



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price  
Report by: Sabrina Walston  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 21/6/2016  
Wards affected: All

## **Social Housing Programme Key Decision**

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### **1. Executive summary**

In July 2014, the Executive Councillor for Housing approved a three year rolling programme of housing sites in the Council's ownership for consideration for development, redevelopment or disposal.

This report provides a review of the programme and specifically seeks approval of a revised Three Year Rolling programme that includes sites to be investigated in 2016/17 to 2018/19.

The report sets this request for approval to the revised three year programme in the context of;

- the new Council Social Housing Programme
- the Housing and Planning Act 2016
  - Starter Homes
  - Vacant High Value Local Authority Housing
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016
  - 1% rent reductions

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- To approve revisions made to produce the 3 Year Rolling Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19 in the context of the wider Social Housing Programme.

### **3. Background**

As the main provider of housing in Cambridge, the reasons why the Council has its own programme are as follows;

- Provide additional social housing to meet the shortfall in Cambridge and to replace the loss of social housing through the Right to Buy.
- Replace some of the Council's existing housing that no longer meets current day standards and is becoming less popular with residents.
- Build new house types that will better meet the overall mix of social housing needed in the future.
- Improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing.

#### **Social Housing Programme**

Cambridge City Council has been directly delivering social housing since 2010. This programme has delivered 131 units thus far and is set to deliver another 164 units in the next year alone. This has been achieved through Housing Revenue Account funding, Homes and Communities Agency grant and Right to Buy receipts. More recently the General Fund has bought stock for Cambridge City Housing Company to supply sub market rental properties.

There has been a tremendous amount of change from central Government in the social housing sector over the last 12 months. The 1% rent reduction for four years has severely impacted the HRA and the Social Housing Programme the Council can pursue. Officers are investigating innovative ways of working to enable the delivery of housing that is affordable but the pace of the Social Housing Programme through the HRA has slowed due to the lack of certainty with regards to funding. Therefore the proposed three year rolling programme in Appendix 2 has no further HRA sites added.

The Housing Development Agency (HDA) is project managing the development of some General Fund land, which means social housing will continue to be directly delivered by the Council, but a minority will be on HRA land over the next 4 years.

A separate report to this Committee called 'New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Sites' requests approval of the Executive Councillor for Housing to progress a few more small HRA sites. These are sites we are

able to fund with the money committed in the budget to match fund Right To Buy receipts.

### **Three Year Rolling Programme**

This annual review keeps members apprised of progress with sites and offers the opportunity to introduce new sites for investigation.

Appendix 1 provides an update of the schemes within the three year rolling programme that are already under investigation.

Appendix 2 is the revised three year rolling programme that is requested to be re-approved with the only addition being Akeman Street. This site gained Executive Councillor for Housing approval to be included in the three year rolling programme at the January 2016 Committee and therefore residents have previously been notified of its inclusion. A final scheme will be brought to Housing Scrutiny Committee for approval.

When reading Appendix 1, Committee Members may wish to note in particular that for 69-159a Lichfield Road (odd nos.) and Campkin Rd Ph2 (including 1-20 and 81-91 Hawkins Road garages) the existing residential blocks have been removed from the programme but that there is some merit in continuing to review the potential of the redevelopment of any non-residential areas and open spaces at these sites.

Once sites have been investigated and if they are considered feasible and viable, proposed schemes are brought to Committee to gain scheme specific approval to commence the development. The schemes that have gained scheme specific approval will be removed from the three year rolling programme. These are;

- Kendal Way
- Tedder Way
- Cadwin Fields and Nuns Way Garages
- Cameron Road Garages
- Uphall Road Garages (between 11 & 13 Uphall Road)
- Wiles Close Garages
- 9 to 28 Anstey Way

The Committee is reminded that approval has been given to relocate residents living in 9 to 28 Anstey Way but in light of the current funding constraints it is not yet proceeding to planning.

Wulfstan Way, 1 Queensmeadow and 39 Hills Avenue are subject to a separate report, New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Sites, coming to this Committee. Therefore these sites have remained in

Appendix 2, the revised three year rolling programme, until such time they do have approval to proceed.

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

Financial implications will be assessed and reported when individual schemes considered suitable for development, redevelopment or disposal are brought forward to this Committee for scrutiny and for approval by the Executive Councillor for Housing.

The cost and funding of the Council's new build programme will be continually reviewed as part of the Council's Medium Term Strategy and budget setting and review cycles.

### **(b) Staffing Implications** (if not covered in Consultations Section)

The recently formed Housing Development Agency project manages the delivery of the Social Housing Programme. This is a joint service with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. HRA projects are monitored by a group of officers that meets quarterly. This includes representatives from the HDA, City Homes, Housing Advice and Housing Strategy, with Procurement, Finance, Internal Audit, and Legal staff as corresponding members. General Fund projects are currently managed by the HDA through project team meetings with key officers. These project teams will need to broaden in the next few months.

### **(c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

A series of EQIAs have been undertaken for the Social Housing Programme, the Housing Development Service and for individual schemes. The EQIAs mainly highlight the benefits of the Council retaining direct control of new housing development itself to ensure a focus on the delivery of housing that meets a diverse range of housing needs. Part of the assessment underlines the need for social housing to help those most likely to suffer poverty as well as ways in which new social housing will directly save money for tenants, such as energy saving measures.

Each individual scheme will continue be subject to an EQIA at the feasibility stage and prior to scheme approval.

### **(d) Environmental Implications**

All new social housing on the growth sites and in the Council's programme is built to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. Going forward, after the abolition of the Code for Sustainable Homes, the Council will use its own Sustainability Guide, which is currently being produced.

**(e) Procurement**

To facilitate the development of Council sites the Council has a partnership agreement with a house-builder/developer and four Registered Providers. This contract is coming to an end, therefore another procurement is proposed by the HDA to enable the development of smaller HRA sites as set out in the report New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Sites coming to this Committee.

With regards to future developments the HDA is leading on the potential selection of an Investment Partner to help deliver housing on City Council owned land. Legal advice is currently being sought on this and a report will be taken to the Strategy and Resources Committee on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

**(f) Consultation and communication**

The Council's approach to the involvement of residents affected by the Three Year Programme process and the Council's new house-building programme was the subject of a report to the January 2013 Community Services Scrutiny Committee. One major change was that the first collective meeting with residents of an affected scheme will be held at least 4 – 6 weeks prior to a report coming to the scrutiny committee for consideration.

Consultation is also carried out with residents and neighbours once schemes have been proposed by the architects in order to receive any comments on the plans.

Due to the uncertainty of funding for the Social Housing Programme it is proposed that the Council sends a letter to residents affected by the potential redevelopment of their homes to update them on the on-going work to secure funding to advance these sites.

If any sites that are occupied by residents are recommended for redevelopment the Home Loss Policy covers the financial compensation available to residents and how they will be supported to move should the site gain approval.

**(g) Community Safety**

All new social housing is assessed against Secure by Design criteria.

## **5. Background papers**

EQIA

## **6. Appendices**

Appendix 1: 3 Year Rolling Programme Update

Appendix 2: New Three Year Rolling Programme 2016/17 to 2018/19

## **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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