Our first strategic housing market assessment

Cambridge Housing Sub-Region

March 2008

The Assessment

The Cambridge Sub-Regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a report commissioned by the Cambridge Sub-Regional Housing Board to inform future housing strategies and individual housing developments within the sub-region. The Assessment was commissioned to ensure the sub-region has a clear and robust understanding of housing markets and how we can respond to them.

The Communities and Local Government published its initial guidance in March 2007, and further detail in August 2007. The guidance:

- Encourages local authorities to assess housing need and demand in terms of housing market areas. This could involve working with other local authorities in a sub-regional housing market area, through a housing market partnership.
- Sets out a framework for assessment that is relevant at regional, sub-regional and local level and provides a step-by-step approach to assessing the housing market, housing demand and need.
- Focuses on what to do as a minimum to produce a robust and credible assessment, explaining how local authorities can develop their approach where expertise and resources allow.
- Sets out an approach which promotes the use of secondary data where appropriate and identifies key data sources at each step of the assessment.
- Considers how local authorities can understand the requirements of specific groups such as families, older and disabled people.

The first report will give a robust, up to date view of the sub-region's housing markets, but will be reviewed and updated annually, over time growing into a highly durable evidence base with which to plan future sub-regional housing.

➲ Further background is provided in Section 1, *Introduction to the SHMA* (chapters 1 to 5).

Links with planning

The SHMA provides evidence for planning policy, as set out in the government's Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3). This says the Assessment itself should:

- Estimate housing need and demand in terms of affordable and market housing.
- Determine how the distribution of need and demand varies across the plan area, for example, as between the urban and rural areas.
- Consider future demographic trends and identify the accommodation requirements of specific groups such as homeless households, Black and Minority Ethnic groups, first time buyers, disabled people, older people, Gypsies and Travellers and occupational groups such as key workers, students and operational defence personnel.

Inside this summary:

Participation

The Cambridge SHMA has progressed involving as many relevant partners and stakeholders as possible. People have been involved in different ways throughout the project, the emphasis being on continuing to involve our partners, and to build on their knowledge and expertise on all aspects of the housing market in the long-term. Although we have tried to keep the SHMA as inclusive and cooperative as possible, we accept there is always room for improvement and further involvement, and look forward to working closely with all stakeholders in future to grow, develop and improve the SHMA.

Housing sub-regions in the East of England

Profile of the sub-region

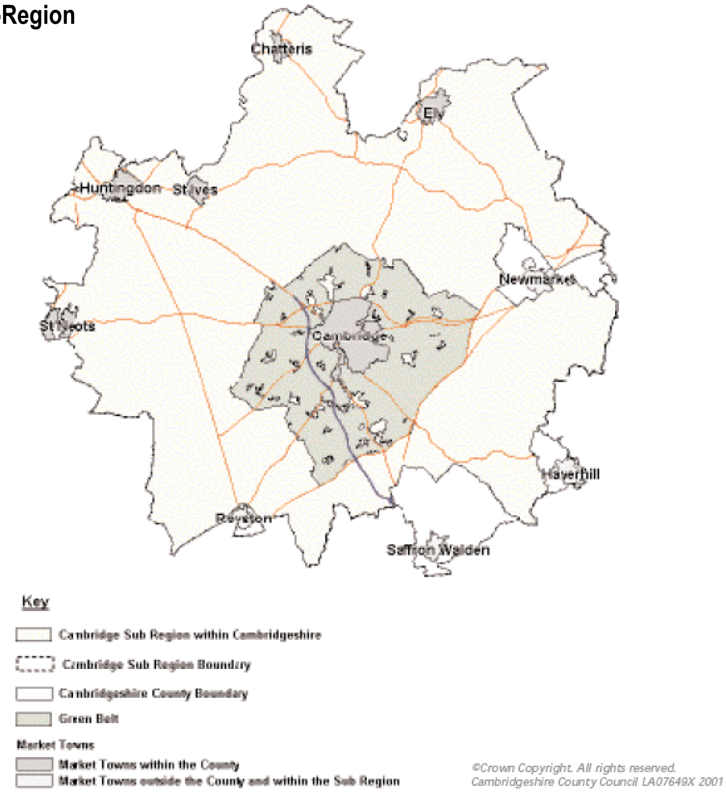
The Cambridge sub-region consists of the five Cambridgeshire authorities along with the Forest Heath and St. Edmundsbury districts in Suffolk. This is the group of authorities through which Housing Corporation funding comes for new affordable housing. For planners especially it is important to note the different boundaries of housing and planning sub-regions, which are shown on the map.

Cambridgeshire is one the fastest growing counties in the UK and expects its population to grow to **665,100** by 2021, mainly because of higher levels of migration. Cambridge City itself accounts for nearly 20% of total population. The City of Cambridge has an important regional and national role, especially for high technology industries. Although surrounded by small market towns and rural areas, its influence extends beyond the county boundary.

The county has a buoyant economy but there are important disparities. Certain industries like high technology have been the focus in the sub-region. In contrast, North Cambridgeshire has suffered decline through traditional industry and agriculture, though regeneration projects are providing new opportunities. Key transport infrastructure has lagged behind the rapid population and economic growth. Alternatives to car travel due to high levels of traffic are being developed, especially around Cambridge.

The key issues for affordable housing are shortages and high costs, with average house prices at least **7 times** greater than average earnings.

The Cambridge Planning Sub-Region



Lower quartile house prices are between 6.6 and 8.8 times lower quartile earnings.

➲ Section 2: *Cambridge sub-regional context* (chapters 6,7 and 8) gives more detail.

Commuting patterns

The two major ‘city-regions’ of Peterborough and Cambridge/South Cambridgeshire have widespread labour markets, although most commuting is generally short-distance. Peterborough’s labour market looks north and west, more than south and east.

Most market towns in the Cambridge sub-region have tight commuter hinterlands. Very few areas contribute 5% or more of their workforce to a large number of labour markets. Consequently most ‘residence’ areas look to one or two labour markets only. Most people are likely to seek housing fairly close to their place of work.

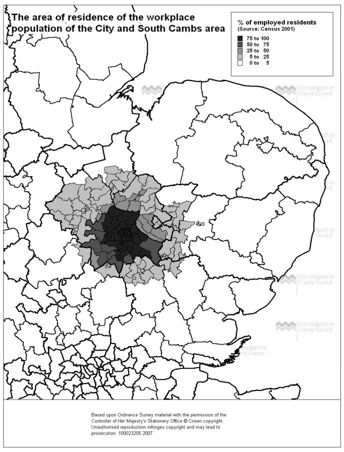
Although experiencing relatively low house prices, Fenland does not appear to have become a major commuter ‘suburb’ for Cambridge; in 2001 no ward contributed more than 25% of its employed residents to work in Cambridge City or South Cambridgeshire.

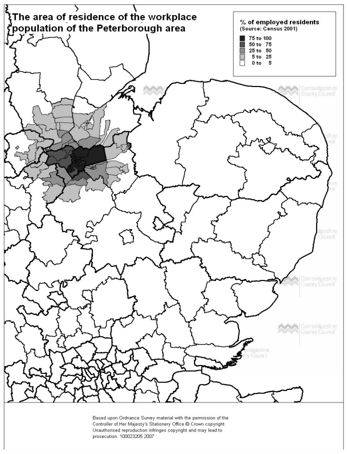
London is not the commuter ‘honey-pot’ of popular myth for Cambridgeshire residents. As at 2001 the ward with the highest proportion of employed residents working in London was Whittlesford, with 8.6%. Only one Cambridge City ward recorded 5% or more of its employed residents as London commuters - Petersfield, with 6.2%.

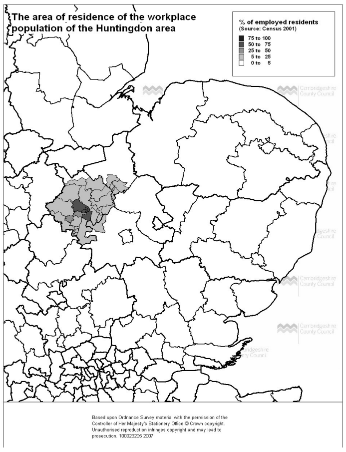
The seven districts comprising the Cambridge sub-region display a number of small local labour markets with relatively little overlap of commuting hinterlands. All market towns have a clear labour market and only the largest have commuter belts extending beyond 10 miles radius. Generally speaking, hinterlands are mainly constrained within districts, as seen on the selection of maps provided.

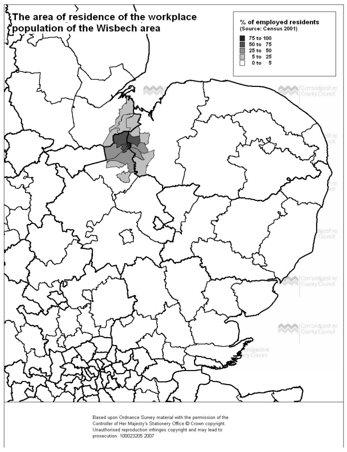
As most migration involves people in work, these commuting markets are a good proxy for very local housing markets. In terms of future planning it is important that the areas develop employment opportunities to match new housing development. The main area where housing and employment development appear to have become somewhat ‘out of synch’ is Ely. There is relatively high commuting to Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, with some wards recording between 25% and 50% of employed residents travelling out of the district.

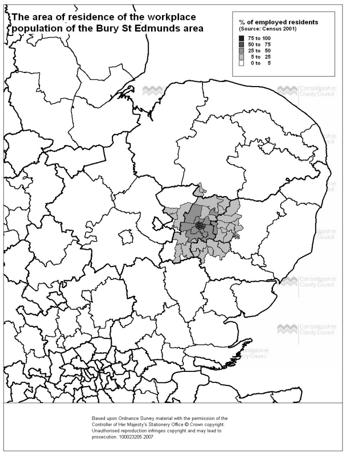
➲ Further maps are provided in Chapter 7 *Defining housing markets using commuting patterns .*

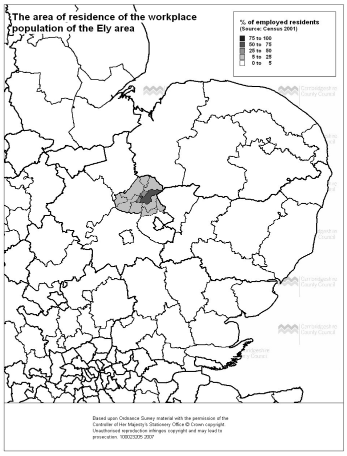


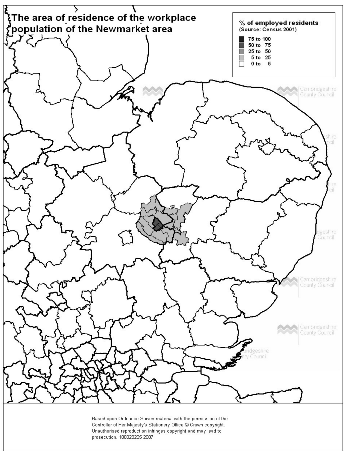


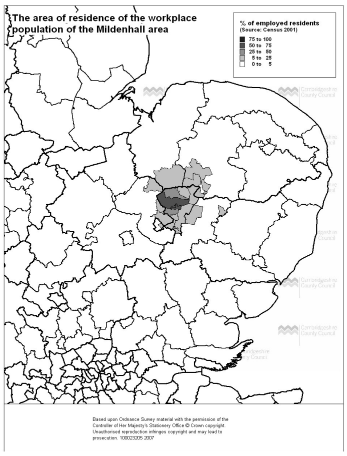












Economic plans

Labour market forecasting involves making assumptions, ranging from international and national economic prospects down to local company performance, commuting and qualifications of the labour force. In a relatively short period of time the assumptions underpinning labour demand and supply forecasts for the Cambridge sub-region have changed significantly. Generally speaking the recent forecasts of job growth have reduced, as have the forecasts of labour supply. What is important, however, is that there is still a relatively close alignment of 'jobs' and 'labour force'.

The targets which the districts in the Cambridge housing sub-region are currently working to are proposed in the draft East of England Plan. The draft Plan does not, however, provide district-level figures. The original employment forecasts known as EG21 are very close to the draft Plan targets. (EG21 refers to Enhanced Growth which aims to move the region's economic performance to a top rank in Euripe by 2021). The labour supply forecasts set alongside the employment figures incorporate up-to-date population and household forecasts, but assume that the economic activity rates adopted in the draft Plan are still valid (for example, they assume that changes in pensionable age will lead to an increase in numbers of older people in the labour force). This table indicates:

- The 2001 'baseline' situation with respect to where people live and work, showing net commuting, comparing the balance between workplace population and employed residents.
- Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire are combined as this reflects the fact that much of the growth associated with the built-up area of Cambridge will in fact be accommodated in adjoining South Cambridgeshire. The planning policies adopted by the Structure Plan, by the draft East of England Plan and now being incorporated in District Councils' Local Development Frameworks are aimed at increased sustainability.
- A key issue is the aim of reducing the need to commute to work. As a consequence the significant increase in house building in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire is aimed at stemming the increase in long-distance commuting into Cambridge.
- An apparent excess of 'jobs' over labour in terms of forecast growth over the period 2001 to 2021. However, the profile of job growth by industry sector suggests that there will be many more part-time jobs in future and it is likely that the current 5% of the labour force holding two or more jobs will increase.
- In their work on regional commuting, Cambridge Econometrics estimated that for Cambridgeshire, an increase of over 62,000 jobs would equate to a much lower 44,000 workforce (people). The difficulties of breaking the 'jobs' figure down to workplace population will be addressed in a new regional model being developed by Oxford Economics.

Issues

There is considerable uncertainty about the robustness of employment and labour supply forecasts for all districts in the East of England; a new model has been commissioned to address this and enable different growth scenarios to be explored.

The main data sources for monitoring both employment workforce population change are not sufficiently robust to enable year-on-year changes to be accurately measured at a district level; this issue is being taken up with the Office for National Statistics.

Although recent forecasts of both employment and labour supply have varied significantly for districts in the Cambridge housing sub-region, they have generally moved in tandem i.e. both have been reduced, maintaining a balance between employed residents and workplace jobs.

Within the sub-region labour market forecasts indicate that Huntingdonshire should experience reduced net out-commuting and Cambridge City/South Cambridgeshire should experience a reduction in net in-commuting. Appropriate policies are being adopted in districts' local economic strategies.

There is significant challenge for East Cambridgeshire and Fenland to attract employment above that indicated by 'trend' growth, to reduce further rises in net out-commuting.

Should there be a major slowdown in the national and regional economy, the Cambridge sub-region will not be immune, although it should withstand problems better than many other areas due to its industrial and business base. This will have important implications on the ability to attract in-migrants to the region to live and work; the knock-on impact will be on sales of new dwellings and hence the trajectories of development in major new settlements and expansion areas.

➲ Chapter 9 gives further information.

Summary of Key Labour Market Factors: Net Commuting in 2001; Job Target Growth 2001-2021 (based on draft East of England Plan); Likely Labour Supply Change 2001/21 (based on 2006 population forecasts)

	Net commuting balance 2001	EG21 jobs growth 2001/21	Labour supply, EA mid rates 2001/21
Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire	24,400	49,400	46,800
East Cambridgeshire	-12,300	4,900	7,500
Fenland	-6,000	5,100	6,700
Huntingdonshire	-13,300	14,300	100
Forest Heath	-3,900	5,700	6,600
St Edmundsbury	100	7,100	2,500
Cambridge sub-region	**-3,200**	**86,500**	**70,100**

Population changes

The main “driver” for future population and household growth in the Cambridge sub-region is the 2003 Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan, which aims to accommodate substantial growth in the immediate Cambridge area, above that generated by ‘natural change’. Following a sequential approach, housing development is proposed at a number of locations on the edge of Cambridge City, at a new settlement north-west of Cambridge (Northstowe) and at market towns. Other village development is guided by measures of ‘sustainability’, linked to the range of services provided.

In the case of the five Cambridgeshire districts, the growth agenda is effectively ‘dwellings-led’. Briefly, a broad balance of employment and resident labour force has been recorded since 1991 and is forecast to continue. However, within the county there is a shift in terms of the location of new dwellings, concentrating these closer to Cambridge to reduce commuting and to promote use of public transport.

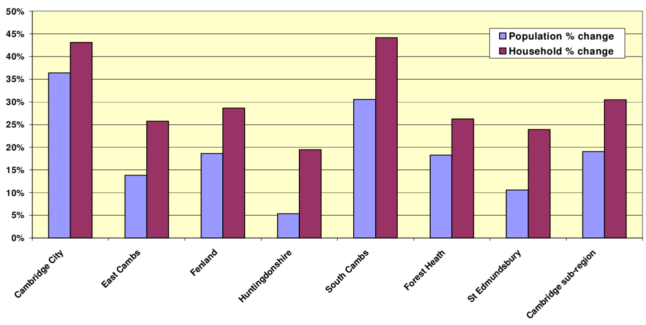
Some demographic highlights:

- Every district in the sub region will see an increase in single person households.
- Cambridge City will see the largest population increase in the 30 to 59 age group and the greatest percentage of in-migration, while Huntingdonshire will see significant decreases in 0-15 and 30-59 ages.
- Every district except Cambridge City will see an increase in elderly households. The largest increase of elderly, and specifically vulnerable households is most likely in South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

Issues

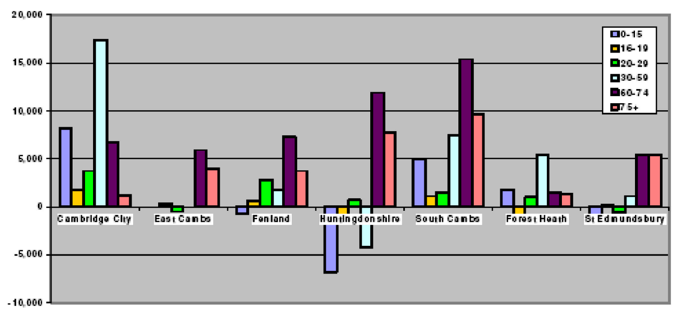
- Population growth is primarily generated by the success of the local economy and labour market growth, although there is modest net in-migration of retired people to Fenland. This framework for growth has been well established in Cambridgeshire with the adoption of the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan and the policies have been incorporated into the East of England Plan.
- The sub-region has experienced relatively high rates of population and household growth in the past and these rates are forecast to continue or be exceeded. ‘Natural change’ of population has historically been significantly lower than ‘migrant change’.
- ‘Natural change’ in households 2001 to 2021 is forecast to account for around 50% of the ‘extra’ households – up to 44,000 in the sub-region. The high number of migrant households presents a real challenge in determining what an appropriate strategy should be for providing ‘affordable’ housing as a share of the total. Historically, migrant households tended to live in the private sector – as owner-occupiers, private renters or renting from employers.

Forecast growth in population and households, 2001 to 2021 (from ARU and CCRG)



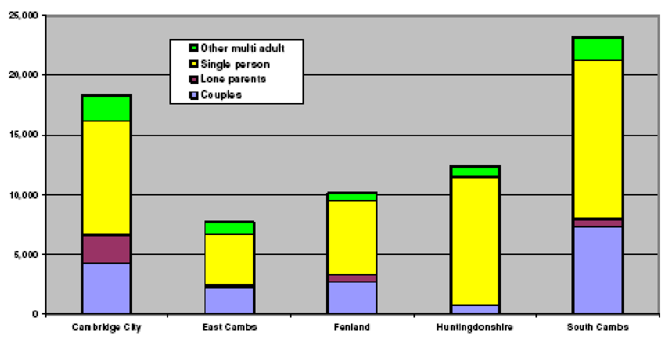
- The growth in number of households has exceeded population growth as average household size has fallen. There is particularly high growth forecast for single person households: 60%, or 53,600. The age group to experience the highest rate of growth is the over 75s at 65% over 20 years. The over 85-year-old age group will increase even more, by a forecast 72% in 20 years.

Forecast population change by broad age groups, 2001 to 2021



- A major challenge to be faced is the increase in potentially vulnerable elderly couple and single person households – with a ‘household’ head aged 75 and over. This could amount to 6,800 additional couple households and 9,250 elderly single person households.

Breakdown of household forecasts by type, 2001 to 2021 (Cambridgeshire)



Dwelling Profile and Occupation

There are nearly 316,000 homes in the Cambridge sub-region and most of the housing stock is in the private sector. There has been a 5% increase in total stock during the past five years alongside an increase of only 0.3% in social rented housing. Decreases in social stock in Forest Heath and Huntingdonshire are due to a high number of right to buy and right to acquire sales, compared to the building rate.

Detached properties make up the largest share of properties by type in the sub-region, and there are comparatively few flats. This profile is different for Cambridge City, which has a higher percentage of flats and terraced properties and very few detached houses. There are just over 4,600 known houses in multiple occupation in the sub-region, most of which are found in Cambridge City, but more research is needed to understand this part of the market and other shared properties.

There are around 8,700 supported housing units, most of which is for older people. Scheme size varies considerably depending on scheme type and client etc. Some 2.3% of properties within the sub-region are vacant and there are very few holiday homes. The number of second homes in Cambridge City is higher than might be expected, due to counting unoccupied student dwellings in this category.

➲ Chapter 11. *Dwelling Profile* gives more detailed information.

Housing Stock Condition

This chapter considers the condition of the sub-region's housing stock, drawing on sample surveys or models undertaken in each district over the period 2002 to 2006. The main reasons for undertaking stock condition surveys are to:

- Provide a key component of an asset management strategy of the Council's own stock, including a range of possible stock options.
- Provide an authority-wide picture of housing conditions as part of a strategic survey of housing demand and supply within the authority's 'enabling' role.
- Assess the need for 'intervention' by the authority, for example through the Regulatory Reform Order.
- Ascertain stock condition element for any local regeneration initiatives.
- Gather information on specific stock, such as HMOs.

However much of the available data is now out of date and does not fit with new methods of assessing housing conditions. The data is also not directly comparable across authorities. To improve this data a new stock modelling project is being carried out by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) to identify areas of poorer housing conditions within each district. This information will be used to inform subsequent local Stock Condition Surveys and will enable better targeting of resources. Once the results have been received, the SHMA will incorporate the results, draw conclusions around how stock condition affects the balance of housing markets across the sub region and work with partners at district authorities and the BRE to identify appropriate key actions.

➲ For more information, see Chapter 12.

Current Property Prices

This chapter looks at average prices by property type, average price comparison between 2003 and 2006, housing affordability, properties sold and affordability by type, and compares house prices and incomes.

The average house price for the sub-region is £194,000. House prices are highest in Cambridge City and lowest in Fenland. Detached properties are the most expensive type of home and flats are the cheapest. Detached houses are the most common property type in all parts of the sub-region (except for the city) and make up most of the sales. Terraced homes have the highest turnover in the sub-region and detached homes have the lowest. Terraced homes make up 47% of all the properties sold for less than £120,000.

Average house prices in the sub-region are 7 times average earnings. Lower quartile house prices are between 6.6 and 8.8 times lower quartile earnings. It is harder for people with lower quartile earnings to be able to afford a cheaper house than for someone with average earnings to afford an "average" priced house.

Current Property Prices (cont.)

Further analysis is needed to enable standardised comparison e.g. by comparing prices per m² as part of the future development of the SHMA. However our initial analysis indicates that prices vary significantly across the sub-region. The average price across the Cambridge sub-region for 1st Quarter 2006 was £194,160, increasing to £203,170 by the 2nd Quarter 2006.

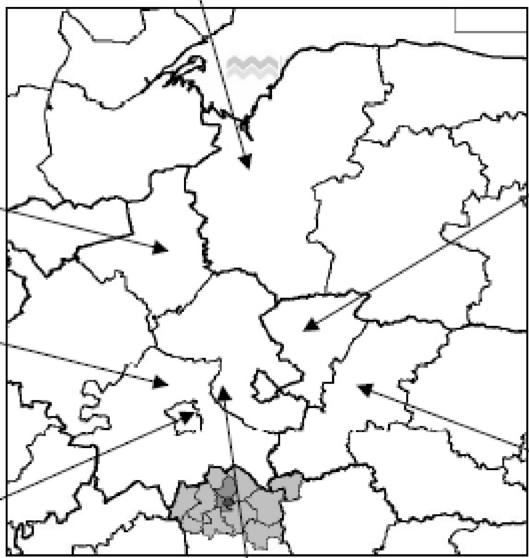
Breakdown of household forecasts by type, 2001 to 2021 (Cambridgeshire)

Fenland
District average prices: £141,058 (first quarter 2006) and £144,510 (second quarter 2006). Variation across the district was relatively small.

Huntingdonshire
District average prices:
£178,525 (first quarter 2006);
£200,730 (second quarter 2006).
North Huntingdonshire showed greater affordability than the rest of the district.

South Cambridgeshire
District average prices:
£248,090 (second quarter 2006).
No postcode sectors containing average prices below £200,000.

Cambridge City
District average price
£252,410 (second quarter 2006).
It is difficult to analyse by postcode sector as several cross boundaries.



Forest Heath
District average prices
£160,824 (first quarter 2006)
£164,830 (second quarter 2006).
As the boundaries of postcode sectors around this district are shared with East Cambridgeshire, St Edmundsbury and Norfolk, the average has to be considered as a guide rather than definitive.

St Edmundsbury
District average prices
£188,935 (first quarter 2006)
£194,870 (second quarter 2006).
The average price in Haverhill (£165,422) was significantly lower than the average for Bury St Edmunds (£188,935).

East Cambridgeshire
District average price = £183,273 (first quarter 2006); £199,840 (second quarter 2006). There was a significant difference in prices comparing East Cambridgeshire North to East Cambridgeshire South - a difference of just under £51,000 on first quarter figures.

Average Prices Jan-Mar 2006, Index, annual earnings and ratio

	Average price, all properties	Index (Sub-region = 100)	Average annual earnings by residence	Ratio of earnings to house price
Cambridge City	£262,070	135%	£33,805	7.75
East Cambridgeshire	£183,813	95%	£30,072	6.11
Fenland	£141,260	73%	£23,930	5.90
Huntingdonshire	£178,734	92%	£29,078	6.15
South Cambridgeshire	£247,603	128%	£36,670	6.75
Forest Heath	£160,921	83%	£24,055	6.69
St Edmundsbury	£189,152	97%	£27,383	6.91

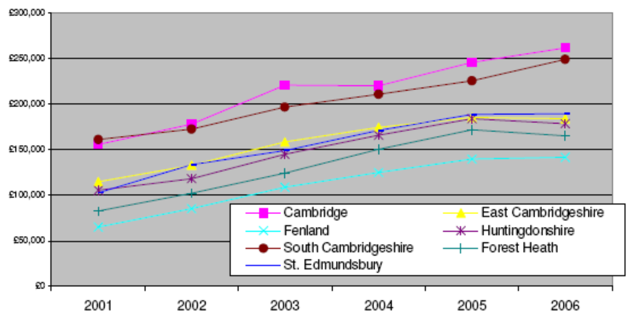
Summary of changes in property prices, 2001 to 2006

Average house prices have increased by between 55% in South Cambridgeshire and 118% in Fenland. Lower quartile prices have increased even more sharply. Despite these increases, the actual number of sales in each district has been quite consistent. In 2001, there was more variation between lowest level entry band and in all areas except for Cambridge City this was under £100,000. The most recent data shows the entry level band for all areas was over £80,000 and most were over £100,000. Less than 100 properties were sold for under £100,000 in all districts, except for Fenland.

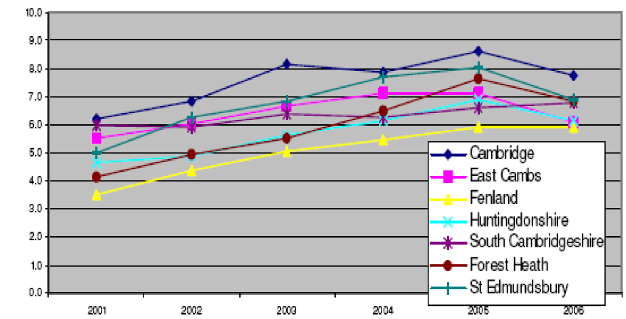
Markets activity by number of sales and % stock turnover in 2006

	Number of sales, 2006	% stock turnover, 2006
Cambridge	2,150	6%
East Cambridgeshire	2,028	7%
Fenland	2,628	8%
Huntingdonshire	4,358	7%
South Cambridgeshire	3,275	7%
Forest Heath	1,573	7%
St Edmundsbury	2,733	7%
Sub-Region	**18,745**	**7%**

Average House Price, Oct-Dec, 2001 to 2006



Ratio of Average House Price/ Average Earnings 2001 to 2006



The private rented market

In the Cambridge sub-region some 13% of households rent their home privately. In Cambridge City, 22% of residents are private renters. This is based on 2001 Census data and there is some evidence of a national increase in the number of private sector tenants since then. Forest Heath also has a high percentage of private renters, largely due to the influence of the US air force presence.

Highlights

- Between 59% and 79% of tenants rent from landlords/ letting agencies, with the second largest group of landlords being employers such as the military. In the sub-region, 8% of private tenants rent from family members or friends.
- Most private sector tenants are young (aged 16 to 34) and stay at their rented address for between 13 and 20 months.
- Some 14% of private tenants in the sub-region previously lived more than 40 miles away from their new address. 22% came from outside the UK, suggesting that the private rented sector is important in housing migrant workers. There is currently a lot of interest in the connection between private renting and migrant workers from organisations such as ARLA and Nationwide UCB. Further research into this subject is planned at a sub-regional level.
- Based on the review of local press adverts for rented property, the average rent for the sub-region is £755 per month, although there is variation between districts and types and sizes of properties.
- Cambridge City is the most expensive place to rent a property (average £965 per month). There is a large gap between the average rents in the City and the rest of the region. Fenland is the cheapest district in which to rent (average £566 per month), and a three-bedroom property in Fenland costs about the same per month as a one-bedroom property in the City. This review will need to be repeated in future to update the information and monitor changes in prices in the private rented sector.
- Local Reference Rents (calculated by the Rent Service) are lower than average and entry level rents in each district, but still show a difference between the City and South Cambridgeshire and the rest of the region. The boundaries used to calculate local reference rents may be a useful point of comparison for sub-markets within the SHMA area. Proposed new boundaries, which are going to produce one suggested level of housing benefit for Cambridge, Littleport, St Ives and Newmarket, if approved, are likely to be less useful.

➲ Chapter 15 provides more detail on the private rented market.

The buy-to-let market

Buy-to-Let & First Time Buyer Mortgages, UK 2000-2006 (from CML)

The buy-to-let market has grown considerably since the turn of the century. Most buy-to-let investors own either one or two properties, and most are individuals rather than companies. A large number are aged 36 to 55 years old; most of their tenants are younger (48% under 30). Most view their investment in residential property as a long-term plan and say they would hold on to property in the event of a price crash as they see their property as a "nest egg".

- Between 3,374 and 5,436 of the 18,745 properties sold in the sub-region in 2007 were sold to buy-to-let investors. New homes in Cambridge have a higher percentage of private tenants than in the rest of the City, (27% compared with 24%). On the whole in these new apartments, people prefer to buy-to-let and have some rental income rather than buy-to-leave, due to service charges.
- The percentage of buy-to-let sales given by a Cambourne estate agent is one of the highest in the region (25%). This may be an important consideration for other new developments but needs further investigation and comparison with other new developments.
- The average cost for buy-to-let properties nationally is slightly lower than the average cost for all properties, reflecting comments in our estate and lettings agent survey that buy-to-let investors look for cheaper properties - although size, age, and condition are also important factors. Most buy-to-let investors buy with a mortgage, a small number buy outright.
- The "ideal" buy-to-let property in the sub-region is a modern, two-bedroom terraced house or flat as these are cheaper to buy and easy to rent out.
- There is a preference for traditional homes over homes in multiple occupation and some evidence of people leaving this part of the market due to pressures such as licence fees, alteration costs and bureaucracy. However there are a small number of investors who specialise in HMOs.

➲ See Chapter 16 for more information on *The buy-to-let market.*

Social rented housing

Some 15% of the sub-regional dwelling stock is social rented housing. Cambridge City has a higher percentage of social housing (24%) than the rest of the sub-region and than the national level (19%). Most of the social rented stock is managed by RSLs and five of the seven districts in the sub-region have transferred their stock to RSLs.

Needs registers

The number of households on the district housing needs registers has risen in the past five years for the sub-region as a whole from just over 15,000 in 2002 to almost 21,000 in 2006.

Lettings

Net social re-lets within the sub-region have decreased from 2,852 to 2,662. This may be due to low numbers of re-lets in Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury in the years affected by LSVT and refurbishing local authority stock in Fenland.

There are gaps in data about who is being housed in properties in some areas. For example, from the RSL data provided it seems like there are very few older heads of household in South Cambridgeshire because they are housed in local authority homes rather than with housing associations. Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire will complete CORE data from 2006/07 onwards and this will improve knowledge of people being housed in the social rented sector in these districts.

(continued on page 10)...

Change in Social Rented Housing Stock 2001/2 to 2005/6and net turnover in 2005/6

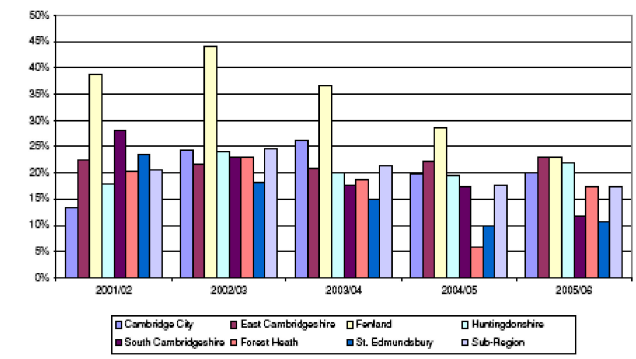
	Stock numbers (LA and RSL)					Net stock turnover 2005/6
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	
Cambridge City	10,951	11,544	10,862	11,265	11,126	6%
East Cambridgeshire	4,510	4,610	4,811	4,478	4,667	5%
Fenland	5,006	4,936	4,881	4,974	5,002	9%
Huntingdonshire	8,996	8,407	8,435	8,400	8,442	6%
South Cambridgeshire	7,210	7,228	7,633	7,563	7,803	3%
Forest Heath	3,401	3,313	3,228	3,149	3,184	4%
St Edmundsbury	7,236	7,384	7,388	7,400	7,238	5%
Sub-Region	**47,310**	**47,422**	**47,238**	**47,229**	**47,462**	**6%**

Social rented housing *(cont)*

Data on the housing needs register is also problematic because of different practices between districts in managing the lists, for example the data for needs registers includes people awaiting transfers in some districts (e.g. Huntingdonshire), but transfers are excluded by other authorities.

➲ Chapter 17 goes into more detail on *Social rented housing turnover, housing registers and lettings.*

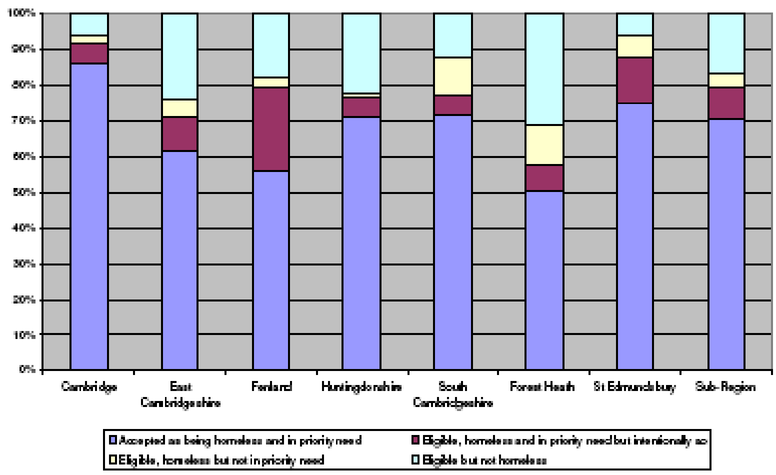
Social Lets (re-lets and new build) as a % of Needs Register, 2001-06



Homelessness

An important part of the housing market, and an indication of where it fails our residents, is homelessness. The SHMA looks at formal, reported homeless applications, acceptances by local authorities and subsequent housing outcomes for households who are accepted as unintentionally homeless.

Homelessness decisions by type, 2005/06 (from P1E returns)



Some notable findings are:

- Across the sub-region the number of decisions made following homeless applications rose from 2001 to 2004 and then fell in 2005/6 to below its 2001 level. The local exceptions to this pattern were St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath where the number of decisions rose slightly between 2001 and 2005/6.
- In most of the sub-region the number of priority group households accepted as unintentionally homeless following their applications decreased. The exceptions were Huntingdonshire, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath.
- The number of households in temporary accommodation rose after 2001 but than fell back to broadly the same level by 2006. Alternatives to bed and breakfast, such as private leasing, mean that generally less than 10% are housed in bed and breakfast.

➲ Chapter 18 *Homelessness*, gives more detail.

Intermediate Housing including homes for keyworkers

This chapter defines the intermediate market and current demand at April 2007, where applicants live and work and issues around this. It looks at key worker industry sectors, including current tenure, family type and affordability, and compares key workers and non-key workers, and mortgage bands by district and family type, tenure and affordability. It moves on to highlight issues arising from analysis of HomeBuy applicants and intermediate housing overall – who has been housed by previous tenure, family type, age of applicants, key workers and type of property bought. It analyses financial issues including mortgage affordability, family types and size of property compared with finance and savings and the effects of new regulations for open market HomeBuy from April 2006. Finally it looks into previous district of residence, family type by number of bedrooms and issues arising from an analysis of low cost home purchasers. Some highlights are summarised below:

Where applicants live and work

Cambridge City dominates the key worker profile in terms of place of work, while non-key workers are more widely spread across the sub-region. East Cambridgeshire has a

Intermediate *(cont)*

significantly higher share of applicants living in the district than working in it: true of both key workers and non-key workers. Neither Fenland nor Forest Heath rank highly as places for applicants to live or work.

Issues for HomeBuy applicants

Although numbers of registered applicants have increased: up from 600 in December 2006 to nearly 800 in April 2007, the total is well below the demand for social rented housing (20,000 across the sub-region). There is a major issue about the public's awareness and knowledge of the schemes available. The number has risen to 2,000 applicants at January 2008, and so further analysis is needed of these households. This is a priority for updating the SHMA.

Heaviest demand for HomeBuy arises from people living in Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, St Edmundsbury and, to a lesser extent, East Cambridgeshire. Demand is currently very low from applicants living in Fenland and Forest Heath. Demand is particularly high from applicants working in Cambridge City, where key workers also predominate, mainly working in health and education.

Applicants on the register (as at April 2007) were housed in two main tenures – renting privately (44%) and living with friends or family (35%). Relatively few applicants currently rent from a social landlord (9%), although this group is a target for the HomeBuy 'product' as successful targeting might help free up social housing.

Single applicants account for 46% of all applicants – rising to 57% in Cambridge City. Couples without children account for 21% of applicants. Households with children together account for 30% of applicants. Currently, some 14% of applicants require a property with 3 bedrooms or more, although 30% or more would be entitled to buy these larger homes if their finances could support the cost.

A significant 25% of applicants can only support a mortgage of up to £52,000. Some 50% of applicants are unable to support a mortgage above £68,000. Couples have the highest average incomes and can thus afford the highest-priced (and therefore largest) properties. Lone parents have the lowest average incomes (although some may have access to capital following a relationship break-up). Generally the largest families do not have the highest incomes, so there may be affordability problems in relation to purchasing homes of 3 or more bedrooms.

Affordability is a particular problem in Fenland and to a lesser extent East Cambridgeshire. Forest Heath applicants seem to have least affordability problems. The lack of information on capital available to different family types and in different areas is an issues which needs further investigation.

Issues when comparing shared ownership to open market home buy (OMHB)

When purchasers have had considerable flexibility as to where and what type of property they can buy, as under OMHB, they selected houses for preference; a significant proportion selected 3 bedroomed properties – probably because a larger percentage had children. Shared ownership new build provided relatively few 3 bedroomed homes in the Cambridge sub-region.

OMHB purchasers selected homes in South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire & Forest Heath in preference to Cambridge City, possibly because the price per square metre is lower outside the City. There were very few either shared ownership or HomeBuy sales in Fenland. OMHB constituted 55% of all low cost home ownership sales handled by housing associations in 2005/06.

Single people and couples accounted for almost two-thirds of shared ownership buyers but a slightly lower share of OMHB purchasers; there were relatively more families and lone parents with children buying under 'HomeBuy'. The vast majority of purchasers had either rented privately or lived with family or friends. There were very few households who were previously local authority or housing association tenants.

The average mortgage taken out by OMHB purchasers was considerably higher than that taken out by shared ownership buyers, both in absolute terms and when calculated as a multiple of gross household income. This may reflect reduced outgoings as no rent is charged and therefore a greater willingness of lenders to offer higher mortgages relative to income.

The change in regulations relating to OMHB in April 2006 has had a significant impact on the intermediate market, greatly reducing the demand for this product. There is a growing affordability gap emerging.

Only 37% of the sub-region's shared ownership applicants and 7% of OMHB applicants can currently afford to buy a lower quartile-priced dwelling in Cambridge City – unless they have access to additional capital. Although there are more opportunities in other districts, the rapid increase in house prices relative to earnings means that the intermediate market is not affordable for many would-be purchasers.

➲ Chapter 19, *Intermediate housing including homes for key workers*, gives more detail.

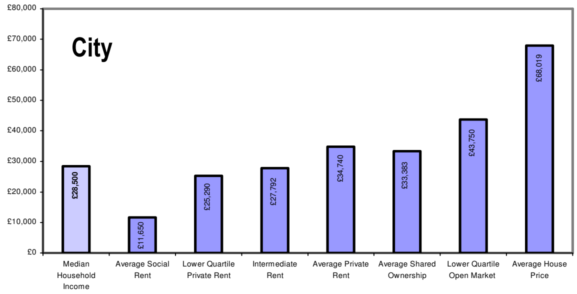
Current affordability and income

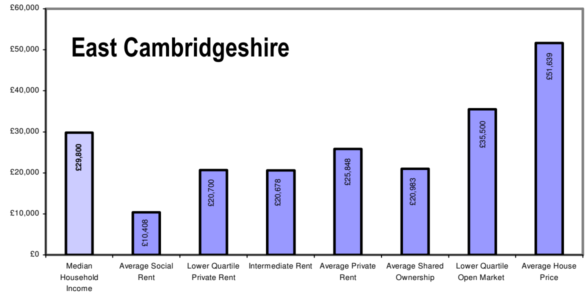
The SHMA uses conservative estimates of affordability for the different tenures available across the housing sub-region, based on household income alone. It does not factor in the availability and size of deposits for households buying a new home. Further work and better data is needed to identify the impact these factors may have.

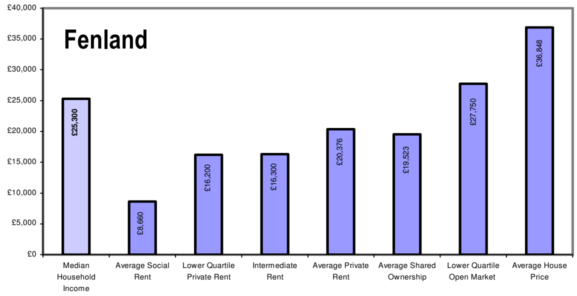
For the SHMA, a snapshot of affordability has been provided for each district, to help analysis of gaps and overlaps between the available housing tenures.

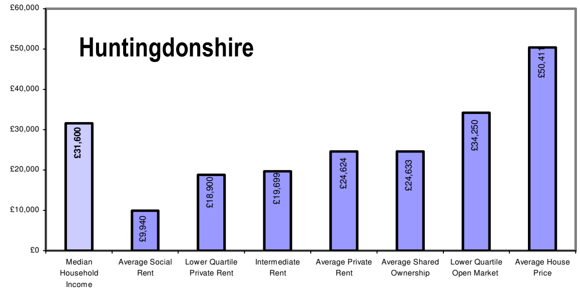
➲ More information is provided in chapter 20, *Current affordability and income*.

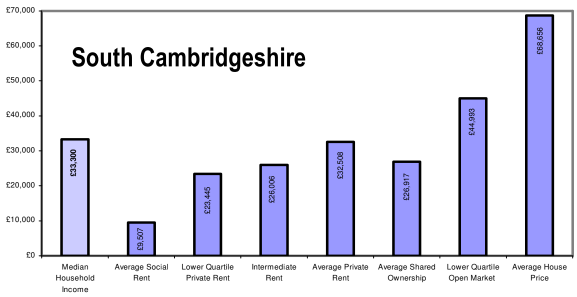
Income required by tenure

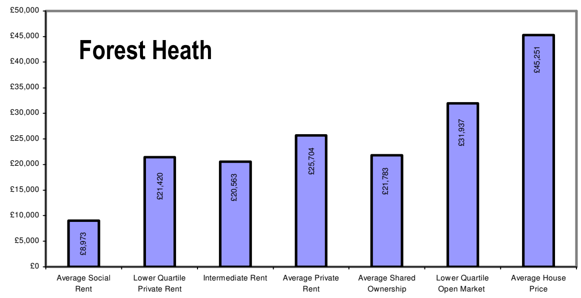


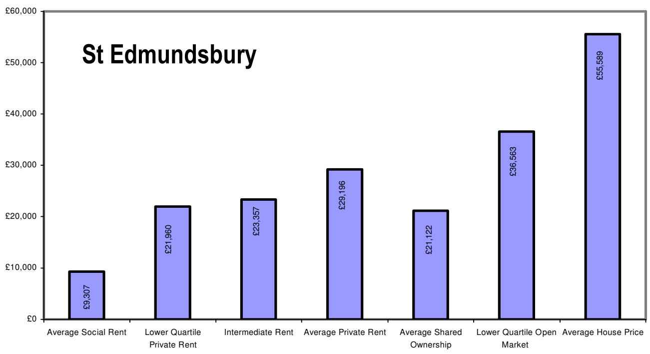












Affordability by tenure

Based on our estimates the prime market for shared ownership ranges from 18% in both Huntingdonshire and Cambridge City and 29% in East Cambridgeshire. However the demand shown through waiting lists or registers for this shared ownership tenure is significantly smaller than registers for social rented. By district, there is more demand for shared ownership in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire than elsewhere in the sub-region. There are also more shared ownership sales in South Cambridgeshire than anywhere else in the county.

In all Cambridgeshire districts, the household income required for entry level home ownership is higher than the mid-point average income for that district. For most of the sub-region, the average cost of shared ownership is more than the cost of lower quartile private rents, but less than average private rents. In St Edmundsbury, a lower income is required for shared ownership than renting privately. In Huntingdonshire, the cost of shared ownership is slightly higher than renting privately at an average price.

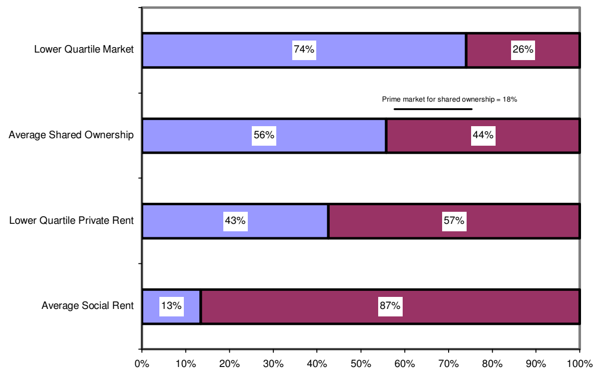
There may be a future role for intermediate rented housing, to assist those who cannot afford private rented, or who can only afford the lowest price private rented. This issue needs further research.

These graphs aim to show the overall affordability of different tenures within districts, based on the percentage of the current population who are able to afford (in blue) and unable to afford (in red) within each tenure.

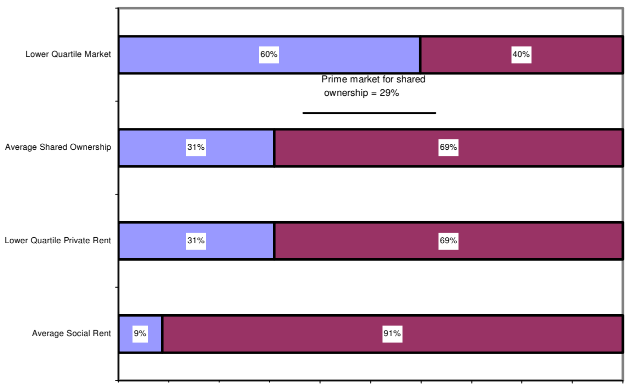
From the top, the tenures assessed are:

- Lower quartile market, which represents the average cheapest second-hand homes available.
- Average shared ownership
- Lower quartile private rent
- Average social rent.

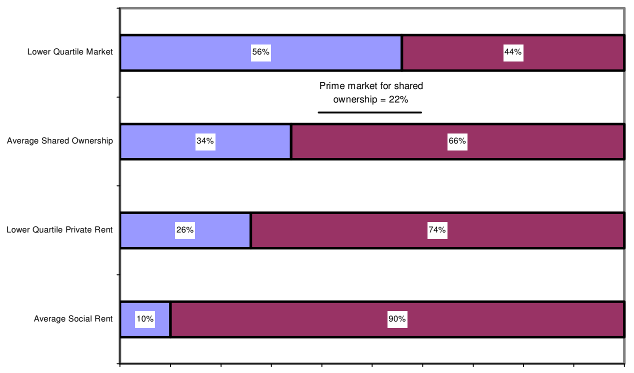
These graphs aim to identify the broad concepts for tenure, though further information and analysis are required. One of the most notable issues is differences in % population able to afford each tenure, particularly home ownership. This leads us to the conclusion that the intermediate market, while needing further investigation, is significant for our sub-region.



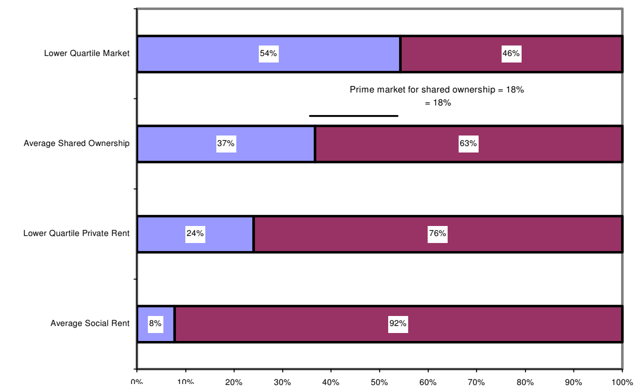
City



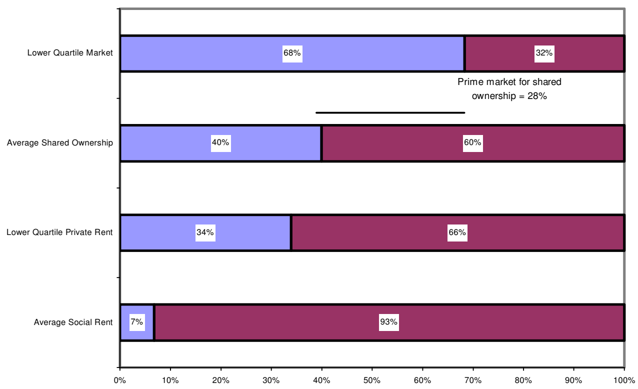
East Cambridgeshire



Fenland



Huntingdonshire



South Cambridgeshire

Planning for delivery

The Cambridge sub-region is planning for a step-change in housing delivery, but this needs to be accompanied by significant infrastructure investment if development is to be sustainable. The development strategy for the sub-region remains primarily as established by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003, which plans for significant growth in and close to Cambridge before 2016 and includes a major new town at Northstowe.

The East of England Plan (RSS), which will shortly replace the Structure Plan, maintains its strategy for accommodating growth while both increasing the dwelling target significantly and making it a minimum target, subject to environmental limits and infrastructure constraints. In setting targets for the delivery of affordable housing regard must be had to the outcome of Strategic Housing Market Assessments. The expectation is that across the region, some 35% of all housing completions will be affordable over the plan period.

Distribution of the minimum regional housing provision (from the Secretary of State's Planned Revision to East of England Plan)

Area / District	Minimum Dwelling Provision, 2001 to 2021 (net increase, with annual average rates in brackets[1])		
	Total to build April 2001 to March 2021	Of which already built April 2001- March 06	Minimum still to build April 2006 - March 2021
Cambridge	19,000	2,300 (460)	16,700 (1,110)
East Cambs	8,600	3,240 (650)	5,360 (360)
Fenland	11,000	3,340 (670)	7,660 (510)
Huntingdonshire	11,200	2,890 (580)	8,310 (550)
South Cambs	23,500	3,520 (700)	19,980 (1,330)
Forest Heath	6,400	810 (160)	5,590 (370)
St Edmundsbury	10,000	1,980 (400)	8,020 (530)

Housing trajectory information is collected which shows when and where development will take place. Some 41% of our planned delivery of some 76,245 new homes to 2021 will take place on large strategic sites, and in the period after 2011/12 strategic sites will assume greater importance in housing delivery, rising to 70% of all completions by 2013/2014.

➲ Chapter 21 provides more detail on *Planning for Housing Delivery*.

Reviewing housing supply and the building industry

This chapter sets out Kate Barker's review findings and recommendations, and the Government's response. It then looks at the Callcutt Review of house building delivery – its terms of reference and call for evidence, and executive summary of the final report—and the Office of Fair Trading study into the UK housebuilding market.

Past & future housing delivery

This chapter looks at the past delivery of all homes, and of affordable homes, and of rented and shared ownership homes. It looks at the future plans for delivering new homes and briefly summarises some of the factors which affect the number of affordable homes secured and tenure split .

Land availability

This chapter sets out what strategic land availability assessments (SLAAs) are, and the approach districts in the sub region are taking to them. It sets out the national planning policy context, the purpose of the Assessments, the importance of a partnership approach, core requirements of the Assessment and how the assessment will be kept up-to-date. It then sets out the situation across the sub-region and a table of each planning authority's progress and evidence.

Summaries have been added from each district's SLAA, to help link the availability of land to the achievement of RSS build targets in the future.

➲ Chapter 23 outlines *Links to strategic land availability assessments*

Delivering mixed, balanced communities

Three major reports have been used to provide some guidance and basis for discussion around what makes a balanced, a mixed, and a sustainable community, and why this should be our intention. The reports are *Balanced and Mixed Communities*; *In the mix* - a review of research on mixed income, mixed tenure and mixed communities and *Creating and Sustaining mixed income communities* – a good practice guide.

The aim of including this section in our SHMA is to provide a basis of discussion and thought around what makes a community where people want to live. The chapter touches on why we need mixed communities, the development process, the current local housing market and demand for housing. It also summarises housing mix and how this affects who might move in, the effects of marketing, delivering affordable and intermediate housing and pepper-potting, relationships with existing communities and finally, the evolution of mix over time and how tenure mix might be maintained long term.

➲ Chapter 25 provides further detail.

Affordable housing need

Government guidance on SHMAs provides a detailed process to assess housing need. This chapter gives details of what the guidance suggests, and how we have used the guidance in the Cambridge sub-region to calculate our housing needs. There are some important principles to consider before looking at the detail:

- The SHMA will be built on and updated as time passes and information changes and improves. This iteration is bound to change, adjust and improve as its foundation data does the same.
- The Guidance is written as just that – guidance, rather than a detailed roadmap of "how to" do it. Some sources of data do not provide the detail or the cross-tabulations needed to work out the figures for a specific sub region or district. For this reason, we have supplemented the secondary sources of data with our MRUK household survey where necessary, to try to provide a more realistic picture of housing need for our sub-region.
- There are numerous ways to tackle the housing needs "part" of the guidance. For the Cambridge sub-region we have tried to follow the guidance and supplement where we feel it is necessary. However in the future we are looking to evolve our approach further, to investigate more frequently updated sources of housing price information, ways to analyse data using mapping and GIS systems, and data systems to track changes in the housing market and in factors such as inflation, land prices and incomes. All these possibilities will add to the flexibility and responsiveness of our assessment of the market in the future, based on this current (2007) foundation of research.

The chapter provides a table for each stage in the CLG process, notes on the guidance, the Cambridge approach and further notes, and where to refer to in the SHMA for further background.

To summarise the **annual** projections:

	Cambridge City		East Cambridgeshire		Fenland		Huntingdonshire		South Cambridgeshire		
	Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total	Key
Current housing need											
Priority homeless households and in temporary accommodation	117		52		81		72		144		
Overcrowded and concealed households	690		1,000		522		1,554		1,014		
Other groups total	5,078		1,454		1,988		1,730		3,288		
Total current housing need		5,885		2,506		2,591		3,356		4,446	
Annual Need to Reduce Backlog over 5 years		1,177		501		518		671		889	A
Future housing need per year											
New household formation	339		311		169		579		635		
Existing households falling into need	670		262		416		520		276		
Total newly arising need		1,009		573		585		1,099		911	B
Total housing need per year		2,186		1,074		1,103		1,770		1,800	A+B
Existing supply											
Total affordable dwellings occupied by households in need	44		16		43		43		81		
Surplus affordable stock	0		0		0		0		0		
Units to be taken out of management	-4		0		0		-1		-2		
Annual supply of social re-lets	635		257		420		513		290		
Annual supply of intermediate affordable housing available for re-let or resale at sub-market levels	2		4		1		10		7		
Total existing supply		677		277		464		565		376	C
Shortfall / surplus											
New supply needed to stop backlog growing		332		296		121		534		535	B - C
Need for new affordable homes per year		1,509		797		639		1,205		1,424	A + B - C
Projected supply from commitments		177		200		112		154		315	D
Predicted shortfall		1,332		597		527		1,051		1,109	A + B - C - D

How does CLG need compare to overall RSS build targets?

(All annual figures)	Cambridge City	East Cambridgeshire	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	South Cambridgeshire
RSS target (all homes)	1110	360	510	550	1330
CLG needs figure for affordable only	1509	797	639	1205	1424
What % does this represent?	136%	221%	125%	219%	107%

Observers data

In the first iteration of the Cambridge SHMA, the five districts within Cambridgeshire have contributed equally to the funding required and the two Suffolk authorities, having recently commissioned housing needs and requirements research, have participated at "observer" level.

For this reason, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath have been included wherever possible in secondary data collection, but have not participated in the MRUK resident survey. They have also not benefited from purchasing CACI data on incomes, which has limited the comparative analysis we could carry out on affordability.

For completeness, excerpts are included of their respective studies with brief introductory comments, to enable a sub-regional view of housing need and demand within this project structure.

We hope in future that these two authorities will be able to buy into the sub-regional SHMA to a greater extent, helping create a complete picture of our housing market areas, and enabling further comparison across sub-regional boundaries, for example with our colleagues in Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex adjoining our boundary to the east.

➲ Chapter 28 for *Observers' data*.

Indication of affordable tenures

This chapter summarises the number of people currently listed on the social rented and shared ownership registers, and the number of newly arising households and their ability to be able to afford different forms of tenure for each district in Cambridgeshire.

The "backlog" stage of each district uses the backlog of households on registers at 31 March 2006. However the "backlog of overall need" in includes overcrowded and concealed households who may not be on the social rented or shared ownership registers and cannot afford to rent or buy their own home and resolve their overcrowding difficulties, as set out in the CLG guidance. Further research will be required if we are to include these households in the breakdown of tenures required in future. However at the draft consultation stage registers of housing need and intermediate housing are our most reliable source to summarise tenure requirements.

Table to be discussed	Cambridge City	East Cambridgeshire	Fenland	Huntingdonshire	South Cambridgeshire
Backlog: rented	944	288	405	322	686
Intermediate	60	22	8	28	52
Newly arising: rented	955	291	216	572	726
Intermediate	585	269	184	468	594
Total: rented	1,899	579	621	894	1412
Total: Intermediate	645	291	192	496	646
% rented	**75%**	**67%**	**76%**	**64%**	**69%**
% intermediate	**25%**	**33%**	**24%**	**36%**	**31%**

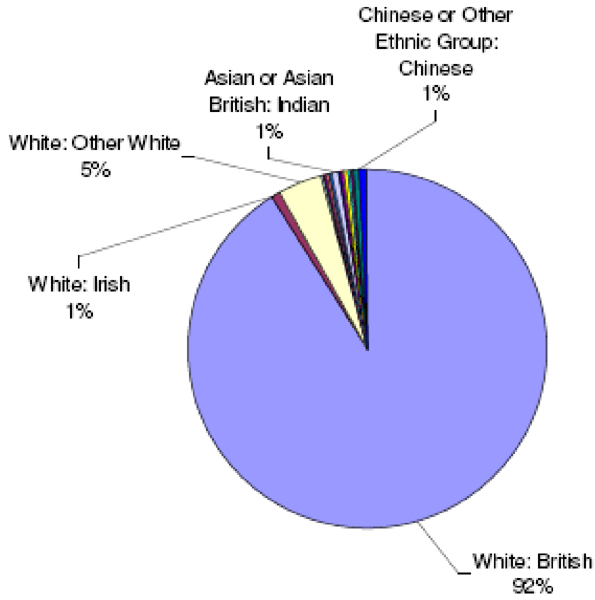
Housing requirements of specific household groups

Black and minority ethnic housing Issues ➲ chapter 30

The main source of information on BME populations is currently the Census 2001, although it is recognised that this information is now somewhat out of date, and does not reflect the recent in-migration of migrant workers about which there is little accurate information available. Improved monitoring is required to give a more accurate picture of ethnicity within the county and sub-region.

- There is a relatively low proportion of people from ethnic groups other than White.
- There is a fairly high proportion of people from "Other White" groups, compared with nationally.
- There is no single dominant minority ethnic group across the county or the sub-region.
- In all districts, residents from ethnic groups other than White are more likely to have high level qualifications than White British residents, particularly so in Cambridge, although in some areas residents from non-White groups were also more likely to have no qualifications.
- Information currently available does not suggest any significant differences in housing need amongst the BME population of the county or the sub-region compared with the White British population.
- A regional BME monitoring pilot is underway to try to improve BME monitoring across the region; the Cambridge sub-region is involved with this pilot. Outcomes of the pilot and its full implementation will inform updates to the SHMA in future.

Cambridgeshire's ethnic composition (Census 2001)



Introduction to migrant worker and housing issues ➲ chapter 31

Just over 27,000 people from outside the UK registered for a National Insurance Number in the Cambridge sub-region between 2004/07. 15,000 people from the Eastern European accession countries registered under the workers registration scheme in the same period.

National Insurance Registrations of Non-UK Nationals, 2002/3 to 2006/7 (from NI registration scheme)

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Cambridge	2,550	2,430	2,900	3,830	3,770
East Cambridgeshire	260	280	400	1,210	1,010
Fenland	210	300	780	1,570	1,200
Huntingdonshire	510	500	720	1,040	1,350
South Cambridgeshire	650	610	900	1,160	940
Forest Heath	360	410	650	1,030	760
St Edmundsbury	480	440	450	770	620
Sub-Region	5,020	4,970	6,800	10,610	9,650

Information on how many people are leaving is difficult to obtain, although what is available shows that most people are here for shorter time periods (less than two years). Tied and private rented accommodation are the dominant tenure types. There are very few people in social housing and not much evidence of owner occupation. Tied accommodation is the least preferred option for housing as it is of low quality e.g. large dormitories, badly heated mobile homes etc., but people usually view this as a temporary option that they are willing to tolerate for a short period. Some employers who own this sort of accommodation would like to update this information but encounter problems with planning processes.

Issues surrounding the private rented sector include problems such as overcrowding and low quality. High rents and costly deposits are prohibitive for some people. Nationally, some letting agents have reported problems getting references from prospective tenants from overseas. There are very few non-UK citizens in social rented housing. Most of those housed are families and include at least one person in work. The main reason for leaving previous accommodation is overcrowding and around a third had previously been private sector tenants.

Gypsy and Traveller housing issues ➲ chapter 32

This chapter sets out the Cambridgeshire Model and Executive Summary of the Accommodation Assessment, the *District Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Needs for Pitches 2005-2010* and other issues. It also outlines new provision planning, the Regional *Single Issue Review for Gypsy & Travellers* and an outline of the Provision Horizons project.

The Provision Horizons project is well on its way to redefining land search in Cambridgeshire - now, and for future generations of both planners and Gypsies & Travellers themselves. Research data already suggests that slight alterations to some existing district-specific criteria could open up more local land options for families in Cambridgeshire who are actively seeking new land.

The project has also had a very positive indirect impact on Cambridgeshire's progress to improving provision planning: local Gypsies & Travellers and planners are gaining more ground-level practical understanding of the challenges both Local Authorities and individual families face. This research has the potential to leave a strong legacy of confidence in the delivery of new provision, both here and in the wider region.

District Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Needs for Pitches 2005-2010 (from Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment 2005-2010)

District	Need for Pitches 2005-2010
Cambridge City	15
East Cambridgeshire	25-45
Fenland	160-205
Forest Heath	15-20
Huntingdonshire	15-25
Kings Lynn & W. Norfolk	45-60
Peterborough	10-15
South Cambridgeshire	110-130
St Edmundsbury	10-20
Total	**405-535**

Young people

There is a relatively high degree of need for supported housing for 16 and 17 years olds; although based on limited evidence, numbers of young people accepted as homeless are rising in some parts of the sub-region. Information on turnover in specialist supported housing schemes for young people at risk shows that a significant percentage of leavers, 44% in 2006/07, left in an unplanned manner. In some schemes 50% or so of these 'unplanned' leavers were evicted.

Specialist accommodation is concentrated in Cambridge City and St Edmundsbury – but that reflects to some degree where young people prefer to live; there is almost no provision in South Cambridgeshire and relatively little in the north and west of the county and Forest Heath. Some specialist housing schemes have no long-term access to resettlement housing or 'move-on' floating support, especially in Fenland. A recent review of 'floating support' services in Cambridgeshire recommends that either supported housing service contracts include move-on support where required or that move-on clients can be supported by a 'holistic' floating support provider.

Four new short-term floating support services for young people at risk are being funded in Cambridgeshire 2006-08, but there is little guarantee that such funding can continue in future. Cambridgeshire has relatively low levels of floating support as compared with neighbouring counties – although this form of support has been identified as the number one priority for development. The units of floating support specifically available for young people in the two Suffolk districts is also low.

The outcomes for many "looked after" children have been poor in terms of educational achievement and life skills and there is interest in reviewing needs of these young people in a holistic fashion, including housing. Further research is required to consider the housing needs of the following groups: young offenders, young substance users, teenage parents and young people leaving care.

Students

An ambitious plan for the development of purpose-built student housing, possibly in the form of a student village, for Anglia Ruskin University. There appear to be no easy ways of introducing such a project into the 'growth area' plans. There are no clear options for the replacement of the potential loss of purpose-built student housing for ARU students over the next 3 years. This will force more students to compete in the private lettings market. More information is required concerning Cambridge University colleges regarding proposals for additional student housing in the medium to long term.

If further bespoke accommodation is provided for students this has the potential to free up family housing in Cambridge; up to 9,000 students do *not* live in bespoke study rooms whilst at university in Cambridge. HMO licensing is likely to see the further loss of larger converted houses from the student market.

Older people

The chapter summarises each district's Supporting People plans for older people. Issues include:

- Very high rates of increase of frail older residents over the period 2006-2021, even if the incidence of frailty can be reduced, with increases in frail elderly residents generally exceeding 50% in Cambridgeshire and 40% in Suffolk.
- Provision of privately rented or owner-occupied sheltered housing is particularly low in Fenland – where overall provision of social rented sheltered housing is also relatively low.
- Fenland is the district experiencing highest rates of in-migration from retired people – around one-third of in-migrants, net, were retired according to the 2001 Census. This suggests that there may be heavy pressure on inadequate resources in future.
- Owner-occupied sheltered housing provision is increasing at present and should be considered as a critical element of support for elderly residents in future. There are relatively high numbers of units in Cambridge City, Forest Heath and Huntingdonshire. The two Suffolk districts already have relatively more extra care housing than do most Cambridgeshire districts
- Strategicially there is an aim to achieve a switch in provision from residential care to enhanced home care while managing a major change in local authority-supported provision may threaten the viability of some residential care homes. Others will need to develop nursing care provision to meet the shortfall. A revised service model for social care will require high investment in extra care sheltered housing.
- Long-term funding cuts are threatened for aids and adaptations and home improvement agencies; an unequal provision of services across Cambridgeshire and a very different profile of services means further research into outcomes and best practice is required. A review of Home Improvement Agencies adds to this picture.

Disability and housing issues ➲ chapter 34

The CLG practice guidance on households with specific needs includes notes on how to assess the market and some useful sources of information. Much of this information is to be included in an assessment of needs in the County's Disability Housing Strategy, to be launched in 2008.

At the time of launching the SHMA consultation draft, we have not progressed as far with this issue as with other parts of the CLG guidance. Therefore our approach in this section is to briefly set out the national context and future challenge, to identify issues raised in research around access to homes, and to outline the draft County Disability Housing Strategy which is currently being developed.

We plan to work with the Cambridgeshire Disability Housing Strategy Network on the County Disability Strategy to access and analyse the data required, to help bring together the evidence and jointly assess this important area of the housing market.

Rural housing ➲ chapter 35

Although home to the City of Cambridge and many market towns, the Cambridge housing sub-region is essentially very rural in character, with over 250 villages with populations below 5,000. In an area of high demand for housing, where planning policy prescribes that the majority of new development will be in or adjacent to urban areas, there can be acute housing problems facing local people seeking to live in villages. House prices are generally very high, yet wages in many rural industries and occupations can often be lower than average. Traditionally villages have had relatively fewer social rented homes than towns and in recent years many houses – which constitute the bulk of the rural social stock - have been sold under the right to buy and subsequently lost from the affordable housing stock available to let to new households. Many social rented homes remaining in rural areas are purpose-built bungalows for the elderly.

This chapter looks at the policies for rural housing and evidence of local need. It also looks at what has been achieved in recent years in terms of providing dwellings for local people in rural areas.

Park Homes

A separate section is included on the role and potential of 'park homes' to help meet housing needs. These are often (though not exclusively) located in rural areas.

Monitoring and development

As a learning process, and as one of the early sub-regions to publish a draft SHMA for consultation, it seemed helpful to identify some learning and some questions about the process and the CLG's methodology. We are also learning from our own experiences and from the methods we have used to comply with the methodology, and have added some early thoughts here on such issues. The list is not exhaustive and will probably grow as the SHMA develops and as we gain responses to consultation on the initial draft. However it does touch upon:

- The scale of the assessment.
- Use of housing needs registers and transfer lists.
- Work linking the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire districts housing needs, the effect of choice based lettings, housing policies and development plans.
- Primary research.
- Creating completely new communities.

➲ More detail is provided in chapters 36 and 37.

Where does the SHMA go from here?

As outlined above, the Cambridge sub-region SHMA is a growing, evolving and improving assessment.

By working closely with our partners and updating the information contained in the first iteration of the SHMA, and adding improved information as and when it becomes available, we plan to keep the SHMA alive and relevant to stakeholders, partners, policy makers and planners alike.

To do this, our plan is to:

- Employ a researcher who will update existing information as it becomes available, and gather new data as required and as suggested during consultation on the first SHMA.
- Secure new information under the guidance of the sub-regional housing board.
- Undertake a programme of consultation and discussion on specific housing issues highlighted in the SHMA with partners, via the internet, discussion groups, focused surveys and briefing notes.
- Re-publish the SHMA annually, using the information and input outlined above.
- Run an annual SHMA event to bring a variety of stakeholders together, to launch the new version of the SHMA and discuss its implications across diverse interest groups.

We have tried to make it clear which version of the SHMA people are reading by clearly labeling each page in each chapter. We will also be issuing a "change log" to help people make sure they are always looking at the most up to date information we have added to the assessment.

At the bottom left of each page will be a note showing Version 1.0 for the first SHMA. Updates and improvements through the year will be labeled 1.1, 1.2 etc, then in 2009 we will consult on and launch our updated Version 2.0.

We will include a change log on the website alongside the SHMA, to make sure version numbers and their dates and status are clear to all readers.

Get in touch, find out more...

Interested? Got a view? Want to feed-back?

Please contact:

- Trevor Baker (add details)
- Polly Jackson (add details)
- Sue Beecroft (add details)

Whetted your appetite?

If you want to read the whole SHMA, please go to:

(add website)