



South Cambridgeshire District Council

Community Impact Statement

Introduction:

With over 20,000 people in communities in our district that either live in our homes, or are part of our estates, Affordable Homes can make a real impact to improve the lives, opportunities and the well being of these communities which are made up of tenants, leaseholders, their families and neighbours.

Our vision for Housing –

To be the best housing service by providing good quality housing across all tenures that is accessible to all – that enhances residents' quality of life, their health and wellbeing, that supports economic growth and social opportunities, alongside improved energy security and reduced carbon footprints.

The Community Impact Statement will help ensure that the Affordable Homes team focuses on implementing policies and procedures that will have a positive impact on these communities to make a real difference and improve opportunities and life chances for our tenants and the population beyond.

Our current Housing Strategy aims to promote and brand our Council's Housing Service as putting the **HEART** back in to Housing:

- **H**Health & Wellbeing
- **E**conomic Growth & Development
- **A**ffordable Housing
- **R**educing Fuel Poverty and promoting energy efficiency
- **T**ackling Homelessness

The Council's Housing Strategy 2012/13 – 2016/17, provides a fuller analysis of the role that housing plays in the achievement of wider council objectives and is renewed every 5 years.

The Housing Service Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15 details the service improvements required to meet the Council’s objectives and to respond to changes in the external operating environment. The Service plan is refreshed annually.

Our Community Impact Statement is a summary document setting out our current priorities for the development of services having a positive effect on the community and aspirations for the future looking at four key areas:

- Improving neighbourhoods
- Promoting sustainable living
- Promoting health and well being
- Investing in people

Improving neighbourhoods: We know that the condition of our customer’s homes and the environment around it is a number one priority. Everyone wants to live in an area where they feel safe and can be proud to live. Research has shown that living in a neglected neighbourhood can have a negative impact on residents’ health and wellbeing as well as impacting on social values, such as increased crime, graffiti, anti-social behaviour, dog fouling, fly tipping etc.

Corporate target: Engagement

Objective 4 Work with tenants, parish councils and community groups to sustain successful, vibrant villages.

- We will work towards Improving and invigorating neighbourhoods by having effective methods in place to manage areas covering - grounds maintenance, estate management, managing ASB, parking and garage sites.
- Working with: Residents, Parish Councils, County Council, Neighbourhood Planning.
- Officers will work closely with residents, councillors and our chosen contractor to ensure the best possible service for maintaining communal areas we are responsible for throughout the district.
- During 2014 our Grounds Maintenance service standards were updated after completing a resident led scrutiny review which resulted in 15 recommendations the majority of which have now been actioned.
- We have recently reviewed our ASB policies and procedures which are implemented by our neighbourhood support team in line with ASB Crime & Policing Act 2014.
- We have recently carried out reviews of the usage of our garage sites and actively look at opportunities to redevelop underutilised sites for new housing/alternative use.

Promoting sustainable living: Providing energy efficient homes that are sensitive to the environment, help to promote sustainable living now and for future generations. A warm home that is energy efficient has positive benefits for residents’ health which can help to prevent hospital admissions and reduce demand on the health service. It also provides positive financial outcomes on reduced energy costs for residents, as well as helping to protect the environment.

Corporate target: Engagement

Engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money.

- We will encourage tenants to live more sustainably by reducing fuel bills, being more energy efficient and using renewable energy.
- We will provide energy advice to residents and investigate funding/grants available for the development of new energy initiatives such as solar, ASHPs, solar thermal, water saving and more efficient and sustainable electric heating/lighting.
- Working with: Asset Management-replacing doors, windows, updating heating systems, improving insulation, smart metering.
- By reviewing and updating our Our Warmer Homes strategy 2011/12 to 2015/16 which sets out 22 targets within 5 main areas.
- We will investigate the potential for partnerships to maximise the benefits of funding and ensure tenants are encouraged to seek the best priced energy supplier for their needs.
- Support local volunteer groups across the District to help communities and residents cut energy costs and become less dependent on increasingly expensive fossil fuels through the South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership.
- Take an active role in delivery of the new 'Green Deal' to improve energy efficiency in homes and other buildings.
- Over a period of 2 years, monitor the Retrofit Project at Rampton Drift, Longstanton to see what difference cutting edge 'green' technologies are making.
- Continue to access grants to improve the thermal efficiency in the Council stock and introduce innovative sustainable energy efficient heating solutions.
- Our key aims to help tackle fuel poverty are to identify levels of fuel poverty and target assistance to the most vulnerable households.
- Raise awareness of the benefits of energy efficiency and encourage take up of appropriate benefits.
- Investigate how fuel poverty impacts on the gypsy and traveller community following funding secured through LEAF (Local Energy Assessment Funding).

Promoting health and wellbeing: We understand the importance of working with our partner organisations to support and promote healthy and independent living practices. In doing so, residents are able to enjoy a better quality of life in their own community close to support networks, as well as reducing the impact on health services and demand for specialist accommodation.

Corporate target: Wellbeing

Objective 9 Work with GP's and partners to link health services and to improve the health of our communities.

Objective 10 Ensure the impacts of welfare reform are managed smoothly and effectively.

- Tackling tenants' inequalities, promoting independence and improving health and well being.
- Have an effective advice and support service in place to help tackle life-style mould and condensation issues.
- Promoting independence for older people and providing information and access to appropriate support services where needed via housing related support to help minimise the impact on housing and health services.
- Work closely with the NHS and community mental health services.
- Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling inequalities.

Investing in people: Supporting residents to help unlock their potential, take up opportunities and be financially included. This will have a positive impact on their quality of life, helping to reduce poverty and benefit dependency. We will continue to research best practice working with partner organisations to help ensure no customers are disadvantaged whilst being able to access appropriate advice and support when needed. We will endeavour to measure the social impact of our services to enable better investment decisions and evidence value for money.

Corporate target: Engagement, Wellbeing

Objective 4 Work with tenants, parish councils and community groups to sustain successful, vibrant villages.

Objective 10 Ensure the impacts of welfare reform are managed smoothly and effectively.

- We will help tackle worklessness, financial exclusion, job seeking, money management, digital exclusion, training and apprenticeships, horticultural training linked to healthy eating.
- South Cambs are working in partnership with a local provider (CHS Group) to help residents access free employment, education and training advice. The service is available to anyone aged 18 or over living in South Cambs and is being delivered under the National Careers Service, which is funded by the Skills Funding Agency.
- We will continue to target support to those households least able to cope with welfare reform changes via visiting/phone contact.
- South Cambs sees apprenticeships as a vital way of introducing and nurturing new talent in to a career in housing.
- South Cambs will continue to work with jobcentre plus and Cambridge Regional College to help identify and recruit two apprentices to work within affordable homes offering two year apprenticeships. This ties in with our corporate target to employ at least one apprentice within each directorate.
- Improving the quality of life for South Cambs residents is an important priority for the Council which includes improving their financial wellbeing whether this involves investing in business to secure jobs, improving work skills or tackling debt.
- We will continue to advertise and promote our low cost home contents insurance scheme.
- We will work closely with a local Credit Union to ensure tenants have access to affordable and accessible savings/loans services.

- We will continue to work with partner organisations such as the Big Issue and Experian to look at the feasibility of introducing a Rental Exchange scheme to help improve the credit rating for the majority of our tenants.
- South Cambs will continue to work in partnership with CAB's across the region and provide direct funding for local services. This enables us to offer tenants free, unbiased, confidential advice delivered by experienced CAB advisers.
- We will continue to act as a collection point for local food bank donations and work with partner organisations to promote new services in the District.
- We will continue to work on ways to prevent homelessness within the District including in some cases providing temporary financial support for example via our Rent Deposit Scheme to help people access housing in the private sector.
- We will promote Digital and Financial inclusion and have strategies and action plans in place to develop these areas of our work.

Future priorities:

- Maintain and update community impact statements via the various housing strategies.
- All staff throughout the organisation aware of service and able to signpost residents for appropriate support. Maintain good links with local providers ensuring written promotional material and website information up to date.

Summary of Key affordable homes Policies/Strategies

Strategy	Time Period	Description
South Cambridgeshire District Council Housing strategy	2012/13 to 2016/17	Overarching strategy linking the role of Affordable Homes with the broader Council objectives including partnership work with housing associations, affordable homes programmes, private sector housing matters.
Five year Housing Maintenance Plan	2012/13 to 2016/17	Detailed spending priorities for next 12 months and indicative details for following four years.
Resident Involvement strategy	2010/11 to 2012/13	Sets out series of projects and actions to increase the ways in which tenants can engage with the housing service.
Asset Management strategy	2011/12 to 2015/16	Identifies the key requirements to maintain the Council's housing stock to at least Decent Homes Standard.
Warm Homes strategy	2011/12 to 2015/16	Series of actions to ensure that investment is prioritised to reduce fuel poverty increase thermal efficiency and tenant comfort and reduce carbon emissions. Linked to EU funding project.
Annual Service Plan	2012/13 to 2013/14	Analysis of operating environment including changes to Government policy. Identifies service improvement projects needed including those projects needed to deliver on specific Council actions.
Value for money strategy	2011/12 to 2013/14	Sets out the way in which the housing service can improve the way data can be captured and analysed to ensure good value for money is being achieved and monitored.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) statement of policies and procedures	2015/2016	Sets out how we will deliver our tenancy support service and deal with neighbourhood issues and ASB
Financial Inclusion strategy	2015/2017	Sets out how we will help prevent Financial exclusion
Digital Inclusion strategy	2015/2017	Sets out how we will promote and support Digital Inclusion within the District
Community Impact statement	2015/2016	Summary document of how our services - current and future impact on the community.