

Appendix C4: Housing Topic Paper

Introduction

This topic paper covers the main policies, evidence and lessons learnt from elsewhere to help inform the provision of new homes on the North East Cambridge development, and a summary of the responses to housing related questions raised through the 2019 Issues and Options consultation. It identifies key issues to be considered when planning for those new homes, and makes recommendations around future policy development.

The current vision for the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan is for an “inclusive, walkable, low-carbon new city district with lively mix of homes, workplaces, services and social spaces, fully integrated with surrounding neighbourhoods”.

As the Issues and Options report makes clear, well considered placemaking, of which housing is an essential component, will be key to achieve this vision.

The draft AAP makes provision for at least 8,000 homes within the North East Cambridge area. Area Action Plan policies need to detail how housing can deliver significant value to the new communities at North East Cambridge by ensuring that contributes to meeting housing need and is of high-quality design, sustainable, liveable, and inclusive.

Key Evidence Documents

- [Cambridge sub-region housing market bulletins](#)
- [Government Valuation Office private rental statistics](#)
- [Local Housing Allowance rates](#)
- [Research report to Greater Cambridge Partnership: Detailed affordability analysis, Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire](#), Savills, June 2017
- [Diamond affordability analysis: A new way of looking at income, housing cost and housing supply, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District councils, for the Greater Cambridge Partnership, June 2018:](#)
- Laing-Buisson 2018, from [Age UK Later in Life in the United Kingdom 2019](#)

- [Older People's Care & Support Needs in Cambridge 2017-2036](#), Sheffield Hallam University and Centre for Regional Economic & Social Research
- [Cambridgeshire & West Suffolk specialist housing needs](#), Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group Autumn 2019
- [Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group population estimates and forecasts](#)
- Home-Link housing applicant data
- Help to Buy housing applicant data
- Local self-build and custom build register data
- Private Rented Sector (Build to Rent) research – national and emerging local
- Tenure integration in housing developments – a literature review, NHBC, 2016
- [Place Alliance, A Housing Design Audit for England](#)
- Health & Wellbeing topic paper
- Anti-poverty topic paper
- Climate Change, Energy and Sustainable Design topic paper
- Community safety topic paper
- Internalisation topic paper

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework aims to ensure that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations.

Paragraph 60 requires strategic policies to be informed by a local housing need assessment, using the standard National Planning Policy Guidance methodology, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach.

Paragraph 61 states that the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. Groups include, but are not limited to: those requiring affordable housing; families with children; older people; students; people with disabilities; service families;

travellers¹; people who rent their homes; and people wishing to commission or build their own homes. Older people and people with disabilities are defined within the National Planning Policy Framework glossary at Annex 2.

Affordable housing is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework glossary at Annex 2: as 'housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions...' i.e. affordable housing for rent; starter homes; discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership.

Under Paragraph 62, where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required (based on National Planning Policy Framework definitions), and expect it to be met on-site unless there is robust justification otherwise.

Under Paragraph 64, on major developments, except where specified exemptions apply, at least 10% of the homes are expected to be available for affordable home ownership, 'unless this would exceed the level of affordable housing required in the area, or significantly prejudice the ability to meet the identified affordable housing needs of specific groups'.²

The 'Agent of Change' principle under Paragraph 182 establishes a responsibility for new developments to mitigate impacts from existing noise-generating activities; which is especially important for noise-sensitive development such as housing. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed.

Engagement

¹ [Planning Policy for Traveller Sites 2015](#), Annex 1 defines gypsies and travellers as 'Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.'

² Major developments are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework, Annex 2 as: where 10 or more homes will be provided; or a site area of 0.5 hectares or more.

The Area Action Plan process has recognised that development at North East Cambridge will have an impact beyond the site boundary and is engaging stakeholders constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis. There are a number of studies relating to housing issues that are ongoing and will inform the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan, but will also be considered as is appropriate for the AAP as it continues through its process.

A Housing Mix assessment examining the housing needs of different groups in the community is being carried out jointly between all the Cambridgeshire districts and West Suffolk. An additional joint study, on the need for private rented sector housing, is being carried out between Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and West Suffolk.

An assessment of the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showmen, Bargee Travellers and other caravan and houseboat dwellers is being carried out. This involves the five Cambridgeshire Districts (including Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire), Peterborough, West Suffolk and King's Lynn & West Norfolk.

The viability assessment and infrastructure delivery plan for the AAP are being conducted together as part of the study that will support the Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

Landowners within the Area Action Plan area are also being regularly engaged through a monthly 'Landowners Forum', and key developers and members of the local community formed part of a series of design workshops to co-design the emerging spatial framework.

Background/Context/Relevant Data/Corporate Council Objectives and Strategies

Background

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire 2018 Local Plans identify the need for 33,500 new homes across Greater Cambridge (i.e. the area covered by the two local authorities) between 2011 and 2031.

There are high levels of housing need across Greater Cambridge, and housing affordability is a major issue. New homes, including affordable housing are a high priority for both councils.

There is a strong history of the two authorities working together in bringing forward development on urban fringe sites.

Cambridge City Council owns some of the land at North East Cambridge and intends to pursue direct delivery of homes on that land.

Data

Data: Overall number of homes required

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire's current Local Plans are based on the need identified for 33,500 new homes across Greater Cambridge. The adopted Local Plans place no reliance on development at North East Cambridge due to the uncertainties at that time over the relocation of the Water Treatment Plant. The Local Plans are subject to early review that is already underway. Whilst the overall future needs of the area will be defined through the new Greater Cambridge Local Plan, building on the 2018 Local Plan policies for North East Cambridge (called Cambridge Northern Fringe East in those plans) it is reasonable to consider at this point that the new homes planned for North East Cambridge can make an important contribution to meeting long term housing requirements in Greater Cambridge.

Data: Population forecast

Table 1 below shows that the overall population of Greater Cambridge is expected to increase considerably during the period of the current 2018 Local Plans. It shows a 16.5% increase in Cambridge from 2016 to 2031, and a 23.9% increase in the same time period for South Cambridgeshire in the same period, representing a 19.5% change overall in Greater Cambridge.

Table 1: Forecast increase in population 2016 to 2031

	2016	2031	Increase	% increase
Cambridge City	134,080	156,240	22,160	16.5%
South Cambridgeshire	155,660	192,840	37,180	23.9%
Greater Cambridge	304,160	358,290	59,340	19.5%

Source: [Cambridgeshire 2015 based population forecasts](#)

Data: Housing costs and affordability

Tables 2 & 3 below show Greater Cambridge as an area of high housing costs relative to other parts of England. House prices have risen dramatically over the last ten years and since the Councils' respective Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents were published. The ten year average house price percentage increase between 2009 and 2019, is shown to be 71% for Cambridge City and 80% in South Cambridgeshire.

Table 2: Average house prices at September 2009 and October 2019

	September 2009 average (mean)	October 2019 average (mean)	Ten year increase	Ten year percentage increase
Cambridge City	£296,031	£507,197	£211,166	71%
South Cambridgeshire	£244,794	£440,451	£195,657	80%
East of England	not avail	£352,532	not avail	not avail
England	not avail	£320,005	not avail	not avail

Source: [Cambridge sub-region housing market bulletins](#), from Hometrack, based on sales and valuations

Lower quartile house prices also increased in Greater Cambridge as the table below shows with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire increasing by 26% and 27% respectively. This is considerably higher compared to the England average of 15%, but slightly lower than the average for East of England which saw a 32% rise.

Table 3: Lower quartile house prices at September 2014 and October 2019

	September 2014 average (mean)	October 2019 average (mean)	Five year increase	Five year percentage increase
Cambridge City	£265,000	£335,000	£70,000	26%
South Cambridgeshire	£230,000	£293,000	£63,000	27%
East of England	£165,000	£217,500	£52,500	32%
England	£143,500	£165,000	£21,500	15%

Source: [Cambridge sub-region housing market bulletins](#), from Hometrack, based on sales and valuations. 10 year comparison not available

Rents are also high, and Local Housing Allowance rates, on which housing related benefits for tenants renting privately are based, until recently, were nowhere near enough to cover even lower quartile rents in Greater Cambridge. They were raised from April 2020/21 in response to the Covid-19 crisis, although the council understands that these will remain in place until March 2021 and there are currently

no plans to reduce them again in future (although that may change). See tables 4 & 5 below.

This has gone some way to close the gap in Cambridge City. For South Cambridgeshire, rates for most property sizes are now higher than lower quartile rents in the district.

The table below shows the average monthly private rents for Cambridge City (£1,225) and South Cambridgeshire (£1,012) being considerably higher than the East of England (£863), and England average (£858). This is also true for the lower quartile average rents that are £925 and £825 for Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire Council respectively compared to a £625 average for East of England and £525 average for England.

Table 4: Monthly average private rents April 2018 to March 2019

	Average (mean)	Lower quartile
Cambridge City	£1,225	£925
South Cambridgeshire	£1,012	£825
East of England	£863	£625
England	£858	£525

Source: [Valuation Office private rental market statistics](#)

Table 5: Monthly lower quartile private rents by size, compared with monthly equivalent Local Housing Allowance

The table below shows how the local housing allowance has increased across the board from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021 in both Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire for all sizes of property.

	Cambridge City	South Cambridgeshire	Local Housing Allowance 2019-2020	Local Housing Allowance 2020-2021
Room	£450	£470	£349.88	£421.49
Studio	£725	£495	£564.14	£775.02
1 bed	£850	£695		
2 beds	£1,075	£825	£648.79	£850.02
3 beds	£1,230	£950	£753.90	£950.00
4 beds+	£1,600	£1,200	£1,005.66	£1300.01

Source: [Valuation Office private rental market statistics](#) April 2018 to March 2019; and Local Housing Allowance rates [2019 to 2020](#) and [2020 to 2021](#) (monthly equivalents)

Data on changes to Local Housing Allowance levels is also relevant in terms of decisions on the level at which to cap affordable rents. Tables 6 & 7 below show that LHA rates are now considerably closer to median market rents. This is particularly so for South Cambridgeshire where rates are now over 80% of median rents for all sizes of property from 1 to 4 bedrooms.

The table below shows how the local housing allowance rate in Cambridge City compares to median market rents across different home sizes as measured by bedrooms. This shows the local housing allowance rate in 2020/21 as being 62% of median market rent for 1 bed, 67% for 2 bed, 65% for 3 bed and 68% for 4 bed, all representing increases compared to 2019-2021.

Table 6: Weekly Local Housing Allowance Rates 2020-2021 compared with median market rents: Cambridge City

	2019/20 LHA rate	New 2020/21 LHA rate	Increase 2019/20 to 2020/21	% increase 2019/20 to 2020/21	Cambridge median weekly rent	2019/20 LHA rate as a % of median market rent	New 2020/21 LHA rates as a percentage of median market rent
1 bed	£135.99	£178.36	£42.37	31%	£219.00	62%	81%
2 bed	£156.40	£195.62	£39.22	25%	£294.00	53%	67%
3 bed	£181.75	£218.63	£36.88	20%	£334.00	54%	65%
4 bed	£242.43	£299.18	£56.75	23%	£438.00	55%	68%

Source: Hometrack

Table 7: Local Housing Allowance Rates 2020-2021 compared with median market rents: South Cambridgeshire

The table below shows how the local housing allowance rate in South Cambridgeshire compares to median market rents across different home sizes as measured by bedrooms. This shows the local housing allowance rate in 2020/21 as being 100% of median market rent for 1 bed, 92% for 2 bed, 86% for 3 bed and 88% for 4 bed, all representing increases compared to 2019-2021.

	2019/20 LHA rate	New 2020/21 LHA rate	Increase 2019/20 to 2020/21	% increase 2019/20 to 2020/21	Median weekly rent	2019/20 LHA rate as a % of median market rent	New 2020/21 LHA rates as a percentage of median market rent
1 bed	£133.72	£178.36	£44.64	33%	£178.00	75%	100%
2 bed	£153.79	£195.62	£41.83	27%	£211.00	72%	92%
3 bed	£178.71	£218.63	£39.92	22%	£253.00	71%	86%
4 bed	£238.38	£299.18	£60.80	26%	£340.00	70%	88%

Source: Hometrack

Local affordability analysis ³ estimates that across Greater Cambridge some 35% of households are on incomes of less than £30k; the group for whom social/affordable rent housing would be the most realistic option in terms of affordability, if there was sufficient supply.

The analysis also identifies that around 26% of households in Greater Cambridge are on incomes of £30K to £50K; the group which might be expected to be able to afford low-cost affordable housing other than social/affordable rent housing. For these households much of the housing supply comes from the private rented sector – often the only available options for people in the middle of the market, although affordability is often a barrier. Shared ownership, although in relatively short supply, also contributes to this zone in the housing market.

Data: Need for affordable housing

Table 8 below demonstrates high levels of need for social/affordable rent housing compared with annual supply. The highest need in recent years has been for smaller homes – one bedroom, followed by two bedrooms.

Table 8: Applicants on Home-Link housing register by property size required

	Cambridge City		South Cambridgeshire	
	No of applicants on register	No of lettings 2018-19	No of applicants on register	No of lettings 2018-19
1 bedroom	1,136	216	833	215
2 bedrooms	608	243	595	237
3 bedrooms	248	71	225	107
4+ bedrooms	44	10	75	22
Total	2,039	540	1,728	581

Source: Home-Link data from Locata, October 2019. Includes all applicants with status of live, pending, offered and nominated.

Tables 9 & 10 below show there is also high demand for housing through Help to Buy, (low cost affordable housing other than social/affordable rent housing) with the highest demand for one to two bedroom properties.

³ [Diamond Affordability Analysis for Greater Cambridge 2018](#)

Table 9: Help to Buy applicant households living in and wanting to remain living in Greater Cambridge

The table below shows that there were a total of 805 help to buy applicants living in Greater Cambridge and wanting to live there, this was split between 478 for 1-2 beds, 188 for 2-3 beds, 113 for 3-4 beds, and 26 for 4-6 beds.

Bedroom entitlement	No of applicants
1-2 beds	478
2-3 beds	188
3-4 beds	113
4-6 beds	26
Total number of applicant households	805

Source: Help to Buy East & South East, October 2019

Table 10: Help to Buy applicant households working in and wanting to live in Greater Cambridge, October 2019

The table below shows that there were a total of 595 help to buy applicants working in Greater Cambridge and wanting to live there, this was split between 330 for 1-2 beds, 164 for 2-3 beds, 83 for 3-4 beds, and 18 for 4-6 beds.

Bedroom entitlement	No of applicants
1-2 beds	330
2-3 beds	164
3-4 beds	83
4-6 beds	18
Total number of applicant households	595

Source: Help to Buy East & South East, October 2019

Data: Need for Purpose Built Private Rented Housing

Research has been commissioned to identify the potential need for purpose built Private Rented Sector housing across Greater Cambridge and more specifically at North East Cambridge.

In the meantime, a brief summary of some of the research previously available is attached at Annex 1 to this topic paper.

Data: Need for housing for older people

As shown in the table below, the older population is expected to increase nationally, and particularly in South Cambridgeshire. Table 11 below shows the over-65

population is expected to increase by around 46% over the period 2016 to 2031; by 44% in Cambridge and 47% in South Cambridgeshire. The largest percentage increase is likely in the number of people aged 85 and over, although the greatest numerical increase is expected in the 75-84 age group. By 2031, over 65s are expected to make up nearly 1 in 5 of the Greater Cambridge population.

Table 11: Forecast change in over-65 population 2016 to 2031

	Cambridge City				South Cambridgeshire			
	2016	2031	Increase	% increase	2016	2031	Increase	% increase
65-74	8,220	10,800	2,580	31%	16,440	20,470	4,030	25%
75-84	5,130	7,790	2,660	52%	9,020	15,130	6,110	68%
85+	2,850	4,720	1,870	66%	4,100	7,840	3,740	91%
All 65+	16,200	23,310	7,110	44%	29,560	43,440	13,880	47%

Source: [Cambridgeshire County Council 2015 based population forecasts](#)

The number of people living in specialist retirement housing or in care homes is relatively low, with most older people living in their own homes. It is estimated nationally that around 410,000 people in the UK currently live in care homes. ⁴

Data: Need for housing for local workers

There is growing interest from local businesses and their representatives in gaining a better understanding of the housing needs of people working in the Greater Cambridge area. For example, Cambridge University Hospitals has been conducting some research into the housing needs of its workers, and Cambridge Ahead is also carrying out some work on housing needs of local workers.

Data: Need for specialist housing for people with disabilities

During 2018/19, Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group undertook a review of specialist housing needs for people with disabilities across the sub region. This research has used population and prevalence estimates to create a model to forecast future need, based on current provision.

The table below details the findings, which indicate that for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City there may be a future need of 47 additional specialist units across the area up to 2036.

⁴ Laing-Buisson 2018, from [Age UK Later in Life in the United Kingdom 2019](#)

Table 12: Greater Cambridge specialist housing requirements (disability – working age)

Disability client group	Number of units required across Greater Cambridge up to 2036
Learning disability	7
Mental health	29
Physical disability	5
Autism	6
Total	47

Source Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group 2019

This assumes ‘business as usual’ in terms of future care provision and acts as a starting point to inform the level of future need. Further work is required to establish the future direction of travel for services for different disability client groups, including the extent to which services may continue to be provided in specialist schemes as opposed to supporting people in mainstream housing.

Data: Need for Gypsy & Traveller accommodation

An assessment of accommodation needs for Gypsies & Travellers is currently under way that will inform the Greater Cambridge Local Plan but on hold due to Covid-19 issues.

Data: Demand for self/custom build housing

Local authorities are required to keep a register of those seeking to acquire serviced plots in the area for self-build and custom house building.⁵

Since the register started, around 600 applicants have been registered as having in interest in self and/or custom build housing across Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire and approximately 450 related units have been granted planning permission.

Data: Demand for community led housing

Work commissioned by the two councils from CLT East⁶ has identified at least four groups looking to build their own homes in the Greater Cambridge area through community-led housing models.

⁵ Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015

⁶ CLT East now part of East Cambridgeshire Trading Company Limited

Corporate Strategies and Plans

Vision and objectives

Cambridge City Council's vision is to lead a united city, 'One Cambridge - Fair for All', in which economic dynamism and prosperity are combined with social justice and equality.⁷ The aim is for Cambridge to be a place which is: fair for all; a great place to live, learn and work; and one that cares for the planet. The council's Corporate Plan is based on five main themes:

- Helping people in Cambridge who have the greatest need;
- Planning for growth and ensuring our new communities are successful;
- Protecting our environment and tackling climate change;
- Delivering quality services within financial constraints; and
- Developing effective partnerships and an innovative and dynamic organisation.

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Business Plan 2019-2024⁸ is about putting the heart into the District by:

- Building homes that are truly affordable to live in – by building vibrant communities in locations where people have good access to facilities and transport links, so they can genuinely afford to live a happy and healthy life.
- Helping business to grow – by supporting businesses of all sizes, including rural enterprises and farming, to help create new jobs and opportunities near to where people live
- Being green to our core – we will create a cleaner, greener and zero-carbon future for our communities; and
- Being a modern and caring Council – we will provide our customers with high-quality services, strive to reduce costs, build on what we are good at to generate our own income and make decisions in a transparent, open and inclusive way.

⁷ [Cambridge City Council Corporate Plan](#)

⁸ [South Cambridgeshire District Council Business Plan 2019-2024](#)

Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023⁹

The Greater Cambridge housing strategy, published in spring 2019 has been developed between Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils within the context of wider council objectives. It shows how both councils aim to meet the housing challenges facing the area, setting out key priorities for action.

Part of the role of the strategy is to complement the councils' Local Plans to help inform planning decisions required to be made separately by each council, as well as joint decisions around development on major fringe sites which straddle the two districts' boundaries. It is a material consideration in making planning decisions.

The Strategy underpins this topic paper, providing further evidence and details on the housing need for the area.

Annex 5 of the strategy provides more detail on the councils' requirements around the delivery of new homes, including requirements around housing to meet different needs.

Other relevant strategies and plans

These include Cambridge City's Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Management Plan 2016-2021, Anti-Poverty Strategy 2017-2020 (currently under review), and the Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide.

Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans and other related planning documents

- [Cambridge City Local Plan 2018](#)
- [Cambridge City Council Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2008](#)
- [South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018](#)
- [South Cambridgeshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2010](#)
- [Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-23 and annexes](#)

⁹ [Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023 and annexes](#)

- [Greater Cambridge Design & Construction Supplementary Planning Document](#)

Local planning requirements: Overall dwelling mix

Cambridge Local Plan Policy 45 states that developments should include a balanced mix of dwelling sizes (measured by the number of bedrooms in each dwelling), types and tenures to meet projected future household needs. The mix of dwellings and tenure types shall have regard to the differing needs for different unit sizes of affordable housing and market housing.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy H/9 states that a wide choice, type and mix of housing will be provided to meet the needs of different groups in the community including families with children, older people, those seeking starter homes, people wishing to build their own homes, people seeking private rented sector housing, and people with disabilities.

For South Cambridgeshire, the market homes in developments of 10 or more homes will consist of at least: 30% 1 or 2 bedroom homes; 30% 3 bedroom homes; and 30% 4 or more bedroom homes; with a 10% flexibility allowance that can be added to any of these categories taking account of local circumstances. This requirement is subject to the housing mix of affordable homes (except starter homes) in all developments being determined by local housing needs evidence. The required housing mix will not apply to developments including specialist housing for older people (with or without care). (SCDC policy H/9).

Local planning requirements: Space standards

Cambridge Local Plan policy 50 and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan policy H/12 specify that residential units need to meet the internal residential space standards set out in the Government's Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015).

For Cambridge City all new residential units are expected to have direct access to an appropriate area of private amenity space, based on specified criteria.

Local planning requirements: Accessible housing

Cambridge Local Plan policy 51 requires all homes to be built to level M4(2) of the adaptable and accessible building standard with 5% of the affordable housing to be built to wheelchair accessibility standards. The council encourages developers to build wheelchair accessible market homes, as well as affordable. (Cambridge Local Plan paragraph 6.38)

For South Cambridgeshire the policy is for 5% of homes in a development to be built to level M4(2). This provision is to be split evenly between the affordable and market homes in a development. (Local Plan policy H/9).

Local planning requirements: Affordable Housing

Cambridge Local Plan policy 45 and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan policy H/10 set minimum affordable housing requirements on new developments as shown at table 13 below

Table 13: Local Plan minimum numbers of affordable homes required on residential developments

The table below shows that the level for minimum affordable housing requirements in Cambridge City is, 25% for sites of 11-14 units, and 40% on sites of 15 or more units, whereas in South Cambridgeshire it is 40% of homes for all sites of 11 or more units.

Local Plan	Minimum affordable housing requirement
Cambridge City	25% of homes on sites of 11-14 units 40% of homes on sites of 15 or more units
South Cambridgeshire	40% of homes on sites of 11 or more units

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans 2008

Where a developer considers that meeting the required affordable housing percentage will be financially unviable, both councils require robust evidence to support any such claim.

Under paragraph 33 of Cambridge City's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2008, the City Council resolves to achieve 75% social/affordable rent housing on qualifying sites in accordance with the council's Housing Strategy, unless overall evidence of need indicates otherwise.

Paragraph 3.14 of South Cambridgeshire's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2010 refers to 75% rent and 25% intermediate housing as the starting point for negotiations on the urban fringes of Cambridge, in alignment with Cambridge City's approach.

Local planning requirements: Housing for local workers

Cambridge Local Plan paragraph 6.7 allows the possibility of employers providing housing specifically for their employees as part of schemes for employment development, subject to evidence of need. Affordable housing requirements will apply to such schemes.

There is no reference in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan to housing for local workers.

The approach in the councils' Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents (in relation to key workers) has been largely superseded by the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy approach. (See below).

Local planning requirements: Self & custom-build housing

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy H/9 states that on all sites of 20 or more dwellings, and in each phase of strategic sites, developers will supply dwelling plots for sale to self and custom builders. Exceptionally, no provision will be expected in developments or phases of developments which comprise high density multi-storey flats and apartments.

There is no specific policy relating to self and custom build housing in the Cambridge Local Plan.

Local planning requirements: Student housing

Cambridge City Local Policy 46 states the circumstances in which new student housing will be permitted. This states that Cambridge intends to deliver accommodation to address the identified future growth aspirations of the institutions and to provide additional flexibility with around 3,104 units to 2026.

The Local Plan process will need to review and update the planned growth for the Universities beyond 2026.

Local planning requirements: Housing in multiple occupation

Cambridge Local Plan policy 48 supports proposals for large houses in multiple occupation (*sui generis*) where the proposal meets certain criteria, including not creating an over-concentration of such use in the area, not causing harm to residential amenity or the local area, and appropriate management arrangements being in place.

Local planning requirements: Gypsy and Traveller accommodation

Cambridge City Policy 49 provides a set of site criteria against which applications for permanent, transit and emergency stopping provision for Gypsies & Travellers will be considered. Should an up to date needs assessment indicate there is a need, then opportunities to deliver sites for Gypsies and Travellers will be sought as part of significant major development sites.

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy H/20 requires provision to be made for at least 11 plots for Travelling Showpeople between 2011 and 2031, based on the most recent local Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Under South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy H/21, if need is identified, opportunities to deliver Gypsy and Traveller sites will be sought as part of large scale new communities and significant major development sites. The need and opportunities should be kept under review through the planning of future phases of such developments as they come forward. Sites provided on such sites must meet specified criteria.

Local planning requirements: Other specialist housing

Cambridge City Local Plan Policy 47 applies to specialist housing, including: sheltered housing; residential care and nursing homes; extra-care housing; shared homes; cluster units; respite, rehabilitation and convalescent accommodation; and hostel accommodation. Provision must be supported by evidence of need, and: suitable for the intended occupiers; accessible to local shops, services appropriate

community facilities and public & sustainable transport; and in a location that avoids excessive concentration of such housing within any one street or small area.

For both councils, where the development falls within use class C3 (dwelling houses)¹⁰, the development will be expected to contribute to the supply of affordable housing. (Cambridge Local Plan policy 47, and South Cambridgeshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2010 paragraph 3.35).

Local planning requirements: Design of affordable housing

The affordable housing should not be visually distinguishable from market housing by its external appearance. Regard should also be had to the Councils' Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document. Impact on service charge levels needs to be taken into account (Cambridge City Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2008 paragraphs 25, 26, 27 & 28).

South Cambridgeshire's requirements are that affordable housing should be visually indistinguishable from market housing, and developers should avoid design that results in high service charges. (South Cambridgeshire Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2010, paragraphs 3.27 & 3.28).

Local planning requirements: Distribution of affordable housing

There is no reference to how affordable housing is to be distributed in the Cambridge Local Plan, but paragraphs 23-24 of the Cambridge City Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2008 refer to integrating affordable and supported housing with open market housing in ways that minimise social exclusion, avoiding tenure monocultures. Clustering is described as the 'usual approach' to affordable housing distribution with clusters normally expected to be between 6 & 25 dwellings. In flatted schemes no more than 12 affordable dwellings should normally have access from a common stairwell or lift. The affordable housing should be provided in prominent parts of a site to aid integration.

¹⁰ The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 defines use class C3 development as: Use as a dwelling house (whether or not as a sole or main residence) —
(a) by a single person or by people living together as a family, or
(b) by not more than 6 residents living together as a single household (including a household where care is provided for residents).

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Policy H/10 requires that affordable housing be provided in small groups or clusters distributed through the site.

North East Cambridgeshire Area Action Plan Issues and Options Report 2019: questions and representations received

Responses to Issues and Options questions: Housing mix

- **Question 38: Should the Area Action Plan require a mix of dwelling sizes and in particular, some family sized housing?**

There was generally a positive response around having a good housing mix, to provide choice & affordability, and create a mixed, balanced and sustainable community. The need for family sized and private rented sector housing were raised. Other responses included: the importance of an evidence based approach; the need for innovation to achieve required densities; opportunities for people to live nearer to where they work; and the importance of design.

- **Question 39: Should the Area Action Plan seek provision for housing for essential local workers and/or specific housing provided by employers (i.e. tethered accommodation outside of any affordable housing contribution)?**

Most responses were positive. Views included: the importance of being able to both live and work in the neighbourhood to reduce the need for commuting; and the need for housing that is affordable to lower paid 'key workers'. However, viability was raised as a concern.

Responses to issues and options questions: Affordable housing

- **Question 40: Should the Area Action Plan require 40% of housing to be affordable, including a mix of affordable housing tenures, subject to viability?**

Most respondents felt that provision of affordable housing was important.

Some emphasised the need for this to be subject to viability; others were concerned about developers using the viability argument to avoid provision, and the need for the council to enforce the affordable housing requirement.

The private rented sector was mentioned as an area where a different approach might be needed other than providing traditional on-site affordable.

Other responses included: social housing should be provided elsewhere; 40% affordable housing should be applied to site as a whole, subject to viability; the need for social housing for local families; the need for affordable housing for science park workers; need for affordable housing to be genuinely affordable; and the need for an overarching long term vision in relation to affordable housing.

- **Question 41: Should an element of the affordable housing provision be targeted at essential local workers?**

Responses were overall supportive. Comments included: a need for decisions in this area, including whether housing should be tethered to employment, to be based on evidence; need for people to be able to live and work locally; and housing should be genuinely affordable and available to lower paid and local workers, including those on the housing register.

Responses to issues and options questions: Custom & self-build housing

- **Question 42: Should the Area Action Plan require a proportion of development to provide custom build opportunities?**

Responses were generally supportive. Comments included: need for better evidence to understand need, demand and viability; opportunities to provide variety and interest; importance of low/zero carbon homes and fewer cars; concern about risks around cohesion & integration of design and for effective monitoring of design; and need for better evidence to understand demand and viability.

Responses to issues and options questions: Houses in Multiple Occupation

- **Question 43: Should the Area Action Plan allow a proportion of purpose-built Housing in Multiple Occupation and include policy controls on the clustering of Houses in Multiple Occupation?**

Three out of the five respondents to this question objected. Reasons included: family houses and well-designed studio apartments would be better; and the need for more detail.

Other responses included: Housing in Multiple Occupation being essential to a diverse community; and need for decisions to be evidence based.

Responses to issues and options questions: Private Rented Sector housing

- **Question 44: Should the Area Action Plan include the Private Rented Sector as a potential housing option as part of a wider housing mix across the North East Cambridge area?**
- **Question 45: if Private Rented Sector housing is to be supported, what specific policy requirements should we consider putting in place to manage its provision and to ensure it contributes towards creating a mixed and sustainable community?**
- **Question 46: Should the Private Rented Sector provide an affordable housing contribution?**
- **Question 47: What 'clawback' mechanisms should be included to secure the value of the affordable housing to meet local needs if the homes are converted to another tenure?**
- **Question 48: What would be a suitable period to require the retention of private rented homes in that tenure and what compensation mechanisms are needed if such homes are sold into a different tenure before the end of the period?**
- **Question 49: What type of management strategy is necessary to ensure high standards of ongoing management of Private Rented Sector premises is achieved?**

There was mixed support for provision of Private Rented Sector housing. Supporters cited need to provide choice, support local employment and accelerate delivery, and that it would need to be high quality and well managed. One recommended involving a housing association, and not wanting the benefits of the area accruing to buy to let investors outside the area was also cited. Three objected, for reasons including not wanting one rich company/ individual in ownership, potential impact on house prices, and that Private Rented Sector housing is 'bad'.

No specific policy requirements were raised.

Potential Affordable housing contribution options suggested were discounted market rent and off-site contributions.

Two approaches were suggested around clawback: only on multi-phased developments where market conditions may change over the life of the project; and a profit sharing mechanism up to an agreed cap, based on the value difference between a private for sale scheme at 40% and a Private Rented Sector scheme at 30%.

10 or 15 years were suggested as suitable retention periods.

One outlined a management strategy to include: ownership by institutional investor, rented out through an agent or directly; tenancy lengths the same as other private rented housing as landlords will want to keep tenants in place for the long-term anyway; and management by a professional management company. Another said that all prospective tenants could be offered the option of a three year tenancy.

Responses to issues and options questions: Other forms of specialist housing, including for older people, students and Travellers

- **Question 50: Should the area provide for other forms of specialist housing, either on-site or through seeking contributions for off-site provision?**

A review of demand, need and viability is needed, including demographic analysis and understanding of current and future local needs of local community and employees. A number of respondents supported inclusion of Traveller site provision. One respondent referred to need for older people's housing. Student housing was mentioned as being inappropriate.

Responses to issues and options questions: Quality and accessibility of housing

- **Question 51: Should the Area Action Plan apply the national internal residential space standards?**
- **Question 52: Should the Area Action Plan develop space standards for new purpose built HMOs?**
- **Question 53: Should the Area Action Plan apply External Space Standards, and expect all dwellings to have direct access to an area of private amenity space?**
- **Question 54: Should the Area Action Plan apply the Cambridge Local Plan accessibility standards?**

Most supported the need to apply good internal space standards, including in Housing in Multiple Occupation, although some saying minimum standards for internal or external space were not enough.

One said there should be scope for exceptions for groups who may prefer smaller homes with more high-quality shared space, including for Housing in Multiple Occupation. This would help with future-proofing. There could be small scale pilot testing of more innovative solutions.

There was general support for external space standards, although viability was mentioned. It may not be realistic to expect all dwellings to have access to private amenity space given the quantum of development and range of different typologies. A flexible approach is needed. Where it is possible, there should be convenient access to high quality community and public space. One said high quality public space can be better.

There was general support for high accessibility standards, but again viability was raised as needing to be considered. There should be flexibility on how accessibility standards are applied; accessibility shouldn't affect the ability to meet density and housing targets.

Key Issues (including any lessons learnt from other sites)

Issues and lessons learned: Housing mix

There is a clear need for a mix of housing sizes, types and tenures, at different price points to create choice, and meet a range of needs.

Issues and lessons learned: Housing to meet needs of the local economy

With science and business parks forming part of the site, this provides the opportunity to support local employment, reduce reliance on cars to get to work thereby helping to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution, and offer a better work/life balance.

Housing at North East Cambridge has the potential to completely change the character of the area in a way that can help induce more sustainable lifestyles. If housing is occupied by employees of nearby employment sites north East Cambridge has the potential to be transformed from an edge of town commercial centre into a truly mixed used neighbourhood where the majority of journeys are made via active travel.

In the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy, South Cambridgeshire prioritises exploring working with businesses to help themselves to provide homes for their workers, and considering whether there are specific requirements to provide essential local worker accommodation as part of the overall mix of housing. Cambridge City Council has been more supportive of meeting the needs of workers through other mechanisms, including giving some priority to those in employment in the allocation of social/affordable rent housing where appropriate, as opposed to supporting specific employers or types of worker.

Provision of a range of homes, including affordable housing, can also contribute to meet the housing needs of those working in the area.

Issues and lessons learned: Housing affordability

Greater Cambridge is an expensive place to buy or rent a home, with housing affordability being one of the main housing challenges facing the area. Proximity to good transport links has the potential to increase demand and push prices up further. We know from other developments that high service charges on new homes can also be an issue.

Because of this, both councils see provision of affordable housing as a priority, but there are issues around the extent to which so-called affordable housing is genuinely affordable. For example, the national approach of affordable rents for social housing being able to be charged at up to 80% of market rents will be unaffordable to many.

The councils' current policy approach is to require affordable rents to be capped at Local Housing Allowance rates, although even then there had been some affordability issues for those on low incomes— particularly in relation to larger new-build homes. In view of the recent significant rises in rates (see tables 6 & 7 above) a new approach will be required to ensure that affordable rents are as affordable as possible.

Other factors can also have an impact on housing affordability. For example, energy efficient homes, living close to places of work, opportunities for active travel and access to cheap public transport can also affect the extent to which households are able to afford their housing costs.

Issues and lessons learned: Need for affordable housing

Evidence demonstrates that for those on low incomes the housing options are scarce, with a heavy reliance on social/affordable rent homes. However, there is also a growing 'affordability gap' where middle income households are being squeezed out of the market with limited housing options for low cost home ownership or the private rented sector.

One of the issues in determining the affordable housing mix at an early stage of planning, is that during the life of the development new evidence on housing needs, as well as changes to national and local policy, can impact on the tenures and sizes of homes required.

High house prices have contributed recently to difficulties for some providers in selling shared ownership properties. A 25% share in an average priced house of around £500,000, combined with rent on the unsold share and potential service charges, is still unaffordable for many. Consideration will need to be given as to how shared ownership is made affordable to those on middle incomes, and whether there are other routes to home ownership that can help meet the needs of this group.

Issues and lessons learned: Size and mix of affordable housing

Both Councils' Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Documents were agreed some years ago. Tables 3 & 4 above show that house prices have increased considerably since then. New affordable housing tenures have been introduced recently through the National Planning Policy Framework, and the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy points to a need for the balance of affordable housing tenures for both districts to be reviewed.

In addition, early results from the emerging local research being carried out on the need for Build to Rent housing is indicating a need for some provision of Affordable Private Rent housing to help meet the needs of those who are unable to access social/affordable rent housing but are also unable to afford to buy or rent on the open market. These factors, and the particular importance of North East Cambridge in supporting needs of the local economy, mean that the Councils need to look beyond the previously recommended social & affordable housing/ intermediate tenure splits of 75/25 for the City and 70/30 for South Cambridgeshire.

In bringing forward any Build to Rent housing it will be important to ensure that there is not an imbalance in terms of the overall rented sector (social/affordable rent, affordable private rent and market rent) compared to other tenures.

In terms of sizes of affordable homes, plans for North East Cambridge need to consider the evidence which currently points to the need for smaller (mainly one and two bedroom) affordable homes, whilst providing some larger family homes to support a balanced community.

Issues and lessons learned: Location of affordable housing

The council's historic policy approach of having affordable housing in clusters of no more than 25 units is unlikely to be deliverable on such a high-density site.

Issues and lessons learned: Private Rented Sector housing

Having good quality, well managed private rented accommodation in close proximity to work is likely to be attractive to young professionals, perhaps on short term contracts, who are not looking to purchase a home at that time.

Although the Area Action Plan Issues & Options consultation 2019 produced a mixed response, the evidence available indicates a potential need for some purpose-built Private Rented Sector housing. Viability issues mean that any such schemes coming forward are likely to be on a reasonably large scale. Research on Build to Rent currently being commissioned by the two councils aims to identify the scale of demand, and also the potential impact of having a large Build to Rent scheme or schemes in a high density area. It is evaluating private rental sector schemes across the UK and identifying best practice, and will also give a better understanding of the extent to which an element of Affordable Private Rent may be viable. Private rented sector housing has a higher risk than other housing of creating transient communities, and these studies will be appraised in line with the placemaking and community building objectives of the emerging Area Action Plan. Minimising churn and transience are key factors that will need to be addressed and specific ways to engage to build communities. This should build on lessons learned from both Orchard park and Eddington..

Issues and lessons learned: Housing for older people

As also identified in the Health & Wellbeing topic paper, recent research on the housing, care and support needs of older people identified that provision is required that includes and connects together a number of different components, including:¹¹

- New housing which promotes independent living and provides opportunities for older people to move to more appropriate accommodation (on the basis of size, design, site and situation) as their needs change in later life;

¹¹ Older People's Housing, Care & Support Needs 2017-2036, Sheffield Hallam University and Centre for Regional Economic & Social Research

- Specialist housing which assists older people with their housing and support needs in later life and delays or reduces the need for more intensive care; and
- Integrated housing, health and social care services which help meet the ongoing health needs of older people;

Data at table 11 above showing the ageing population also highlights the importance of providing a range of housing options for older people.

However, people are not always willing to move out of long-term family homes, even where their health and social care needs would be better met elsewhere, and people often only want to move if a bungalow is available. Wherever possible the homes being delivered need to be flexible to meet needs of both young and old, giving as many people as possible the opportunity to live at North East Cambridge and to remain at home as they age.

There are likely to be strategic and revenue implications for Cambridgeshire County Council in developing specialist accommodation and care beds. There are inherent difficulties in the time lapse between planning for and delivering specialist housing schemes for older people and those with disabilities where commitments to revenue funding are unable to be made.

Issues and lessons learned: Community impacts

It is generally accepted that mixing of tenures on a development can have a positive effect in terms of place making, through building mixed and sustainable communities and improving integration. The recently published National Design Guide, part of the government's collection of planning practice guidance, refers to the need for different tenures to be well-integrated and for there to be no segregation of tenure.

With mixed tenure, high densities planned for the site, there will need to be careful consideration of how to minimise any potential negative community impacts, to ensure that North East Cambridge is a pleasant place to live and can make a positive contribution to health and wellbeing. For example, it has been identified that on previous large developments in Cambridgeshire where the infrastructure and facilities are less established this has contributed towards some residents feeling isolated, often leading or contributing to mental ill health.

Noise mitigation will be particularly important given the site's proximity to the railway and the emerging spatial framework's intention to retain noise-generating industrial uses at North East Cambridge. As the site matures, it is reasonable to expect a growth of town centre noise generating uses such as schools, pubs and music venues.

Noise and anti-social behaviour related to short term lets, such as through AirBnB, is also a growing issue both nationally and locally. Issues can include: impact on permanent residents' privacy and enjoyment of homes and amenity spaces; disruption caused by visitors moving in and out; impacts on sense of security and community cohesion associated with frequent rotation of unknown neighbouring occupiers; and additional pressures in relation to management and servicing of communal areas.

The removal of residential properties from the local housing market, either as informal online rental or serviced apartments, as well as increasing local rental values, can also undermine the character of the local area and community cohesion by increasing the transitory nature of the community.

Housing needs to be delivered alongside other facilities and social infrastructure, including appropriate community, cultural and recreational provision. Accessible amenity spaces can facilitate and encourage social activity, community cohesion and help tackle inequality.

It is also important that the new development is designed to have a positive impact on, and integrate with, existing communities.

Issues and lessons learned: Accessible housing

The ageing population points to the need for level M4(2) of the accessible and adaptable building standards to be met for some or all of the new homes provided.

North East Cambridge provides an opportunity to provide good quality accessible housing for older people and others with mobility needs, in line with Housing Our

Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) principles.¹² However, the potential impact of meeting accessible housing standards on scheme viability was raised during the Area Action Plan Issues and Options 2019 consultation. There are also differing Local Plan policy positions between the two councils.

Issues and lessons learned: Design

Recent national research has found that the design of new housing development is overwhelmingly mediocre or poor. It points to widespread evidence that high quality design makes new residential developments more acceptable to local communities and delivers huge value to all; but that high quality design does not have to be unaffordable.¹³ The National Planning Policy Framework is also clear that “good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

The Cambridge Sustainable Design Guide is based around four key principles: Community, Connectivity, Character and Climate. Its objectives are to: address issues such as fuel and water poverty; build homes that have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents; build homes that are designed and built to high design and sustainability standards; ensure new homes are easy to maintain and affordable to heat; and ensure they are adaptable, both for residents and to future climate change.

High quality housing design is recognised as important for the occupants themselves, and can also make a major contribution to place-shaping.

Quality design and construction can contribute towards addressing the climate change emergency, supporting the aim to achieve zero carbon by 2050. (See the Climate Change, Energy and Sustainable Design topic paper for more detail). Energy and water efficient homes can also help to combat fuel and water poverty.

As outlined in the Community Safety topic paper, building to Secured by Design standards can help make homes and neighbourhoods safer and more secure, helping to reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour, and cutting carbon

¹² [Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation \(HAPPI\) principles](#)

¹³ [Place Alliance: A Housing Design Audit for England](#)

emissions. It can help promote a sense of public ownership and make homes easier to maintain and housing developments easier to manage.

In addition, developments need to be connected to and integrated with existing communities and with the existing natural, built and historic environment; and elements such as car parking and cycle and bin storage need to be an integral part of overall design.

The covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of information technology and digital connectivity to support home life. Developments in the Area Action Plan should integrate these considerations into the design of homes, in line with the Digital Connectivity topic paper preferred approach, to ensure an equitable distribution of high quality digital infrastructure. These design considerations will support communication and community building that is ever more reliant on IT,

Issues and lessons learned: Trip internalisation

As detailed in the Trip Internalisation topic paper, the transport evidence base identifies significant potential for trip internalisation. (ie trips generated within North East Cambridge that both begin and end within the boundary of the Area Action Plan). A significant shift away from private vehicle journeys will be needed, and a threshold (trip budget) has been set to mitigate the impact of vehicular traffic from the development on the existing highway network.

A good mix of housing types and tenures to suit local requirements, and residential provision linked to work places have been identified as part of the solution to achieving this.

Issues and lessons learned: Health & Wellbeing

Housing has a key role to play in promoting health and wellbeing. Having a stable, secure home that is truly affordable to live in is recognised as a key determinant of good mental and physical health. Homes should have access to open space as this is critical to the welfare and mental health of new communities in particular. (See Health & Wellbeing topic paper)

Homes designed to be accessible and adaptable enable people to live independently for longer, and help to reduce strain on wider health, care and support services. As North East Cambridge is a new community, it will provide a place for new families to start, so even on small unit size properties, the need for homes to be integrated with

considerations around child placement/care/nursery provision is key to support health and wellbeing .

Given the draft proposals for high density provision of homes at North East Cambridge, meaning large numbers of flatted development and mixed use schemes, the build quality will need to ensure noise is mitigated from both external (e.g. A14 and rail) sources and internal development. Neighbour noise is critical and is something that has been learned from other recent developments. The Environmental Health topic paper and the mixed use development evidence provide further information on this.

Issues and lessons learned: Self and custom build housing

With a duty to hold a register of people interested in plots for self and custom build housing, local authorities must have regard to this and give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand. Self and custom-build properties can provide market or affordable housing.

Issues and lessons learned: Viability

Energy efficiency, meeting space & accessibility standards, sizes of homes, and clustering of affordable housing are just some of the issues which can have an impact on scheme viability. Assessing where the balance should lie between all these elements can be a challenge.

The draft Area Action Plan requires 40% of the homes at North East Cambridge to be delivered as affordable housing to meet evidenced high levels of need. However, the national planning guidance benchmark for providing Affordable Private Rent housing as part of Build to Rent schemes is set at 20%. To achieve the 40%, the shortfall would need to be made up across other parts of the development.

Preferred Approach

Preferred Approach: Overall housing mix

A range of house types, tenures and sizes is needed to meet the needs of different groups from all sectors of the community, in line with the Cambridge Local Plan 2018. South Cambridgeshire's Local Plan requirements around the percentage mix of sizes of market housing are not considered appropriate for North East Cambridge, given the urban character and likely densities required on the site that differ considerably to South Cambridgeshire's largely rural setting. The need to support social inclusion and wellbeing, and to create a mixed, balanced, sustainable and successful community needs to be taken into account in deciding on the housing mix. This mix should reflect the latest evidence, identified through the pre-application process, to ensure that housing is responsive to the latest housing needs.

Preferred Approach: Tenure mix

The affordable housing provision requirement differs in the two existing 2018 local plans.. With a clear need for affordable housing, it is appropriate that the policy target in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 of 40% affordable for all major schemes should apply to the AAP area. To achieve this, all housing that provides 10 or more net additional dwellings should include affordable housing.

The table below shows the split that would arise from such a policy, between affordable and market homes, based on delivery of 8,000 homes. The housing would be comprised of 3,200 affordable homes, being a mixture of social/affordable rent, low cost home ownership, affordable routes to home ownership and affordable private rent; and 4,800 market homes, a mix of market sale and private rent (build to rent).

Table 12: North East Cambridge- Potential number of affordable and market homes based on a 60/40 market affordable split

	Percentage	No. based on 8,000 units	Notes

Affordable	40%	3,200	Likely to be a mixture of social/affordable rent housing, low cost home ownership, affordable routes to home ownership and affordable private rent.
Market	60%	4,800	A mix of market sale and Private Rent (Build to Rent)
Total	100%	8,000	

Preferred approach: Affordable housing tenure mix

As well as recognising the high level of need for social/affordable rent housing, there is also a need to consider a broader range of affordable housing tenures. To meet the affordability challenge and to support creation of a balanced community, three affordable tenure mix options have been considered:

- A 75/25 split between social/affordable rent and other affordable housing tenures in line with Cambridge's current Local Plan;
- A 70/30 split to match South Cambridgeshire's Local Plan requirement; or
- A 60/40 split which recognises more the potential for new models of 'intermediate' tenure affordable housing for those on middle incomes. This could help to provide a wider range of housing options beyond the more traditional shared ownership model, and also support local businesses by improving provision of housing which is accessible to a wider range of local workers.

These are modelled in tables 13 to 15 below.

Table 13: Indicative Affordable Housing mix based on a 75/25 split.

The table below shows the number of social/affordable rent homes being 2,400 if representing 75% of the overall affordable housing allocation. This means that the remaining 800 homes, representing 25% of all affordable homes, would be made up of low cost home ownership, affordable private rent, Rent to Buy and other routes to home ownership,

	Percentage	No. based on 8,000 units	Notes
Social/affordable rent housing	75%	2,400	Social Rent, or Affordable Private Rent capped at an appropriate level

Other affordable tenures	25%	800	Likely to be a mix of low cost home ownership (shared ownership), affordable private rent, Rent to Buy and other routes to home ownership, etc.
Total affordable	100%	3,200	

Table 14: Indicative Affordable Housing mix based on a 70/30 split

The table below shows the number of social/affordable rent homes being 2,240 if representing 70% of the overall affordable housing allocation. This means that the remaining 960 homes, representing 30% of all affordable homes, would be made up of low cost home ownership, affordable private rent, Rent to Buy and other routes to home ownership,

	Percentage	No. based on 8,000 units	Notes
Social/affordable rent housing	70%	2,240	Social Rent, or Affordable Private Rent capped at an appropriate level
Other affordable tenures	30%	960	Likely to be mix of low cost home ownership (shared ownership), affordable private rent, Rent to Buy and other routes to home ownership, etc.
Total affordable	100%	3,200	

Table 15: Indicative Affordable Housing mix based on a 60/40 split

The table below shows the number of social/affordable rent housing being 1,920 if representing a 60% of the overall affordable housing allocation. This means that the remaining 1,280 homes, representing a 40% of all affordable homes, would be made up of low cost home ownership, affordable private rent, Rent to Buy and other routes to home ownership,

	Percentage	No. based on 8,000 units	Notes
Social/ affordable rent housing	60%	1,920	Social Rent, or Affordable Private Rent capped at an appropriate level
Other affordable tenures	40%	1,280	Likely to be a mix of low cost home ownership (shared ownership), affordable private rent, Rent to Buy and other routes to home ownership, etc.
Total affordable	100%	3,200	

It is recommended that the 60/40 approach at table 15 is taken at North East Cambridge. This takes into account the high level of need for social/affordable rent homes, but also presents opportunities around newly emerging affordable housing tenures to create a more mixed community and meet a wider range of needs.

The potential split between affordable housing tenures other than social/affordable rent housing needs to be based on up to date evidence going forwards.

All affordable tenures should only include those where the homes or grant funding used remains available for affordable housing in the long term.

An indicative mix of the types of affordable housing tenures at outline planning stage would need to include a review mechanism to ensure that it continues to reflect an up to date assessment of housing need as the development progresses.

Preferred approach: Affordable housing size mix

With current social/affordable rent housing demand mostly for smaller properties, the following table gives an indication of size mix for such housing based on Home-Link housing register figures. This is liable to change over time, and developments coming forward in the Area Action Plan should reflect the latest evidence when determining the acceptable splits of home sizes to ensure they best respond to local needs.

Table 16: North East Cambridge – Social/affordable rent housing indicative sizes based on current demand

The table below shows that based on current evidence the affordable homes provided in the Area Action Plan should be 60% 1 bed, 29% 2 bedroom, 9% 3 bedroom, and 2% 4 bedroom.

Size	Percentage of affordable housing	Approximate numbers based on 1,920 social/affordable rent homes
1 bedroom 2 person	60%	1,152
2 bedroom 4 person	29%	557
3 bedroom 5 person	9%	173
4 bedroom 6 person	2%	38
Total	100%	1,920

Source: Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy, from Home-Link

The Help to Buy register indicates levels of demand for the more traditional forms of intermediate tenure – shared ownership, shared equity etc, (although it may not pick up potential demand for new tenures such as Affordable Private Rent).

Based on table 10 above, combined with affordability issues for larger homes, it is recommended that whilst current demand patterns remain, shared ownership provision focuses largely 1 and 2 bed properties, although there should be scope for some larger family homes also to create a better mix.

There is also the potential for competitively priced studio sized apartments within Affordable Private Rent provision to meet some of the need for those who might otherwise gravitate towards Housing in Multiple Occupation.

As with tenure, mechanisms need to be in place to review the size mix as the development progresses, to ensure that provision continues to meet up to date assessment of need.

Preferred approach: Affordability of social/affordable rent housing

Social/affordable rent housing needs to be as affordable as possible to eligible applicants.

The councils are considering how affordability should be assessed going forwards in light of the recent changes to Local Housing Allowance rates (shown in tables 6 & 7 above) which have previously been used to cap affordable rent levels.

Preferred approach: Affordability of Affordable Private Rent housing

Affordable Private Rent should be set at least 20% below private market rent levels (inclusive of service charges) for the same or equivalent property and at levels that clearly meet the needs of those on middle incomes (currently £30k to £50k), in line with up to date affordability analysis.

The discount should be calculated when an Affordable Private Rented home is rented out and when the tenancy is subsequently renewed. The rent should increase on the same basis as longer term market tenancies within the development.

Preferred approach: Location of affordable housing

Consideration needs to be given to how affordable housing is distributed within each land parcel and across the site as a whole, to meet national policy requirements, support community integration, and ensure homes can be effectively managed. clusters of social/affordable rent homes in particular need to be well integrated, tenure blind, and not confined to less prominent parts of the site as a whole or on any individual land parcel.

Any consideration of pepper-potting of affordable housing needs to take into account potential ease and efficiency of managing those homes.

Preferred approach: Local workers/ tethered housing

Local workers should be prioritised for allocations to a proportion of the Affordable Private Rent units in any Build to Rent schemes.

Consideration should also be given to whether some of the Build to Rent units should be offered to employers on a block-lease basis, so that homes are targeted specifically to individual companies as part of their recruitment offer to employees.

This could be done through local publicity or bespoke offers to companies. It could enable homes to be offered by individual companies as part of their recruitment offer to employees.

Any opportunities for block-lease would need to be explored further as part of the master-planning of the scheme. Any consideration of such offers to employers should be based on robust evidence of need.

It is recommended that a Local Lettings Plan be introduced for first lets to the social/affordable rent housing on each phase of the development, so that applicants may be given some priority if they work in the area. This would also help in developing a mixed and balanced community.

Preferred approach: Private Rented Sector Housing (Build to Rent) including Affordable Private Rent

As identified above, emerging evidence indicates a potential need and demand for some purpose-built Private Rented Sector housing in North East Cambridge as part of the overall range of housing provision. Purpose built Private Rented Sector schemes delivered as Build to Rent should be required to provide an element of affordable housing to help address the high level of need for affordable housing in Cambridge and the wider Greater Cambridge area. In line with National Planning Practice Guidance, at least 20% of units of all Build to Rent Units should be provided as Affordable Private Rent; more if there is a clear need and viability permits.

Given the lower contribution of Build to Rent schemes to the overall affordable homes target, and the high level of affordable housing need in Cambridge and also South Cambridgeshire, in order to achieve the overall target of 40% affordable housing in the AAP area, it is important for the shortfall to be made up elsewhere in North East Cambridge.

Consideration has been given to means of securing the most appropriate balance between build to rent provision and securing 40% affordable housing provision. Implications of different levels have been explored. If, for example, Build to Rent made up all the housing across the Area Action Plan, quite apart from not creating a mixed community, it would require developers to deliver a minimum of 1,600 affordable private rent homes, significantly less than the minimum 3,200 homes, without any social/affordable rent or other affordable tenures being delivered. If Build to Rent made up 30% of tenures on site, for example, it would require other developments to increase their provision by 6% to 46.25% affordable housing to achieve the overall 40% target. If Build to Rent made up 10% of tenures on site, this would require non-Build to Rent developments to make up the shortfall by 2%, providing around 42.22% of their developments as affordable homes.

Having considered the impacts of different levels of Built to Rent housing, it is considered that a cap on the total amount of build to rent housing of 10% of the total homes delivered at North East Cambridge is reasonable and appropriate. This numbers 800 homes (10% of the total proposed 8,000 homes). This cap helps ensure that the housing tenures within North East Cambridge remain viable and deliver on the recommended 40% affordable homes target overall across the AAP area, while supporting the delivery of a mixed and balanced community. The Viability

Study for the whole site is ongoing, and this preferred approach will be reviewed in light of the results of the study.

A range of unit sizes and household types should be required. Studio apartments may be acceptable in order to provide a more affordable housing option (subject to clear evidence of need), but only as part of a wider mix of sizes, providing a balanced offer.

Any new Private Rented Sector schemes should require a range of rent levels to meet a variety of income levels, with affordability assessed on the basis of 30 to 35% of net household income being reasonable to spend on housing costs, including any service charges.

Affordable Private Rent housing should be evenly distributed throughout the private rented development and physically indistinguishable from the market rent housing in terms of quality and size. Flexibility may be built in to alternate specific units between Affordable Private Rent and market rent over time.

Any affordable private rent homes included as part of a scheme, through a section 106 agreement, should be provided specifically as a community benefit in perpetuity. The future sale of a build to rent scheme, or the sale of individual homes within the scheme to other tenures, should not result in the withdrawal of the affordable housing contribution from the local community; it should not result in the loss of affordable housing without alternative provision being made.

Appropriate clawback arrangements in the event of future tenure change would also need to be agreed with the councils to secure the value of the Affordable Private Rent. The nature of these arrangements should depend on the circumstances at the time and evidence of good practice elsewhere.

Consideration should also be given to what is a suitable covenant period to require the retention of market Private Rented Sector homes, and what compensation mechanism would be needed if tenures are converted before the end of that period.

Such schemes need to be well managed. Developers should be required to propose a suitable management strategy for a scheme, negotiated with the councils to ensure it meets the needs of residents and the wider community.

Further recommendations may be made in this area based on the results of the Build to Rent research currently being carried out.

Preferred approach: Older people

The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy recommends a percentage of different types of older people’s accommodation to be included on new developments in Greater Cambridge as a starting point. The following table shows that percentage provision and what numbers of homes that might generate in North East Cambridge.

Table 17: Recommended breakdown of older people’s accommodation on new developments in Greater Cambridge, and consequent number of homes likely to be required for North East Cambridge¹⁴

Housing type	Reco- mmended % of new housing supply	Number based on 8,000 homes	
Age exclusive	5%	400	Likely to be mainstream housing built with older people in mind, i.e. meeting Building Regulations Part M4 (2 or 3). To include market and affordable housing.
Specialist housing	7%	560	Could include care ready type accommodation or extra care, dependent on availability of revenue funding from the County Council.
Total specialist housing for older people	12%	960	
Care beds	Not yet established		Residential and/or nursing care taking into account health and social care policy requirements.

Research is currently under way to better understand the need for housing for particular groups, including older people, to help inform the new Greater Cambridge

¹⁴ Based on Older People’s Housing, Care & Support Needs in Greater Cambridgeshire 2017-2036, Sheffield Hallam and Centre for Regional Economic & Social Research

Local Plan. Cambridgeshire County Council is also carrying out research in relation to residential care provision.

It is recommended that North East Cambridge aims for the breakdown at Table 17 until the results of the emerging research are known.

In addition, whilst the majority of households aspire to continue to live independently in their own home, it is essential that as many new homes as possible are future-proofed through design so that homes have the flexibility to be adapted as household's needs change.

Any plans for delivery, other than mainstream age exclusive housing, should be discussed with the County Council at pre-planning stage, and would need to be endorsed by them before any planning application is considered.

Preferred approach: Accessible homes

With differing requirements around accessible housing in the two Councils' Local Plans, and viability concerns raised through consultation, further consideration is required on the extent to which homes should be built to level M4(2) of the adaptable and accessible building standards, in addition to age exclusive housing, to meet the needs of older people and younger people with disabilities. This needs to take into account the ageing population, and the need to support social inclusion and sustainability, and promote a mixed community.

Preferred approach: Specialist housing for people with disabilities – working age

In terms of location and access to services, it is considered that North East Cambridge would be a suitable location for specialist housing for disabilities, although figures in table 12 above suggest numbers needed are likely to be small.

As with specialist housing for older people, any plans for delivery need to be discussed with the County Council at pre-planning stage, and would need to be endorsed by them before any planning application is considered.

Preferred approach: Self & custom build, and community led housing

Given the high density planned for the area, it is likely that custom build or custom finish will be a more appropriate form of housing on the development than self-build. There is 5% self and custom build recommended for larger sites in the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy. Given the high density make-up of the site limiting the potential for self-build, this leaves a smaller percentage for custom build. It is recommended that for North East Cambridge around 2 to 3% of homes should be brought forward as custom build/ custom finish.

The approach to custom build also has the potential to enable appropriate community led housing initiatives to be supported to help meet affordable housing need.

In bringing forward custom build/finish housing, the councils must be satisfied that the initial owner of each home will, as a minimum, have primary input into its final layout and finish.

Preferred approach: Student accommodation

Student accommodation is intended for students of the institution undertaking full-time courses of one academic year or more. As there are no Higher Education institutions offering such courses in the vicinity of North East Cambridge, the councils do not consider that there is any need to provide any student accommodation in situ unless otherwise recommended by new evidence that may emerge during the plan period.

Preferred approach: Gypsy & Traveller accommodation

It is acknowledged that the new Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment being carried out is likely to identify a requirement in Greater Cambridge for accommodation for caravan dwellers and Travelling Showmen. However, given the high densities being proposed at Cambridge North East, low density accommodation such as traveller pitches may impact on the site's ability to deliver the intended level of affordable housing.

Existing Gypsies and/or Travellers at nearby Chesterton Fen Road should be able to benefit from the proposed Area Action Plan in other ways, this may include new travel improvements with a new foot and cycle bridge proposed in the Spatial

Framework to cross the railway tracks, and they should be able to access all local services and amenities within North East Cambridge.

Preferred approach: Housing in Multiple Occupation

No extra provision of Housing in Multiple Occupation is recommended, as some market homes are likely to become Housing in Multiple Occupation over time anyway. But a proportion of Affordable Private Rent units could be provided as studio apartments at price points comparable to the wider Cambridge City Housing in Multiple Occupation market.

Preferred approach: Phasing

Due to risks around people on new developments feeling isolated, it is critical, especially for those in higher housing need, that the bringing forward of infrastructure and facilities is phased appropriately in line with housing development, especially in relation to the affordable housing to help support an integrated community and wellbeing from the outset.

Preferred approach: Design

Homes should meet the requirements of the Greater Cambridge Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document unless it can be demonstrated that it is inappropriate or unviable to do so.

Housing development should also meet the principles laid down in The Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide (due to be updated).¹⁵

Internal space standards should meet national residential space standards as a minimum, and there should be requirements around appropriate provision of private amenity space.

The Agent of Change principle should be treated as a key consideration for determining residential applications. Development proposals for housing should demonstrate how noise, pollution and other potential nuisances have been mitigated.

¹⁵ [Cambridge Sustainable Design Guide](#)

Affordable housing should not be visually distinguishable from market housing by its external appearance or the space standards adopted.

Likely impact of design on residents' utility bills should be taken into account in designing homes, particularly in affordable housing, to help tackle fuel and water poverty and ensure that homes are as affordable as possible to live in.

Preferred approach: Short-term lets

Provision of purpose built visitor accommodation should not result in the loss of existing housing.

Conversion of existing housing to visitor accommodation should not adversely affect: the supply or affordability of local housing including rental values; residents amenity and sense of security; or the character of or community cohesion within the area. A service management plan should be agreed the planning authority.

Preferred approach: Viability

Given the density of the scheme, other section 106 contribution requirements, and requirements around energy efficiency, accessibility, internal and external space standards etc, it is recommended that a mechanism be developed to prioritise the different elements, to be used where viability can clearly demonstrated as an issue. This could be in the form of a cascade, or a requirement for certain percentages of properties to meet required standards in order to make a scheme viable.

Sustainability Appraisal

The sustainability appraisal of the emerging draft plan looks at the policies contained within it. This contained no recommendations on policy development for housing apart from the inclusion of the requirement for all housing to meet at least Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' and an appropriate proportion of housing to meet Building Regulation requirement M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings'. This has been covered in the design Good Design at Higher Densities policy.