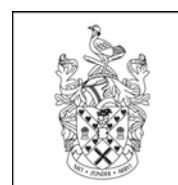




Homes for our future

Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019 - 2023

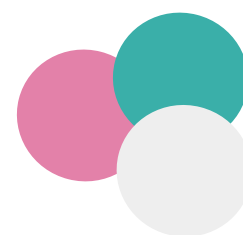
Working in partnership, a collaborative
Housing Strategy covering both Cambridge
City and South Cambridgeshire District



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

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Foreword from the Cambridge City Council Executive Councillor for Housing

This strategy, jointly produced by Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils, provides a clear vision of how we can, with the public and other stakeholders, achieve our shared aspiration in providing housing that meets the needs and requirements of the Greater Cambridge area.

Cambridge is a wonderful place to live. But not everyone here currently can have access to affordable, sustainable and good quality housing. Pressures of a growing and aging population, which in turn will create additional demand, will make this issue more acute. This strategy sets out possible solutions and approaches to overcoming these challenges.

Providing new homes for council rent is Cambridge City Council's number one policy priority, and our main contribution in tackling the housing crisis. The £70million from government, as part of the devolution deal, has kick-started the process, and will allow us to build at least 500 council homes over the coming years.

The scrapping of the council's Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap will free us to continue to add to this new

generation of homes once the devolution funding has been allocated and spent. But the council cannot solve this problem alone. We will work with housing associations, developers, planners and others to tackle the shortage of affordable housing in new and innovative ways. Engagement in other relevant policy areas, such as bringing back empty properties back into use, are also key priorities.

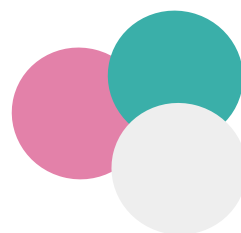
We also need to continue to engage with government, charities and voluntary organisations in addressing, and halting, the rise in rough sleeping and homelessness recorded in recent years. This strategy sets out some of the ways homelessness can be tackled, such as through our 'Housing First' approach which provides intensive support for homeless people with complex or multiple needs.

I am confident that this strategy will succeed in its aim of providing a blueprint for progress over the next few years in delivering the homes we need, as well as identifying additional opportunities for further progress in this important area despite the economic and social challenges ahead.



Richard Johnson

Executive Councillor for Housing



Foreword from the South Cambridgeshire District Council Lead Member for Housing

I am pleased that we are launching our new Housing Strategy which is shared with Cambridge City and paves the way to working together in the future to deliver the homes we need that will support our growing economy in Greater Cambridge.

Whilst the strategy focuses on the levers and influence we have in terms of providing new homes and ensuring our existing homes are in good condition, this strategy is really about our people and communities. We want to ensure that our villages remain vibrant places that are sustainable in the future, by building the new homes that are needed, that are well designed and bring benefits to the existing community. Our focus is on 'affordable living' rather than just affordable housing and we want homes to be close to jobs, with good transport links and as energy efficient as possible so that running costs are cheaper and we are doing our bit for the environment.

We know how difficult it is for young people to get a foot on the housing ladder and we are keen to provide a wider choice of housing options. It is also clear that there are some real recruitment challenges for some local businesses where workers

What we're about

Putting the heart into South Cambridgeshire by:

- Building homes that are affordable to live in
- Helping business to grow
- Being green to our core
- Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do

can't afford to live in the area and we want to support those companies to provide targeted new homes.

Planning for an ageing population is also a high priority and we need to be building new homes which are future-proofed in design and technology.

This strategy reflects how important housing is to the health and well-being of residents, the role it plays in building and maintaining strong communities and how housing is entwined with the economic prosperity of the district.

We cannot achieve these ambitions alone, and we will continue to build strong relationships with key partners to deliver on our priorities.



Hazel Smith

Lead Member for Housing



Purpose of the strategy

The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy is a high level document that sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District. Its purpose is to set the context as to how both councils aim to meet the housing challenges facing the area, setting out key priorities for action (*see Annex 1 for detailed Action Plan*).

The Strategy acts as a piece of the jigsaw to support the ambitions of both councils through their Corporate/Business Plans^{1,2}. It helps to complement and support a range of existing strategies and plans, providing a framework for decision making by the two councils in relation to housing issues.

For new homes it complements the existing Local Plans^{3,4} to help inform planning decisions required to be made separately by each council, as well as joint decisions around development on major fringe sites which straddle the two councils' boundaries. Priorities 01 & 02 and Annex 5 of the Strategy sets out the housing requirements relevant to all development partners in terms of type, size and tenure and will be a material consideration in making planning decisions.

The Strategy will also help to inform the development of joint housing related Supplementary Planning Documents to support both councils' current Local Plans.

The Strategy does not address the overall number of new homes required for the area or allocate land, as this is the role of, and has already been agreed through the two districts' Local Plans. This will be reviewed as part of the process to deliver a proposed new joint Local Plan for Greater Cambridge.

The need for sustainable transport and having the right infrastructure in place were identified through consultation on this Strategy as a major concern for residents and organisations in



bringing forward the development of new homes. We recognise that this is critical to the success of development in the area and the Strategy acknowledges the inter-relationship of both sustainable transport and infrastructure to housing; however, it is not the function of the Housing Strategy to look to resolve these issues. Good transport design, with the aim to reduce car usage, having good public transport links, increased cycleways, etc. is integral to good spatial planning. Both Local Plans promote travel by sustainable transport through designing walking and cycling and public transport options into plans for new housing developments. The development of the new Joint Local Plan will look to build on this work up to and beyond 2031.

Strategically, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority is the Local Transport Authority for the area and published its Interim Local Transport Plan⁵ in June 2017, setting out its ambitions to improve transport and the physical connections between communities as a means of unlocking sustainable growth, and recognising the significance of transport in growing the economy. The Greater Cambridge Partnership also seeks to secure multi-million pound improvements in vital infrastructure. Both councils aim, through this Housing Strategy, to complement and support this work.

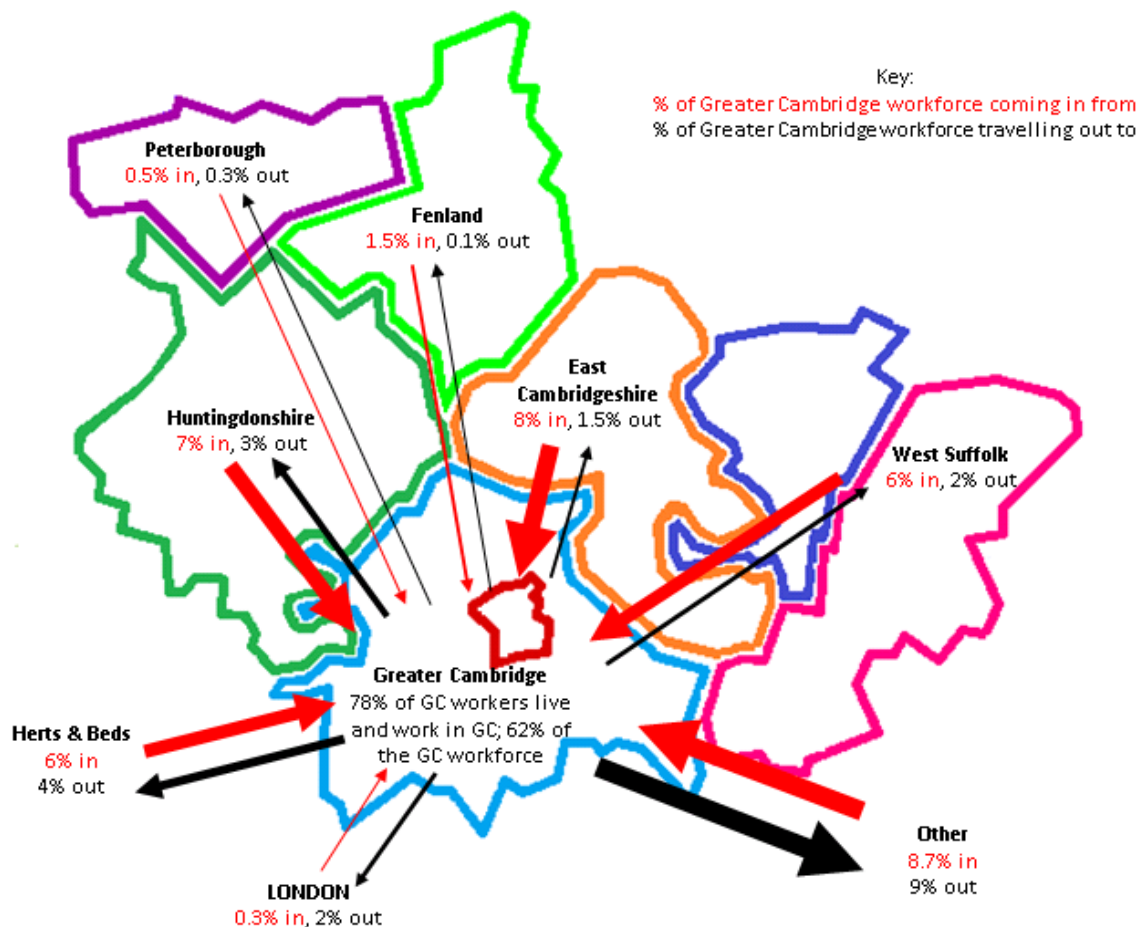
Introduction

This Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy brings together the two unique areas of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, reflecting their joined-up economy and housing market.

Globally renowned for its world-leading scientific research and technology clusters, Cambridge remains top of the UK league for economic growth prospects⁶, and the villages in South Cambridgeshire are regularly ranked amongst the best places to live with the highest quality of life in the UK.

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire together forms its own distinctive housing sub-market area, with over three quarters of Greater Cambridge workers both living and working in Greater Cambridge⁷. The councils have already been working together for some years now to bring forward large scale mixed tenure developments on the fringes of the city.

This Strategy looks to build on this joint work and the success of the area, whilst ensuring that we retain the unique character of both areas, including historic Cambridge and the rural nature of the villages within South Cambridgeshire. We want Greater Cambridge to remain a place where people want to live. We want it to be a place that is socially inclusive for everyone, young and old, and provides housing that is affordable to all, including social housing for rent, private rent, intermediate tenures and home ownership. We know that housing is so much more than just bricks and mortar. The impact on health associated with poor housing is well versed, and the functionality of communities is crucial in terms of social interaction and residents' health and wellbeing.



Source: All figures based on 2014 working of ONS (www.nomis.co.uk)

The costs of buying or renting a home and the shortage of homes available for those on low to middle incomes are a real issue for many of those living and wanting to live in Greater Cambridge. This Strategy aims to help ensure we are building the right homes in the right places that people need and can afford, and that support is available where required so that everyone has the opportunity to live settled, healthy lives.

Whilst this is a Strategy developed collaboratively between Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, acknowledging the acute pressures in terms of affordability and lack of supply and the high level of growth, there are also specific differences against which each local authority will need to prioritise action.

In particular, Cambridge, as well as a significant student population, has a larger proportion of private rented homes and faces high levels of rough sleeping. With even higher house prices and private rent levels in the City than in South Cambridgeshire, delivery of social housing for rent is a particularly high priority for the City Council.

For South Cambridgeshire, ensuring its villages remain vibrant and sustainable, and working with local businesses to ensure homes are affordable and available to local workers are high priorities for the District. For many residents living in rural villages access to good transport is an issue, and where possible we want homes to be built close to places of work, with good transport links and access to services and facilities.

Our objectives cannot be achieved in isolation and working closely with a wide range of partners is essential to the success of the Strategy. Chapter 7 of the Strategy lists some of our key partners and outlines how we will work with them in implementing the Strategy.



Long term vision and objectives

Our vision:

**“Healthy, Safe, Affordable:
Homes & Communities for All”**

We want Greater Cambridge to be a place where:

- Everyone has access to a suitable home, and residents are able to live as healthily, safely, and independently as possible.
- The housing market functions effectively, providing homes which are affordable to people on all incomes; to meet the needs of residents and support the local economy.
- There is a wide and varied choice of good quality, sustainable homes of different sizes, types and tenures, including new provision of council homes, to meet the needs of a wide range of different households and age groups.
- Homes are warm, energy and water efficient, with built in resilience to climate change and fuel poverty.
- Homes are affordable to live in, located in high quality sustainable environments, served by jobs and neighbourhood facilities, appropriate green space, effective and sustainable transport links and other necessary infrastructure.
- People from all walks of life live in harmony, within mixed, balanced and inclusive communities; and homes and communities continue to meet the needs of residents into the future.
- We have strong relationships with residents, developers and partners that enable housing and services to be delivered effectively, and that support innovation where appropriate.

Building the right homes in the right places that people need and can afford to live in

Priority 01: Increasing the delivery of homes, including affordable housing, along with sustainable transport and infrastructure, to meet housing need

Priority 02: Diversifying the housing market and accelerating delivery

Priority 03: Achieving a high standard of design and quality of new homes and communities

Enabling people to live settled lives

Priority 4: Improving housing conditions and making best use of existing homes

Priority 5: Promoting health and wellbeing through housing

Priority 6: Preventing and tackling homelessness and rough sleeping

Building strong partnerships

Priority 7: Working with key partners to innovate and maximise resources available

Our Housing Strategy sets out our overarching objectives, whilst also aiming to achieve the councils' broader objectives:

- Supporting the economy
- Promoting health & wellbeing
- Tackling poverty and inequality
- Reducing carbon emissions and promoting environmental sustainability

The details of how this strategy links with other strategies and plans is shown at Annex 2.

Local and National context

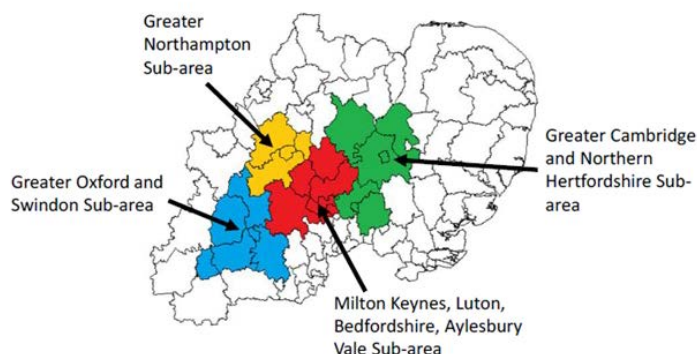
Economic Growth

Greater Cambridge is an area of high national and international importance, specialising in science, technology and innovation. It is strategically placed to create co-ordinated growth and investment along the corridors of Cambridge, Milton Keynes & Oxford, London-Stansted-Cambridge and the Cambridge-Norwich agri-tech corridor.

The need for 33,500 new homes across Greater Cambridge has been identified through the two councils' recently adopted Local Plans. The housing sub-markets of Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire are interdependent in supporting sustainable economic growth, with the close functional relationship between the two areas recognised through the Local Plans, and the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP)⁸. This is further evidenced through the Cambridge & Peterborough Independent Review (CPIER)⁹ published in September 2018 which identified Greater Cambridge (in their report consisting of Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and parts of Huntingdonshire and East Cambridge) as being one of three economies within the Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority area.

Whilst strong economic growth brings with it great opportunities for international recognition, investment into the area and local employment, it also creates challenges in terms of high

Cambridge - Milton Keynes - Oxford Corridor



housing costs and the ability to find suitable affordable accommodation within close commuting distance to places of work.

Investment in sustainable transport and infrastructure is also critical to securing the delivery of the region's economic and housing growth and to enable those living in more established communities to access jobs and services. We will continue to work with both the Combined Authority and GCP to secure investment for homes and infrastructure for Greater Cambridge. Alongside the need for good transport links, the energy grid and water supply capacity are identified as potential challenges to the delivery of housing and we will need to work with key partners, such as GCP and the Combined Authority, to explore innovative new technologies to secure the infrastructure required.

78% of working households who live in Greater Cambridge also work in the area and make up 62% of the overall workforce for Greater Cambridge.



The 'Affordability' Challenge

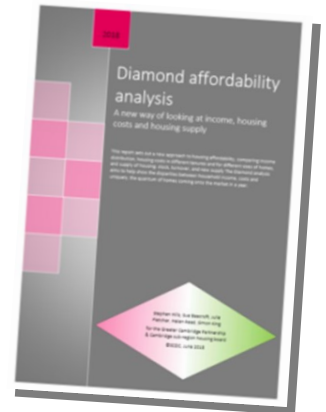
Greater Cambridge is an expensive place to buy or rent a home. High prices are fuelled by high demand, which itself is fuelled by the strength of the local economy and in-migration of highly skilled workers. For those on low incomes, the housing options are scarce with a reliance on social housing for rent; but even so-called 'affordable rent' at up to 80% of market rents is unaffordable to many.

There is also a growing 'affordability gap' where middle income households are being squeezed out of the market; with limited housing options for low cost home ownership or the private rented sector. The demand for housing for these groups far outstrips the current supply.

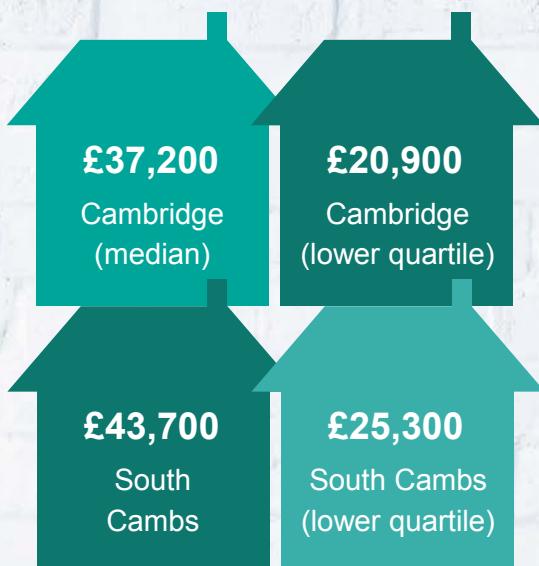
We have undertaken extensive research into the affordability issues for Greater Cambridge¹⁰.

Affordability is not just about tenure, but is also affected by living costs associated with the location and design of someone's home. For example, a highly energy efficient home can lead to it being more affordable in terms of utility costs. Homes that are located close to good transport links, especially in terms of public transport, can also help make living there more affordable to households on lower to middle incomes.

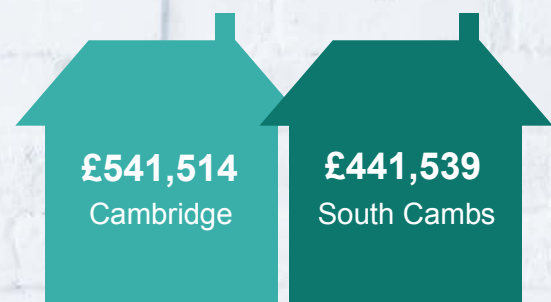
<https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/housing/local-housing-knowledge/our-housing-market/affordability-analysis>



Gross household income



Average House Prices



Lower quartile price to income ratio

14.3 (for Cambridge City)
10.8 (for South Cambridgeshire)

See annex 3 for more key statistics and data sources.

Median monthly cost to rent (2 bed house)

£1,190 per month (for Cambridge City)
£893 per month (for South Cambridgeshire)

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

£666.42 per month



Population Growth

The population of Greater Cambridge is expected to increase by around 26% between 2011 and 2031¹¹. The demographic profile is also changing, with the proportion of those aged over 65 significantly increasing, especially within South Cambridgeshire. With an ageing population this presents a challenge for housing health and social care in terms of providing the right type of homes and increased need for health and social care services.

At the other end of the spectrum, Cambridge has one of the 'youngest' populations in the country. People aged 24 and under, including students, make up around 37% of the City's population, and their housing needs tend to be quite different compared to other age groups¹².



National Policy

This Housing Strategy sits within the context of a wide range of national strategies and policies.

Housing issues have risen up the national agenda over the last two or three years, with the main focus around boosting supply to support the economy and meet housing demand as well as increasing home ownership. The Grenfell Tower tragedy triggered a new national debate around the quality and management of social housing, and the poverty and inequality affecting so many of those for whom social housing is their only option. These, combined with major welfare reforms such as Universal

Credit, more focus on improving management and conditions in the private rented sector, and changes in how health and social care is commissioned, will all have an influence on our Housing Strategy.

Where the opportunity arises, both authorities continue to lobby government over devolution, to support social care and provide further council housing, and on national policy where it appears to conflict with local needs.

Further details on changes to national housing policy can be found in Annex 4.

Resources

Both councils have strong ambitions, but resources are inevitably limited. We will continue to make the best use of available resources, as well as seeking additional opportunities to harness appropriate investment from other sources.

The work of the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority will support the activity

identified in this Strategy. Their work to promote delivery of new homes and improve infrastructure and transport links will widen the scope for housing delivery and help to ensure that residents of Greater Cambridge can live in sustainable and accessible locations.

The main resources currently available for delivering our Housing Strategy are summarised at Annex 7.



Priority 01

Increasing the delivery of homes, including affordable housing, along with sustainable transport and other infrastructure, to meet housing need

Housing is at the core of our ambitions for growth, for jobs and prosperity, for the health and wellbeing of our residents and to ensure that Greater Cambridge is one of the best places to live.

There is a recognised mismatch between growth in employment and the corresponding slower growth in house-building and infrastructure, and the adverse impacts this can have on both people and businesses.¹³ It is therefore essential for local economic success that the pace of delivery of new homes overall is increased and that we can stimulate the housing market in the case of any market failure. But we also need to make sure that we are providing the right types of homes in the right locations, ensuring these are affordable for those that need to live and work in the area, whilst minimising adverse impacts of growth.

Annex 5 to the Strategy provides further detail on our housing provision requirements, especially in terms of affordable and specialist accommodation.

Housing Need

Through our Local Plans we know that we need to deliver an additional 33,500 homes up to 2031; 19,500 in South Cambridgeshire and 14,000 in Cambridge; with the key challenge that sufficient housing is available which is affordable to everyone who wants to live in the area. The CPIER report suggests that higher housing target numbers are likely to be needed if the potential for higher growth in employment is to be met.

In developing the joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan, a review of housing needs will be undertaken in 2019 building on the new national standard method for calculating local housing need. A further assessment will determine the appropriate size, type and tenure of housing needed for different sections of the community.

Moving Forward

Both councils will:

- Develop a joint Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to supplement our Local Plan housing requirements
- Work together to deliver a joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan
- Establish the number of new homes required as part of the development of the joint Greater Cambridge Local Plan, in collaboration with the Combined Authority
- Assess the housing requirements of groups with specific needs
- Work with registered providers to ensure homes are genuinely affordable to those that need them
- Prioritise social housing for rent as part of the wider mix of affordable housing
- Provide choice to those aspiring to own their own home by increasing the range of intermediate housing products
- Agree Local Lettings Plans for the affordable housing on large s106 urban fringe sites and major strategic sites and share those affordable housing allocations between Cambridge and South Cambs
- Use results of new community surveys and focus groups to improve the design, planning and development of and support to new communities
- Work with partners to identify the housing needs of the local workforce

Increasing the supply of housing that is affordable to those on low to median incomes

The majority of new affordable homes will come from private developments and we will continue to work proactively with developers to secure the provision of affordable housing through our Local Plans. See Annex 5 (*Summary of requirements for development of new homes*) for more detail. In summary, the affordable housing sought on developments will be:

Cambridge City

25% of homes on sites of 10-14 dwellings and 40% of homes on sites of 15 or more dwellings to be affordable, of which:

75% Social housing for rent*
25% Intermediate*

South Cambridgeshire

40% of all homes on sites of 10 or more dwellings to be affordable, of which:

70% Social housing for rent*
30% Intermediate*

Both councils

All affordable rent homes to have rents, including service charges, capped at the Local Housing Allowance Rate. Our preference, wherever possible, is for social rather than affordable rent, to maximise affordability.

**subject to review as part of the Housing SPD*

We are committed to working proactively with developers to help them find ways of making it viable to deliver our affordable housing requirements. Where developers choose not to work with us in this way we will take a robust approach based on the National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance as to how we scrutinise any viability challenges, to ensure we maximise the affordable housing contribution.

We will continue to prioritise social housing for rent to meet the needs of those on low incomes who are unable to afford alternative accommodation.

For those aspiring to own their own home we want to offer choice, and will explore alternative models to shared ownership, such as rent to buy. We also

- Ensure new developments provide appropriate housing for older people and other groups with specific needs
- Require Affordable Rents, including service charges, to be capped at Local Housing Allowance rates

South Cambridgeshire District Council will:

- Work with businesses to help themselves to provide homes for their workers
- Deliver at least 200 council homes over the next 5 years
- Review what we mean by 'affordable housing' with a focus on 'affordable living'
- Explore opportunities for direct commissioning of land through local authority investment, joint ventures, etc.
- Explore the potential for a retirement village
- Work to identify a site or sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Cambridge City will:

- Deliver at least 500 new council homes funded through the devolution deal including on council owned land

want to explore the role that new Private Rented Sector housing can have in broadening housing options.

We need to ensure that homes are affordable to those who need them. As a rough guide, Shelter suggests that affordability should be assessed on the basis that around 35% of net household income spent on housing costs is considered affordable¹⁴.

Tackling poverty is a priority for both councils, and we are committed to building

new council homes which are affordable to those on low incomes. Over the years we have seen a historic decline in stock numbers - particularly through Right to Buy sales, but we are aiming for this trend to be reversed through our council new-build programmes. Cambridge City Council has an ambitious programme to deliver at least 500 new council homes over 5 years following £70m funding via the

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Devolution Deal. South Cambridgeshire currently has a programme to build at least 200 new council homes over the next 5 years, with ambitions to double this total following the lifting of the HRA borrowing cap and the potential to apply for Combined Authority funding as part of the £100m available to accelerate the delivery of affordable housing.

Building sustainable and cohesive communities

We will continue to enable delivery of significant development on the fringes of Cambridge and in larger new communities, such as Northstowe and Waterbeach, to help meet the housing needs of Greater Cambridge, including the need for affordable housing tenures¹⁵. Building new communities in which people want to live requires considerable master-planning to ensure we have the right mix of homes in terms of sizes, types and tenures. We also need to ensure early provision of appropriate: infrastructure, retail, leisure and other services; green spaces; and links to the natural environment, to enable residents to live settled, healthy lives from the outset. Both councils are committed to working with new communities to

enable them to become established, supporting community cohesion and long term sustainability.

To support well balanced and sustainable communities, Local Letting Plans for the allocation of affordable housing will be used for larger developments.

We know that on previous large sites where the infrastructure and facilities are less established this has led to some residents feeling isolated, often leading or contributing to mental ill health. We are committed to learning lessons from past experience to help improve the design, planning and development of new communities going forwards.

Understanding the housing needs of the local economy

Shared ownership homes and alternative intermediate models, such as rent to buy and Private Rented Sector models (PRS), can help support the needs of those on middle incomes who come to work in the area but cannot afford to live locally.

Our shared Home-Link choice based letting scheme is also available for low income workers to apply for social housing for rent.

Both councils are keen to work with local employers and other partners to get a better understanding of the housing needs of the local workforce, to support local services, the local economy and further economic growth.





South Cambridgeshire Priority: Promoting housing for Essential Local Workers

A top priority for South Cambridgeshire District Council is to reduce commuting travel and ensure business growth is sustainable into the future through the provision of homes specifically targeted to essential local workers beyond the 'Essential Local Workers' definition in the NPPF¹⁶.

As well as public sector employees providing frontline services, we also want to take into account the needs of other workers who provide the services necessary for the economy.

The council has an 'open door' approach to work with businesses to help themselves in terms of providing exemplar schemes that deliver a range of homes that are provided for and are affordable to their workforce. There may also be potential for needs of essential workers to be met on larger sites close to places of work through local lettings plans, to help reduce travel needs.





Building for an Ageing Population

With a rapidly ageing population, both councils are keen to promote a range of housing options to accommodate people and families throughout their lifetime across all tenures, to enable them to live safely and independently for as long as possible. This could be through the provision of ‘downsizer’ accommodation to provide more choice to older people who want to move to smaller and more suitable accommodation, and to enable them to remain in their local community if they wish to do so. This can also help to free up family homes. In relation to affordable housing, local lettings plans may also be used to give priority to older people wanting to move to smaller homes in particular new housing developments.

We know that loneliness and isolation is one of the biggest issues that may affect older people, and we will promote homes that are well located to services and facilities and well integrated into the community, where people of all ages can help support each other.

There are a number of sheltered housing and extra care schemes for older people in the Greater Cambridge area, which enable older people to remain in the community, whilst at the same time having the opportunity to mix more with people of their own age where they choose to do so. Both councils are interested in exploring options for more housing specifically for older people, including new models of housing. Any new provision has to take into account any impacts on social care and we will continue to work with the County Council to make best use of the financial resources available.

In terms of general housing, both affordable and private, we need to be future-proofing new homes through design so that they can be easily adaptable to enable people to live independently in their own homes as they age.

In accordance with our current Local Plans, all homes within Cambridge City should be built to level M4(2) of the adaptable and accessible building standard with 5% of the affordable housing to be built to wheelchair accessibility standards. For South Cambridgeshire, the current Local Plan seeks 5% of all homes to be built to the accessible and adaptable dwellings M4(2) standard but we will encourage developers to work to this standard where possible¹⁷.

In addition, from local research carried out by Sheffield Hallam¹⁸, based on projected need for specialist accommodation we will look to secure the following types of accommodation for older people on larger development sites.

Approximately 5% of new supply to be age exclusive homes - likely to take the form of mainstream housing built with older people in mind, i.e. meeting Building Regulations Part 4 (2 or 3).

Around 7% of homes to be specialist housing for older people, where the size of development makes this practicable. This could take the form of care ready type accommodation or extra care.

Appropriate provision of additional care beds.

According to the research, the number of care beds in Greater Cambridge is insufficient to meet existing needs. The provision of care beds that can be funded through social care is a particular issue facing the County Council and we will continue to work with them to identify how we can support the provision of care homes, including places available for spot purchasing beds for those funded through social care. With the increase of older people suffering from dementia, providers of any new specialist accommodation should consider how it can help meet this need, as well as the potential to help hospital discharge through the provision of intermediate care.



South Cambridgeshire Priority: Exploring the Potential for a Retirement Village

South Cambridgeshire District Council is keen to explore the potential for a retirement village in the District that provides a retirement lifestyle with a real community spirit where people want to live, alongside affordable homes for care workers needed to support older people with more complex needs.

The council is also keen to understand the role that existing mobile home parks play in the District to meet the accommodation needs of older people, and whether this type of accommodation should be supported in the future mix of homes provided.

Promoting specialist and other types of housing

We will continue to develop partnership working with appropriate organisations (*see partnership diagram under priority 7*) to ensure that sufficient support is available for those at greatest risk in our communities, including young people, families with young children, young people leaving care, ex-offenders, those suffering from domestic abuse and asylum seekers. Where purpose built accommodation is required, we will work with both commissioners and developers to secure appropriate accommodation on new developments.

Students form a significant part of Cambridge's population and the two universities make a major contribution to the local economy. Provision of new student housing is to be closely aligned with growth in University student numbers and can contribute towards balanced and mixed communities. However, consideration needs to be given to the scale and impact of any such development on local residential amenity. How proposals for new student accommodation will be dealt with is detailed in Cambridge City Council's Local Plan.

Homes for Gypsies & Travellers and Houseboat Dwellers

Everyone should have the right to a decent home, be that in traditional housing or through other cultural or lifestyle choices. Under the Housing & Planning Act 2016, local authorities have a duty to assess the housing needs of both those residing in caravans and on inland waterways where houseboats can be moored. A key priority for South Cambridgeshire District Council is to identify new sites to accommodate those that wish to live in a caravan. Although a recent assessment did not identify any need for Gypsy & Traveller sites for those meeting the planning definition, it did show a need to provide sites for those residing in caravans who no longer travel, as well as pitches to accommodate Travelling Showpeople¹⁹.

Across Greater Cambridge there has also been a noticeable increase over the last year or so in

the number of temporary unauthorised encampments, particularly involving gypsies and travellers needing to access hospital treatment. As part of the council's action to identify new sites, we will look to see how we can best accommodate those stopping temporarily in the District.

In terms of houseboat dwellers, there is currently space for around seventy residential boats plus some additional space for visitors, on the river Cam. A site to the north of the City has been allocated for off-river residential moorings, and the Local Plan supports appropriate delivery of residential moorings where they meet agreed criteria. As we develop the Joint Local Plan from 2019, a full assessment of need for these groups will be undertaken.

Priority 02

Diversifying the housing market & accelerating housing delivery

Everyone has different needs when it comes to the homes people live in. We want to create a place where people have choice, through ensuring that a wide range of different types of housing are available, which at the same time can help accelerate rates of delivery. We also want to provide diversity in how homes are delivered so we are not solely reliant on a handful of developers to build the homes, including the affordable housing that we need.

We are also keen to explore new ways of delivering different types of housing - such as community-led development, including cooperative-housing & Community Land Trusts, and self-build homes.

Encouraging investment for purpose-built Private Rented Sector Housing (PRS)

The councils want to gain a better understanding of the local need and demand for purpose-built private rented sector (PRS) accommodation; and of the relationship between large PRS schemes and the ability to create settled and cohesive communities.

We recognise that PRS can meet the needs of households on a range of incomes, from those who are unlikely to be considered for social housing for rent to those who can afford but do not want to own their own home. We also recognise PRS can help accelerate overall housing build-out rates on large strategic sites. Subject to clear evidence of need, we may consider proposals for new PRS as part of a wider housing mix. Any such homes provided should remain available as PRS for an agreed period.

They need to be of high quality, well managed and offer longer term tenancies, as well as options for tenants to end tenancies sooner where it meets their needs.

Where the need for PRS has been identified we will seek a range of unit sizes and household types and income levels, including appropriate provision of Affordable Private Rent.

Moving Forward

Both councils will:

- Carry out further research to identify need and demand for purpose-built private rented sector housing (PRS)
- Develop a set of local requirements to inform development of PRS schemes that are appropriate to the area
- Work with developers to accelerate delivery, e.g. through off-site and modular construction homes and supporting SME builders to bring forward smaller sites
- Review outstanding planning permissions and work with developers to ensure that schemes are built out in a timely manner

South Cambridgeshire District Council will:

- Explore what role development of new HMOs could play locally in providing an affordable housing option for single people
- Seek opportunities, where viable, for Ermine Street Housing to be an active private sector landlord for new developments in the District, including exploring the potential to deliver and manage HMOs
- Deliver self and custom-build housing plots on new developments to meet identified demand
- Work with local communities to secure the development they need
- Implement a programme for delivering homes on exception sites in our villages

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Well managed HMOs have an important part to play in meeting housing needs, offering a more affordable housing solution for single low income households. With HMOs predominantly located in Cambridge, the City Council's Local Plan supports provision of good quality, larger HMOs, in appropriate locations. At the same time the council will seek to avoid over concentration of provision in an area, and to minimise any potential adverse impact on neighbouring occupiers through its registration scheme.

As part of the development of the larger strategic sites we will explore what role new-build HMOs can also play within South Cambridgeshire.

Cambridge City will:

- Seek opportunities, where financially viable, to buy back new market homes on our own developments to provide as intermediate tenure homes
- Review our approach to self and custom-build housing in line with statutory requirements

South Cambridgeshire priority: Promoting self-build & custom build housing

With just under 400 applicants on the self-build register in South Cambridgeshire, there is an expectation that new developments will support this need and we will be seeking around 5% of homes on large sites to be for self or custom build. The council has also identified over 100 plots of council-owned land to help meet this demand, with the proceeds going towards funding new council homes. This initiative ensures that the council gets best value from small sites on which it would not be financially viable to build single council houses.

There may also be scope to promote self-build for households wishing to downsize in appropriate circumstances where there is



development potential within their own garden land, subject to Local Plan policy.

In addition, both councils are currently working together to share best practice and identify options for a joint approach in terms of the self-build/custom-build registers and the best ways to meet demand.

Exploring off-site and modular construction

Innovative and new ways of developing high quality housing more quickly and cheaply than through more traditional construction methods are emerging. Although this is unlikely to completely replace existing housebuilding methods, at least for now, it does offer opportunities for the councils to consider more innovative ways of promoting delivery through their own development programmes, and for supporting carbon reduction and other sustainability objectives.



Any such consideration would need to take into account implications for future repair and maintenance. We will continue to work with developers on the larger strategic sites where the scale of build is appropriate to modern methods of construction.

Increasing the role of small & medium size enterprise builders (SMEs)

Both councils want to promote diversity in the market, to help speed up delivery and provide a wider range of housing options. We are keen to work with SME builders to bring forward smaller sites that provide variety in the market to meet local needs.

The councils will seek to identify land to accommodate at least 10% of our housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, in accordance with the National Planning Policy. This will help to ensure that land is available for small to medium sized housebuilders to develop.

Increasing rates of build out

Measures above aimed at diversifying the housing market can also help to accelerate the delivery of housing, which in turn can help us to address affordable housing need more effectively.

We await the government's response to recommendations from the recent Letwin review of build out rates, to assess whether there is more we can do to speed up delivery²⁰.





South Cambridgeshire Priority: Supporting villages to remain vibrant and sustainable for the future

With just over 100 villages within South Cambridgeshire District, a high priority for the council is to promote vibrancy and sustainability to enable villages to grow and flourish through appropriate development supported by the local community. We want to make sure that we keep our villages alive, where communities thrive and support networks are created. Our villages should be places where people want and can afford to live in, that offer easy access to work and play.

Maintaining the social fabric of our villages is important; helping young people to stay close to family networks through providing homes they can afford to live in, as well as homes for the older generation who want to stay in the village but need more suitable accommodation. In turn, this will help to sustain village facilities, such as local shops, schools and community activities.

South Cambridgeshire District has an excellent track record for promoting rural exception sites, working alongside parish councils, with around 180 new affordable homes built over the last five years. Whilst providing social housing for rent for local people is still a priority, we want to extend this to cater for a wider range of households through different intermediate products, such as shared ownership and rent to buy. The Local Plan also allows a small proportion of market homes to support sites coming forward which can help to meet local needs in rural areas; this could include an element of self build, such as for those who want to downsize.

Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby and meet housing need within a wider catchment area.

As well as building homes for local people through the exception sites policy, the introduction of entry-level exception sites that provide homes suitable for first time buyers will support the council's ambitions in terms of economic development and enabling people to come and live in the District close to places of work. This will also help to reinvigorate villages, providing a range of housing opportunities for young families on middle incomes to live in our villages.

For villages that have received large planning permissions for developments whilst the council did not have a five year land supply, this does offer opportunity for parishes to work with us to ensure any new development benefits local people, such as homes for first time buyers, older people's accommodation, etc.

We will continue to work with local communities to help them secure the development they want to see through Neighbourhood Plans, Village Design Statements, community-led housing and the promotion of affordable and entry-level housing through exception sites policies.

Priority 03

Achieving a high standard of design and quality of new homes and communities

It's not just the cost of rents and mortgages which determines whether a home is affordable but also service charges and running costs, including costs associated with heating a home. We want to see homes built that are environmentally sustainable, and to encourage well-designed developments, especially in terms of on-site renewable energy and low carbon technologies, and in promoting biodiversity.

We need to ensure that homes are of good quality, and that communities are well designed with access to sufficient facilities and open spaces. New communities need to be effectively integrated with existing more established communities so that everyone can benefit from new developments.

Cambridge City Council has published its Sustainable Housing Design Guide²¹ as to the standards expected in its own council new build programme and as a guide for developers to follow. The City Council's Climate Change Strategy 2016-2021 aims to achieve zero carbon status in Cambridge by 2050 and stresses the importance of new developments being designed to both respond to and mitigate against climate change²².

Whilst South Cambridgeshire District Council has a Design Guide SPD²³ and specific policies within its current Local Plan, one of the key priorities for the council is to do more to drive up standards and make South Cambridgeshire a 'greener' sustainable place to live. The council has also pledged to beat government targets and reduce local carbon emissions to zero by 2050.

New homes need to be flexible to meet the needs of a range of household types and sizes, and to meet individual households' changing needs over time. All new homes have to meet the nationally described space standards²⁴.

Ensuring that villages keep their distinctive character, South Cambridgeshire District Council wants to raise the quality of new development and support inclusive, sustainable growth through the use of Village Design

Moving Forward

Both councils will:

- Drive up standards for environmental sustainability including onsite renewable energy and low carbon technologies
- Develop a joint Sustainable Design and Construction SPD
- Ensure that housing, in particular affordable housing, is developed alongside the provision of community infrastructure
- Future-proof the design of new homes so that as residents age, homes can be easily adapted to meet changing needs
- Ensure all new homes meet the nationally described space standards as a minimum

South Cambridgeshire District Council will:

- Work with communities to develop individual Village Design Statements

Cambridge City will:

- Use the Sustainable Housing Design Guide to support good housing design in its own developments and promote amongst other developers

Statements. These Statements will set out guidelines, worked up in partnership with parishes, that will help shape the character of new development in villages. The council also works with communities to develop Neighbourhood Plans as a way for communities to take a proactive approach to deciding the future of the places where they live and work.

Having easily adaptable homes as a household's circumstances change also helps support people to live independent lives. An ageing population means we must future-proof the design of our homes now, so that as we age homes can be easily adapted to avoid the need for expensive specialist housing. Whilst the Lifetime Homes Standard has been superseded, we will, wherever possible, build to M4(2) adaptable and accessible standards ourselves and encourage other house builders to do so.

We also need to be delivering homes and wider infrastructure that are designed with a view to new technologies, including the move towards a digital connected future.

As part of the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme, led by Cambridgeshire County Council, funding has been secured from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority to significantly improve mobile, broadband and public WiFi coverage across Cambridgeshire. Being digitally connected will support a range of groups, including those seeking employment, those that want to work from home, and those for whom assistive technology can reduce the need for care.

We are working towards a joint Sustainable Design & Construction SPD which will consider in more detail our requirements around design and construction of new homes, including use of new technologies.



Priority 04

Improving housing conditions and making best use of existing homes

Everyone has the right to live in a decent home and whilst we have an ambitious programme for building new homes in future years that are well designed and energy & water efficient, we must not forget that the majority of residents live in existing homes, and as many of the homes are older they are likely to in poorer condition, less well insulated, and more expensive to heat.

Promoting energy and water efficiency

It is estimated that around 40% of UK emissions come from households, with up to 50% coming from heating and electricity.²⁵ As well as the effects on our environment, it can also be damaging to the health and wellbeing of residents where homes cannot be heated properly, with an estimated 11.5% of households in fuel poverty in Cambridge, and 8% in South Cambridgeshire.²⁶

We therefore have a responsibility to ensure that housing across all tenures meets a high standard for residents and supports our goals to reduce the overall carbon footprint. We will continue to promote greener and energy & water efficient solutions for council tenants and home-owners, Through a new Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations & Repairs Policy, from April 2019 there is greater scope and flexibility to fund energy efficiency measures for those on low incomes, to promote warm homes. Both councils will look to provide greater support to improve housing conditions through this policy. We will also provide advice and support to private landlords, but where necessary take enforcement action if they fail to meet the expected standards.

Both councils will continue to explore the potential to work together to deliver energy efficiency projects that address issues of fuel poverty and climate change through the Cambridgeshire Energy Partnership.

Moving Forward

Both councils will:

- Promote greener and energy efficient solutions for those in the private sector
- Ensure council homes continue to be well managed and maintained
- Invest in the fabric of our council homes for optimum energy and water efficiency, and ensure they remain good quality homes that people want to live in
- Support tenants through the implementation of Universal Credit
- Work to ensure HMOs are licensed where required
- Support private landlords in managing their homes, and take enforcement action against the minority of landlords who do not meet required standards

South Cambridgeshire District Council will:

- Review its Empty Homes Strategy in 2019/20

Cambridge City will:

- Continue to be pro-active in bringing empty homes back into use



Ensuring our council homes and environments are of high standard and are well managed and maintained

As stock holding authorities, we maintain and manage over 12,200 properties for rent, (7,000 in the City and 5,200 in South Cambridgeshire) accounting for 11% of the overall homes in Greater Cambridge.

Having high quality responsive services for managing and maintaining council properties is something that tenants and leaseholders have identified as particularly important. We know also that the physical appearance of the outside of homes is important to tenants and needs to feature in our investment plans.

Significant investment has been made in maintaining our homes to a good standard and making them more energy efficient. This will continue to be a priority for us in terms of improving our homes and we will work towards any additional requirements following the government's proposed review of the Decent Homes Standard. Cambridge City Council has also committed to investing in a five year programme of environmental improvements on

its council housing estates. South Cambridgeshire District Council has an ongoing programme of improving the energy efficiency of council homes. This includes the installation of triple glazed windows and high thermal efficient doors, improving thermal insulation and replacing electric heating in gas areas with gas heating systems. South Cambridgeshire District Council is also investigating battery storage systems, as well as looking at smart home technology and how it can be used to improve properties.

The roll-out of Universal Credit could have a significant impact on our tenants' welfare, including the ability to pay their rent. This in turn could have a knock-on effect in terms of the councils' rental income, reducing the funding available to invest in homes and services. We will prioritise the support we can give to tenants to ensure they are able to claim and pay their rent on time.

Making sure private rented homes are of good quality and well managed

The number of private rented homes in Greater Cambridge has seen a significant increase, especially in Cambridge. Housing conditions tend to be worse in private rented accommodation, with an estimated 18% of private rented homes in Cambridge and 15.3% in South Cambridgeshire not meeting the required Health & Safety standards^{27, 28}. The councils have an important role to play in improving management and conditions in the private rented sector. We will actively support landlords in meeting their responsibilities in this area, but will take enforcement action against the minority of landlords who do not meet the expected standard. The government has

recently introduced new requirements for councils to register landlords who do not manage or maintain their properties appropriately, together with new financial penalties that should help drive up the standards in private rented accommodation.

In terms of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), the classification has been broadened to include smaller HMOs which must be compulsorily licensed. It is estimated that as many as 1,700 additional HMOs may need to be licensed in Greater Cambridge; around 1,000 in Cambridge and 700 in South Cambridgeshire.

Bringing Empty Homes back into use

Having homes sitting empty when we have such a high demand for housing is a wasted resource. Long-term empty homes can also have a detrimental impact on the wider community, making streets or neighbourhoods appear neglected and uncared for. Whilst the number of long term empty homes is low compared to many other parts of the country and represents less than 1% of the total Greater Cambridge housing stock²⁹, it is important that we work with owners to try and bring homes back into use. For example, both Councils' Council Tax schemes^{30, 31} include elements designed to help dis-incentivise people from leaving homes empty for long periods. Whilst

empty homes have not been identified as a serious issue for South Cambridgeshire District Council, and therefore not considered a high priority on which to focus resources, the council will continue to offer advice and support and refer owners to its housing companies Ermine Street Housing³² and Shire Homes Lettings³³ with a view to increasing the availability of private rented housing. South Cambridgeshire District Council will review its Empty Homes Strategy in 2019/20. Ermine Street Housing has also built up good relationships with the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to release empty properties in the District for private rent.

Cambridge City Council Priority: Empty Homes Policy

Tackling empty homes is a particular priority for the City Council. The council, through its Empty Homes Policy³⁴, actively supports owners of long-term empty homes to bring them back into use. This includes providing informal advice and assistance to owners, and providing interest free loans to enable such homes to be brought up to standard³⁵.

Where loans are offered, this is on the basis that the management will be taken over by the

council's social lettings agency, Town Hall Lettings³⁶ (or another not for profit provider). Where working directly with owners is unsuccessful, the council may go on to use its enforcement powers, including serving Improvement Notices or ultimately resorting to Compulsory Purchase.

The council will also review its approach to dealing with empty homes on new developments.



Priority 05

Promoting Health & Wellbeing through housing

Poor and/or unsuitable housing, and lack of appropriate transport and community infrastructure, can have a significant effect on people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. In addition, a cold home can lead to respiratory and other diseases, and unsuitable homes can increase trips and falls. It is estimated that poor housing costs health and social care around £2.5bn per year.³⁷

Ill health prevention is crucial to improving the population's health. On average, approximately 68.7%³⁸ of time is spent at home. Therefore housing availability, affordability and quality is essential to staying well, both physically and mentally, and to having the ability to live independently for as long as possible. Access to green space and quality of environment are also important.

Our aim is to help people live safely and independently at home, and encourage residents to be active participants in community life to combat loneliness and isolation.

We will continue to work with partners to improve the integration of housing, health and social care services, including the planning and delivery of new developments, reviewing how we deliver Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and home adaptations, and supporting the county-wide 'Housing Options for Older People' project to help families make informed housing choices as they grow older.³⁹

Improving support to people in their homes

Over the years we have seen a changing tenant profile within our own council homes with an increase in the number of tenants experiencing mental health issues. This has resulted in us moving towards a much more intensive housing management service to help support the needs of our tenants. This is a growing problem generally across all tenures, with people with complex needs ending up as homeless because there is no where else to turn for support. Often homelessness is a symptom, rather than the cause of mental ill health. We will continue to work

Moving Forward

Both councils will:

- Work with partners to improve the integration of housing, health and social care and support service transformation
- Work with partners to ensure that there is appropriate support and provision available to meet increasing demand from those suffering with complex health issues
- Implement the proposed Cambridgeshire-wide repairs and adaptations policy to help improve housing conditions and deliver health and social care outcomes
- Support the new Housing Options for Older People scheme and monitor the impact on existing services
- Promote digital inclusion through training up 'champions' to help others get online
- Work with partners to help tackle loneliness and isolation
- Explore opportunities for joint inter-generational work, particularly across the councils' sheltered housing schemes
- Work with health and social care partners to develop a sustainable approach to revenue funding for our shared Home Improvement Agency
- Continue to engage with the Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

with partners to ensure that there is appropriate support and provision available to meet increasing demand.

With continuing reductions in health and social care budgets, it is essential that we work together to ensure that our support services are sustainable for the future.

In particular, forging closer links with GPs and other allied health professionals to resolve health issues as a result of poor housing is a priority. Early intervention and prevention is crucial in helping to reduce costs and provide a better quality of life for residents.



Tackling poverty and inequality

Welfare reforms are impacting on residents across all tenures. For example, low Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates compared with local private rents make it increasingly difficult for benefit claimants to rent privately in Greater Cambridge, and the overall benefit cap is already affecting a number of local families. The full local roll out of Universal Credit from 2018 onwards will also have an impact. Both councils are working on a number of projects in this area.

Cambridge, in a recent study, was identified as the most unequal city in the UK⁴⁰. The City Council's work is co-ordinated through its Anti-Poverty Strategy.

This includes actions around, for example: supporting residents to access benefits and respond to the impacts of welfare reform; provision of debt and other financial advice; supporting people to reduce their fuel and water bills; and supporting people into work and training.

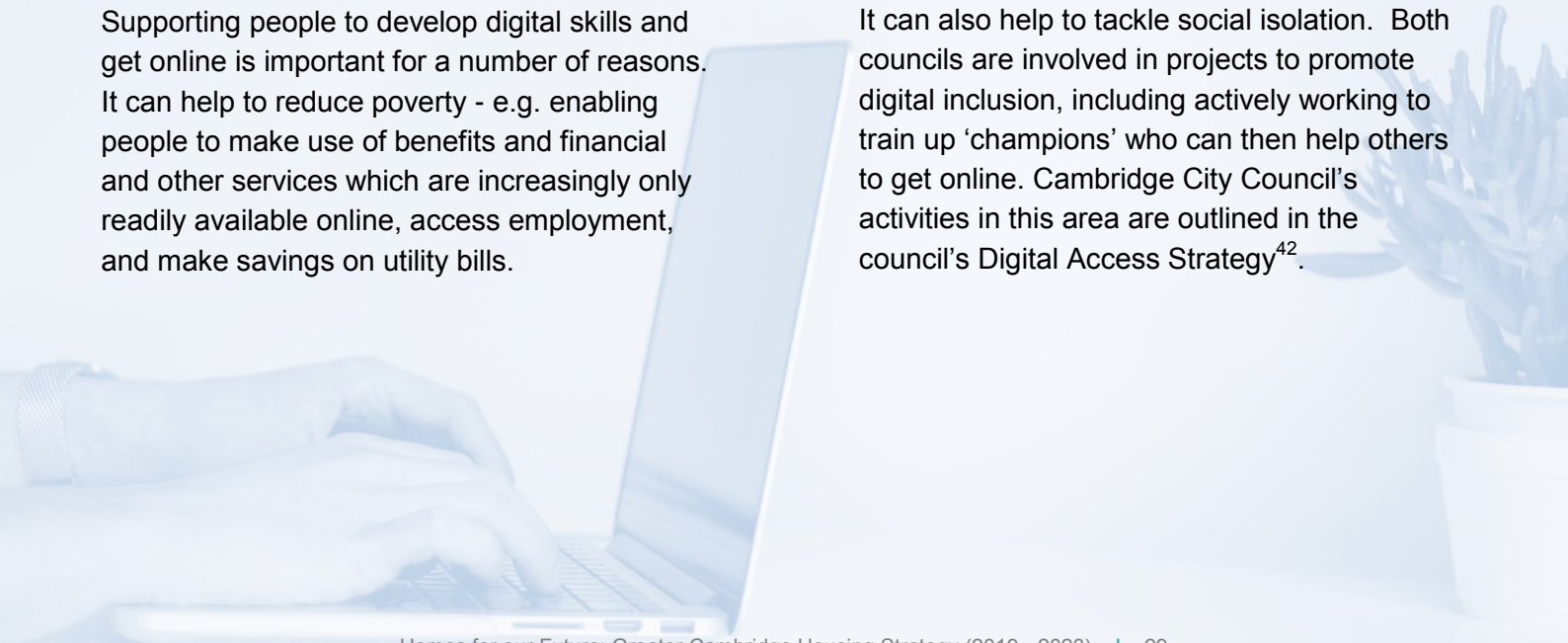
As part of South Cambridgeshire's Financial Inclusion Strategy, the District Council supports the local credit union to provide access to banking for its tenants⁴¹. Also working in partnership with Mears, a specialist support worker is employed to provide help and advice to tenants who are struggling financially.

Fuel and water poverty are particular issues for local residents who struggle to pay their utility bills. By improving the energy efficiency of new and existing homes, this will reduce the carbon footprint and improve the quality of life for residents. It is therefore a key priority for both councils to continue to ensure through partnership and publicity activities, that owner occupiers and private rented tenants secure their full share of any funding available to help address fuel poverty.

Promoting Digital Inclusion

Supporting people to develop digital skills and get online is important for a number of reasons. It can help to reduce poverty - e.g. enabling people to make use of benefits and financial and other services which are increasingly only readily available online, access employment, and make savings on utility bills.

It can also help to tackle social isolation. Both councils are involved in projects to promote digital inclusion, including actively working to train up 'champions' who can then help others to get online. Cambridge City Council's activities in this area are outlined in the council's Digital Access Strategy⁴².





Combating Loneliness and Isolation

The issue of loneliness is rising up the national agenda, particularly in relation to older people, with an estimated 1.2 million chronically lonely older people in the UK⁴³. Both councils are working with partners on community development and other initiatives to tackle loneliness, including work on improving digital access as well as improving planning on new

developments. As part of this we want to explore opportunities for joint inter-generational work, particularly across the councils' sheltered housing schemes.

Both councils also offer community grants to voluntary and community groups which help bring people together and improve quality of life.

Tackling Crime and Anti Social Behaviour

Both councils treat anti-social behaviour and hate crime seriously, engaging proactively with partners and the wider community in terms of both prevention and in dealing with complaints and issues as they arise.

Both councils are also active members of the Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership.

Preventing and Tackling Homelessness and Rough Sleeping

Preventing and tackling homelessness requires a co-ordinated and strategic response, and involves partnership working across a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies.

The new Homelessness Reduction Act, which came into force in 2018, introduced new responsibilities for housing authorities. Both councils worked together to review their approaches to dealing with homelessness in preparation for the new Act.

South Cambridgeshire has its own Homelessness Strategy (published April 2019) for the district, and a full review of homelessness was undertaken in early 2018 which informed that strategy.

In Cambridge City, issues and approaches to homelessness and rough sleeping are detailed in the council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Plan 2016-2019. A new action plan for 2019-2022 is being worked on in partnership with a range of agencies through the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Partnership. A Homelessness Summit, with a particular focus on rough sleeping, also took place in 2017 with the City Council and a range of partners, which will help to inform the plan.

More recently, It Takes a City's Summit on Homelessness identified a strong local interest in issues around homelessness and rough sleeping, and presented further opportunities for community engagement and partnership working in this area. It may also open up funding opportunities from private sector sources⁴⁴.

This Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy does not seek to replace the councils' strategies and action plans referred to above. Instead this chapter, together with Annex 6, highlights some of the issues and priorities dealt with in more detail in those other strategies and plans.

Moving Forward

Both councils will:

- Work with partners to prevent homelessness
- Continue to lobby government around impact of welfare policy on affordability in the private rented sector
- Review the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act on our lettings policies
- Prepare for the roll out of Universal Credit and assess what further actions may be needed to prevent homelessness following implementation
- Help shape the county-wide review of housing related support, to ensure that the districts can continue to effectively meet their homelessness prevention obligations
- Improve our understanding of the issues faced by people discharged from prison, and our approach to preventing homelessness amongst ex-offenders

South Cambridgeshire District Council will:

- Review existing information available to those facing homelessness
- Review the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme
- Increase the number of homes available to rent through the council's private sector leasing scheme - Shire Homes Lettings
- Publish a Homelessness Strategy in 2019

Homelessness: some of the issues

Cuts in welfare funding, combined with high housing costs and low Local Housing Allowance rates, mean that people on low incomes are becoming increasingly vulnerable to homelessness. This is evidenced by the number of homeless people coming through our doors, which has significantly increased over the last five years; with the main reasons being the loss of a private tenancy, eviction by friends / family and relationship breakdown. Through our prevention work, our success in helping to prevent or relieve homelessness has increased over the years, with nearly 1,500 households supported in 2017/18.

To date we have been able to use Discretionary Housing Payments to help some households to deal with the welfare changes. However this will not be enough going forwards to cover the loss of benefits which some households will experience as they move over to Universal Credit.

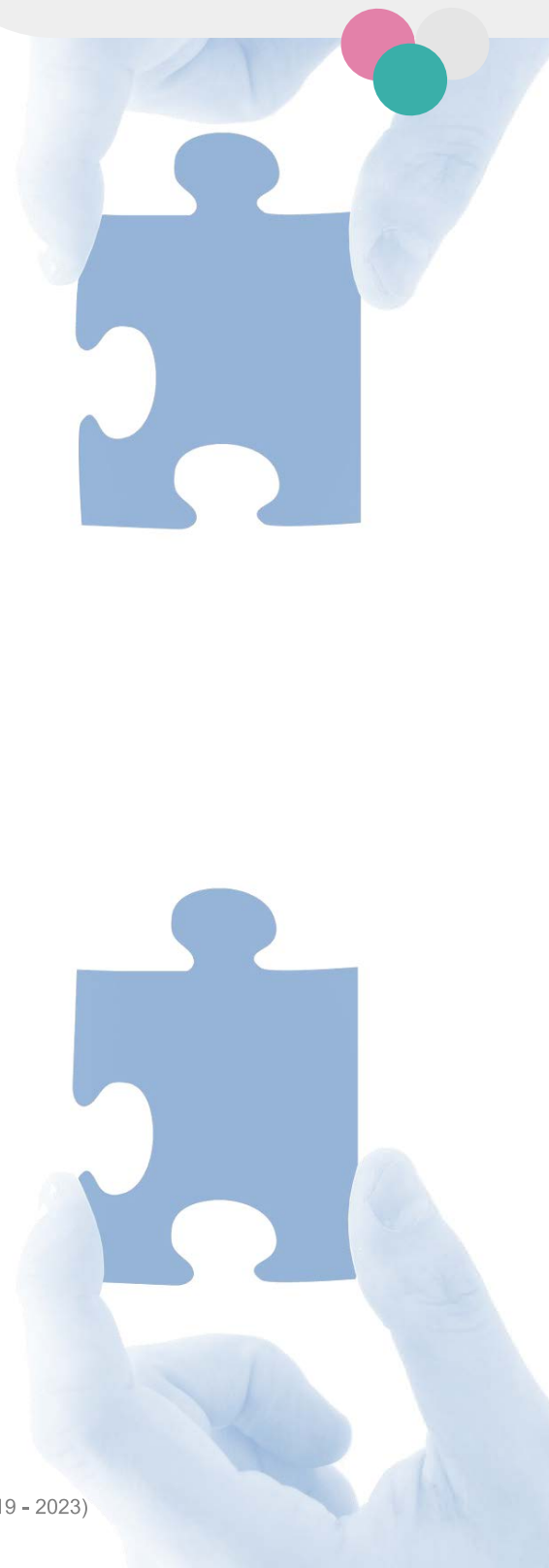
The mismatch between the Local Housing Allowance rate for Greater Cambridge based on the Broad Rental Market Area (BRMA) and the actual costs of private rents in the area, make it extremely difficult for those on benefits to secure private rented accommodation. We will continue to lobby government at every opportunity around concerns about the impact of Universal Credit, and to seek alignment of the BRMA with actual rents.

Single homelessness is on the rise across Greater Cambridge. Both councils are involved in a number of initiatives with partners to help prevent single people from becoming homeless, especially in terms of supporting those with mental health problems. We know that ex-offenders being discharged from prison is one of the groups particularly at risk of becoming homeless and we will continue to work with partners to improve the support available.

For those who require temporary accommodation, the use of Bed & Breakfast has been kept to a minimum and we will only use this form of temporary housing as a last resort.

Cambridge City Council will:

- Keep the council's strategic approach to homelessness and its homelessness strategy action plan under ongoing review
- Extend the Housing First training flats scheme by sourcing additional homes with links to support services, including through the council's own housing development programme





Cambridge City priority: Tackling Rough Sleeping

Cambridge City, as a largely urban area, has a tendency to attract rough sleepers from a wide area.

Partners have reported a significant increase over recent years in the number of rough sleepers with mental health problems, many of whom also have alcohol or substance misuse issues. Some engage in street-based anti-social behaviour and begging. Not all rough sleepers, or those begging or adopting a street lifestyle, are homeless, but may have tenancies, and

such behaviours can put tenancies at risk.

The council's focus has been moving away from short term hostel accommodation for single homeless people and rough sleepers, towards supporting partner agencies in the provision of one-to-one support and re-ablement services, including development of skills and employment. We also operate a re-connections policy to reconnect rough sleepers to where they came from.

Increasing the supply of private rented housing for those on low incomes

To help tackle the difficulties experienced by people on low incomes, Cambridge City Council's social lettings agency Town Hall Lettings (THL) works to secure private rented housing for single people. More recently, some market homes provided on the council's own new developments have been bought back by its arms length housing company (CCHC Ltd) and let out through THL at sub-market rents.

South Cambridgeshire District Council have also set up Shire Homes Lettings, to take forward the management of the private sector leasing scheme which provides affordable, good quality private rented accommodation in the District to help prevent homelessness.

Both councils will continue to explore a range of housing solutions for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Homelessness Trailblazer⁴⁵

Both councils are signed up to making homelessness 'the unacceptable outcome' as part of a wider multi-agency partnership across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The number one priority is to help prevent homelessness occurring in the first place, helping people to help themselves before they hit crisis point.

Funding for housing related support

The County Council's review of housing related support is likely to see a reduction in funding available. Many of the homelessness services provided in Greater Cambridge are run by local charities and organisations which are reliant on long term funding security in order for them to operate viable services.

In the context of shrinking resources there are likely to be significant challenges for the county and district councils in terms of the support available, and we will continue to work in partnership with the County Council to enable us to continue supporting those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.



Cambridge City Council Priority: Housing First

Housing First is a relatively new approach in England, aimed at supporting homeless people with multiple and complex needs. It involves providing a secure home, together with personalised support. Providing a home first can provide a stable platform from which other issues can be addressed. There is increasing evidence that Housing First can be an effective way of helping people to come off the streets, and of delivering positive outcomes.

Cambridge City Council is working to pilot a number of different Housing First models on some of its new developments on council owned land, including one with on-site accommodation for a tenant who will provide an essential link to support services. Impacts and outcomes of this new approach will be closely monitored, and we will need to evaluate whether it should be considered more generally as an alternative to hostel accommodation in the longer term.



Priority 07

Working with key partners to innovate and maximise resources available

Although this is the Housing Strategy for Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils, it is clear that we cannot work alone; we rely on working closely with a whole range of partners to help meet our objectives.

In the context of national policy and reduced national funding available for local government, the councils face challenging times in terms of meeting our statutory obligations and our wider objectives. Forming strong investment partnerships can help to strengthen our position in terms of financial capacity and applying for available funding, and we will work with partners to innovate and maximise the resources available.

The success of this Strategy and the economic growth of Greater Cambridge can only be achieved through strong partnership working and collaboration with both private and public sectors.

Developers and Registered Providers (RPs)

By far the largest investors in new housing are private developers, through direct provision of new homes and through S106 contributions to affordable housing and other facilities and infrastructure. Both authorities are keen to strengthen relationships with existing and potential developers of all sizes, to help ensure that the right homes are delivered in the right places, together with timely provision of infrastructure.

Registered housing providers (housing associations) also have an important role to play in the growth of Greater Cambridge, providing the majority of new affordable homes. Their commitment to invest in the area is critical to delivering the affordable homes that we need. It is estimated that for every £1 of public funding received, registered providers will invest a further £6 to deliver affordable housing in the area⁴⁶.

Quality of management of affordable housing is important, and the councils would urge developers to take this into account when selecting registered providers (RPs). We are keen to engage with RPs at the earliest possible stage when new developments come forward.

Moving Forward

Both councils will:

- Work proactively to build on existing and new relationships with key organisations, housing associations and developers
- Work closely with the Greater Cambridge Partnership and the Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority to secure investment into the area to support infrastructure and affordable housing
- Explore investment opportunities with the Greater Cambridge Partnership to directly commission housing development that will specifically help address the affordability challenges facing essential local workers
- Actively engage with partners through the Housing Board and other key forums
- Support the Combined Authority in the development and delivery of their new housing strategy

South Cambridgeshire District Council will:

- Work with the Combined Authority to ensure that schemes are identified locally for the Combined Authority's £100m Housing Fund

Cambridge City will:

- Continue to work through the Cambridge Investment Partnership to deliver new affordable homes on some of the council's own sites

We are also seeing an increase in 'For Profit' registered providers wanting to invest into the area. Whilst the councils are open to new models that support the provision of affordable housing, any registered provider, including those operating 'for profit' must ensure that Affordable Rents are kept within the LHA rates and that satisfactory local housing management arrangements are in place.

Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP) has been set up as a joint venture between Cambridge City Council and Hill Investment Partnerships to develop sites to meet the need

for housing, and in particular high quality affordable housing in Cambridge.

South Cambridgeshire District Council has published its Investment Strategy as part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019. This sets out a process to establish a framework of potential investment partners who wish to work with the council to bring forward sites. It is envisaged that the framework will be open to allow new partners to join at any time in the future, with the aim to go out to tender from Spring 2019.

Parish Councils

The 106 parishes and settlements in South Cambridgeshire are combined to make 90 parish councils, 10 parish meetings and one community council. As key partners to the delivery of homes, South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to working with parishes to ensure that the right homes are planned in the right places. In particular, parishes have a key role in helping to provide affordable housing for local people through the

rural exception sites policy. Working with parishes on Neighbourhood Plans, community-led development or through the Village Design Statements are further ways that communities can get involved and engaged with the council to deliver the homes that they want and need. The development of the Joint Local Plan will involve extensive engagement and collaboration with parishes.



Greater Cambridge Partnership⁴⁷

The Greater Cambridge Partnership is the local delivery body for a City Deal with central Government, bringing powers and investment worth up to £1 billion over 15 years to help secure sustainable economic growth and quality of life for the people of Greater Cambridge.

The partnership is working with the councils and the business community to sustain the economic growth taking place within Cambridge, and helping to deliver on our aspirations for the Greater Cambridge area, including accelerating delivery of the 33,500 new homes required and supporting the 44,000 new jobs coming to the area. In terms of housing investment, given the affordability challenges facing local workers, the councils are



keen to work with the Greater Cambridge Partnership to explore investment opportunities. The Greater Cambridge Partnership aims to work with partner authorities to help address delivery challenges and bring forward vital homes to accommodate local workers, both of which are key in order to support the continued economic growth of Greater Cambridge and beyond.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority⁴⁸

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority was established in 2017, following a devolution deal with central government. Powers and funding devolved to the Combined Authority are being used to facilitate delivery of new homes, economic growth, local infrastructure, and jobs across the area.

As part of the 'housing offer' the Combined Authority secured funding of £100m up to 2022 towards accelerating the delivery of affordable housing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, with a further £70m allocated to Cambridge City for the delivery of 500 new council homes. This funding was primarily secured in recognition of the significant affordability issues identified in Greater Cambridge.

Both councils are keen to work with the Combined Authority to support the development and delivery of their new Housing Strategy, to help them to achieve the best housing outcomes for our area.

We are keen to ensure that an appropriate proportion of the Combined Authority's £100m funding is available to help alleviate housing pressures in the Greater Cambridge area. South Cambridgeshire District Council, in particular, will work closely with the Combined Authority to ensure that the District is supported in terms of the investment needed to support the economic growth and affordability issues facing the district.



The Housing Board

We work closely with partners through the Housing Board covering Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and West Suffolk; including the local councils, registered providers and public health. The Board works collaboratively on strategic housing issues, and has been responsible for commissioning a number of major projects, including our sub-regional Choice Based Lettings System (Home-Link) and Strategic Housing Market Assessment; and securing funding for partnership projects⁴⁹.



Health and social care partners

We as districts have an important role to play in supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing, and enabling people to live safely and independently at home. We also provide and/or fund a number of services which can help prevent hospital or care home admission, and speed up transfers of care from hospitals.

In turn, many of our services can help reduce health and social care system expenditure. For example, it is estimated that fixing Category 1

hazards in England could generate an NHS cost saving of around £1.4bn per annum in first year treatment costs.⁵⁰ It is also suggested that every £1 spent on handyperson services could generate £4.28 in savings to health and social care services.

We are committed to strengthening partnership working in this area, to support service transformation and achieve improved outcomes for local residents.

Resident Involvement Groups

For both councils, engagement with tenants and leaseholders is integral to effective management and maintenance of the councils' homes.

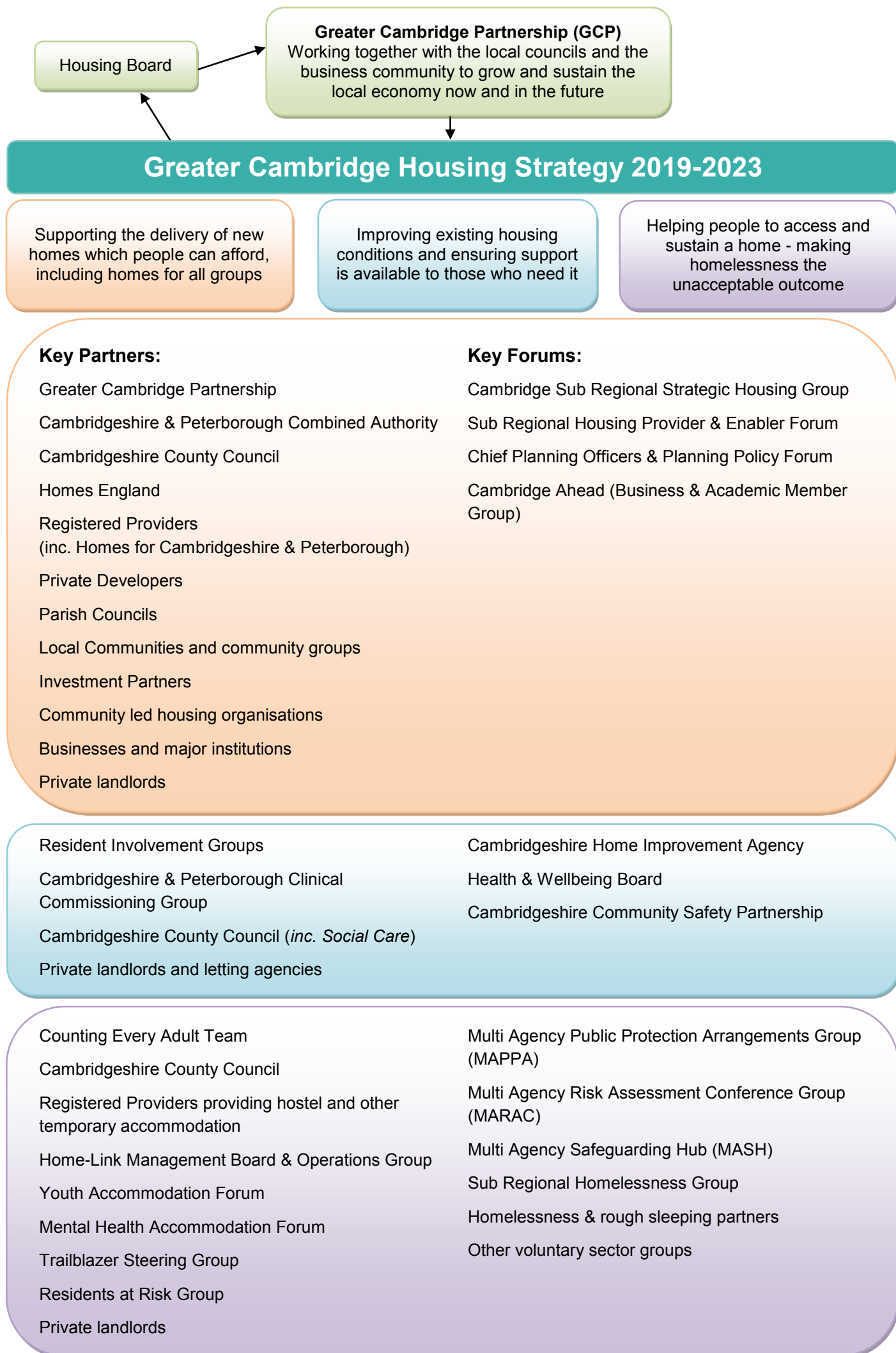
Through a range of dedicated groups and forums, tenants and leaseholders have an important role to play in designing, developing and improving council housing services, and overseeing and scrutinising performance.

Other partners

The diagram overleaf demonstrates some of the main inter-linkages and partnerships that support the ambitions for Greater Cambridge.

We will continue to work with a whole host of other partners linking the many activities associated with good housing, health and wellbeing, and economic growth.







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