and paying it at the 30th percentile of local market rents, instead of the 50th percentile at which it was paid previously.
- Caps to the overall amount of benefit payable to individual households
- Increased deductions in payments for non-dependants

- Extension of the shared accommodation rate to those aged 26-35; (that group being previously eligible for the single room rate)
- The reduction of housing benefit payable to social housing tenants of working age deemed to have more bedrooms than their family size requires
- The proposed introduction of a new Universal Credit as a single welfare payment for working-age claimants to replace a range of existing benefits, with an overall cap on the amount payable.
- The localisation of Council Tax Benefit (CTB), including a reduction in the overall amount of CTB available to pay to working-age claimants.

Most of these reforms are being implemented through the Welfare Reform Act 2012.² The reforms will have a significant impact on many welfare benefit claimants, and on a number of objectives and priorities in this Strategy.

Planning Policy Reforms

Fundamental reforms are being made in relation to planning policy, with the emphasis shifting from national control and regional targets, to more local decision-making. These include:

- The abolition of regional house-building targets set through the Regional Spatial Strategies (including the East of England Plan), with local authorities becoming responsible for setting their own targets for provision.
- The introduction of a new simplified National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), to replace the existing Planning Policy Statements, to include a presumption in favour of sustainable development.³
- New rights for local people to take control over development in their local areas, through new Neighbourhood Development Plans, a Community Right to Build, etc
- Changes to the existing planning obligations system (section 106 agreements) with the introduction of a new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on developers for the funding of strategic infrastructure.

² Welfare Reform Act: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/welfarereform.html>

³ National Planning Policy Framework:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/>

Health and Social Care Commissioning Reforms

Housing plays an essential role in promoting health and well-being. The Health and Social Care Bill includes provisions to:

- Abolish Primary Care Trusts (PCT), transferring their public health functions to local authorities (including Cambridgeshire County Council), and their primary health service commissioning responsibilities to GP consortia.
- Require local authorities (including Cambridgeshire County Council) to: set up Health and Well-Being Boards to promote more joined up commissioning of health care, social care and public health; develop a local Health and Well-Being Strategy; and co-ordinate the production of Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs).

There is currently a shadow Health and Wellbeing Board for Cambridgeshire, which is expected to become a statutory body from April 2013.⁴

Regional, Sub-Regional and County-Wide Policy Context

Sub-Regional Housing Statement

The Cambridge sub-Regional Housing Board (CRHB), made up of representatives from the seven districts in the Cambridge housing sub-region, has developed a sub-regional housing statement which identifies how authorities will work together with partners to address housing needs across the sub-region. The key priorities are to:

- Deliver new homes which support economic success
- Create mixed, balanced, sustainable communities
- Improve standards in existing homes
- Meet housing needs and tackle homelessness
- Enable better health through housing and support

⁴ Cambridgeshire shadow Health and Wellbeing Board
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/council-and-democracy/partnerships/shadow-health-and-wellbeing-board.en>

A number of other large-scale projects have been commissioned through CRHB, including a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme (Home Link), and our sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Cambridge Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

Our Strategic Housing Market Assessment brings together a range of information on the local housing market. The new draft National Planning Policy Framework identifies SHMAs as an important part of the evidence base for Local Authorities in developing their Local Plans.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough LEP⁵ has been set up to help local businesses, education providers, the third sector and the public sector to work together to drive sustainable economic growth in the area. Housing forms one of the key areas of focus for this partnership. The work of this partnership is in its early stages, but the Council will work through CRHB with the aim of supporting and influencing its work.

Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan

The Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan seeks to show our local investment priorities, how those priorities meets key policy objectives, and how growth, housing and regeneration projects can be brought forward.⁶

Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)⁷

The Cambridgeshire JSNA brings together data and information from a number of different sources to identify the health and well-being needs of the county's population, to help to inform health and social care decisions on commissioning. Housing has an important role to play in promoting health and well-being, and a number of priority recommendations in the JSNA are relevant to this Housing Strategy.

⁵ Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP <http://www.yourlocalenterprisepartnership.co.uk/>

⁶ Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/cambridge-sub-regional-housing-board/crhb-publications-and-documents.en>

⁷ Cambridgeshire JSNA <http://www.cambridgeshirejsna.org.uk/>

Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The Council is actively supporting the development of a county-wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy, through the Cambridgeshire Health and Well-being Board. The future of commissioning of housing-related support through the Supporting People programme is also being reviewed in this context.

Local Strategic Context – Cambridge City

Cambridge City Council’s Vision

The City Council’s vision for future of the City is:

- Cambridge – where people matter
- Cambridge – a good place to live, learn and work
- Cambridge – caring for the planet

The Council’s vision is for a City:

- Which celebrates its diversity, unites in its priority for the disadvantaged and strives for shared community wellbeing;
- Whose citizens feel they can influence public decision making and are equally keen to pursue individual and community initiatives;
- Where people behave with consideration for others and where harm and nuisance are confronted wherever possible without constraining the lives of all;
- Which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds – close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities;
- Which draws inspiration from its iconic historic centre and achieves a sense of place in all of its parts with generous urban open spaces and well- designed buildings;
- With a thriving local economy that benefits the whole community and builds on its global pre-eminence in learning and discovery;
- Where getting around is primarily by public transport, bike and on foot;
- In the forefront of low carbon living and minimising its impact on the environment from waste and pollution.

This Housing Strategy has a role to play in achieving all of the elements of this vision.

Medium Term Strategy (MTS)⁸

The MTS is the Council's key financial planning document. It details the financial and wider context in which the Council operates, and identifies priorities for spending within that context.

The Cambridge Local Plan⁹

The Cambridge Local Plan sets out the Council's vision, policies and proposals for future development and land use in Cambridge to 2016. It is currently being reviewed, with the revised Plan due to be adopted in April 2014.

Other relevant strategies and plans are referred to elsewhere in this Strategy

Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan

The Council has recently agreed a new Climate Change Strategy which establishes the framework for the Council's action to address the causes and consequences of climate change over the next five years. Objectives include supporting residents to reduce their carbon emissions and manage climate risks, and working with partners to address the causes and effects of climate change.¹⁰

A Carbon Management Plan will also be adopted shortly, with a target to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's own operations and estate.

Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy¹¹

⁸ Cambridge City Council Medium Term Strategy: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/council-and-democracy/how-the-council-works/council-finance/budget-process.en>

⁹ Cambridge Local Plan: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/development-plan-for-cambridge/local-plan-2006.en>

¹⁰ Climate Change Strategy: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment-and-recycling/sustainable-city/climate-change/>

¹¹ Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/council-and-democracy/how-the-council-works/council-policies-and-plans/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-policies-and-plans.en>

The Council is committed to developing an anti-discriminatory organisational culture, placing equalities at the centre of all activities and key agendas, and celebrating diversity in its many forms. Our Comprehensive Equalities and Diversity Policy sets out a number of principles around tackling discrimination, promoting good relations, and ensuring that services and opportunities are open to everyone.

Single Equality Scheme

The Council's Single Equality Scheme 2012-2015 sets out the objectives of the Council in relation to Equality & Diversity, which are:

- To continue to work to improve access to and take-up of Council services;
- To develop an improved level of understanding of Cambridge's communities and their needs through research, data gathering and equality mapping;
- To improve community engagement in the development and delivery of services;
- To ensure that people from different backgrounds living in the city continue to get on well together;
- To ensure that the City Council's employment policies and practices are non-discriminatory and compliant with equalities legislation as a minimum standard;
- To work towards a more representative workforce within the City Council.

A high-level Action Plan is included in the scheme, which includes key areas of focus for each Department.

An Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out on this Housing Strategy.

Chapter 3: Understanding the Housing Market

Objective:

- ★ Understand the dynamics of the housing market in Cambridge and the surrounding area, and use that information to influence the delivery of new homes and housing related services.

Priorities:

Work with partners to:

- Continue to review and update the Cambridge sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- Develop methods of forecasting and measuring the impact of national change on the local housing market – particularly in relation to Welfare Reform and Affordable Rents.

Background

As previously stated, Cambridge has a thriving, buoyant and dynamic economy, with high house prices, high private rental costs, and high demand for housing of all tenures.

Housing 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 maintain a mix of different types of sizes, types and tenures of housing to meet a wide range housing needs.

Therefore we need to have a good understanding of the local housing market, and how it interacts with other housing markets. Our 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.¹² We need to ensure that this remains up to date and continues to evolve, so that it provides the information we need to help understand the market and plan for and influence future change. It is also an important part of the evidence base for the development of the Cambridge Local Plan.

A number of significant changes are taking place nationally which are already starting to affect local housing markets. (See chapter 2 for more information).

These include:

- A global economic downturn, impacting on jobs, income levels, the cost of living and access to mortgages.
- The growth of the private rented sector
- The removal of national targets for housing growth, and the introduction of a new National Planning Policy Framework
- Changes to how new Affordable Housing will be funded, including a reduction in grant funding available.
- The introduction of new 'Affordable Rents' and fixed term tenancies for new and some existing social rented homes.
- Fundamental reform of the welfare system, including reductions in benefits payable – including those covering housing costs - and the proposed introduction of the new Universal Credit.
- Changes to how health services are commissioned,
- Other social housing reforms, including: abolition of the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system; more local influence on who social housing should be allocated to; more opportunity for tenants to buy their homes, etc

These, and other changes, have the potential to impact significantly on the balance of the housing market and on the ability of local people – including those on low and middle incomes - to access and retain appropriate housing in the City, as well as on the services that need to be provided. We will continue to work with partners to anticipate and keep abreast of the effects of those changes. We will also where we can, seek to influence those changes to try to maximise the positive and minimise the negative impacts on the City.

¹² Cambridge SHMA: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/cambridge-sub-regional-housing-board/crhb-publications-and-documents.en>

Key Issues for Cambridge

Demography:

- Of cities in England, the population of Cambridge is one of the fastest growing in the country – second only to Milton Keynes.¹³ The population now stands at around 125,700 – up from 109,900 in 2001.
- An increase in all household sizes is expected, with the largest increase in the 30-59 age group, followed by 0-15 year olds.
- Numbers of older people are expected to increase, albeit to a lesser extent than in other parts of the Cambridge sub-region.
- 14.5% of Cambridge residents had a limiting long-term illness in 2001, increasing to 25% amongst Council tenants.
- The planned new growth in the City will impact on the demography of the City, and we need to continue to support the work of other agencies in monitoring change and the impact this will have on infrastructure and service requirements for the City.

Economic Conditions:

- So far the City has been relatively well protected from the large-scale effects of the economic down-turn compared to many parts of the country, and even with quite a high proportion of public sector jobs this is expected to continue
- However, we know that many people from all walks of life are feeling the effects of a squeeze on household income, and we need to improve our approach to monitoring income trends and how they affect people's ability to access and retain appropriate housing.
- Unemployment, rising prices, pay freezes and benefit cuts will also affect people's ability to maintain their homes and keep them warm, and we need to understand where the greatest impact of this is felt in order to target resources effectively.
- Economic conditions have also led to a slow-down in the delivery of new homes, including new Affordable Homes.

¹³ Centre for Cities: City Outlook 2012
http://centreforcities.cdn.meteorite.net/CITIES_OUTLOOK_2012.pdf

Further information on local economic conditions are available in the Cambridgeshire Economic Assessment.¹⁴

Welfare Benefit Reforms:

- Cambridge is part of a large, mainly rural, Broad Market Rental Area (BRMA) used to calculate Local Housing Allowance rates. With the significantly higher rents in the City than in some other parts of the BRMA, and Local Housing Allowance now being calculated at the 30th percentile of market rents across that large area, LHA is now insufficient to cover even lower quartile private rents in the City. Other reforms, including the removal of the single-room rate for single people aged 25-34, increased deductions for non-dependants etc, are also starting to impact on a number of claimants.
- Welfare benefit changes will also impact on Council tenants, with reductions in payments for tenants 'under-occupying' their homes.
- Anecdotal information suggests that some benefit claimants have started to move out of the City to cheaper areas. As well as the effects on the people concerned, this could impact on recruitment by local businesses, on travel to work patterns, on the balance of communities, etc.
- The full impact of changes will not be known until the new Universal Credit has been in place for a while.

We need monitor the potential and actual impact of these changes to understand how they are affecting the housing market, and how any negative impacts can be mitigated.

Balance of Tenure, Size and Types of Homes:

- There are a number of factors which are likely to lead to a shift in the balance between Affordable Housing tenure types. For example, changes in how new Affordable Housing is funded are expected to alter the balance between social and intermediate housing tenures. The introduction of the new Affordable Rent tenure will lead to a reduction in the number and proportion of homes available at Social Rent levels. We have done some sub-regional modelling on the potential impact of these changes, and we will continue to develop this further.

¹⁴ Cambridgeshire Local Economic Assessment:
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/economicandcommunitydev/ecodevelopment/economicaassessment.htm>

- Factors such as changes in the economy and the new Planning Policy Framework could influence further changes in the overall tenure profile of the City.
- We don't yet know what the combined impact of the economic downturn and planning reforms will have on the overall balance of property sizes and types. We will need to take this into account in the review of our Local Plan to encourage and enable developers to provide new housing to meet a range of needs.
- We need to assess how many social housing tenants and housing applicants are likely to be affected by proposed reductions in welfare benefits, to help to inform plans for new-build, changes to our overall and local Lettings policies etc

Affordability:

- Access to housing which is affordable is a key issue for many people in Cambridge, as evidenced by responses to our recent Citizens Survey and consultation on this Housing Strategy.
- Affordability does not just affect those on low incomes – many people on middle-incomes are struggling to access housing in the City, to buy or rent, that they can afford to live in.
- Whilst the number of private sales has dropped over the last two to three years, house prices in Cambridge have remained relatively stable. The ratio of average house prices to average earnings has also remained fairly constant over the past three years, currently standing at 9:2.
- We do not anticipate a significant reduction in private rent levels in the foreseeable future. Cambridge has a relatively young mobile workforce and a high student population, so demand remains high.
- Landlords are showing limited interest at present in leasing properties for families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- As well as new grant-funded homes, some local Registered Providers are planning to convert some existing social rented homes to the new Affordable Rent tenure. Although the Council has successfully negotiated with the Homes and Communities Agency that these should be at or around 65% of local market rents (as opposed to the proposed 'up to 80%'), the rents on these homes will be higher than on homes let on Social Rents. We need to improve the information we have on income levels, and to monitor closely the profile of tenants moving into the different types of tenure.

- We are also assessing the potential impact of higher Affordable Rents on the Housing Benefit bill.

Affordable Housing Need:

- There were around 8,210 applicants on the housing register at April 2012, an increase of around 1500 (22%) since March 2011. Based on household size the greatest need is for one and two bed homes.
- The number of applicants for intermediate housing across Cambridgeshire has been increasing, with 367 Cambridge residents registered on the Homebuy Register for intermediate (shared ownership, shared equity etc) housing at March 2012.¹⁵
- Numbers of social housing re-lets have reduced over the last year, and any increase in the number of homes purchased following recent increases in Right to Buy discounts will reduce further the number of rented Affordable Homes available locally – at least in the short term and possibly in the long-term as well.
- Latest estimates (subject to confirmation) suggest that 2,140 new homes would need to be built per year over the next five years to meet existing and newly arising housing need. This has increased steadily year on year from 1,509 when the 2008 Housing Strategy was published.

Diversity of Housing Need:

- The importance of housing in promoting health and well-being is recognised in the Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.¹⁶
- There are around 9,000 students occupying housing other than bespoke student rooms, and both Universities in Cambridge aim to increase their own housing stock.
- The number of older people in the City is set to increase, including those who are physically and mentally frail, and there needs to be a range of types and tenures of housing suitable for older people to move to if they wish to do so.¹⁷
- The revised Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment for the Cambridge sub-region identifies the need for one new permanent pitch for Gypsies and Travellers in the City between

¹⁵ Orbit Homebuy Agent: <http://www.orbithomebuyagents.co.uk/main.cfm>

¹⁶ Cambridgeshire JSNA: <http://www.cambridgeshirejsna.org.uk/>

¹⁷ Older People's Housing Strategy: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-and-related-strategies.en>

now and 2031, as well as one (or more) sites for transit or emergency stopping provision in the Cambridge area.¹⁸

Private Sector Housing Conditions:¹⁹

- Cambridge has a significantly higher proportion of private rented homes and Homes in Multiple Occupation than the national average, and a higher proportion of older homes (built pre-1919).
- Around 37% of the private sector housing stock fails the Decent Homes standard. The main reasons for non-Decency are Category 1 hazards and thermal comfort failure.
- Around 23% of private sector homes have serious ('Category 1') hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) attributed to excess cold. Risk of falls is also a significant contributor to Category 1 Hazards. Those with disabilities and in receipt of benefits are particularly affected.
- Non-Decency and Category 1 hazards are highest in privately rented homes and older homes.
- Disrepair is highest in older properties, owner-occupied and private rented homes, and amongst those in receipt of benefit and over 65.

Making Best Use of Existing Homes:

- The number of homes in the City which have been empty for more than 6 months at any one time has remained fairly steady over recent years at around 70.
- We need to improve our understanding of how many Social Rented homes are under-occupied by number of bedrooms, particularly in light of government proposals to limit housing benefit entitlement to under-occupiers.

Conclusion

Understanding our housing market, how it affects a wide of groups of people, and how it might change in future is becoming increasingly complex. As well as monitoring and responding to change as it happens, we need to continue to improve our approach to anticipating change to maximise our ability to influence that change.

¹⁸ GTANA 2011: <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/pdf/env-plan-evibase%202011%20GTANA.pdf>

¹⁹ Private Sector Housing Condition Survey 2009
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-research.en>

Our Strategic Housing Market Assessment provides a strong basis for much of this information, and we will continue to develop this, with sub-regional partners, to ensure it provides appropriate and timely information to meet a wide range of needs.

Chapter 4: Increasing Housing Supply

Objectives:

- ★ Increase the supply of good quality, energy efficient Affordable Housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures
- ★ Create green, mixed and sustainable new communities which benefit existing communities

Priorities:

Work with partners to:

- Review housing targets and Affordable Housing requirements within our Local Plan
- Ensure high levels of provision of good quality new Affordable Housing
- Ensure that new homes and communities meet carbon reduction requirements and are environmentally sustainable
- Ensure that new developments are well-designed and provide appropriate and timely infrastructure, facilities and services
- Ensure that new Affordable Housing remains as affordable as possible to local people
- Maintain an appropriate balance of sizes, types and tenures of homes within new developments and across the City
- Continue with our programme of Council new-build Affordable Homes
- Maximise the positive and minimise the negative impact of growth on existing communities

Introduction

With a strong economy, Cambridge is at the centre of an area of significant housing growth planned for the coming years. With high housing costs but only limited land available for housing, it is essential that as much Affordable Housing is provided as possible to meet local housing need and support the growth of the local economy. At the same time we need to ensure that new housing developments are well-designed and desirable places to live, and remain so in the long-term. Providing good housing is not just about providing good quality bricks and mortar – it is also important to ensure that appropriate infrastructure

and facilities are in place, and that every opportunity is taken to promote mixed communities.

It has to be recognised that although the Council has a key role to play in promoting an increase in housing supply, new housing development is very much market driven. A number of issues, including the state of the economy, national planning policy, and availability of funding for Affordable Housing, will affect the extent and type of new development which can take place. There is a limit to which local authorities can truly influence housing delivery, and therefore the objectives in this Strategy have to be realistic.

Progress Since Previous Strategy

Over the last three years the Council has:

- ✓ Identified more than 5 years' supply of land for housing
- ✓ Secured planning approvals for phases of development on major growth sites on the fringes of Cambridge, including Trumpington Meadows, Clay Farm, Glebe Farm, and the NIAB frontage site, to include provision of Affordable Housing²⁰
- ✓ Supported the delivery of 410 new Affordable homes through Private Registered Provider partners
- ✓ Started our own Affordable Housing build programme, completing 8 new homes and securing grant for a further 146 homes to be built over the next three years
- ✓ Improved our approach to working with Affordable Housing development partners, including appointing an Affordable Housing Development partner, and producing an Affordable Housing Charter and Affordable Housing Policy guide.

Key Strategies and Policies

- Cambridge Local Plan
- Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan
- Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
- Sustainable Development SPD
- Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)
- Climate Change Strategy

²⁰ Progress on growth sites: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/growth-and-new-neighbourhoods/find-out-more/progress-so-far.en>

Key Issues to Address

THE NEED FOR GROWTH

Cambridge, as well as being a regional centre for employment, is important both nationally and internationally as a University City with a strong economy focused on high-tech and bio-tech industries. Many employers and colleges are struggling to attract the best staff, and more housing, including more Affordable Housing, together with appropriate infrastructure, remains essential for long-term economic prosperity. Cambridge City is represented on the newly formed Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, set up to drive forward economic growth in the wider local area.²¹

With the removal of regional housing targets the Council has reviewed its development forecasts down from 19,000 new homes by 2021, to 14,000 new homes by 2031 – equating to around 700 homes per year over that period. Although growth is a key priority for the City, this recognises the need to balance the importance of housing delivery with the deliverability of required infrastructure and the potential impact on the green belt. These figures are being reviewed again through consultation on our Local Plan, and a Council decision will need to be made on the future target. The decision by South Cambridgeshire District Council not to pursue a boundary change around the edges of the City, and the decision by Marshall Group not to relocate from Cambridge airport in the immediate future will inevitably have an impact on the number of new homes that can be built.

Growth is planned on a number of sites on the outskirts of Cambridge which straddle or are just outside the City boundary, in partnership with South Cambridgeshire District Council. These include development on land on the southern, north-western, eastern and north-eastern urban fringes, with further growth taking place around Cambridge Station.²² Other, smaller developments are planned for and/or being built out within the City.

Beyond the City, we will continue to maintain a close interest in growth sites close to Cambridge which could present opportunities or

²¹ Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership:
<http://www.yourlocalenterprisepartnership.co.uk/>

²² Growth web pages: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/growth-and-new-neighbourhoods/>

implications for Cambridge residents. This includes the further development of Cambourne and the proposed new settlement at Northstowe.

Growth is important to the City. However, this has to be balanced with the need to ensure that housing remains of high quality, in high quality sustainable environments. We support the role of the independent Cambridgeshire Quality Panel in assessing new schemes against the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth.²³ It is also critical that adequate infrastructure – including education, transport and green infrastructure – is provided at appropriate stages during the development of new communities.

The social infrastructure on new developments is also critical to the success of new communities. We need to continue to strengthen our work in this area, working with partners to support the development of appropriate services, including health and education, and to influence the planning process at an early stage to promote issues around maximising community safety and minimising the risk of anti-social behaviour – both in new and nearby existing communities.

New housing and infrastructure funding opportunities are emerging, and we will continue to work with partners to access funding streams as appropriate.

The Council is willing to consider alternative methods of housing delivery. For example, co-operative and self-build housing have been raised during consultation on this Strategy.

We are committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, developments include the provision of new Affordable Housing. We will also continue to support the appropriate development of purpose-built accommodation for the two Universities – University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Supply of Land for Affordable Housing

²³ Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/growth-and-new-neighbourhoods/find-out-more/progress-so-far.en>

We have carried out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to identify more than 5-years' supply of land for housing, and we will continue to prioritise the requirement for Affordable Housing when bringing sites forward for development.

We also now have a 3-year rolling programme of Affordable Housing Development on our own land, which we will continue to progress within the context of our 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.²⁴

Delivery and Affordability of Affordable Housing

In order to maximise the provision of Affordable Housing we will continue to seek, as a minimum, the levels of Affordable Housing required in our Affordable Housing SPD; ie we currently require 40% of new homes on larger sites to be provided as Affordable Housing, subject to the review of our Local Plan.²⁵

However, delivery of Affordable Housing through section 106 planning gain has slowed down during the last year - both nationally and locally – due to the economic downturn which has impacted both on scheme viability for developers as well as their capacity for borrowing. We will, under our Local Plan, continue to require developments to include appropriate provision of Affordable Housing, except where developers can demonstrate, through a full financial appraisal, that scheme viability would be jeopardised.

Grant funding available for new Affordable Housing has also reduced significantly, with developers required to supplement grant with their own resources, and new grant funded Affordable Housing for rent to be let at Affordable Rents. The Council recognises that 80% of market rent will be unaffordable to many local residents, and has negotiated with the HCA that for Cambridge, charging Affordable Rents at around 65% of market rents and below Local Housing Allowance Rates is more appropriate. However, the rent levels on these new homes will still be somewhat higher than for existing Social Rented homes – particularly in the case of larger homes. We will continue to work with the HCA to try

²⁴ HRA Business Plan:

http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy/documents/s8870/Special%20HMB%20CS%20February%202012%20-%20Whole%20Document%20Final%20Draft_1.pdf

²⁵ Affordable Housing SPD: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents-and-guidance/affordable-housing-spd.en>

to ensure that new Affordable Rent homes remain as affordable as possible to local people within the constraints of the grant conditions.

The majority of respondents to one of our consultation questions said that up to 30% of take-home income was reasonable to pay on housing costs. Therefore we will continue to model affordability of housing using 25% and 30% of net income as a reasonable benchmark.

New national models of funding for Affordable Housing are being debated, including the potential use of Community Infrastructure Levy funding, and we will continue to monitor national developments in this area to understand how we can best promote the delivery of new Affordable Housing.

Our Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document recognises that co-operative housing may be an option for increasing Affordable Housing provision. The Council welcomes approaches from Co-Ops wishing to develop in Cambridge if funding can be secured.

We also need to look at opportunities which may arise from the government's proposals around promoting development of new privately rented homes.

The Council is continuing to work with partners on the development of new Affordable Housing, both on the urban fringes together with South Cambridgeshire District Council, and on land within the City.

We have embarked on a programme of developing on our own land, and have been successful in securing grant for 146 new Affordable Homes between 2010 and 2015, to follow on from the 8 which have been completed to date. As a condition of grant most of the remaining homes to be delivered are likely to be at Affordable Rents. The Council is also investigating whether it can develop 104 Affordable Homes on land at Clay Farm, and has aspirations to build a further 400 on its own housing land.

Current plans should enable the completion of around 1300 new Affordable Homes for the City between 2011 and 2015.

Mix and Size of New Affordable Housing

The cost of housing, and the shortage of Affordable Housing, affects all age groups and household types, and there is an urgent need for new Affordable Housing of all sizes to meet a range of needs.

Under our Affordable Housing SPD, we aim for 75% of new Affordable Homes to be provided for rent. Based on evidence of need from our Strategic Housing Market Assessment, and tenure preferences stated in the response to our consultation questionnaire, we consider this to continue to be an appropriate mix for the time being. However, we recognise that the market is evolving, and further consideration of this will form part of the review of our Local Plan.

There is a tension between the higher levels of absolute need for one and two bedroom homes amongst applicants on the housing register, the relatively high level of existing supply of smaller homes, and the need to create a balanced and mixed communities and provide larger homes to enable families to grow without having to move on again. Sizes of homes and occupancy rates affect the infrastructure required, including levels of need for school places and health service provision. Welfare reforms restricting housing benefit to those under-occupying their homes may also affect the size of homes needing to be built in the future.

Applicants for intermediate low-cost home ownership tend to want to buy the largest size of property they can afford. This means that one-bedroom homes tend to be in lower demand, but fewer people are able to afford larger 3 and 4 bedroom homes.

Older people wanting to down-size are sometimes discouraged from doing so because of lack of floor-space in one and two bedroom homes, and smaller homes can be more difficult to adapt for disabled people.

Responses to our consultation questionnaire indicated a preference for larger homes.

This is a complex issue, and our approach to numbers of bedrooms and room sizes will be included in the review of our Local Plan.

Quality of Affordable Housing

Quality of housing remains a high priority, and as well as compliance with the Cambridgeshire Quality Charter for Growth, we require new Affordable Housing to meet, as a minimum, the Homes and Communities Agency quality standards.²⁶ We also aim for a minimum standard of Sustainability Code level 4 - and higher where possible - and all new Affordable Homes to be built to the Lifetime Homes standard.

Further details of our policies and guidance, and our expectations around Affordable Housing delivery, are in our Affordable Housing Policy Guide.²⁷

We will continue to use local lettings policies where required to provide mixed and balanced communities.

We fully recognise the need for specialist housing to meet the needs of particular groups; this is discussed further in Chapter 7.

Maintaining an appropriate balance of housing tenures

The Council recognises the need for housing of all tenures to meet a range of housing needs.

In the past, the main Affordable Housing tenures in the City have been Social Rented and Intermediate housing (mainly shared ownership). Under the new national Affordable Rent model the proportion of housing available on a Social Rent will inevitably reduce as Registered Providers let new and some existing homes on Affordable Rents. Affordable Rents are expected to attract a wider group of people than those who have traditionally applied for social housing. We are working through our sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to model the potential effects of changes to the balance of tenure across the City and the rest of the housing sub-region.²⁸ This will help to inform our ongoing work with Registered Providers to try to ensure that future delivery meets housing need.

²⁶ HCA Quality standards: <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/ourwork/design-and-sustainability-standards>

²⁷ Cambridge City Council's Affordable Housing Policy Guide
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/development-enabling-and-growth.en>

²⁸ Future Affordable Housing Report: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/cambridge-sub-regional-housing-board/crhb-publications-and-documents.en>

Tenancy Strategy

The Council is working on a Tenancy Strategy within the context of the new Affordable Rents and flexibilities around length of tenure. This will outline the issues which Registered Providers will need to take into account in assessing what sort of tenancies they will offer, assessing the lengths of tenancy to be offered, and deciding whether fixed term tenancies should be renewed at the end of the fixed term. The Council's approach is likely to be that homes should be as affordable as possible to local people, that secure tenancies are preferred over fixed term tenancies, and that if fixed terms are used, tenancies should be renewed at the end of the term other than in exceptional circumstances.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

In line with the Council's Climate Change Strategy we will continue to work to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions, and pursue the use of sources of renewable energy through the Planning process, within the context of legislation and government guidance.

We will also continue to promote the construction of new Affordable Homes to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 as a minimum, but still aiming for zero carbon where possible prior to the national policy anticipated from 2016.

We will continue to seek high levels of energy efficiency in the new homes the Council is developing under our Affordable Housing Development Programme.²⁹ Energy efficiency measures need to continue to be considered within the context of the need to keep long-term maintenance costs down.

Ensuring an adequate supply of water for the City and mitigating the risk of surface water flooding are significant challenges.

Grey-water recycling is being introduced as part of the refurbishment of the Council's Brandon Court sheltered scheme, and we are looking at possibilities for other new developments – including at Clay Farm.

²⁹ Affordable Housing Development Programme:
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/development-enabling-and-growth.en>

Surface-water drainage is being improved to reduce the risk of flooding at the NIAB growth site development, and as part of the Council re-build of Seymour Court, and the Council aims to repeat this on other new developments.

Provision of appropriate green infrastructure in the development of new communities, which existing communities can also benefit from, will continue to be a high priority.

We will be rationalising our sustainability requirements for new housing as part of our work to review the Local Plan.

PLANNING POLICY ISSUES

As stated in Chapter 2, the coalition government has introduced fundamental significant changes to planning policy, including the removal of regional targets in place of more local decision-making, and the introduction, through the new draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) of a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The Council is reviewing its Local Plan within this context, aiming for adoption in around spring 2014. This will include re-consideration, through consultation, of a number of issues around the future provision of housing in and around the City. As well as reviewing such issues as densities, mixes of tenure size etc, the review will also seek to strengthen, and better integrate, the Council's approach to environmental sustainability in relation to new development.

The Council is working with South Cambridgeshire District Council on a new co-housing initiative at Orchard Park. The Local Plan review will explore the extent to which other community-led solutions such as Neighbourhood Planning, Community Right to Build etc might be appropriate for Cambridge.

A review of our Affordable Housing SPD will be considered once the Local Plan has been adopted.

The New Homes Bonus awarded to the Council to match the Council Tax take on new homes is being used to revenue fund the work to facilitate planned growth.

IMPACT OF GROWTH ON EXISTING HOMES AND COMMUNITIES

We will continue to work to maximise the positive, and minimise the negative impacts on existing communities of the planned growth for the City and surrounding area. We will take this into account in the review of our Local Plan, and continue to implement local lettings policies where appropriate.

Our work on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the review of our Lettings Policy will need to take into account the impact of the new Affordable Rents in new developments on lettings to existing homes.

We will work with Residents Associations to understand and respond to the potential existing impacts of growth in different parts of the City.

Chapter 5: Existing Homes & Communities

Objectives:

- ★ Ensure homes are Healthy, Safe and Energy Efficient
- ★ Make the best use of existing homes
- ★ Promote community cohesion

Priorities:

Council Housing

Work with tenants to:

- Manage, maintain and improve the Council's housing stock
- Review the Cambridge Standard to help prioritise future investment in homes and surrounding areas
- Improve energy efficiency and promote affordable warmth
- Explore greater use of renewable energy in sheltered schemes
- Review our approach to supporting people to move to smaller homes if they wish to do so
- Review whether to continue with our current shared ownership scheme
- Explore whether new Fixed Term Tenancies should be used in exceptional circumstances.

Private Sector Housing

Work with residents and partners to:

- Review our Private Sector House Condition Survey
- Improve the safety and management of private rented homes
- Continue to use enforcement powers to ensure that private sector homes meet required safety standards
- Promote and support home energy improvements across all tenures
- Support the improvement of health outcomes for older and vulnerable people
- Bring long-term empty homes back into use
- Explore whether we can improve our approach to tackling anti-social behaviour in private sector housing.

Key Local Strategies and Policies

- Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan
- HRA Asset Management Plan
- Climate Change Strategy
- Sheltered Housing Carbon Reduction Action Plan
- Carbon Management Plan
- Affordable Warmth Strategy/ Action Plan
- The Cambridge Standard
- Private Sector Housing Strategy 2006-2011
- Private Sector Stock Condition Survey 2008
- Empty Homes policy
- Lettings Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour Charter
- Enforcement Policy

Introduction

As well as building new homes, the Council also has a significant role to play in relation to existing homes

Good quality, safe, well-maintained and energy efficient housing across all tenures is recognised as an important factor in supporting the economy and promoting good health. And with high demand for and limited supply of housing in the City, it is important to try to make the best of the existing housing stock.

Addressing the causes and effects of climate change and supporting residents to reduce carbon emissions and manage climate change risks are key objectives in the Council's Climate Change Strategy. Also, with the ongoing rise in fuel costs, and the squeeze on household budgets, many people are finding it increasingly difficult to heat their homes. So we need to continue to work to tackle fuel poverty and improve the thermal efficiency of the City's homes.

The Council has a strong record of tenant involvement in decision-making and will continue to actively develop and promote involvement

activity within the context of the Homes & Communities Agency Regulatory Framework.³⁰

Progress Since Previous Strategy

Over the last three years the Council has:

- ✓ Brought all the Council's rented homes up to the national Decent Homes Standard
- ✓ Increased the average SAP rating of the Council's housing stock by 10 points over the last five years, to a rating of 75 (calculated using SAP 2001)³¹. Measures have included improved thermal insulation and installation of energy efficient boilers.
- ✓ Helped to reduce domestic gas and electricity consumption across Cambridge by 11% and 9% respectively over the past 5 years, equivalent to an average fuel bill reduction of £210 per household (at today's prices), and an average of 800kg of carbon dioxide per household.³²
- ✓ Improved the energy efficiency of our sheltered schemes, including improving insulation, installing energy efficient boilers and lighting, and working with tenants to conserve energy in communal areas
- ✓ Ensured the removal of Category 1 hazards from 123 homes in the private sector, making those homes safer for their occupants
- ✓ Given financial assistance to 88 vulnerable owner-occupiers on low incomes, to carry out necessary repairs and improvements to their homes
- ✓ Registered 476 private rented homes to the Council's Property Accreditation scheme, to ensure that those homes meet an agreed set of standards
- ✓ Brought 47 long-term empty homes back into use in the private sector
- ✓ Issued 195 mandatory licences to larger Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), to ensure that they continue to be effectively managed.

Key Issues to Address

COUNCIL HOMES

³⁰ TSA Regulatory framework:
<http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/server/show/ConWebDoc.20175>

³¹ How SAP rating is calculated

³² Department of Energy and Climate Change <http://www.decc.gov.uk/>

The Council is a stock-holding authority with around 7,000 rented, and around 1,100 leasehold and shared ownership, homes. Under the government's Social Housing reform programme the national Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy system has been abolished from April 2012, making the Council fully responsible for financing the management and maintenance of, and major improvements to, the Council's homes. The Council has taken on a one-off share of the national housing debt – just under £214 million - in return for retaining all the rental income from the Council's homes and having more freedom to decide, with residents, how that income is spent.

A 30-year business plan has been agreed, which details the Council's priorities and how the business will be managed over that period. This will be kept under regular review. Alongside this an Asset Management Plan has been agreed, detailing the anticipated investment required in the stock.³³

The consultation questionnaire on this Housing Strategy that we ran through our tenant and leaseholder magazine Open Door identified that as well as affordability of housing, quality of housing and energy efficiency were high priorities for residents. Tenancy management and environmental issues were also considered important.

Tenant priorities for investment in the Council's homes and surrounding areas were identified through the development of a Cambridge Standard in 2004. A tenant satisfaction survey is being carried out in early 2012, the results of which will be used to inform a review of the Cambridge Standard, and the Council will continue to use this standard to prioritise improvements over and above statutory requirements.

Maintaining Council Homes

The Council has now successfully brought all of its rented homes up to the national Decent Homes standard, and will continue to ensure that the housing stock is maintained to this standard as a minimum.³⁴

³³ HRA Business Plan & Asset Management Plan:
http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy/documents/s8870/Special%20HMB%20CS%20February%202012%20-%20Whole%20Document%20Final%20Draft_1.pdf

³⁴ Decent Homes Standard: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/advice-for-tenants-and-residents/information-for-council-tenants/decent-homes-standard.en>

The Council is implementing a range of improvements to its repairs and maintenance services to improve the service to customers and achieve better value for money.

We will monitor the outcomes of the national Tenant Cashback Scheme pilots to assess the extent to which repairs in the home and surrounding area might be carried out by tenants, and how the scheme might be used to promote employment opportunities for tenants.³⁵

Warm, Energy Efficient Homes

Carbon reduction and managing climate change risks are key priorities for the Council, and we need to demonstrate more clearly to tenants the extent to which work carried out in this area can contribute to keeping tenants' fuel bills down.

Whilst significant improvements have been made over the last five years, it is probably inevitable that the rate of improvement will slow down now that many simple energy efficiency measures have been completed. The Council will continue to make improvements in this area through exploring thermal insulation options for homes with solid walls and boiler replacements, and in the longer term through a new programme of uPVC window replacement, as detailed in our HRA Asset Management Plan.

We are working with tenants and licensees to reduce the amount of energy used in the communal areas of our sheltered schemes through our Sheltered Housing Carbon Reduction Plan, and further projects are planned in our sheltered and temporary housing as part of our proposed Carbon Management Plan. We will also continue to look for opportunities to introduce sources of renewable energy - again particularly in our sheltered schemes.

In deciding on future investment in this area we will use the lessons learnt from a recent project to retrofit one of the Council's homes to Exemplar standards.

The Council is required to produce Energy Performance Certificates when re-letting its homes, and we need to consider how to speed up

³⁵ Tenant Cashback Scheme: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/housing/1882271>

this process to help to inform the choices made by applicants bidding for homes through Home-Link.

Environment Around Council Homes

Although there is no longer a requirement to carry out a regular satisfaction survey with tenants, we consider this a useful tool in helping to understand what the priorities are for tenants. We will be using the results of the survey carried out in early 2012 to help us to assess the on-going need for environmental works around the Council's homes as part of the Cambridge Standard.

Estate management issues came out as an issue in our consultation survey with tenants and leaseholders, and we will continue to work with residents and other partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and ensure the safety and cleanliness of the Council's housing estates.

Making best use of Council Homes

We will continue to keep void times to a minimum to maximise rental income and ensure that homes are swiftly made available for those who need them.

We offer financial incentives to Council tenants who have larger homes than they need to move to smaller homes if they wish to do so. We aim to review our approach in this area, particularly in the context of welfare changes which will restrict the amount of benefit payable based on the number of bedrooms deemed to be required for different household sizes. We will consider how we provide information to people wanting to move, and whether we can increase the support available to those who wish to move but for whom the effort and upheaval is a barrier to moving. We aim to explore opportunities with other Registered Providers operating in the City, and will consider the benefits of joining Huntingdonshire's Under-Occupation Partnership.

We will continue to try to ensure, wherever possible, that when disabled adapted homes become available they are re-let to households with similar adaptation needs.

We are reviewing our Lettings Policy in light of the new Affordable Rents regime and current government proposals in this area.

We will also consider the implications of the government's proposals around tackling tenancy fraud, and consider how we might use the proposed new powers to tackle fraud, including the sub-letting of Council homes.

Shared Ownership Homes

The Council has around 90 homes which it sells to applicants on a shared ownership basis. Demand for these homes has diminished over the last few years, having to compete with newer homes on longer leases provided by other RPs. We need to assess whether to continue to provide shared ownership homes in the longer term, or whether better use could be made of these homes to meet housing need.

Affordability of Council Housing

In our questionnaire to tenants on the priorities for this Strategy, affordability of housing came out as a high priority. It was also highlighted as an important issue through the Council's latest Citizens' Survey.³⁶ Whilst recognising the need to keep Council rents at affordable levels, the Council also needs to take into account the impact of rent levels on the HRA business model. The government clearly expects that rent levels will continue to be set in line with national guidelines, and any decision to increase them at a lower rate than assumed in the HRA debt settlement would inevitably have a negative impact on the business model.

Maximising energy efficiency of the Council's homes is, again, an important element in ensuring that tenants can afford to run their homes, as is keeping service charge increases to a minimum for leaseholders.

Although new grant funded homes being built by the Council will need to be let on Affordable Rents, the Council will endeavour to keep these rents as low as possible within the constraints of the Affordable Rents scheme and the requirements of the HRA Business Plan.

Affordability is a particular issue for those on low incomes and welfare benefits, and we will explore options with our partners for supporting Council tenants to seek and retain employment.

³⁶ Citizens' Survey: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/consultations/residents-surveys.en>

Tenancy Policy

The Council is developing a Tenancy Policy which will outline the types and lengths of tenancy to be offered to Council tenants in the light of Affordable Rents and new freedoms to introduce fixed term tenancies. This will be reviewed during 2012 in consultation with tenants and applicants to ensure that the Council is making best use of its housing stock.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOMES

Over 80% of the City's homes are in the private sector – ie not owned by the Council. Around 53% are owner-occupied, and around 25% private rented – a percentage which, as in many urban areas across the country, is thought to be increasing. Most of the remainder are owned by Private Registered Providers (Housing Associations). Within the private rented sector there are an estimated 5,200 Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

The increase in the private rented sector is due to a combination of factors, including the difficulty of accessing home-ownership, a relatively mobile work-force, and demand for accommodation for students.

Private sector housing activity was previously covered in the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy, which ran until 2011.

Private Sector Housing Conditions

The importance of safe and decent homes in promoting positive health outcomes across all tenures should not be under-estimated.

Our 2008 Private Sector House Condition survey identified that around 37% of private sector homes did not meet the national Decent Homes standard, mainly due to excess cold.³⁷ The majority of homes classified as being non-decent and unsafe (ie having Category 1 hazards under

³⁷ Private Sector House Condition Survey:
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-research.en>

the Housing Health and Safety Rating System) were older homes and those in the private rented sector.³⁸

The Council has an important role to play in dealing with enquiries and complaints about poor housing conditions, and has responded to over 680 service requests in this area over the last three years.

Where Category 1 hazards are identified, the Council is responsible for ensuring that these are remedied. The Council will provide advice and support to landlords and home-owners, and will use its enforcement powers if necessary to bring those homes up to the required standard.

Conditions in Private Rented Homes

The Private Rented sector is an important part of the housing market in Cambridge, and we need to continue to use the powers at our disposal to support landlords in maintaining and improving housing standards for the growing number of private rented tenants in the City. We have recently reviewed our Guide for Landlords which gives advice on letting and managing properties.³⁹

Where landlords are identified who are not meeting statutory requirements – eg in relation to the condition of the home, excess cold, overcrowding etc – we work with those landlords to support them in meeting the standards required to ensure the health, safety and well-being of their occupants. If they still do not comply we will use our enforcement powers to ensure compliance. From April 2012 the Council is levying a charge where enforcement notices are served, to cover some of the administrative costs.

We are continuing to develop and promote our Property Accreditation Scheme (formerly known as the Landlord Accreditation Scheme) whereby landlords can apply for accreditation of private rented homes which comply with a locally agreed Code of Standards in relation to the condition and management of the home.⁴⁰ We now have 476 homes included in the scheme, and from 2012 we will offer financial support to

³⁸ Housing Health & Safety Rating System: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/advice-for-tenants-and-residents/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system.en>

³⁹ Guide for Landlords: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/advice-for-landlords-and-homeowners/property-accreditation-scheme.en>

⁴⁰ Property Accreditation Scheme: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/advice-for-landlords-and-homeowners/property-accreditation-scheme.en>

landlords for energy efficiency works to bring their homes up to the required standards.

We also have a set of Amenity and Safety Standards for landlords of properties owned or managed by higher education establishments.⁴¹

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Around 12.6% of the private rented homes in Cambridge are estimated to be HMOs, and this figure is expected to continue to rise.

Although some professionals and many students choose to live in HMOs, for many this is the only housing option available which is affordable to them.

With new rules around Local Housing Allowance being payable only at the shared-room rate for under 35s, more vulnerable people are likely to be seeking accommodation in HMOs. Poorer housing conditions – including excess cold, overcrowding and disrepair - are generally found in HMOs occupied by vulnerable people, which can impact on both their physical and their mental health.

The Council's approach to mandatory licensing of larger HMOs is outlined in our HMO Licensing Policy.⁴² We currently have around 270 licensed HMOs. Where larger HMOs are not licensed, or the terms of a licence are breached, the Council may use its enforcement powers to ensure compliance.

The Council will continue to monitor the HMOs of which it is aware, and use enforcement powers to ensure that they are safe and decent to live in, and that any negative impact on the wider community arising from poor management can be minimised.

Energy Efficiency, Carbon Reduction and Affordable Warmth

Supporting improvements to the energy efficiency of the City's private sector homes is a priority in terms of reducing carbon emissions, promoting positive health outcomes, and supporting economic growth.

⁴¹ Amenity Standards for College Properties:
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/advice-for-landlords-and-homeowners/property-accreditation-scheme.en>

⁴² HMO Licensing Policy: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/advice-for-landlords-and-homeowners/houses-in-multiple-occupation.en>

With fuel bills rising, fuel poverty is also becoming an increasing issue for those on low incomes.

Poor thermal efficiency is a particular issue in private rented homes, with an estimated 23% of private rented homes being identified as having Category 1 hazards through excess cold. Where identified, the Council will use enforcement powers to have these hazards removed.

The new national Green Deal scheme will enable energy efficiency works to be funded up-front, and the costs recouped through occupiers' fuel bills. The new Energy Company Obligation to subsidise works will also be merged into the Green Deal. We will explore how the Council can work with partners and residents to support the scheme, to help maximise opportunities for improvement works within in the City and support the local economy. We may also need to reconsider our approach to enforcement in the private rented sector.

The Council is carrying out a thermal imaging 'Heatseekers' project to identify homes which could benefit from improved thermal insulation, and will encourage and support property owners – including landlords - in accessing available funding for improvements.

We will also continue our work to understand how older solid wall construction, and historic, homes can be better insulated.

Whilst our main focus will be on promoting energy efficiency works, we will also continue to signpost property owners to any available sources of funding for renewable energy schemes.

Improving Conditions for Older and Other Vulnerable People

We currently run a private sector grants scheme for home improvements for vulnerable owner-occupiers, including safety and home energy works. Most people using the scheme opt for grants rather than loans, and with government grant no longer available for private sector renewal work, we need to explore alternative funding opportunities, including how we can support home owners to free up equity in their homes within the context of government proposals to stimulate more attractive financial products in this area.

We now jointly commission, with Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, a Handyman and Safer Homes

scheme which provides help to older people to make their homes safer and carry out small repair and adaptation works. We see this as important in helping people to remain in their own homes and in preventing accidents and hospital admissions, and we will continue to work with partners to try to secure ongoing funding for this scheme.

We will, through our newly formed joint Home Improvement Agency, explore opportunities to improve links with health and social care commissioners as national reforms are implemented, to strengthen the contribution of the Council's work to improving health outcomes for older and vulnerable people.

Empty Homes

Although the number of long-term empty homes in Cambridge is well below the national average, dealing with empty homes was identified as a high priority by respondents to our questionnaires on this Strategy; and with such pressure on housing in and around Cambridge we need to continue to prioritise bringing long-term empty homes back into use.

We have recently reviewed our Empty Homes policy, clarifying the action we will take to ensure that homes are returned to use as quickly as possible. As part of this we will now consider buying back certain types of ex Council homes for letting as Affordable Housing, and provide low-cost loans to owners to carry out repairs to bring homes back into use. Landlords taking up these loans will be able to choose whether to lease to the Council for use as Affordable housing, or to rent or occupy privately.⁴³

COMMUNITY COHESION

The Council has always taken a strong approach to community safety through its work with the Cambridge Community Safety Partnership, and through working closely with minority communities in the City.⁴⁴ We have been successful in improving our approach to anti-social behaviour in recent years, particularly in relation to issues arising in and around the Council's homes. We will use the results of our Tenant

⁴³ Empty Homes Policy:

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy/documents/s9350/empty%20homes%20policy%202012.pdf>

⁴⁴ Cambridge Community Safety Partnership: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/community-safety/cambridge-community-safety-partnership.en>

Satisfaction Survey to assess whether we need to improve further in this area.

We have, over the last couple of years, seen an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour cases involving vulnerable people who need support to live independently. As economic conditions, welfare reforms and shortage of appropriate housing put further pressure on households, we need to be prepared for potential further increases in the numbers of anti-social behaviour incidents which might arise. We will continue to seek opportunities to work with health and social care commissioners and providers to try to ensure that vulnerable people are getting the support that they need.

We also need to consider whether we can strengthen our approach to tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector, through engagement with landlords and lettings agencies.

Chapter 6: Housing Advice, Homelessness and Housing Options

Objectives:

- ★ Prevent homelessness and rough sleeping
- ★ Minimise use of temporary accommodation and maximise use of longer-term housing solutions
- ★ Enable people to make informed choices about their housing
- ★ Promote sustained and settled lifestyles and minimise social exclusion

Priorities:

Work with partners to:

- Increase access to the private rented sector for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and those on welfare benefits
- Review the sub-regional and local Lettings Policies to ensure that best use is being made of available homes
- Provide a more joined up service to people seeking housing advice and support
- Explore housing options for those living in overcrowded conditions
- Support vulnerable households and chronically excluded adults in accessing and retaining suitable housing and in moving on from temporary accommodation
- Reconnect single homeless people to their place of origin where appropriate support is available to them
- Develop a Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping action plan for the City, and explore options around co-ordinating activity in relation to single homelessness across the sub-region
- Ensure that prison-leavers can be re-habilitated and integrated back into society
- Pilot support to people in housing need in finding suitable employment
- Develop a Tenancy Strategy advising local Registered Providers on what the Council expects in relation to use of Affordable Rents and fixed term tenancies

Key Local Strategies and Policies

- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2009-2012
- Cambridgeshire's Homelessness JSNA
- Lettings Policy

Introduction

As previously stated, the strong housing market in Cambridge makes it difficult for many to access appropriate housing. Delivery of new homes has slowed down significantly, and national economic conditions are contributing to housing stress for increasing numbers of households.

The Council has, working with partners, been successful in recent years in preventing homelessness and rough sleeping, and reducing the use of temporary accommodation including bed and breakfast.

However, over recent months we have seen an increase in the number of single people at risk of homelessness, and rough sleeping levels have risen.

A considerable reduction in the number of social rented homes becoming available to re-let during 2011-2012 has also meant that the Council has had to increase the use of temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast, to meet short-term needs.

Other partners providing housing-related services are reporting an increase in demand for their services. This reflects the situation nationally, and such pressures are expected to continue for the foreseeable future, particularly as the impact of welfare reforms, and changes to Housing Benefit in particular, start to take hold. The Council aims to ensure that sufficient advice and support is available to ensure that those requiring re-housing are able to access appropriate housing to meet their needs.

Progress Since Previous Strategy

Over the last three years the Council has:

- ✓ Intervened to help prevent around 700 households becoming homeless.

- ✓ Developed and implemented a Home-Link Access Policy, which ensures that vulnerable people are able to bid effectively for homes available through Home-Link, and that no groups are being unfairly disadvantaged by the arrangements
- ✓ Almost completed the re-development of Jimmy's Nightshelter, to provide improved temporary accommodation for single homeless people and facilities for their needs to be assessed more effectively
- ✓ Improved the information available to those suffering or at risk of domestic violence
- ✓ Successfully run a nationally funded pilot scheme for chronically excluded adults, improving health and well-being outcomes for service users and reducing the costs incurred by health and other services. Ongoing funding has been secured to continue the project beyond the pilot phase
- ✓ Established a debt and employment advice service to enhance our housing options advice service, providing positive outcomes for 15 clients to date, including support in accessing interviews, training and employment.

Key issues to address:

Homelessness Prevention

The Council has a separate Homelessness Strategy, which expires in 2012.⁴⁵ The main themes are:

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

A revised Homelessness Action Plan is being developed within the context of this Housing Strategy.

Over recent years the Council has shifted more resources from accepting people as homeless, to more proactive intervention to help people to access appropriate housing and prevent homelessness from arising. This has included the provision of housing advice services through the Citizens Advice Bureau, improving access to employment

⁴⁵ Homelessness Strategy 2009-2012 <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-and-related-strategies.en>

and training advice for people in housing need, employing additional staff members to focus on homelessness prevention, and improving our internal recording systems.

We need to try to make better use of the private rented sector and empty homes to find housing solutions to tackle homelessness and meet housing need where appropriate. The Council has procured a Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme for this purpose. However, because of the already strong demand for private rented housing in the City, this scheme has not yet been able to identify landlords who are willing to participate. We need to engage with landlords to understand how they can be encouraged to let homes to people who are in housing need, either temporarily or on a longer-term basis.

As part of a review of our Lettings Policy, we are reviewing the priority and extent of choice given to homeless households for social housing in relation to other applicants. We need to work with homeless applicants to ensure that they have realistic expectations of the type and tenure of accommodation available to them.

We will continue to explore how existing funding can be better used to deliver housing solutions. For example, by exploring the wider use of local budgets shared across local agencies where appropriate. We will also continue to seek additional forms of funding, including government grant and the potential use of institutional investment to deliver housing solutions.

We will also work with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to try to ensure that direct payments of housing benefit (and later Universal Credit) are available for appropriate groups of vulnerable clients, to help them to access private rented housing and to sustain their tenancies.

We are reorganising the Council's Housing Advice service, one of the aims being to further improve our focus on preventing homelessness from arising, and we will monitor the impact of these changes.

Rough Sleeping

Having kept rough sleeping within the national target of 10 in recent years, the number of rough sleepers has started to rise again – with 12 rough sleepers at the last count. There is also anecdotal evidence of an increase in associated street drinking, begging and anti-social

behaviour. Contributory factors include the impact of the economic downturn, reduction in funding available for support, and changes to the welfare system. The problem is expected nationally to get worse, and we need to respond to this effectively.

The Council has been working with partners to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for single homeless people, and to re-divert resources into seeking permanent housing solutions for them, ensuring that they have the necessary support to live independently and retain their homes. Examples include the re-modelling of Jimmy's Night-shelter into an Assessment Centre, and a reduction in the number of bedspaces at the Victoria Road hostel.

However, finding permanent housing solutions is proving increasingly difficult, with a shortage of single person accommodation available through Home-Link, and lack of private rented accommodation which landlords are willing to let to homeless people at a low enough rent. We will need to work with partners to monitor the ongoing impact of this approach within the current economic climate and changes to the welfare system.

Many single homeless people experience multiple problems which can lead to them being chronically excluded from society. These may include physical and/or mental health problems, substance misuse etc. Some may also have been in and out of prison.

We already do a significant amount of work with partners to support chronically excluded adults, but we need to further strengthen our approach in this area to try to find more sustainable solutions for vulnerable single people who are chronically excluded and homeless or at risk of homelessness. We need to further explore options with partners such as voluntary agencies, faith groups, private landlords, Registered Providers, health and social care commissioners etc, to secure appropriate accommodation, help people to find and retain suitable employment, and support them to remain in their homes. We will also continue to strengthen our work with partners around moving people on from temporary accommodation, to ensure that they have the support that they need across all tenures.

We also want to work with local lettings agencies to understand the extent to which they can support lettings to those who are homeless or

at risk of homelessness, and those who are in receipt of welfare benefits.

For some single homeless people, shared accommodation may be the best option. We need to work with private landlords and Registered Providers to try to meet the needs of these individuals, taking into account the new restrictions on payment of Local Housing Allowance at the single-room rate for under-35s.

A significant proportion of rough sleepers in the City come from outside the area, and the Council will continue to use its reconnections policy to help people to reconnect with the areas from which they came. We also need to consider how to deal with the growing problem of European nationals who have no recourse to public funds and are therefore forced to sleep rough.

Some of the single homeless people in the City have come from other districts in the Cambridge sub-region where there is currently little or no provision for housing single people with support needs. We are exploring, with sub-regional partners, the option of using allocated grant funding to employ a sub-regional Single Homelessness Co-Ordinator to work with partners to co-ordinate the delivery of housing solutions for single homeless people across the sub-region, including Peterborough. We are also exploring whether support services can be commissioned more effectively on a sub-regional basis.

A prison-release protocol has been agreed, and home-visit links have now been made with Peterborough prison, to try to help to reduce the number of ex-offenders being released to no fixed abode in Cambridge, and we will monitor the impact of this work. We will explore further whether there are options for enabling ex-offenders to access housing in other parts of the country if they wish to do so, to help them to make a fresh start.

The Council is working with partners to develop a joint single homelessness and rough sleeping action plan, proposed to be around the overarching themes of managing the impact of welfare reforms, ensuring equality of services delivered to the client group, and service-user involvement in design and commissioning of services. It is likely to address such issues as reducing in-migration to the City, securing settled accommodation, early intervention to prevent homelessness from arising etc.

Use of Temporary Accommodation

Whilst the Council has been working to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, demand has risen recently, and with the reduction in Council and Housing Association homes available to let, it is taking people longer to move on from temporary accommodation. Again, better access to homes in the private rented sector could help to relieve this pressure.

Choice Based Lettings

Demand for housing through our sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme - Home-Link – is continuing to rise, with 8,210 applicants on the register at April 2012.⁴⁶

The sub-regional Lettings Policy is being reviewed in the light of government-led social housing and welfare reforms. We are also working with partners to establish how applicants can bid for the new Affordable Rent homes through Home-Link.

At the same time we are reviewing the Council's own Lettings Policy to establish what level of priority for housing should be given to different groups within the more local context. This will include consideration of a whole range of issues around increased freedoms to decide who can be accepted on the register, what levels of priority should be given to different groups, and whether homeless households should be rehoused in the private rented sector.

As part of this review we will need to assess whether, in line with government thinking, any extra priority should be given to households who are in work or to those with local connections, or whether income levels should be taken into account when deciding who should have access to social housing. We also need to review our approach to ex-service personnel with a local connection, to ensure that they have appropriate access to housing.

We will continue to work to ensure that all applicants have equal access to bidding for homes.

Ensuring a Range of Housing Options is Available

⁴⁶ Home-Link website <http://www.home-link.org.uk/THO/>

The reorganisation of our Housing Advice service aims to provide a more integrated and seamless service and improve the advice and support we can give to service users to enable them to make more informed housing choices.

Ensuring that applicants on the housing register can access a range of housing options in addition to bidding through Home-Link, remains an important priority.

As already stated, we need to try to improve access to the private rented sector for those who are vulnerable or on low incomes. As part of this the Council is looking into whether there might be opportunities for attracting investment for new-build private rented homes for this group.

We will continue to require new developments to contain a mix of different sizes, types and tenures of housing to meet a range of different needs.

Ensuring that people have access to work opportunities is important in accessing and retaining suitable housing, and we will be evaluating our Employment Advice service for those in housing need to assess whether this should continue as a longer term project.

Maximising the use of existing homes (see Chapter 5) and ensuring options are available for people with specialist needs (see Chapter 7) also remain priorities.

Our Home Improvement Agency has recently transferred to a shared service between the City, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils, and this may present opportunities to investigate the viability of this service providing active support to older or vulnerable people wanting to move.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding, whilst it does arise, has not been a major issue for Cambridge as a whole, although it is more prevalent in the private rented sector and in HMOs in particular. It can also be an issue for particularly large families.

With increasing pressure on the housing market and reductions in Local Allowance payable for those on low incomes, the Council anticipates that incidents of overcrowding are likely to increase – particularly in smaller accommodation (flats and bedsits).

Overcrowding can have serious health implications, and the Council will need to continue to use enforcement powers to tackle overcrowding in the private rented sector, and support tenants in finding alternative housing solutions. For larger families living in the private sector we will explore whether there are options available for helping them to extend their existing homes.

Use of Affordable Rent Tenancies

We are in the process of developing a Tenancy Strategy in line with the requirements of the Localism Act, outlining the sorts of issues Registered Providers should take into account in deciding whether to offer lifetime or fixed term tenancies for new and existing homes, and in whether to renew tenancies at the end of any fixed term.

The Council, whilst recognising that new developments need to be viable, will be asking Registered Providers to take affordability into account when assessing Affordable Rent levels.

Whilst recognising the need for providers to offer fixed term tenancies on Affordable Rented homes in order to re-base the rents, the Council will expect tenancies to be renewed at the end of the fixed term except in exceptional circumstances.

The Council, as a housing provider, is also developing a Tenancy Policy outlining its approach to the letting of its homes in relation to Affordable Rents and new flexibilities available around tenancy succession.

Chapter 7: Specialist Housing, Supported Housing and Specialist Needs

Objectives:

- ★ Ensure that housing and related services meet a range of specialist needs

Priorities:

Work with partners to:

- Ensure appropriate housing is available so that older people who wish to move have a range of housing options to choose from
- Improve use of social media to ensure that younger people are aware of housing issues and the services available to them
- Ensure appropriate housing options are available for disabled people
- Work with South Cambridgeshire District Council to deliver site accommodation for Gypsies / Travellers
- Monitor the impact of welfare benefit changes to ensure Discretionary Housing Payments are targeted at those most in need
- Implement the provision of a shared Home Improvement Agency service between Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils
- Review our requirements around new Affordable Homes being suitable for disabled people
- Identify and provide for the housing needs of people with physical and sensory disabilities
- Ensure that the Council is able to influence decision-making around the commissioning of services for older and vulnerable people under the new health and social care commissioning arrangements

Key Local Strategies and Policies

- Older People's Housing Strategy 2009-14
- Cambridgeshire Supporting People Commissioning Strategy
- Cambridgeshire Extra Care Commissioning Strategy
- Cambridgeshire Travellers Strategy
- Cambridgeshire Disability Housing Strategy
- Developing Affordable Housing Policy Guide

Introduction

People in Cambridge have a wide range of housing needs. It is important that the Council takes this into account when agreeing and implementing priorities, to ensure that different groups, and individuals with differing needs, can access housing and related services.

The Council provides a number of services and activities aimed specifically at groups who may need more support or may potentially be disadvantaged in some way, or who may be subject to harassment on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation etc.

This chapter shows our approach to meeting the housing and housing-related service needs of individuals and groups who are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable, or disadvantaged. Although this chapter is split into different client groups, the Council recognises that many people will belong to more than one of these groups, as well as having more individual needs.

Progress since previous strategy

Over the last three years the Council has:

- ✓ As part of a wider sheltered housing modernisation programme, worked in partnership with Cambridge Housing Society to redevelop one of the Council's old sheltered scheme into a new Extra-Care sheltered scheme for older people
- ✓ Almost completed the-refurbishment of Brandon Court Sheltered scheme to provide modern, self-contained, energy efficient accommodation
- ✓ Provided Disabled Facilities Grants to 212 households.

- ✓ Introduced a shared Home Improvement Agency service with South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils, to improve value for money and create wider opportunities for improving and increasing services to older and disabled people
- ✓ Won the Supporting People contract to continue to provide high quality, integrated care and support services at the Ditchburn Place Extra-Care scheme
- ✓ Improved the information available to migrant workers to help them to access appropriate housing and understand what they can expect from their private landlord

Key issues to address

Older People

The number of older people is expected to increase significantly over the coming years, including the number of frail elderly. Our vision in the Council's Older People's Housing Strategy (aimed at people aged 50 and over) is for older people in Cambridge, with a range of diverse needs, to be able to:

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

We have almost completed a large-scale programme of redeveloping and refurbishing sheltered schemes in the City.

We have worked with partners on the development of an Extra Care Commissioning Strategy for Cambridgeshire.⁴⁷ Extra Care housing needs to meet a range of needs, including those of an increasing number of older people with dementia and/or learning disabilities. More

⁴⁷ Cambridgeshire Extra Care Commissioning Strategy:
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cmswebsite/apps/committees/AgendaItem.aspx?agendaItemID=4062>

extra care housing for older people in the City is a priority for us. However, we recognise that with the recent completion of Richard Newcombe Court as an Extra Care scheme, restrictions on the availability of Adult Social Care funding, and the wider existing availability in the City compared with other districts, provision of additional publicly funded extra care housing for Cambridge may not be possible within the period of this revised Strategy. We are keen to explore options for appropriate private sheltered and/or extra care provision where developers express an interest.

The support we provide to occupants of our sheltered housing is funded through the Supporting People programme. As part of their strategy to re-configure services to enable older people in the wider community to benefit from the limited funding available, the support service provided in sheltered housing is likely to be put out to competitive tender. The Council was successful in winning the contract to provide care and support at our Ditchburn Place extra care scheme, and plans to submit a bid to continue directly providing the support in our sheltered housing schemes and to people in the wider community.

We currently run a 'Sixty Plus Scheme' which provides advice, support and sign-posting to older people across all tenures in the wider community. We will continue to explore, with our partners, options for improving and extending this service.

We will continue to consider the housing needs of older people when enabling and developing new housing, including requiring Affordable Housing to be developed to Lifetime Homes standards, and promoting the development of high quality, accessible housing specifically designed for older people. Affordability of housing for older people wanting to down-size from larger homes is also an issue for those not on benefits and in the context of Affordable Rents, and we are working with the Homes and Communities Agency to try to ensure that rents on new homes suitable for older people are affordable to them.

Our approach to improving housing conditions for older and vulnerable people is detailed in Chapter 5 of this Strategy.

Further information is available in our Older People's Housing Strategy.

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⁴⁸ Older People's Housing Strategy: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/housing-and-related-strategies.en>

Younger People

Younger people (other than full-time students) are one of the groups particularly disadvantaged by the shortage of housing in the City, especially the shortage of Affordable Housing.

Few people aged under 25 responded to our on-line survey questionnaire, and we may need to improve our communication with this group, ensuring that they know what services are available. The Council is increasingly making use of different forms of social media to interact with residents and service users, and as younger people are more likely to use these than more traditional methods of communication it is important that we continue to improve in this area.

The Council carries out a range of community activities involving younger people, and we need to consider whether we can use these opportunities better to ensure that younger people are aware of the housing-related services available to them and the issues around accessing appropriate housing.

Disabled People

The Cambridgeshire Physical and Sensory Impairment JSNA identifies housing as a major factor affecting the health and well-being of disabled people.

Our Home Improvement Agency arranges disabled adaptations and home improvements for vulnerable people living in the private sector. From April 2012 this service is being provided as a shared service between Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire District Councils. This will enable us to provide better value for money, and will help us to identify wider opportunities for partnership working and improve signposting to existing services.

We plan to continue to top-up Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to try to minimise the waiting time for disabled adaptation works, provided sufficient funding can be generated and made available from available Right to Buy receipts.

We require new Affordable Homes to be built to Lifetime Homes standard as a minimum, and for at least 2% of new Affordable Housing to be fully wheelchair accessible, with a further 8% provided to meet

other specialist needs. We will be reviewing our requirements in this area as part of the review of our Affordable Housing Policy Guide.⁴⁹ We will also explore with partners how we can better ensure that new Affordable Homes are designed so that disabled adaptations can be installed effectively in the future if required.

We will continue to work with partners to identify specialist housing needs for people with physical and sensory disabilities. For example we have been working to facilitate delivery of a small specialist scheme for people with Acquired Brain Injury.

The Council keeps a separate list of housing register applicants who need disabled adapted housing, and are given priority when suitable housing becomes available. We would like in the longer term to explore issues around how better use could be made of suitable private sector homes for disabled people on our housing register, and whether we could work more closely with developers of new homes in enabling bespoke private sector solutions for individuals.

Mental Health

We have been working with Mental Health service commissioners, but to date have not identified any needs for housing specifically designed for people with mental health issues. Their preference is currently for ordinary housing with floating support going in, and we will continue to work, through the Home-Link register, to help meet these needs.

We will ensure that where opportunities arise in future for provision of Extra Care housing for older people, the needs of people with dementia are taken into account within the requirements of the Cambridgeshire Extra Care Commissioning Strategy.

Domestic Violence

The Cambridgeshire Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy has recently been reviewed. This aims to increase awareness of the issues, encourage the reporting of incidents of domestic violence, and support agencies to work together to provide support to victims and their families.

⁴⁹ Affordable Housing Policy Guide: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/development-enabling-and-growth.en>

We have recently improved the information available to victims and potential victims of domestic violence, through our Council housing tenancy conditions, lettings policy and website. We also plan to publish a question and answer sheet around access to housing for this group.

We will continue to work with partners to ensure that appropriate housing options are available for victims.

Vulnerable People on Welfare Benefits

National changes to the welfare benefits system are already impacting on vulnerable people in receipt of benefits. The Council has been awarded an increase in its Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) fund, but this will only cover a small proportion of the overall reduction in benefits payable to claimants.

We have been actively monitoring the potential impact of these changes, and will continue to do so as the changes are implemented, to understand where we need to direct the greatest level of DHP support.

As outlined previously, we are anticipating a potential increase in the number of benefit claimants becoming or being threatened with homelessness, and we need to work with partners to explore housing and support options, as well as potential employment opportunities for this group.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups and Migrant Workers

Whilst Cambridge's population has a high proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic residents, many of these people have high levels of qualifications and are not disproportionately disadvantaged in accessing housing and related services. However, for those who could potentially be at a disadvantage we will continue to monitor the extent to which people from BME groups are accessing our services, and satisfaction levels amongst those groups.

We will also continue to promote engagement with BME groups as appropriate for specific projects. The Council has procured a new Translation and Interpreting Service Framework, and will continue to monitor requests to ensure that translation into appropriate languages is available.

We are noticing an increase in European migrant workers having to be housed in our temporary homelessness accommodation, and we are looking into why this might be and how this issue might be addressed. Issues sometimes arise around migrant workers living in overcrowded or poor housing conditions, although less so than in other parts of the sub-region. We will continue to be vigilant in this area and deal with problems as they arise.

Gypsies and Travellers

Gypsies and Travellers are amongst the most disadvantaged BME groups in the country, and we need to aim to meet the housing needs of this group.

We have worked with partners on the development of a Gypsy and Traveller Strategy for Cambridgeshire, with one of the main priorities being to increase site provision across the county.

We have also supported the production of a revised Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA)⁵⁰. With the removal of regional targets under the Localism Act, this has identified limited need for permanent Traveller accommodation in the City, in contrast to need identified in other districts across the sub-region. We recognise that the review was based largely on Gypsies and Travellers already living on sites in each district, and therefore it is unsurprising that little need was identified within the City. However, the review has identified a need for some transit/ emergency stopping place provision in the Cambridge area.

The Council has developed some site-based criteria against which we have assessed the suitability of land available across the City, and we will be consulting on these criteria, and any potential sites identified, as part of the issues and options consultation on our Local Plan.

We have, jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council, been successful in securing £500,000 of government grant to provide 10 pitches between now and 2015. We are working with them to try to identify some suitable land for a site in or close to the City.

⁵⁰ Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment: <http://www.peterborough.gov.uk/pdf/env-plan-evibase%202011%20GTANA.pdf>

Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual and Transgender (LGBT)

We still need to improve the monitoring information we have on LGBT residents to understand whether our services are meeting the needs of these groups. However, we recognise that some people find monitoring questions in this area intrusive, so we need to ensure that questions are only asked where the response can be used to improve access to services, or eliminate discrimination for these groups.

The Councils Tenancy Conditions fully recognise the rights of civil partners.

Our consultation on the development of this Strategy raised the issue of LGBT residents needing to feel safe when living in hostel accommodation. Provision of self-contained accommodation at the new Assessment Centre should help to address this, as well as more comprehensive assessments of need when moving-on.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Housing Support

The national reduction in the amount of Supporting People funding available, and the removal of the ring-fence around the Supporting People budget, is likely to have a significant impact on the support services that can be provided to vulnerable people in their homes. Services are being re-modelled through implementation of the Supporting People Commissioning Strategy⁵¹ to make them more cost-effective, but pressures in this area will continue to increase in the foreseeable future.

The floating support service for vulnerable adults, previously provided by the Council, was re-tendered by Supporting People and a new provider is now in place. Although the Council was unsuccessful in winning the tender, we did have an input into the specification for this service to try to ensure that service users continue to receive a quality service within the funding available. The Council will be bidding to continue to provide support services in the Council's sheltered and temporary housing.

⁵¹ Cambridgeshire Supporting People Commissioning Strategy:
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/supportingpeople/schsupstratrevs.htm>

The Council needs to work with Adult Social Care Commissioners to continue to influence decision-making on commissioning of services in this area, in the context of the new health and social care commissioning arrangements.

Health and Social Care Commissioning

With radical reform taking place to the commissioning of health and social care, the Council will need to engage effectively with the newly emerging partnerships to ensure that the care and support needs of Cambridge residents are met and that our housing activities are appropriately targeted. The new arrangements should present new opportunities for joint working to ensure that the housing needs of vulnerable people can be met effectively.

Monitoring and Signposting

The Council already carries out monitoring to capture the profile of service users, and uses this information in a number of areas to ensure that it is not discriminating against different groups, and that strategies and services are developed to meet a wide range of needs. We need to continue to improve this monitoring to ensure that everyone can have equal access to housing and services.

The Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment includes a range of mapping information in relation to vulnerable groups, and the Council will use this, and work with partners to improve the information available, to improve our understanding of the needs of different groups.

We will also continue to improve staff training in meeting the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

We need to continue to work with other partners to ensure that people know how to access housing and know about the services the Council provides.

Chapter 8: Resourcing and Next Steps

Resourcing the Strategy

The Council's Housing Strategy has been reviewed during a time of significant financial uncertainty, and in the context of unprecedented cuts in public expenditure. The Council has been implementing a range of measures to reduce overall expenditure and improve value for money, including re-evaluating priorities, re-structuring services, and sharing some services with other authorities. This Strategy aims to set realistic objectives and priorities which can be delivered within available resources and in conjunction with a range of partners.

Implementation of the Strategy will be funded through a combination of the following:

- Revenue resources allocated to housing-related issues from the Council's General Fund.
- Council Housing revenue activity funded through rental and service charge income into the Housing Revenue Account, following the abolition of the HRA subsidy system. The new regime requires the Council to take on a proportion of the national housing debt - ie around £214 million - as a one-off settlement. Plans for funding housing activity and paying off the debt are detailed in the Council's HRA Business Plan.⁵²
- Capital projects will be funded through our ring-fenced Housing Capital Programme, funded from the HRA and General Fund. This will be reviewed annually to take into account changes in the funding available for the programme. Additional borrowing capacity may be available, up to the overall value of the stock.
- National funding streams aimed at facilitating growth, including New Homes Bonus, the proposed new Community Infrastructure Levy etc.

⁵² HRA Business Plan:
http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy/documents/s8870/Special%20HMB%20CS%20February%202012%20-%20Whole%20Document%20Final%20Draft_1.pdf

- Government grant available through the Homes and Communities Agency for new Affordable Housing and Gypsy and Traveller site development.
- Other government grant which may become available from time to time. For example, the Council has recently been successful in securing a share of national Homelessness Prevention and Discretionary Housing Payment grants to be spent locally.
- Developer contributions through planning obligations (section 106 agreements). This will generally be in the form of free land for Affordable Housing, although the Council may accept a financial contribution (commuted sum) instead, but only in exceptional circumstances.
- Supporting People funding for housing support services provided by the Council - currently to residents of sheltered and Extra-Care housing and temporary homelessness accommodation.

Further information on available funding and the potential impact of spending cuts is available in the Council's Medium Term Strategy.⁵³

Next Steps

This Housing Strategy, once approved, will be available to the public through the Council's website.

Actions to achieve the priorities within the Strategy will be developed with relevant partners. Progress will be monitored through our internal Housing Management Team, and updates published periodically on the Council's website.

⁵³ Medium Term Strategy: <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/council-and-democracy/how-the-council-works/council-finance/budget-process.en>

Appendix 1: Action Plan

Being Developed

Appendix 2: Results of Consultation

ON-LINE QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction

A questionnaire was run on the Council's website from 5th December 2011 to 6th January 2012, publicised through the local press and radio and emailed to some local organisations. Hard copies were available for anyone who was not able to complete the questionnaire on-line. A £50 prize was offered to Cambridge City residents to encourage people to respond.

53 individuals, and 3 organisations operating in Cambridge responded, with 42 respondents completing the whole questionnaire. Of those who completed it as an individual, around 90% lived in Cambridge and the remaining 10% lived in surrounding areas (as identified from postcodes).

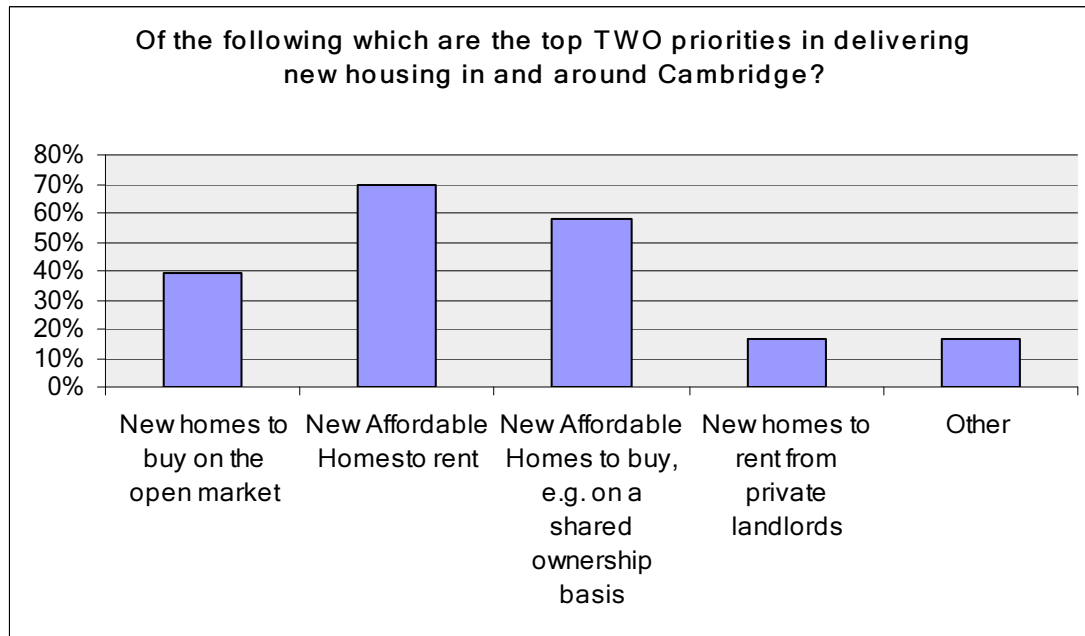
The decision was made at an early stage that the consultation would be carried out within existing resources, and it was recognised that that it was not going to give a statistically robust analysis of the views of residents in and around Cambridge. It was intended to give a flavour of what respondents think is important. The results have been used, alongside a range of other information, to inform the revised Housing Strategy.

A few respondents felt that the questionnaire asked 'leading' or inappropriate questions. The Housing Strategy, by its nature, covers a broad range of issues, but we needed to keep the questionnaire manageable and fairly straightforward for people to complete, and therefore focused on some fairly specific issues within the existing chapter headings. We did, however, give respondents the opportunity to add additional views on priorities, which have also been used to influence the Strategy.

We did not specifically ask questions about housing for older people, as we already have an Older People's Housing Strategy which links closely to the Housing Strategy.

HOUSING RELATED QUESTIONS

Q2. New Homes, New Growth: Housing Delivery



43 respondents answered this question.

The majority of respondents answering this question considered Affordable Housing - for rent and for sale - to be a high priority for delivering new housing in and around Cambridge, with new homes to rent from private landlords being the lower priority.

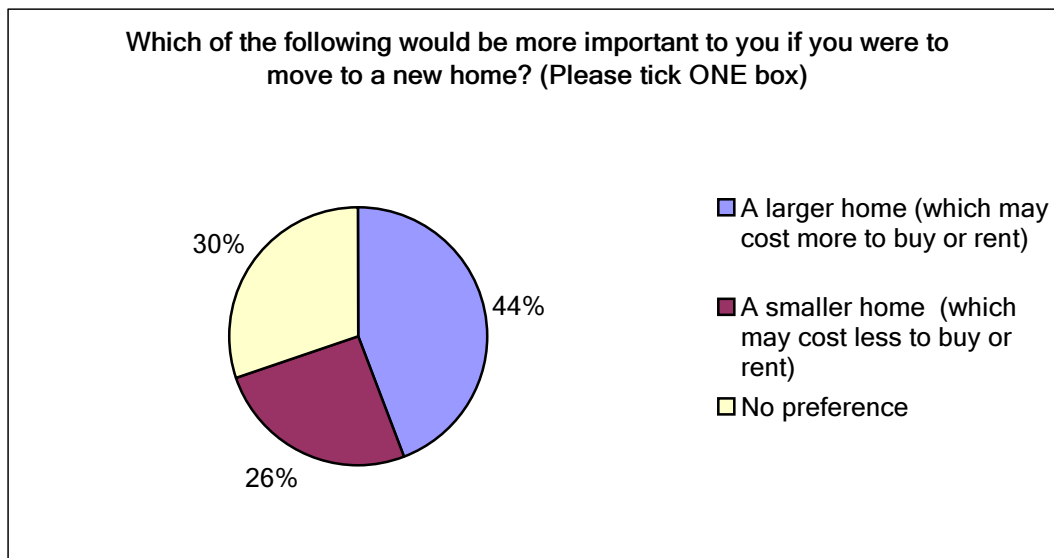
Responses to 'Other', included the importance of the quality of design of housing and neighbourhoods; the need for family homes, including houses, to deal with overcrowding; need for retirement housing for older people; the importance of Housing Associations; turning over empty homes more quickly, and tackling private sector empty homes. One respondent commented that Affordable Rents were not affordable.

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

- Continue to seek a mix of types and tenures of Affordable Housing to meet a range of housing needs
- Feed views on the need for more family homes into the issues and options consultation on the Local Plan review (starting June 2012)

- Ensure a range of types and tenures of housing is available for older people to move to, including specialist and general needs housing
- Prioritise bringing empty homes back into use
- Have a requirement in our Tenancy Strategy for Registered Providers to ensure that new homes are as affordable as possible to local people

Q3. New Homes, New Growth: Priorities in a New Home



43 respondents answered this question.

The intention of this question was to help us to assess whether the Council should be working to influence the building of larger homes, or whether smaller, cheaper homes are acceptable. This is a particular issue for Cambridge, with a large number of smaller homes being developed over recent years.

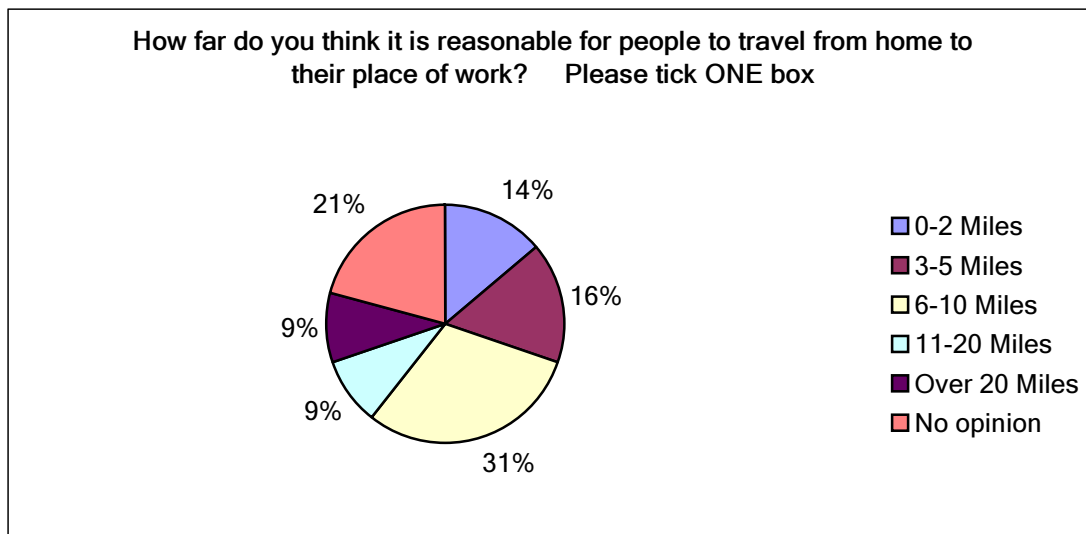
Although just under one third expressed no preference, this suggests that respondents consider larger homes to be somewhat more important than smaller homes which would keep the cost down.

Additional comments were mainly around the need for more spacious new homes for middle-aged and older people to move into – not just sheltered accommodation - which would help to free up family sized housing. Other issues which might be important in wanting to move included location, garden size and quality of housing.

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

- Feed views on the need for more family homes into the issues and options consultation on the Local Plan review (starting June 2012)
- Ensure a range of types and tenures of housing is available for older people to move to, including specialist and general needs housing

Q4. New Homes, New Growth: Travel to Work



43 people responded to this question. (NB as one respondent pointed out, this question would have been better if fields 0-2 miles, 0-5 miles, 0-10 miles etc had been used).

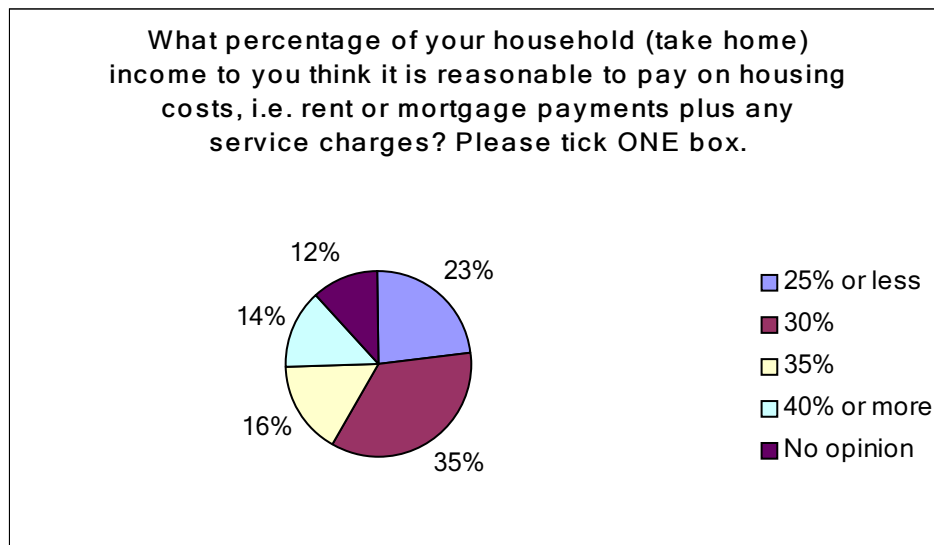
The vast majority (61%) felt that up to 10 miles was a reasonable commuting distance to work, with roughly half of those considering that up to five miles was reasonable.

Most of the additional comments referred to the need to be able to walk, cycle, or use public transport to get to work.

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

- This reinforces the aim in our existing Strategy that people should be able to make local journeys to work. The design and location of new housing developments, and access to public transport, should continue to be a priority.

Q5. New Homes, New Growth: Affordability



43 people answered this question.

This question was to help us to understand what level of housing costs local people consider to be affordable, particularly within the context of the new Affordable Rents which are likely to be around 65% of local market rents.

We recognise that assessing housing affordability is a complex issue, and that different household circumstances will affect what level of housing expenditure is affordable to each household.

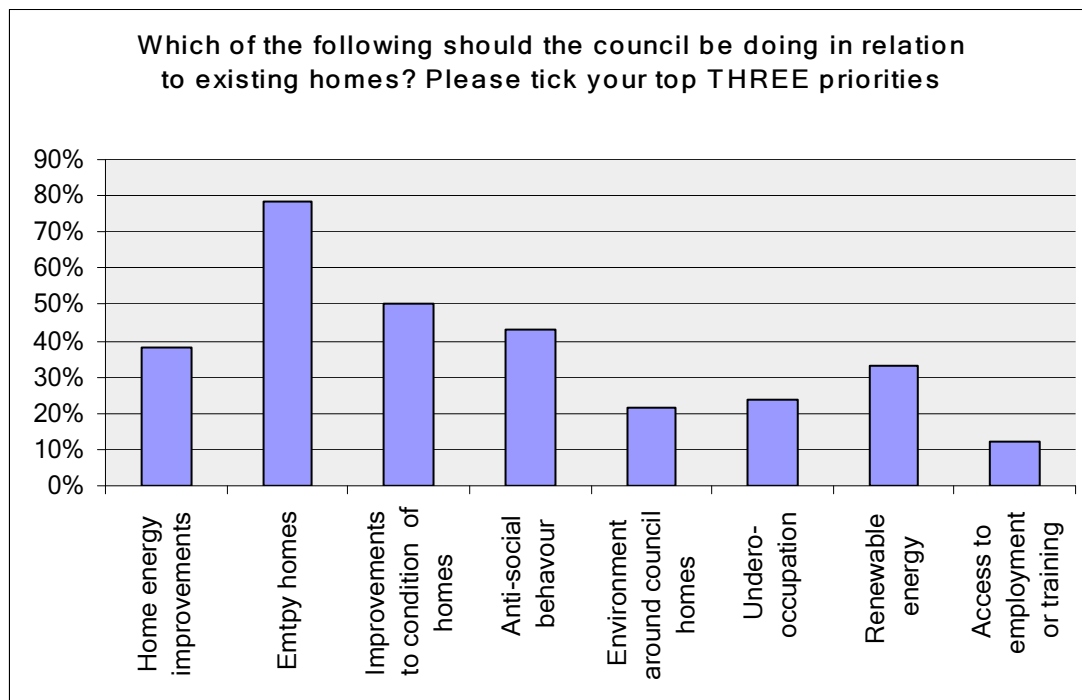
However, in general terms, most of those expressing an opinion felt that costs of up to 30% of take-home income was reasonable to spend on housing costs – with almost a quarter of respondents saying that up to 25% was reasonable. Around one-third felt that 35-40% of household income was reasonable. A higher proportion of owner-occupiers felt that 35% or more was reasonable than from other rented tenures.

Additional comments included: the influence that other costs – including travel costs – will have on what people think is reasonable; the extent to which people may prioritise mortgage costs at certain times in order to be mortgage free later; the effect of interest rates on mortgage payments; and the greater impact which any percentage will have on households on lower incomes as opposed to those on higher incomes.

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

- Continue to use 25-30% of household income as a basis for assessing affordability of housing, but recognising the impact that other factors have on affordability

Q 6. Existing homes: Priorities



42 respondents answered this question.

The question took some of the existing priorities in the ‘Existing Homes’ chapter of the Housing Strategy, and asked respondents to select the three main ones, and let us know of any other areas of priority. The intention was to help us to assess how investment might be balanced in relation to existing homes.

Ensuring that empty homes are brought back into use emerged as the most important priority of those listed, followed by improving the condition of existing homes, tackling anti-social behaviour, and home energy improvements and renewable energy. There were no issues which no respondent included in their top three priorities, and two respondents, in the additional comments box said that they were all important.

Other responses included: need to lobby for higher stamp duty exemptions to reflect high cost of housing in Cambridge; the importance

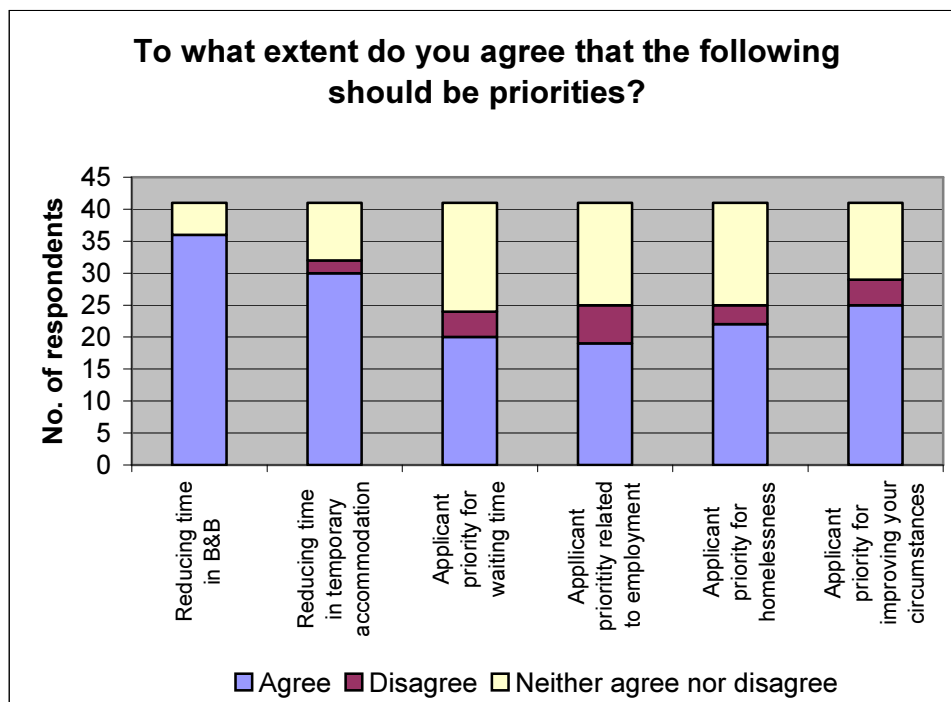
of a free housing market with limited landlord regulation and less housing restriction through conservation areas; and freeing up social housing by encouraging existing council tenants to purchase Affordable Homes.

One respondent said that improving the fabric of homes and the surrounding area in all tenures was more important than investing in new PVCU windows, and would reduce the incidence of Anti-Social-Behaviour.

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

- All of these factors to remain priorities
- Empty homes to be a high priority

Q7. Housing Options and Preventing Homelessness: Priorities



There were 41 responses to this question.

This question explores the relative priorities between elements of the existing Housing Options service and whether priority should be given to Housing Register applicants for a range of circumstances.

Reducing time in Bed and Breakfast and temporary accommodation were high priorities, with no-one disagreeing about reducing time in Bed and Breakfast. This reinforces the importance of our current approach in this area.

Of the categories given for applicant priority, high percentages of respondents who expressed a view said that priority should be given for waiting time, employment circumstances, homelessness and improving one's circumstances; although significant proportions expressed no opinion. This will be used to inform our work on reviewing the Lettings Policy.

Again, the additional comments on this question varied considerably. Most related to applicant priority, including giving priority to local people, and prioritising transfers/ mutual exchanges to 'rightsize' homes. One respondent said that social housing should not be used for 'social engineering'.

In relation to homelessness, one respondent highlighted the importance of taking into account the reasons why someone is homeless.

One response said that reducing crime should be a key consideration.

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

- Reducing time in bed and breakfast accommodation and temporary accommodation to remain key priorities
- Responses re applicant priorities to be fed into review of Lettings Policy

Q8. Is there anything else you think is important about housing, or any other issues we need to take into account?

13 respondents answered this question.

There were no predominant themes arising from this question, with almost all respondents citing different priorities and issues. The wide range of responses included:

- Importance of low-rise buildings, and houses as opposed to flats, in high quality public areas with amenities

- Importance of prioritising green space, cycling and walking over car use
- Keeping cost of social housing down
- Importance of setting housing priorities to protect vulnerable people from harm and costlier state intervention
- Ensuring all money raised from sale of Council homes is used to fund replacement Council housing
- Priority should be given to families with children, and disabled and vulnerable people
- Importance of housing related support and homelessness prevention
- Single people shouldn't be able to occupy more than one bedroom
- Dealing with low-standard rental properties and Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- Need to consider impact of poor housing on health and crime.
- Reviewing the quality of student housing

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

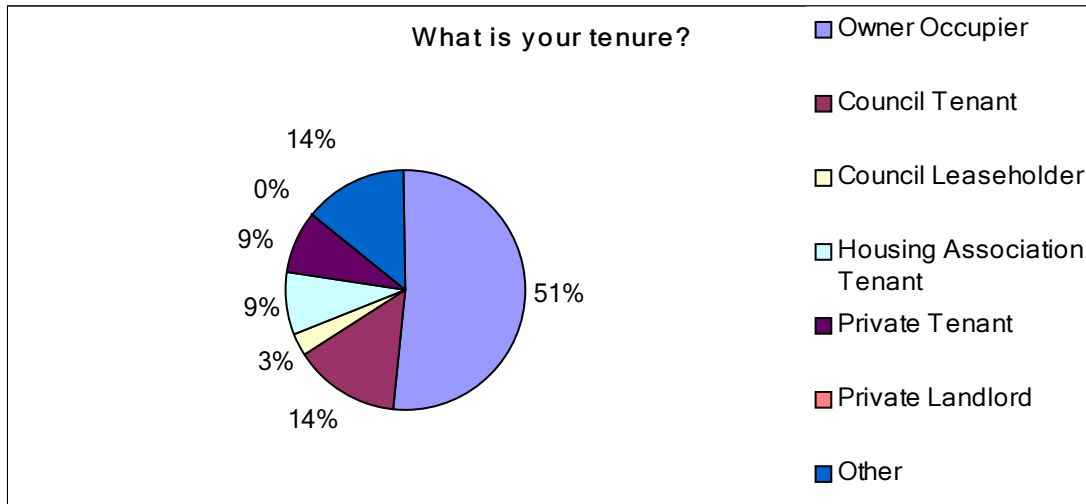
- No one additional issue coming out is accepted as confirmation that the objectives and priorities in our Strategy are the right ones

Q9 & 10. Would you like to get more involved?

Just over 25% of respondents said they would be interested in getting further involved. Of these, those who gave contact details have been contacted to discuss potential involvement.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

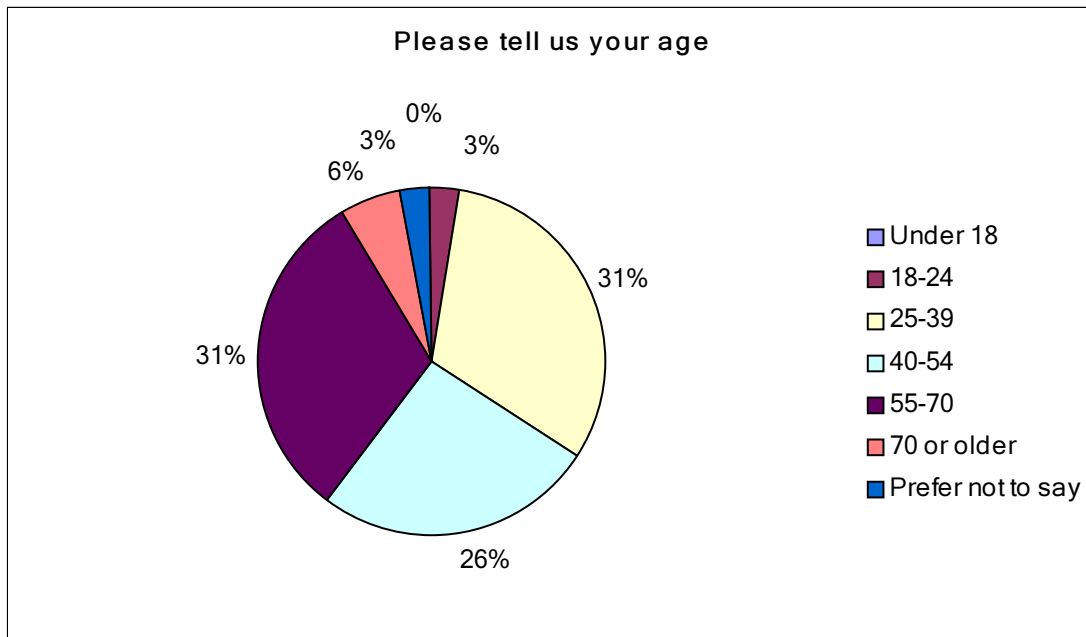
Q11. What is your tenure?



35 respondents answered this question. Of these, just over half were owner-occupiers, and 26% were social housing tenants and leaseholders, which matches the Census 2001 profile of the City. Only 9% were private tenants – this group being significantly under-represented compared with the estimated 25% of homes in the City being privately rented.

There were no private landlords. 4 of the 5 respondents who cited 'Other' were from local organisations.

Q12. Please tell us your age



The majority of the 35 respondents to this question were fairly evenly split between 25-39s, 40-45s and 55-70s. There were no respondents under 18 years of age.

40-54 year olds were slightly over-represented at 26% compared with 18% city-wide in the Census.

55-70 year olds were significantly over-represented, at 31% compared with a Cambridge population of 13%.

The 18-24 age group were significantly under-represented compared to the City profile, (3% compared with a Cambridge population of 19% aged 20-24). As were the over 70s, at 6% compared with a census figure of 10%

Q13 Ethnicity. Please click on the term that best describes you.

25 respondents described themselves as White British (71%), which is lower than the overall White British population as measured in the 2001 Census. However, 7 respondents (20%) preferred not to reveal their ethnicity, some of whom may have been responding on behalf of organisations, so we are not able to identify whether the profile of respondents reflects the general ethnic make-up of Cambridge.

(The remaining 2 respondents were from unspecified White and Black backgrounds).

Q14 Do you consider that you have a disability?

Around 14% of respondents identified themselves as having a disability. As some of those without a disability will have been responding on behalf of organisations, it appears that a lower proportion of individual respondents had a disability than the 14.5% of the City population identified in the 2001 Census as having a long-term limiting illness, health problem or disability.

Q15 Please tell us how you heard about the survey

29 responses were received to this question as follows:

Council or Councillors' Websites 10
Twitter 5
Email 4
Cambridge Past Present and Future 3

Local newspaper 3
Local Radio 2
Open Door 1
Cambridge Matters 1

This suggests that internet-based publicity on the survey was the most effective way of reaching people, although the Council recognises that not all residents have on-line access so other forms of communication are also important.

OPEN DOOR SURVEY

The Survey

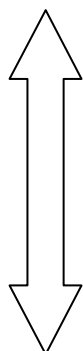
Prior to the on-line questionnaire being issued, a short survey was included in the magazine issued to Cambridge City Council tenants and leaseholders, 'Open Door'. A prize of £35 was offered as an incentive for responding.

The survey listed 7 issues in order of priority and asked respondents to put them in order of importance, with 1 being the most important and 7 the least important to them. 126 responses were received.

The rankings each respondent gave to each issue were added up. So the issue in the list that was most important ended up with the lowest number of points, and the issue which was least important to them had the highest number of points.

The order of priority for tenants and leaseholders was as follows:

Most Important

- 
1. Affordability of housing (276 points)
 2. Quality of housing and the surrounding environment (334 points)
 3. Energy efficiency in the home (373 points)
 4. Location of where to live (384 points)
 5. Making homes safer (479 points)
 6. Tackling anti-social behaviour (490 points)
 7. Sense of community and neighbourhood (554 points)

Less important

Affordability of housing came out as the number one priority, followed by quality of housing and the surrounding environment, energy efficiency in the home and location of where to live. Making homes safer, tackling anti-social behaviour and having a sense of community and neighbourhood were considered generally less important in relation to the other priorities.

Other Issues Identified Through the Survey

Tenants and leaseholders were invited to say whether there were other things which they thought should be priorities for housing in Cambridge.

Much of the response to this was around housing management issues, including anti-social behaviour and community safety, litter and fly-tipping, caretaking, car parking, and dog fouling and barking.

The importance of providing new Affordable Housing, including housing built by the Council, especially for younger people, was also reinforced here as a number of people cited it as particularly important.

Environmental improvements cited included improved lighting, safer footpaths and recycling facilities. Improvements in the home included better home safety, draught reduction, and provision of external storage for cycles and mobility scooters.

Some people also expressed concerns that local people should have higher priority on the housing register.

Some issues raised were not directly related to housing – including more policing, better community facilities, improvements to public transport etc.

How this will be reflected in our strategy:

- Delivery of new Affordable Housing will remain a key priority, and the Council will continue to work with the Homes and Communities Agency to ensure that Affordable Rents are kept as low as possible within the grant conditions.
- The Council's HRA debt settlement has been agreed within the context of the government's expectation that rents will continue

- to be set in line with government guidelines, which will inevitably lead to rent increases over time. However, the Council will continue to try to ensure that services charges represent value for money.
- The Council will work with tenants to review the Cambridge Standard to consider what investment should be made in the quality of the housing and surrounding environment over and above the Decent Homes standard, and the results of this survey will be fed into that work.
 - The Council will continue to work with residents to improve the management of the Council's housing and surrounding environment.
 - The Council will continue to invest in energy efficiency improvements, and to trial new forms of energy efficient heating, lighting and building systems.
 - Issues raised around priority on the housing register will be fed into the work to review our Lettings policy.

TELEPHONE SURVEY OF HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE USERS

As part of a customer satisfaction survey carried out by telephone amongst our Housing Advice Service users, two additional questions were asked to help to inform the Housing Strategy. Unfortunately information could only be collected from 7 people, but it helps to enhance the information on what our strategic priorities should be.

Q1. What do you think are the main issues about housing in Cambridge?

Again, the main answers to this were around high demand for housing. The shortage of Affordable Housing, and of homes to rent which were available to young people and those on Housing Benefit were highlighted as issues.

Q2. Tell us two things that you think the Council should be doing to tackle and resolve housing issues in Cambridge?

The need for housing to be more affordable was highlighted, as well as the need for the Council to work with Letting Agencies to try to improve access to privately rented housing for people on Housing Benefit. One

respondent highlighted the need for shared hostel accommodation where Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual or Transgender (LGBT) people would feel safe to stay.

How this will be reflected in our strategy

- Our Strategy will continue to prioritise the provision of new Affordable Housing.
- We will work with Letting Agencies and other partners to try to make more private rented housing available to people on the Housing Register – including those on Housing Benefit.
- The provision of self-contained single homeless accommodation in the new Assessment Centre, and the introduction of more comprehensive needs assessments for people being moved on from temporary accommodation, should help to address safety issues for LGBT clients.

CONSULTATION ON DRAFT STRATEGY DOCUMENT

The following is a summary of the issues raised by respondents to the consultation on the draft Strategy, and shows how or whether they can be addressed in the final version of the Strategy or through other means.

A number of the responses around new development involved issues which need to be picked up as part of the Local Plan review, rather than being able to be resolved through the revised Housing Strategy. Responses relating to Local Plan issues are being passed to the Council's Planning Policy team, and will be considered in general terms. However, respondents have been advised to respond separately to the Local Plan Issues and Options Statutory Consultation, so that their concerns can be considered in more detail. That consultation runs from 15th June to 27th July 2012.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
Understanding the Housing Market		
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) should not be used as it does not include the right information. The evidence base used to inform the Strategy is out of date		SHMA includes information on the current situation and projections into the future in some areas, although it is recognised that some data will always be slightly out of date. Priority in Chapter 3 has been strengthened:

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
		<p>'Continue to review and update the Cambridge SHMA'.</p> <p>As part of the review of the Local Plan, the Council has prepared a comprehensive range of evidence bases. Key sources of evidence which have informed and will continue to inform the future level of housing include the SHMA (including housing need), demographic projections, economic potential, Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (land capacity), housing delivery, community and strategic issues and infrastructure capacity.</p>
SHMA doesn't use examples of best practice across the country		This is not the role of the SHMA. Cambridge City works with sub-regional partners to recognise best practice, and regularly uses it in development of housing and services.
Need to engage pro-actively with all parties to identify local market needs.	<p>Development of SHMA will be carried out in conjunction with partners.</p> <p>Local Plan Issues and</p>	SHMA is a key source of market information, and a range of stakeholders are involved in its development and review. This approach needs to continue to improve. Stakeholder engagement on planning issues will be a

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
	Options consultation is being carried out.	key part of the Local Plan review process.
Increasing Housing Supply		
Council should not have reduced its overall development targets. Need more housing built.	Reviewing housing targets within the Local Plan is a priority	<p>Have re-worded paragraph in Chapter 4 to clarify that the review of housing targets will take into account a wider range of issues than the decision not to pursue boundary change and the decision by Marshall Group not to relocate.</p> <p>Targets were reduced before the new NPPF came in, because of shortage of land available. Availability of land and revised targets are being considered through the Local Plan review.</p> <p>There is limited land available in and around the City, and there will always need to be a balance between the number of homes developed and the need for high quality, sustainable, new and existing communities.</p>
Should increase the amount or Affordable Housing provided so that the need for Affordable	Ensuring high levels of provision of good quality Affordable Housing is a	The percentage of Affordable Housing required as part of new developments will be re-considered in the Local Plan Review.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
<p>Housing is met fully.</p> <p>Percentage of Affordable Housing required on new sites should be increased, and the threshold reduced so that smaller sites require Affordable Housing.</p> <p>Affordable Housing needs to be delivered <u>now</u>.</p> <p>Affordable Housing quotas should cover all a developer's properties in the city collectively</p>	<p>priority.</p> <p>Affordable Housing Requirements will be reviewed through the Local Plan review.</p> <p>How much Affordable Housing can be developed on a site is inevitably affected by whether it is viable for the developer.</p> <p>We will continue to require developments to include appropriate provision of Affordable Housing, except where developers can fully demonstrate that scheme viability would be jeopardised.</p> <p>The Council is committed</p>	<p>The Planning Inspectorate would not allow the Council to require 50% Affordable Housing when the current Local Plan was adopted – 40% was the maximum.</p> <p>Developers will only build the amount of Affordable Housing that is viable, although the Council requires clear evidence of non-viability if requirements are to be relaxed on specific sites.</p> <p>With limited land available in the City, and limited funding, it is unlikely that the identified Affordable Housing could be fully met.</p> <p>The Strategy has to be realistic – development is market-driven, and Council powers to ensure that development takes place are limited.</p>

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
	to promoting new development in sustainable new communities.	
Viability of providing Affordable Housing should be weighed against need for other community facilities/ benefits, and should reflect local area or site specific considerations.	We will continue to require developments to include appropriate provision of Affordable Housing, except where developers can fully demonstrate that scheme viability would be jeopardised.	The current Local Plan allows for negotiation on each site. Viability work is part of the Local Plan Review.
Opportunity to put in place an affordability ratio within the housing strategy eg set a long term target of reducing the ratio of house prices to incomes by a set figure every year for the period of the local plan.		Can't be done yet as Local Plan now being reviewed. But may be something to consider when the Strategy is reviewed again, once new Local Plan adopted.
Needs to be more discussion of how the local authority will use its planning powers through the Local		Needs to be addressed through the Local Plan Review.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
Plan to build the number of new homes that are needed, including the steps that will be taken to work with surrounding local authorities to relieve the pressure upon Cambridge		
Percentage of Affordable Housing available to buy to should be increased from 25% to 50%.	Will be reviewed through the Local Plan	<p>Percentage split between rented and intermediate tenures is a Local Plan issue.</p> <p>Affordable Housing to buy has to be sold at a percentage of market value, and rent is also chargeable, so it is still unaffordable to many.</p>
No mention of co-operative housing in Strategy or Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), and no co-operative groups are SHMA stakeholders	N/A	<p>Statement added that the Council is willing to consider alternative methods of housing delivery and co-operative housing is recognised as a form of Affordable Housing delivery in the Council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>Will raise this with sub-regional colleagues in context of further development of the SHMA.</p>
No mention of self-build		Statement added that the Council is willing

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
		to consider alternative methods of housing delivery – self-build came up through consultation.
<p>Strategy too focused on vulnerable, younger and older people, and doesn't address the needs of the group in the middle (35s and overs) who want to buy their own homes but can't afford to.</p> <p>Impact on personal care costs falling on local authorities in later life if no housing equity to pay for them.</p>	<p>Intermediate tenures (shared ownership etc) and Affordable Rents are aimed at people on middle incomes.</p> <p>This group weren't explicitly excluded, but probably not sufficiently emphasised in the Strategy.</p>	<p>Objective strengthened: 'Increase the supply of good quality energy efficient Affordable Housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures'</p> <p>Added data on applicants to Homebuy Register.</p> <p>Other references made in the text to the lack of affordability for people on a wide range of incomes.</p> <p>Re-worded the need to review 75/25 split between rented and intermediate tenures on new developments.</p> <p>Clarified that Affordable Rents are likely to be attractive to a new group of people who would not previously have considered joining the housing register.</p>

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
		The main emphasis in the Strategy still needs to be around vulnerable people and those on low incomes, as they are the people most severely affected by the housing shortage.
Opportunities to purchase Affordable Housing aren't communicated well enough to the public when they arise		This is an operational, rather than a strategic, issue. Applicants on the Homebuy register will have access to the information. Developers are responsible for marketing, and it's in their interests to market effectively.
Percentage of wheelchair accessible new homes should be increased in line with number of wheelchair users in population	Percentage will be reviewed as part of review of Affordable Housing Policy Guide.	This will be dealt with as part of the review of the Council's Affordable Housing Policy Guide. One issue to consider is that wheelchair accessible housing is more expensive to rent/buy, and not all wheelchair users want or need fully wheelchair accessible housing.
Strategy shouldn't make reference to 80% of market rents – seems to conflict with references to 30% of household income being affordable	The government has stipulated that Affordable Rents are to be set at up to 80% of local market	The Government's position needed to be explained in the Strategy

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
	<p>rents or close to Local Housing Allowance rates.</p> <p>The Council recognises that this is unaffordable to many in Cambridge, and has negotiated with the Homes and Communities Agency that rents should be closer to 65% of market rents in Cambridge</p>	
<p>Concerns raised about quality of new developments –eg sound insulation</p>	<p>Grant funded Affordable Housing has to meet Homes and Communities Agency quality requirements.</p>	<p>New-build market housing has to meet national Building Control requirements, and the Council will use enforcement powers to address any high level hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Otherwise this is outside of the Council's control.</p>
<p>Affordable Homes need to be affordable</p>	<p>The Council are advising Registered Providers that Affordable Rents need to be as affordable as possible to local people.</p>	<p>The Council is working in a number of ways to do this within the powers it has to do so, but has limited power to influence.</p>

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
	Council rents will continue to be set in line with government guidelines	
Regulate housing developers		Council has limited powers to do this, other than what is allowable through local planning policy.
There should be minimum property sizes	Space standards are being reviewed through Local Plan Review	This will be dealt with through the Local Plan review.
New homes should be no larger than existing homes, with similar plot sizing and spacing	Space standards are being reviewed through Local Plan Review	This will be dealt with through the Local Plan review.
Noise and disturbance on new sites should be carefully weighed against need for development		This needs to be dealt with through the planning process for each site.
The Council should build new Affordable Housing for the rental market	Strategy makes reference to exploring government options around private	Sentence added in Chapter 4 to highlight that the Council is exploring options around investment in private rented homes for vulnerable people and those on low incomes

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
	investment in new privately rented homes	who are currently unable to access appropriate private rented housing.
Quarter-to-Six Quadrant have produced a vision for protecting south-west Cambridge from inappropriate development.		This is a planning issue for south-west Cambridge.
Development should not take place on recreational space	Objective to Create green, mixed and sustainable communities which benefit existing communities	This is a Local Plan issue, and needs to be dealt with through the planning process for each site.
Comments made on a particular parcel of land		Promotion of a particular site is an issue for the Local Plan rather than the Housing Strategy.
Housing Strategy lacks ambition and presents few solutions on how the City can build the number of homes it needs to re-balance the local housing market.		This needs to be addressed through the Local Plan review.
Strategy needs to recognise Cambridge as an internationally renowned university and high-tech City and that many employers and colleges are struggling to attract	Cambridge's position in the economy, and the importance of housing to long-term prosperity is recognised in the	Chapter 4 - have added that organisations are struggling to recruit staff.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
the best staff due to high house prices, and that this impacts upon both the local economy and the economy of the UK.	Strategy.	
Should be more reference to need for infrastructure		References strengthened in Chapter 4. Added reference to impact that growth will have on demography, and need to continue to support other agencies in monitoring impact in relation to services and infrastructure (Chapter 3).
All new housing developments should have a minimum amount of green space		This is a Local Plan issue.
New Council homes will end up being sold off under Right to Buy		New government rules will enable some of the capital receipt to be spent on building new homes – government intention is that for each new home purchased a new one will be built (nationally). Fewer new homes are likely to be purchased as under national rules the purchase price cannot fall below what's been spent on building, repairs etc.
Local Plan review gives Council an opportunity to assess future housing needs.		Agreed - this is part of the Local Plan review work.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
<p>The planning system should seek to use brownfield land prior to using green belt land wherever possible.</p>		<p>The Council has undertaken a robust and comprehensive Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which assesses the capacity within the urban area of the City for future housing. This indicates that there is capacity for an additional 2,060 homes within the urban area.</p> <p>The Council is asking, through the Issues and Options consultation, whether there should be more development on the edge of Cambridge and whether more land should be released from the Green Belt.</p>
<p>Housing Strategy Review is premature, as it precedes review of Local Plan</p>		<p>The Housing Strategy covers other aspects of housing, as well as new development. National and local policy is changing all the time, so there will never be an ideal time to review the Strategy. Work on the Housing Strategy and Local Plan reviews are closely linked, although the Local Plan process, as a legal process, will inevitably take longer. The Local Plan, as a statutory document, will generally take precedence over the Housing Strategy if, once reviewed, anything</p>

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
Any future increase in jobs needs to be supported by new residential development.		conflicts with the Housing Strategy. Given the competing development pressures in Cambridge, the Council will need to consider how housing and employment needs can be met and balanced with environmental and infrastructure constraints along with improving the quality of life for all.
Existing Homes		
Number of Houses in Multiple Occupation shouldn't be restricted.	Priority to explore whether planning powers should be used to control the development of HMOs	Removed objective in Chapter 5 around exploring the use of planning powers to control HMO development.
Many professionals do not choose to live in shared housing – may be their only option	States that although some HMOs are occupied by professionals and student groups, for some vulnerable people they are the only option.	Clarified that for many professionals they are also the only affordable option.
Should promote Landlord Accreditation Scheme. Scheme could be mandatory for all	Reference made to Landlord Accreditation Scheme	Scheme is regularly promoted and numbers of landlords on the scheme continue to increase.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
landlords.		No power to make Landlord Accreditation mandatory, and could stifle the market.
Offer secure tenancies where possible	The Council recognises that Registered Providers may want to offer fixed term tenancies on Affordable Rent homes to re-base the rents, but expects tenancies to be renewed at the end of the fixed term.	This will be dealt with in the Council's Tenancy Strategy for Registered Providers operating in the City, and a Tenancy Policy for the Council's own housing.
Strategy needs to set out greater clarity over the regulation and improvement of the private rented sector, and greater clarity over definitions of HMOs and steps taken to monitor and inspect in future.	Will continue to use enforcement powers. (Use of planning powers to restrict development of HMOs has now been removed from the draft)	The Council is not prepared the present time to use planning powers to restrict HMO development. As with all services, will continue to review our approach to enforcement in the private rented sector.
More regulation of private rented sector required, and more inspections. (Including regulation of landlords and letting agents).		Inspections will be carried out where issues are reported to the Council. Limited powers for local authorities to regulate, other than through licensing of small HMOs, which would be very costly. No powers to regulate letting agencies.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
Landlords shouldn't be penalised if a home is overcrowded with a single family		Overcrowding will continue to be dealt with in the same way, regardless of whether it is a single family or different households. However, the Council takes individual circumstances into account in dealing with each case.
Housing Advice, Homelessness & Housing Options		
Strategy should make reference to work to re-model 222 Victoria Road	Council is working with partners to reduce the number of hostel bedspaces and re-divert resources towards finding more permanent solutions	Re-modelling of 222 Victoria Road added as an example in Chapter 6
Concern expressed about reduction in homelessness bed-spaces available in the City		With Adult Social Care funding being squeezed, the Cambridgeshire Supporting People Strategy aims for a reduction in residential bed-spaces and an increase in support provided in people's homes.
Concerned that large numbers of people will be removed from the register through the Lettings Policy	Lettings Policy is under review	Consultation response passed to colleagues working on the Lettings Policy Review.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
Review		
No mention of how reconnection of homeless people to their place of origin will work in conjunction with the sub-region	Sub-regional single homelessness co-ordinator being considered.	Paragraph in chapter 6 strengthened in recognition that some single homeless people come from other parts of the sub-region with little or no provision for housing single people with support needs.
Current measures to prevent tenancies from failing don't work		To be picked up in Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan.
More reference needed on Single Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan		Reference made in Chapter 6.
No reference to specific support needs of substance mis-users or offenders		Reference made in Chapter 6.
Specialist Housing, Supported Housing and Specialist Needs		
No reference to changing client group in sheltered housing and increasing support needs		Need to assess the extent to which this is a growing issue which needs to be addressed.
No reference to supported housing re single homeless		Reference made in Chapter 7 to vulnerable single people with multiple needs. This will be picked up through the Single Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Plan.

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
General		
Clarify what is meant by 'older' and 'younger' people		<p>Clarified that Older People's Housing Strategy relates to over 50s.</p> <p>Don't want to be too prescriptive – some services can be flexible as to the age-group covered.</p>
Students don't generally need special intervention – already received support etc		Clarified in Chapter 6 that students are not within the 'younger' group finding it particularly difficult to access housing whereby the Council needs to intervene.
Strategy only considers needs of those on the Housing Register and who are already housed.		Homebuy Register data added in Chapter 3 to show information on applicants for intermediate housing.
Consultation Process		
Questionnaire consultation wasn't sufficiently robust		The review was a review of the existing Strategy rather than starting a new Strategy from scratch, and the decision was made at an early stage to consult within existing resources. A more sophisticated and statistically robust analysis of views would have required use of an external agency, and was not considered to be cost-effective

Issue Raised	How addressed in Consultation Draft Strategy	Council's Response
		<p>on this occasion – particularly in light of the Local Plan review taking place. However, consultation methods will be re-considered when the Strategy is next reviewed.</p> <p>The Council welcomes suggestions on how to improve engagement with hard-to-reach groups.</p>
<p>Concerns expressed about being consulted on a large document</p>		<p>Appreciate that many people will not want to respond to a large document. However, the opportunity to influence the strategy was previously offered through a publicly available questionnaire. Asking for comments on the draft strategy gives an additional opportunity to respond for those who wish to read about and understand the wider context.</p>

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing	<p>Affordable Housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. <p>(See National Planning Policy Framework for full definition)</p>
Affordable Rent	<p>A new form of rented housing provided by Local Authorities and Private Registered Providers of social housing to households that are eligible for Social Rented housing. Affordable Rent is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).</p> <p>From April 2012, most new homes funded by government grant have to be offered at Affordable Rents, to generate funding for further new Affordable Housing. Some existing Social Rent homes may also be converted to Affordable Rents in agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency.</p>
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	<p>Part of the Cambridge Local Plan. Its objectives are to facilitate the delivery of Affordable Housing to meet housing needs, and to assist the creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities</p>
Cambridge Housing Sub-Region	<p>An alliance of local authorities around the Cambridge area, working in partnership to address the housing needs of the area. The local authorities are: Cambridge City, South</p>

	Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury District Councils.
Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	The scheme under which Council and Housing Association homes for rent are let. Applicants (including existing tenants who want a transfer) are able to bid for properties which become available. Cambridge City Council is part of a sub-regional CBL scheme – Home Link.
Code for Sustainable Homes	An environmental impact rating system used for new homes in England, which sets standards for increasing levels of sustainability and energy efficiency to limit the environmental impact of new homes.
Decent Homes	A standard set by government related to the condition of people’s homes. All Council rented homes were required to meet the Decent Homes standard by December 2010.
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)	Grants provided by the Council for adaptation works in the home for disabled people. The government allocates a sum to each local authority each year, but Councils may choose to top up the amount payable.
Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)	Energy Performance Certificates are required to be issued whenever a building is built, sold or rented out. The certificate provides an A-G rating for the building, with A being the most energy efficient and G being the least.
Equality Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on the Council’s policies and services to assess whether they may have a different or adverse effect on some communities or groups compared to others, and whether the policy or service actively promotes good relations between different groups.
Extra care	Specialist accommodation designed to maximise the independence of older people, in which residents live in their own home with their own front door, but can benefit from around the clock social care and housing support. Some of the Services provided in extra care housing can also be extended to people living in

	non-specialist accommodation in the wider community.
Fixed Term Tenancy	A tenancy which runs for a fixed period of time and is reviewed, and either renewed or terminated, at the end of the fixed term. From April 2012, Councils and Housing Associations are able to offer fixed term tenancies instead of having to offer long-term security of tenure as previously required.
Fuel Poverty	Fuel Poverty arises when more than 10% of a household's income would need to be spent on heating the home to a comfortable level. (This definition is currently being reviewed nationally).
General Fund	The local authority account which deals with income and expenditure other than for the Council's own Housing
Homebuy Agent	The Agency which administers the allocation of a range of Intermediate Affordable Housing including shared ownership and shared equity. Orbit is currently the Homebuy Agent for Cambridgeshire.
Home Improvement Agency	An agency which provides disabled adaptations and home improvements for vulnerable people.
Home Link	The choice based lettings scheme through which Council and Housing Association homes are let across the Cambridge sub-region.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	The national housing and regeneration agency for England. It provides grant funding for new Affordable Housing and to improve existing social housing, and provides advice and support to partners in delivering new housing and new communities. It is also, from April 2012, the regulator for social housing providers.
Housing Associations	Independent societies, bodies of trustees or companies established for the purpose of providing low-cost social housing for people in housing need on a non-profit-making basis. Any trading surplus is used to maintain existing homes and to help finance new ones. They are now the United Kingdom's major providers of new homes for rent, while many also run shared ownership schemes to help people who cannot afford to buy

	their own homes outright
Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	A national scheme, introduced by the Housing Act 2004, which enables local authorities to identify and protect against health and safety hazards in the home arising from the condition of the dwelling. Where serious ('Category 1) hazards are identified, Councils must take any enforcement action necessary to ensure that the hazards are removed.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	The account which deals with the rent and service charge money paid by Council tenants and leaseholders, and pays for management, maintenance and improvement of the Council's homes and surrounding areas.
House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	A single building let as separate units, bedsits or similar. There will be several separate tenancies within one HMO.
Intermediate Housing	Homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above Social Rent, but below market levels, and which meet the criteria for Affordable Housing (above). These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not Affordable Rented housing.
Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)	Provides an overview of population health and well-being in an area. There is a JSNA for Cambridgeshire.
Lifetime Homes Standard	Homes built to the Lifetime Homes standard have certain design features which make them flexible enough to meet changing needs, over time, of the households that occupy them.
Local Plan	Local Planning Authorities, including District Councils, must provide a Local Plan which sets planning policies in the local authority area.
Low Cost Home Ownership	A form of Intermediate Affordable Housing, providing home ownership at below market prices.
Medium Term Strategy	The Council's key financial planning document, showing how the Council's objectives will be funded.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	The national framework introduced from April 2012 to replace all the existing Planning Policy Statements. It sets out the government's policies around new developments, including the development of Affordable Housing.
Private Registered Providers	See 'Housing Associations' above. Private Registered Providers may be non-profit or profit making organisations.
Property Accreditation	Landlords signing their homes up to the Council's Property Accreditation scheme agree that their home/ homes will adhere to a Code of Standards relating to the management and condition of those homes.
Registered Providers	Providers of social housing. Includes Private Registered Providers (see above) and Councils who still have their own housing stock.
Right to Buy (RTB)	Scheme introduced by the Housing Act 1980 which enables secure Local Authority tenants (and some assured Housing Association tenants) to buy their rented home at a discount. The Right to Buy now extends to tenants with fixed term tenancies.
SAP Rating	Standard Assessment Procedure Rating. A national standard rating to assess energy efficiency
Section 106 Agreement	Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 allows a local planning authority to enter into a legally binding agreement with a developer. Such agreements can be used to require developers to provide Affordable Housing and/or community facilities on a site.
Section 106 Commuted Sum	Money provided by a developer through a section 106 agreement instead of the developer providing housing or facilities on that site. Commuted sums are usually used for Affordable Housing on other sites.
Shared Ownership	A form of Intermediate Tenure Low Cost Home Ownership housing. Homes in which the occupier owns a share of the equity and pays rent on the remaining share.
Social Housing	Housing let at lower than market rents to people in housing need. It includes Social Rent, Affordable Rent and Intermediate Housing tenures and is

	usually provided by not-for profit organisations including Housing Associations and Councils.
Social Rented Housing	Rented housing owned by local authorities and Private Registered Providers, for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)	An assessment of land in an area to identify sites available for housing development.
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	A collection of data and survey information about all parts of the local housing market. The Cambridge SHMA covers the Cambridge housing sub-region, and helps in planning for housing and related services in the area.
Supporting People	The central government programme set up to fund, monitor, review and improve housing-related support services. Supporting People Grant is no longer ring-fenced, enabling local authorities to decide how that money is spent across their wider priorities. Cambridgeshire County Council manages the local programme.