

Cambridge City Council

Housing Portfolio Plan

Portfolio Holder: Catherine Smart

Accountable Officer: [Liz Bisset](#)

Email address: liz.bisset@cambridge.gov.uk

Phone number: 01223 457801

Introduction

Despite the national context, 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 and types and tenures of housing for local residents, including affordable housing, consistent with the Charter for New 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.

Details of the long awaited reform to the national system by which Council's like Cambridge finance their own housing (known as 'self-financing') were announced in February 2011. Preparation for self-financing will be a major focus for new work in the coming years we need to be ready to implement changes to the Housing Revenue Subsidy in April 2012. In parallel, we will continue to pursue the feasibility of a programme to build more new Council homes. The impact of other new government initiatives such as changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance; the new Affordable Rent proposal; reduction of funding to build new Affordable Homes and reduction of revenue funding through the Supporting People programme etc, are not yet clear – again, we need to be ready to implement any changes when required. Changes to the planning system introduced at the national level could inhibit the planned growth of Cambridge.

Whatever emerges, we will work with partner local authorities, housing associations and others across the sub-regional 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

- 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 2011-2012

Vision Statement:	A city which recognises and meets needs for housing of all kinds - close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities
Strategic Objective HSO1:	Maximise the delivery of new housing in a range of sizes, types and tenures ensuring that current standards are at least maintained.
By March 2012 we will have:	<p>H1.1 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 decided on the Council's own new build programme.</p> <p>H1.2 Worked with Registered Providers to ensure the current standard of new build housing is sustained in terms of size, construction and layout.</p>
Lead Officer:	Alan Carter

Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New Affordable Homes on the strategic growth sites. Completions – 176 2. New Affordable Homes on other sites. Completions - 57 3. Whether agreement is reached with the University on the mix, rent policy, letting and management of the Key Worker Housing on the new University Site in the North West Quadrant.
Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New national policy drivers could impact on the ability to deliver policy aspirations for example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced public capital grant for new Affordable Housing could change the tenure mix of housing on new housing sites and result in a reduction in social rented housing • changes to the benefit system could adversely impact on access to the private rented sector for low income households 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 2012 we will have:	HG2.1 delivered a planned maintenance programme (£952,000) so that all City Council stock continues to meet the Decent Homes standard and reviewed systems in respect of repairs and customer access to improve value for money.

	<p>HG2.2 Influenced Registered Providers' resident engagement to ensure it is effective; developed measures to tackle under-occupation, potentially through a sub-regional approach.</p> <p>HG2.3 Engaged with private sector landlords to ensure they meet the statutory requirements of the Housing Act 2004 so that the physical condition of private housing in Cambridge continues to improve and the Council encourages the good management of housing in multiple-occupation.</p> <p>HG2.4 Delivered our statutory responsibilities and engaged with property owners to ensure that the number of long term empty homes in the private sector continues to reduce.</p> <p>HG2.5 Engaged with Cambridge Colleges to help them attain Landlord Accreditation Scheme standards.</p>
Lead Officer:	Alan Carter (4) Bob Hadfield (3) Jas Lally (5, 6 & 7)
Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All City Homes stock sustained to Decent Homes standard. 2. More City Homes households are satisfied with services measured by customer feedback . 3. At least 12 long term vacant properties returned to residential use 4. 12 Cambridge University or other College properties attain Landlord Accreditation Scheme standards.

Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Changes to the Housing Revenue Subsidy System restrict the ability of the Council to deliver high standards of management and maintenance. 2. Changes to the benefit system discourage private landlords from providing good standard housing. 3. Increased demand for support from households in housing stress is not matched by reprioritisation of resources.
Strategic Objective HSO3:	To prepare for the implementation of self-financing.
By March 2012 we will have:	<p>HG 3.1 Set-up the new self-financing system showing a clear fully funded, 30 year Business Plan for City Homes.</p> <p>HG 3.2 Revised the Business Plan to clearly show the revenue and capital costs of sustaining City Homes; and made choices between different areas of expenditure in the future, including the feasibility of the Council having a new build programme.</p> <p>HG 3.3 Engaged with tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders to take account of their priorities.</p>
Lead Officer:	Robert Hollingsworth
Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conditions that apply to the new self-financing system are so restrictive that there is little real local control over the management of the system and no opportunity to

	<p>feasibly sustain a Council new build programme.</p> <p>2. All risks such as variations in interest rate and changes in utility costs etc will be passed to the Council without proportionate local control over the management of the system.</p>
Performance Measures:	<p>1. Whether the new self-financing system is delivered on time.</p> <p>2. Whether the Council responds to any further consultation.</p> <p>3. Tenants, leaseholders and other stake-holders fully engaged, as measured by informal feedback and supportive votes from Housing Management Board tenants and leaseholder representatives.</p>
Strategic Objective HSO4:	Foster good quality housing and housing related advice.
By March 2012 we will have:	<p>HG4.1 Continued to rationalise and streamline the Housing Options and Homelessness service to ensure that Home-Link (the sub-regional choice-based letting system) evolves to become the hub for housing and housing related advice across all tenures linking effectively with other services offered through the Customer Service Centre e.g. housing benefit advice.</p> <p>HG4.2 Carried out improvements such as increasing accessibility to the Homelink IT system for customers. As better and more information on housing options is provided more people will be able to make decisions themselves over where they want to live. As more people take earlier and direct control over their housing options homelessness will</p>

	<p>be minimised.</p> <p>HG4.3 Improved support to rough sleepers so that the incidence of rough sleeping and use of Temporary Accommodation is minimised as households move more effectively to secure permanent housing.</p> <p>HG4.4 Established whether a shared Home Improvement Agency with South Cambs DC and Hunts DC is a viable option and if not what is the alternative option for a service to support older and vulnerable people to be warm, safe and as independent as possible in their homes.</p>
Lead Officer:	Alan Carter
Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Number of Rough Sleepers remains below 10 2. Number of households in non-permanent accommodation remains below 70. 3. More households are satisfied that they have access to the housing advice they need (measured by customer feedback) 4. Key performance measures in respect of Housing Benefit. 5. Home Improvement Agency services are sustained at no additional cost
Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Benefit levels restrict access for some households to housing that meets their needs within the city.

	<p>2. New national policy initiatives such as the new 'Affordable Rents will restrict access to new housing provided by housing associations (Registered Providers).</p> <p>3. If a shared HIA service does not proceed there is a risk that partner funding will be withdrawn resulting in additional cost to the Council.</p>
--	---

Vision Statement:	A city in the forefront of low carbon living and minimising its impact on the environment from waste and pollution.
Strategic Objective HSO5:	Increase energy efficiency of existing homes; promote sustainable design and construction methods; promote high standards of environmental sustainability of new homes and communities, including water management.
By March 2012 we will have:	<p>HG5.1 Worked with Registered Providers to ensure that New Affordable Housing is built to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.</p> <p>HG5.2 Carried out improvements as part of the planned maintenance programme to measurably improve the energy efficiency of the Council stock and generate lower levels of carbon output; environmental waste; and pollution as part of the Decent Homes Programme.</p> <p>HG5.3 Optimum use of the 'feed-in tariff' programme and other funding sources.</p> <p>HG5.4 Promoted Improved energy efficiency of private housing in Cambridge so that fewer people suffer 'fuel poverty' in their housing, particularly vulnerable households; and housing generates lower levels of carbon output, environmental waste and</p>

	<p>pollution through schemes with private landlords such as the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.</p> <p>HG5.5 Increased take-up of Landlord Accreditation scheme which includes energy efficiency standards. .</p>
Lead Officer:	Alan Carter (15) Bob Hadfield (15 & 16) Jas Lally (17& 18)
Delivery Risks:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The capital investment required is not forthcoming or pay-back of investment is not sufficient to represent 'value for money' (HG 16). 2. Low take up by residents and landlords on energy initiatives (HG17)
Performance Measures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased percentage of new Affordable Homes built to at least Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes 2. New targets to be established as part of the revised Home Energy Strategy to be produced in 2011. 3. Take-up of energy saving schemes within the city in the private sector stock. During 2011/12 develop achievable targets for monitoring the take up of energy saving initiatives taking into account the Green Deal as detail becomes available.

Background Information:

Housing Strategy 2009-12
Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Developing Affordable Housing Policy Guide
Charter for New Affordable Housing
Private Housing Stock Condition Survey
Strategic Housing Market Assessment
Draft Cambridge Local Investment Plan