

Housing Strategy Action Plan April 2017 to March 2018

Barriers to Success

The most critical housing issue for the Council stems from the pressure to deliver new housing growth. This is important to meet the needs of the current and future population, and also to help meet front line needs for affordable housing, enabling households in need of affordable homes to be allocated these promptly thereby reducing the use of temporary accommodation and bed & breakfast establishments.

The barriers to achieving a stable level of housing growth include the availability of land and the funding required to deliver growth and infrastructure. As set out in the Housing Strategy 2017-20, Government policies which have previously steered provision towards forms of home ownership rather than conventional models of affordable housing have impacted on the rate of delivery of new affordable housing.

The action plan below sets out clearly how this Council will work in partnership to tackle key issues.

Priority 1 – To increase the supply of new and affordable housing we will:			
	Action	Lead Team	Timescale for completion
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare and adopt an ambitious Local Plan to guide the future growth of Huntingdonshire which enables the delivery of new homes to exceed Objectively Assessed Need including a significant number of affordable homes, and maintain a 5-year land supply position. ○ Enable the provision of new affordable housing to help meet local needs including specialist and supported housing needs through section 106 and other sources. 	Planning Policy Development Management/ Strategic Housing	In accordance with Local Development Scheme, or alternative timescale agreed by Cabinet Ongoing
2	Host a myth-buster tour and a half-day workshop to encourage the development of rural exception housing in partnership with the rural housing enabler and parish councils.	Strategic Housing	Myth-buster tour in July 2017. Half-day workshop by December 2017
3	Maintain a list of sites which may be suitable for affordable housing funding from the Combined Authority and work with local housing providers and developers to ensure schemes in Huntingdonshire are best placed to attract the funding.	Strategic Housing	Ongoing
4	Prepare a report to identify gaps in the skills, capacity and resources currently available which are necessary to enable the council to pursue opportunities to use its own money, or borrow, to increase the provision of affordable housing.	Strategic Housing	End of October 2017

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Implement the resolution of Cabinet relating to the disposal of the first parcels of land which have been identified to facilitate affordable housing. ○ Ensure the appropriate structures for approving asset disposals are in place and sell assets accordingly. 	Strategic Housing	Within 1 month of resolution
6	Prepare an options paper on different models of housing companies and joint ventures to enable the council to explore the value of creating a Housing Company or entering into a joint venture to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing.	Transformation Project	End of December 2017
7	Ensure our approach to Community Infrastructure Levy is used creatively to enable housing growth.	Planning Implementation	Ongoing
8	Support bids and explore potential sources of external funding for housing and infrastructure where opportunities exist, especially from the HCA.	Planning Implementation	Ongoing
9	Use statutory enforcement powers, where appropriate, to reduce the number of empty homes in the district.	Planning Enforcement	Ongoing
10	Monitor the findings of the feasibility study commissioned by the Combined Authority into modular housing and explore whether there are opportunities to accelerate housing growth in Huntingdonshire.	Strategic Housing	Initial exploration within 2 months of publication of report.
11	Support communities exploring the potential for increasing the provision of affordable housing in their communities through the creation of initiatives such as Neighbourhood/Community Plans, Community Land Trusts and Community Right to Build.	Planning/ Strategic Housing	Ongoing
12	Maintain a register for custom and self build housing.	Planning Policy	Ongoing
13	Work in partnership with the developers and housing associations to positively influence the development of the large strategic sites at Alconbury Weald and St Neots.	Planning Policy, Strategic Developments and Strategic Housing	Ongoing

Priority 2: To identify housing need and improve health and wellbeing

	Action	Lead Team	Timescale
14	Review the Homelessness Strategy by the end of 2017/18.	Housing Needs	March 2018
15	Implement the new regulations arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.	Housing Needs	As required by the legislation
16	Prevent homelessness through a range of interventions including advice and	Housing Needs	ongoing

	assistance / landlord liaison / court advocacy / rent deposit schemes.		
17	Increase the provision of temporary accommodation by providing an additional 10 units per year to help meet the needs of homeless households	Strategic Housing and Housing Needs	March 2018
18	Review, with registered providers, the long term viability of temporary housing schemes within the district and prepare an options report for Scrutiny Panel examining the implications of rent caps on social tenancies and Housing Benefit subsidy changes.	Strategic Housing and Housing Needs	Options report prepared by March 2018
19	Prepare a twice yearly report for Executive Councillor analysing the need identified on the housing register and monitor the provision of new and proposed temporary accommodation or affordable housing to ensure it meets evidenced need.	Strategic Housing	First report in October 2017
20	Prepare a report to evidence the demand for new extra care housing in the district following the adoption of the Cambridgeshire Extra Care Strategy and Market Position Statement and enable new extra care schemes subject to scheme viability.	Strategic Housing	Within two months of the Extra Care Strategy/Market Position Statement being prepared.
21	Prepare an options paper/briefing note regarding the changes to legislation relating to supported housing funding and work with supported housing providers to ensure the long term viability of supported housing schemes.	Strategic Housing	Report prepared within 2 months of new legislation.
22	Ensure we have a 5 year supply of Gypsy and Traveller sites.	Planning	Ongoing
Priority 3: To improve housing conditions in existing housing			
	Action	Lead Team	Timescale
23	Improve private sector housing conditions through inspection and enforcement / tackling category 1 and 2 hazards / licensing HMOs where applicable / tackling illegal eviction.	Environmental Health	Ongoing
24	Promote good housing management standards through the organisation of twice yearly Private Landlord Forums.	Strategic Housing	Next forum in September 2017
25	Contribute to the nationwide database of rogue landlords and utilise the enforcement powers, such as banning orders and civil penalties, introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016, where appropriate.	Environmental Health	To be implemented if required by legislation following Housing & Planning Act 2016.
26	Make provision for Disabled Facilities	Strategic	Report to July 2017

	Grants and implement the findings of the multi-agency review of the programme.	Housing	O&S Panel and Cabinet
27	Maintain the Safer Homes Handyperson Scheme to help meet the needs of the ageing population and monitor its progress by attending quarterly meetings with the service providers and reporting annually to Executive Councillor.	Strategic Housing	First annual report by August 2017.
28	Licence and maintain standards within mobile home sites.	Environmental Health	Ongoing
29	Ensure good management of the Council's own mobile home site in St Neots.	Strategic Housing	Ongoing
30	Reduce the number of residents in fuel poverty by facilitating access to energy efficiency funding and by working with other Cambridgeshire councils and the Stay Well County Partnership.	Business Development	Ongoing
31	Investigate and tackle anti-social behaviour in association with the Police and other appropriate partners, including Housing Associations and other landlords.	Community	Ongoing
Priority 4: To work in partnership to improve conditions			
	Action	Lead Team	Timescale
32	Continue to work in partnership with neighbouring Councils and housing associations through the Sub-Regional Housing Board, and implement the sub-regional Action Plan.	Strategic Housing	Ongoing
33	Collaborate with neighbouring Councils in the Cambridge sub-region to develop the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and ensure it is a sound evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.	Strategic Housing & Strategic Planning	Local plan date
34	Manage the Home Improvement Agency shared service through representation on the Management Board.	Strategic Housing	Ongoing
35	Work with the Combined Authority to prepare an overarching Housing Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.	Strategic Housing	March 2018