



To: Executive Councillor for Housing  
Report by: Alan Carter  
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing 7 March 2017  
Wards affected: All

## **New Housing by the Council**

### **Key Decision**

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION: **Appendix 1** of the report relates to an item during which the public is likely to be excluded from the meeting by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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### **1. Executive summary**

The advent of the Devolution Agreement means that the Council can consider building new Council housing again. This report seeks endorsement of the housing dimension of the Devolution Agreement and sets out the development framework within which the Council will provide new housing itself. It also provides details of the current delivery programme for using Devolution Housing Grant over the next two years. The Council's approach to the involvement of residents in the process is refreshed as is the Council's Home Loss Policy.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- a. Endorse the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution New Homes Business Case 20.1.17 at Appendix 1.
- b. Approve the Council's approach to the development of new Council housing as shown in the paper at Appendix 2.
- c. Approve the 'Commitment to Resident Involvement'.
- d. Note the current delivery programme for using Devolution Housing Grant over the next two years.
- e. Reapprove the Home Loss Policy at Appendix 5.

### **3. Background**

In the year to the end of March 2017 the Council will have completed 113 new Council homes. 84 to rent or for shared ownership through City Homes and 29 to rent at sub-market levels through the Cambridge City Housing Company.

In July 2015, the Council had to put any new schemes on hold as a consequence of the potentially major detrimental impact of national housing policy on the Council's housing finances.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution Agreement has meant that the Council can resurrect its programme to build more new Council homes. Through the Devolution Agreement process, the Council has negotiated £70m capital grant from the Government specifically for the Council to provide at least 500 new Council homes over a five year period from April 2017. To qualify for the grant the Council must start building the homes within the five year period. The overarching Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution New Homes Business Case 20.1.17 is shown as Appendix 1. The Business Case includes further details on the £70m programmed for the city (see Appendix 1 to the Business Case).

Now that the Council can start building again, it was felt appropriate to set out afresh how the Council goes about building new Council homes. Appendix 2 is a paper entitled "New Housing by the Council : Our Approach to Development" and provides the development framework for the Council's new housing building programme. The paper sets the scene for other reports that are being brought forward to the Committee requesting specific approval to develop sites for new Council homes and re-approval of the Home Loss Policy.

Importantly, the paper reaffirms the Council's commitment to involve residents and how it will support those who are directly affected by the programme. This commitment is summarised in the consultation section below.

In the context of the Council's overall vision for Cambridge and in line with the Interim Housing Strategy Statement considered as an earlier committee agenda item the paper explains;

1. Why the Council has a new house-building programme
2. What is built and why
3. The location of new housing
4. When it gets built and why
5. The process behind how it is built including how residents are involved
6. Who organises the programme

Appendix 3 is a list of new schemes being progressed during 2017.18, the first year of the Devolution Housing Grant programme.

## **4. Implications**

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

The financial plans that underpin the new build programme will be detailed in the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Annual Budgets and Mid Year Reviews.

The financial implications for 2017.18 have been approved as part of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account Annual Budgets for 2017.18. In summary, £20m per annum has been built into the HRA budget for five years from April 2017 for building new Council homes.

Where new Council homes are to be provided on General Fund sites the HRA or the Cambridge City Housing Company will in effect 'buy' the land and housing from the General Fund.

### **(b) Staffing Implications**

The Council has set up a shared housing development team with South Cambridgeshire District Council and the County Council called the Greater Cambridge Housing Development Agency (H DA).

The H DA will manage the programme and projects to deliver the new homes for the Council. Appendix 2 includes further details. Nicola Hillier, Housing Development Manager, will oversee new homes being built through the HRA and will project manage some schemes direct. Mark Wilson and Amelia Norman (Housing Development Officers) will also project manage schemes and David Goddard-Gill (Construction and Technical) will take the lead in ensuring that new homes are built to required standards

The H DA will work closely with the Cambridge Investment Partnership to ensure that the overall programme of Council investments generate both the financial and social outcomes expected.

The H DA team will work closely with City Homes and the Estates and Facilities throughout the development process.

There will be staffing implications for the Council's corporate body. Consideration is being given to the Cambridge Investment Partnership funding a post in the Planning team to provide the capacity to process planning applications. There may be additional 'section 106' legal work and

land conveyancing, although the latter is likely to be repetitive work using similar legal contracts. For the finance team there may not be any new work, just more of the same.

The impact on the corporate body is currently being assessed for the first year of the programme.

**(c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

An EQIA for the Council's new build programme was last approved in January 2013. The EQIA has been reviewed and up-date and is shown as Appendix 4.

**(d) Environmental Implications**

The new house-building programme has been given a 'High Positive Impact' rating. The new homes will be built within the Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide. This looks to promote the delivery of high quality new development, seeking to:

- 1) Address issues such as fuel and water poverty amongst our residents;
- 2) Build homes that have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of our residents;
- 3) Build homes that are designed and built to high design and sustainability standards;
- 4) Ensure new homes are easy to maintain and are adaptable, both for residents and to future climate change.

**(e) Procurement**

There are no procurement implications associated with this report. Any procurement implications will be outlined when scheme specific approval is requested for individual schemes.

**(f) Consultation and communication**

How the Council will engage with residents in building new Council homes is detailed in Appendix 2. The following is a summary of the Council's commitment to involving residents directly affected by any development.

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## **COMMITMENT TO RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT**

The Council is committed to ensuring that there is the least possible disturbance to residents who are required to move from their homes.

For tenants:

- Support will be available for those in who need that support to organise the move.
- Tenants required to move will be consulted on the new scheme as it evolves and will be given priority to return to new housing that meets their needs provided there is sufficient new accommodation of the type required available. The Council's Lettings Policy will be used to determine a match between the household and property type and size.
- If a tenant does not wish to move back every effort will be made to re-house them in the area of their choice.
- Statutory 'Home Loss Payments' will be made to tenants as will reasonable 'Disturbance Payments' to the expenses involve in moving.

For leaseholders:

- When a leaseholder's property is to be redeveloped, and if they are not able to afford to buy a suitable alternative home on the open market, the Council will offer advice and assistance to secure shared ownership, equity share or another form of intermediate housing option in the city. Where the property is to be refurbished the leaseholder will be able to return to the property.
  - Home Loss Payment and Disturbance Payments are also payable to leaseholders however the legislation is different in respect of Home Loss Payment.
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Appendix 5 shows an up-dated Home Loss Policy for approval with amendments that bring it line with the Council's 'Commitment to Resident Involvement'.

(g) **Community Safety**

There are no specific community safety implications of this report. The Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide has as a key objective that all development should create places that are active, inclusive, safe and fair to everyone.

## **5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

None.

## **6. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Devolution New Homes Business Case 20.1.17 (Not for Publication)

Appendix 2 – “New Housing by the Council: Our Approach to Development”.

Appendix 3 – Current delivery programme for use of the Devolution Housing Grant over the next two years.

Appendix 4 – EQIA Housing Development

Appendix 5 – Home Loss Policy

## **7. Inspection of papers**

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

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