

Cambridge City Council

Housing Portfolio Plan 2014-15

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Introduction

The local economy centred on Cambridge remains one of the most buoyant in the country and the number of new homes planned and needed remains 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 well-designed homes 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 2013 we revised our Lettings Policy in response to new national guidelines and we also started innovative work to set up a sub-regional lettings agency (Town Hall Lettings) with the aim of providing immediate accommodation for single homeless people. Recognising the pressure on the private rented sector we increased staff capacity to tackle private landlords who have the tendency to flout rules on property standards and the service they offer to their tenants. 2013 also saw the first significant batch of new housing on the Southern Fringe growth site contributing to the completion of over 300 homes as Affordable Housing for the first time for a number of years. This new housing is timely to mitigate the worst impact on households of the implementation of welfare reforms. For example, the numbers of households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation reduced significantly by the end of 2013 as a direct result of the supply of new Affordable Housing. Nearly 400 more Affordable Housing dwellings are predicted to be completed by March 2015.

In 2014.15 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. The opportunities that may arise from the City Deal will be central to the influence the City Council can have on the local housing market and meeting housing need. Working to address local City Council priorities to support vulnerable people to sustain independent housing within the framework set by the county-wide Health and

Wellbeing Board will be critical if housing choice is to equally and fairly sustained for all households including meeting the need of an ageing population.

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 2014- 2015

<p>Vision Statement:</p>	<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>
<p>Strategic Objective HSO1:</p>	<p>Maximise the delivery of new sustainable housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures – driving up standards and increasing the energy efficiency of new homes for residents and developing plans for the Council to deliver up to 2000 new Affordable Homes.</p>
<p>By March 2015 we will have:</p>	<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 Developed proposals to work together with partners to deliver affordable housing in the Greater Cambridge area, potentially under the auspices of a Greater Cambridge City Deal.</p> <p>HS01.3 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 – reviewing sizes of new build to ensure the supply of new build reflects the context of welfare reforms.</p>

	<p>HS01.4 Established the extent that new approaches to revenue funding available to health and social care partners support vulnerable people to sustain independent lifestyles and housing in community settings including meeting the needs of an ageing population.</p>
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 – 168 2. New Affordable Housing on other sites. Completions - 252 3. 75% of new Affordable Homes built to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes in 2014.15 (it is estimated that 60% will be completed to Level 4 of the Code in 2013.14).
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. Depending on the outcome of current negotiations with Government, together with

	<p>South Cambridgeshire District Council, the City Deal may not result in the level of new funding for Affordable Housing sought by the Council and partners.</p> <p>3. The availability of development finance and mortgage finance slows down the delivery of new housing.</p>
<p>Strategic Objective HSO2:</p>	<p>Make the best use of existing homes, promoting and leading the provision of well maintained, safe and secure homes to maximise housing choice.</p>
<p>By March 2015 we will have:</p>	<p>HS02.1 Increased staff capacity to support vulnerable people and those most adversely affected by welfare reforms to remain in their homes, including those with mental health issues and those who are moving into an independent home of their own for the first time or following a period of homelessness.</p> <p>HS02.2 Completed our annual planned maintenance programme of works that ensure City Homes continue to be maintained to a good standard.</p> <p>HS02.3 Continued to have 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 Continued to prioritise bringing back into occupation long standing empty homes in the private sector.</p> <p>HS02.5 Completed the House Condition survey to help assess the current condition of the private housing stock including its energy efficiency.</p>

Lead Officer:	Robert Hollingsworth, Head of City Homes (HS02.1), Bob Hadfield (HS02.2) Jas Lally (HS02.3;HS02.4 and HS02.5)
Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report and monitoring of all investigations undertaken according to complaints received – estimate 200 new cases 14.15 2. Number of long term empty homes brought back into use – target 20 3. Survey completed by March 2015 on current housing stock with an emphasis on energy efficiency
Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health and care funding will not be sufficient to support vulnerable people to sustain independent housing. 2. 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.

Strategic Objective HSO3:	Deliver good quality housing related advice and direct measures to help prevent homelessness.
By March 2015 we will have:	HS03.1 Focused our housing advice to reduce homelessness and help prevent homelessness by offering early advice on alternative housing options and by embedding the Town Hall Lettings scheme.

	<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 15 (the average number of individual recorded as sleeping rough over the calendar year 2013 was 25. 2. Numbers of households in Bed and Breakfast accommodation less than 5 at any one time (from a high of over 30 households in B&B in one month over the last 12 numbers have reduced to less than 5 since November 2013) 3. Combined number of households in and waiting for temporary accommodation no more than 95 (measured through quarterly snapshot) 4. Homelessness preventions to continue to be above average for region ie over 380 per annum
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). 3. There will be insufficient suitable properties for single people that become available

	to be let under the Town Hall Lettings scheme.
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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