

Cambridge City Council

Housing Portfolio Plan 2013-14

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Introduction

The local economy centred on Cambridge remains resilient and the number of new homes planned and needed is anticipated to remain high. We will make sure that the expansion of Cambridge creates new homes and communities that people want to live in. Market house prices and rents remain high in Cambridge and we will continue to make the case for investment in a range of sizes, types and tenures of housing for local residents, including Affordable Housing. We will also continue to invest in, and make best use of, the existing homes within the City, taking account of the need to tackle climate change and ensuring the existing communities can benefit from the planned growth.

In 2012 we approved a revised Housing Strategy and introduced our first Tenancy Strategy. Early in 2013 we will revise our Lettings Policy in response to new national guidelines. 2013 will also be significant in seeing the first batch of new housing on the Southern Fringe growth site contributing to the completion of over 300 Affordable Housing for the first time for a number of years. This new housing will be timely as we will need to monitor carefully the worst impact on households of the implementation of welfare reforms.

We will continue to work with partner local authorities, housing associations and others across the sub-region around Cambridge to demonstrate the need for investment in local housing and how this is critical to the success of other local policy requirements such as social care; health; and local economic growth.

Virtually all of the Council's service divisions contribute to the achievement of this Plan's Objectives but the main Teams involved are Housing Strategy; Private Sector Housing; Housing Development; Housing Options and Homelessness; Home Aid; City Homes; Repairs and Maintenance and Safer Communities.

Vision Statements applicable to this portfolio

The vision statements most pertinent to this portfolio are:

- A city which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds - close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities
- A city in the forefront of low carbon living and minimising its impact on the environment from waste and pollution.

Strategic Objectives 2013-2014

Vision Statement:	<p>A city which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds - close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities</p> <p>A city in the forefront of low carbon living and minimising its impact on the environment from waste and pollution.</p>
Strategic Objective HSO1:	<p>Maximise the delivery of new sustainable housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures - at least maintaining current standards and driving energy efficient homes for residents.</p>
By March 2014 we will have:	<p>HS01.1 Worked with developers, Registered Providers (housing associations) and planners to ensure that the city's social and market housing (including private rented housing) stock continues to grow, including 40% Affordable Housing in most new developments and the delivery of the Council's own new build programme.</p> <p>HS01.2 Worked with Registered Providers to ensure the current standard of new build housing is maintained in terms of size, construction, layout and to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.</p> <p>HS01.3 Established the extent that new specialist housing is supported by the new Health and Well-being Board; the Local Health Partnership and the County Council in terms of the prioritisation of revenue funding.</p> <p>HS01.4 Assessed the potential for the provision of additional Gypsy and Traveller sites,</p>

	as part of the local plan development and in discussion with South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council.
Lead Officer:	Alan Carter, Head of Strategic Housing
Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Affordable Housing on the strategic growth sites. Completions – 176 2. New Affordable Housing on other sites. Completions - 176 3. Site(s) identified for 10 additional travellers pitches either for transit or emergency use. 4. Sustain percentage of new Affordable Homes built to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes – it is estimated that 100% will be completed to Level 4 of the Code in 2012.13 compared with an estimated 17% in 2011.12.
Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. National policy drivers could impact on the ability to deliver policy aspirations for example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the introduction of Affordable Rents changes the tenure mix of housing on new housing sites restricted choice of housing options for some lower income groups. • changes to the benefit system could adversely impact on the ability of the Council to plan under-letting of some new homes in the Growth areas to foster mixed and sustainable communities 2. The availability of development finance and mortgage finance slows up the delivery

	of new housing.
Strategic Objective HSO2:	Make the best use of existing homes.
By March 2014 we will have:	<p>HS02.1 Increased staff capacity in City Homes to mitigate the most adverse impact of welfare reforms and to settle people moving on to alternative housing from existing housing that is to be redeveloped.</p> <p>HS02.2 Completed our annual planned maintenance programme of works that ensure City Homes continue to be maintained to the best possible standard.</p> <p>HS02.3 Maintained and promoted services to take action effectively against private sector landlords that do not comply with housing health and safety matters as well as landlord and tenant issues</p> <p>HS02.4 Prioritised bringing back into occupation long standing empty homes in the private sector.</p>
Lead Officer:	Robert Hollingsworth, Head of City Homes (HS02.1), Bob Hadfield (HS02.2) Jas Lally (HS02.3; and HS02.4)
Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 120 people settled in suitable alternative housing to enable the Council's new build programme to progress Increase number of long term vacant properties returned to residential use from 15 to 25 a year.

Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More detailed analysis shows that there are complex reasons why a number of homes stay empty and the investment required to bring them back into use does not represent good value for money. 2. The availability of suitable alternative accommodation in areas of the residents choice will dictate the pace at which people can move
Strategic Objective HSO3:	Deliver good quality housing related advice to help prevent homelessness.
By March 2014 we will have:	<p>HS03.1 Focused our housing advice to keep homelessness to a minimum and help prevent homelessness by offering early advice on alternative housing options.</p> <p>HS03.2 Increased the range of temporary housing available to minimise the impact on households who become homeless or who are threatened with homelessness and reinforced our work with partner organisations to support people with a history of homelessness to find a settled home.</p>
Lead Officer:	Alan Carter, Head of Strategic Housing
Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of Rough Sleeping estimates average no more than 10 2. Combined number of households in and waiting for temporary accommodation no more than 95 (measured through quarterly snapshot) 3. Homelessness preventions to be above average for region ie 300 per annum

	4. Verify all Home-Link applications within 28 working days of receipt of all information required
Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Housing Allowance levels restrict access for some households to housing that meets their needs within the city. 2. New national policy initiatives such as the new 'Affordable Rents will restrict access to new housing provided by housing associations (Registered Providers).

Background Information:

Housing Strategy 2012-15
 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
 Developing Affordable Housing Policy Guide
 Charter for New Affordable Housing
 Private Housing Stock Condition Survey
 Strategic Housing Market Assessment
 Cambridge Local Investment Plan 2012