

Cambridge Sub-Region Housing Strategy

2004 to 2008/09

**Cambridge City Council
East Cambridgeshire District Council
Fenland District Council
Forest Heath District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
St. Edmundsbury Borough Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council**



Foreword

by Nick Abbey, on behalf of Cambridge Sub-Region Affordable Housing Group

The Cambridge Sub-Region is a vital part of the East of England, sitting as it does in the middle of one of the Growth Areas identified by the Government in 2003. It is an area that is crucial to the UK economy, has a rising population, and exhibits all the issues that are central to Housing Policy in the early part of the 21st Century. In recent years:

- house prices have risen rapidly
- growing numbers of people, including key workers, are unable to afford to buy a home within reasonable reach of where they work
- the numbers of people asking for help from Councils and housing associations are rising
- older housing, both public and private sector, needs renewal
- rural areas within the sub-region are typically facing problems around having fewer local services for local people

The Cambridge sub-region is one of nine sub-regions in the East of England and the strategies being produced will inform the East of England's Regional Housing Strategy (due to be published in early 2005). This latter document will guide funding decisions to be made by the Regional Housing Board for the period from 2006/7 onwards.

This updated Sub-Regional Housing Strategy therefore comes at an important time and reflects the position in the late summer of 2004. The parties that have co-operated in drawing the strategy together have addressed issues set out above in the light of:

- recent developments in Government policy around planning and funding for affordable housing
- the policy framework of Regional Planning Guidance and the Cambridgeshire/Suffolk Structure plans
- the likely availability of funding to support affordable housing provision for both general needs and for supported housing
- the very recent establishment of a "Delivery Vehicle", the Cambridge Infrastructure partnership

Like all strategy documents, this has to be seen as work in progress, given the pace of change, where new policy announcements are made regularly. Proper review and monitoring arrangements mean that actions can, and will, be revised to take account of the latest intelligence. Nevertheless, it sets out clear actions for addressing current issues and, for the first time, gives a sub-regional view about spending priorities.

The group that has developed the strategy is the Cambridge Sub-Regional Affordable Housing Group. Mainly composed of housing and planning specialists from the seven District Councils, the group has benefited from the involvement of key partners: GO-East, Cambridgeshire County Council, Housing Corporation and National Housing Federation. The sub-regional consensus that has emerged is the product of joint working established over many years, and of detailed consultation with other stakeholders, especially developers and housing associations, at two events during 2004. Throughout this period, the group was mainly chaired by David Poole (lately Director of Community Services at Cambridge City Council) whose personal commitment to the needs of the sub-region was always evident.

As interim Chair, I am very grateful for the work of all those from the constituent authorities who have contributed to this strategy and whose continuing efforts will underpin its success in improving the prospects for affordable housing in the Cambridge Sub-Region.

Nick Abbey, Chief Executive Hereward Housing
Chair, NHF East of England
Interim Chair, Cambridge Sub-Region Affordable Housing Group.

On behalf of:

Cambridge City Council
East Cambridgeshire District Council
Fenland District Council
Forest Heath District Council
Huntingdonshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
St Edmundsbury Borough Council

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1. Challenges and Priorities

The local housing and planning authorities of the Cambridge sub-region are working together in partnership with Housing Associations and government agencies to address key housing issues across the area served by: Cambridge CC, South Cambridgeshire DC, East Cambridgeshire DC, Fenland DC, Huntingdonshire DC, Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC. This *Strategy* seeks to identify the key challenges facing the sub-region, and to suggest ways in which the partnership can address them.

Sub regional working developed early in the Cambridge sub-region, building on a history of co-operation between districts. We are now also identified as one of nine sub-regions in the East of England, working together through the Regional Housing Forum.

The primary purpose of the sub-regional partnership is to develop an analysis of housing needs, share good practice and develop joint approaches through the sub-regional housing *Strategy*. The partnership also seeks to inform and influence the Regional Housing Strategy and thereby the resource allocations of the Regional Housing Board.

This is the second *Strategy* - the first having been published in February 2003. For this *Strategy*, partners have identified six key issues where joint working is a high priority, addressed in sections 5 to 10 of the Strategy. In summary, they are:

- **Growth:** the implications of the growth in population, largely due to economic growth and in-migration. In particular, the inclusion of the sub-region in the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor.
- **Increased supply of affordable housing:** the need to work together to deliver an increased level of affordable housing output in the sub-region, with a provisional target for this strategy of 1200 new homes a year. This will require emphasis on planning arrangements, and a joint approach to investment as well as developing new models of affordable housing, particularly those requiring limited or no public funding.
- **Homelessness:** working together to prevent homelessness and improve services for homeless people, bearing in mind the considerable synergies between the seven authorities' homelessness strategies and the operation of a housing market across the wider geographical area.
- Making best use of **existing housing:** improving public housing to meet the government's Decent Homes target, and working to improve private housing, to reduce empty homes and to achieve balance in the housing market.
- **Supported housing:** working together, and with the two Supporting People Commissioning Bodies of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, to address the needs of vulnerable people who need support to live independently in the community. In particular, working to bring consensus on capital and revenue finance for new schemes.
- **BME communities:** working together to improve understanding of the housing needs of black and minority ethnic communities in the sub-region, and developing appropriate responses.

The *Strategy* has an ambitious Action Plan, with clear responsibilities and timescales. This Action Plan will be monitored, and it is proposed to bring stakeholders together at least once a year to review progress and revise the Action Plan in the light of developing trends, in particular examining the priorities of the Regional Housing Board.

2. Strategic context

Strategies for addressing the key housing issues facing the Cambridge sub-region cannot be pursued in isolation. It is critically important to ensure that the Housing Strategy is linked to national and regional strategies for housing, economic development and social inclusion. This section sets out these linkages.

National Housing Policy

In February 2003, the Government published *Sustainable Communities: building for the future*, which sets out the main national priorities and strategies for housing, linked to developing sustainable communities. The key national priorities are as follows:

- Increasing the supply of affordable housing in areas of shortage
- Ensuring that housing strategies contribute to sustainable communities, particularly at the neighbourhood level
- Targets for decent homes in the social housing sector; and for vulnerable households in the private sector
- Improved conditions and management in the private sector
- Tackling areas of low demand for housing
- Addressing the housing and support needs of vulnerable households
- Sustainable development and meeting housing needs in rural communities
- Ending the use of Bed and Breakfast for homeless families
- Reducing rough sleeping and sustaining the reduction

At the same time as the national programme of action, the Government published *Sustainable communities in the East of England*, with regional priorities for the East of England within the national framework. This sets out the key strategic challenges for the region as:

- Addressing problems of high and rapidly rising house prices and their impact on the recruitment and retention of staff, particularly close to London and around Cambridge but spreading deeper into the region
- Improving transport infrastructure - railways, roads, airports and ports to meet the needs of economic growth
- Ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are spread across the region
- Addressing the development consequences of scarce water resources throughout the region and a rising sea level for coastal and low lying areas

The document identifies key challenges for housing policy in the East of England:

- To provide for the region's growing population (an increase of 6% in the last decade, and a projected increase of over half a million from 1996 to 2021)
- To address the imbalance in the demand and supply for housing -- the increase in the number of dwellings is not keeping pace with the increase in household numbers, and housing completions are at historically low levels in most of the sub-region
- To find housing solutions for increasing numbers of those on modest incomes, including key public sector workers, who cannot afford to purchase their own home
- To close the gaps between the need for and provision of affordable housing in rural districts
- To achieve targets for all social housing to meet the decent homes standard by 2010.

The London – Stansted - Cambridge corridor is identified in *Sustainable Communities* as one of the key growth areas for the South East. This growth corridor, which has subsequently been extended to include Peterborough, includes the Cambridge sub-region. The implications of growth area status are examined in Section 5.

Regional Economic Strategy

The vision of the Regional Economic Strategy (prepared by the East of England Development Agency) is to '*make the East of England a world class economy, renowned for its knowledge base, the creativity and enterprise of its people and the quality of life for all who live there.*'

The key aims with regard to the cities, towns and villages within the region are as follows:

- Growth of sustainable communities in the region's growth areas that make a major economic and social contribution to regional success
- Enhance the region's qualities as an attractive place to live, work and visit
- Significantly reduce deprivation in disadvantaged communities and neighbourhoods

The Regional Economic Strategy is currently being revised and the final version is expected to be available in November 2004.

Regional Housing Strategy

In 2003, the Government established Regional Housing Boards in each of the regions, including a Regional Housing Board for the East of England. The role of these boards is to analyse the housing circumstances in different parts of the regions, and to develop a strategy and investment plan to address housing issues, consistent with the national plan. This approach recognizes that housing markets differ between and within regions, and that a coherent approach to improving housing circumstances is best pursued at a regional level.

The initial East of England Regional Housing Strategy for 2003-2006 was developed through the Regional Housing Forum, with representatives of local government, the National Housing Federation, Housing Corporation, Government Office, Chartered Institute of Housing, Countryside Agency, East of England Development Agency and the House Builders Federation. The Regional Housing Strategy 2003-06 identifies the major housing stresses for the East of England are identified as:

- High and rising house prices in many areas
- Inability of those in low paid employment to rent or buy a home
- Pockets of deprivation masked by overall affluence of a district
- Some pockets of low demand
- Commuting and congestion as people travel long distances to work
- Shortages of accommodation for key workers in some areas
- Non-sustainable communities

The Regional Housing Board has sought to address these issues through an investment plan based on themes of:

Growth	40%
Regeneration	30%
Rural	15%
Supported housing	10%
Black and minority ethnic	5%

Regional Housing Board investment has been targeted through the Housing Corporation to begin to address these themes, and to ensure:

- that growth is pursued in a balanced way, which protects the essential character of the region; and is supported by adequate infrastructure investment, including social infrastructure
- the consolidation of Supported Housing over the next two or three years
- Support for sustainable rural communities by investment in affordable housing
- that housing needs of black and minority ethnic communities are recognized

One dimension of the Regional Housing Strategy 2003-06 is the strong focus on sub-regions. Nine sub-regions, groupings of local authority areas, were developed to reflect the diversity of the East of England, and to identify housing market areas.

The next Regional Housing Strategy is currently in development and will be available for consultation November 2004 – February 2005. It is being developed from strategic information and priorities from nine sub-regional strategies and as such this is a key contribution to the regional agenda. The next Regional Housing Strategy should inform the next government spending review in 2005, as well as guiding regional housing investment decisions for 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Links with other strategies

Planning strategies

The growth strategies for the sub-region, and the delivery of affordable housing, are critically dependent on regional planning guidance, structure plans and local plans in the seven authorities. These links are set out in Sections 5 and 6.

Supporting People Strategies

The seven local authorities in the Cambridge sub-region are involved in two county-based planning processes for supported housing - for Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Full Supporting People strategies are to be developed by March 2005. The main themes of Supporting People for the sub- region are outlined in Chapter 9, and are considered as investment priorities.

Homelessness Strategies

Local authorities were required to publish Homelessness Strategies by July 2003. There are common themes and proposals in the Homelessness Strategies of the seven authorities in the Cambridge Sub-region, and joint work on homelessness is proposed in section 7.

Community Plans

Local authorities are required to produce Community Plans, in partnership with other local agencies, to promote a coherent approach to developing strategies and services. The links between housing objectives and community plans for the seven authorities in the sub-region are set out in the following table:

Cambridge	Affordable housing is one of four key priorities in the Community Strategy.
East Cambs	Affordable housing is one of five key priorities identified in the Community Strategy.
South Cambs	'Quality homes for all' is one of the six key themes in the Community Strategy.
Huntingdonshire	One of the key outcomes of the Community Strategy is to ensure an adequate supply of high quality housing to meet local needs.
Fenland	Fenland Strategic Partnership has seven themes including "vibrant town and village communities which are good to live in"; more affordable housing is identified as an output for this theme.
St Edmundsbury Forest Heath	The West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (covering 4 districts in West Suffolk, including St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath) has developed a Community Strategy, which has as one of its key objectives to 'make an inclusive community.' Under this objective, one of the priorities is to ensure the provision of good quality affordable housing.

3. Partnership and stakeholder involvement

The local authorities in the Cambridge sub-region are keenly aware that the delivery of the objectives of this *Strategy* will not be achieved without commitment from a range of organisations. This partnership approach is evidenced throughout the *Strategy*. Some of the key elements are as follows:

- Working with the Regional Housing Board and the Housing Corporation to develop a comprehensive resourcing plan for the *Strategy*.
- Supporting the Infrastructure Partnership for the Cambridge Planning sub-region, to ensure that the growth targets for the region are met, and that there is careful phasing of infrastructure alongside housing growth.
- Partnership with housing associations and developers through the proposed Affordable Housing Liaison Group, to ensure a consistent approach to affordable housing delivery, and in particular to work on models of affordable housing which require limited or no public funding
- Joint working with the Cambridgeshire and Suffolk Commissioning Bodies for Supporting People, to agree priorities for new supported housing and to ensure that new communities include provision for vulnerable people.

- Working with other statutory agencies, voluntary agencies and housing associations to improve services for homeless people and examine joint work on reforming social housing lettings.
- Improving contact with Black and minority ethnic communities to assess their housing needs and deliver appropriate responses.

A range of partners have been involved in the development of this strategy, in particular through consultation events held on 5 March 2004, and 21 July 2004.

The first event – well attended by local government officers and Housing Association representatives – included a presentation on the Cambridge sub-regional housing need study by David Couttie, and workshops on key topic areas, based around pre-circulated discussion papers on:

- Growth Areas
- Affordable housing
- Homelessness
- Choice in social housing lettings
- Black and minority ethnic housing issues

The consultation event validated these issues as the focus of the sub-regional housing strategy, and contributed to the proposals for action in each of the areas.

At a wider consultation event in July, elected members, housing association (RSL) representatives, government agencies, developers and others commented on the draft Action Plan, and held small group discussions focussing on the investment themes. RSLs and developers were particularly keen to support more joint working at a sub regional level – replacing some district level negotiations. There was strong support for a sub-regional allocation of investment from the Single Regional Investment Pot, and for investment priorities focussed on Supported Housing and Growth, with the latter allocated spatially in support of Structure Plan dwellings targets.

Ideas and comments from the consultation day have been used to inform this draft of the strategy, and we have wide support for the investment themes now adopted.

4. Housing needs and housing market analysis

A Housing Strategy must be based on the clear identification of needs, and understanding of housing market trends. A range of research and information has been assembled to inform this housing strategy, including research specially commissioned by the sub-regional partnership during 2003. This forms the basis of the analysis of the key housing issues to be addressed over the four year period of this Strategy, as set out in the following sections.

During 2005, the authorities of the sub-region will continue to update information on housing needs, housing costs, and other relevant information, and will consider how best to utilise the new Housing Market Assessment Model.

Households and tenure

The resident population of the seven local authorities making up the Cambridge sub-region, according to the 2001 census, was:

Cambridge	108,863
East Cambs.	73,214
South Cambs.	130,108
Huntingdonshire	156,954
Fenland	83,519
Forest Heath	55,510
St. Edmundsbury	98,193

The **age structure** of this population was:

Resident population (percentage)

	Cambridge	East Cambs	South Cambs	Huntingdonshire	Fenland	Forest Heath	St. Edmundsbury	England & Wales
Under 16	14.7	19.9	20.2	21.7	19.6	20.8	19.3	20.2
16 to 19	7.2	4.4	4.8	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.9
20 to 29	25.5	10.8	10.5	10.9	10.3	15.1	11.8	12.6
30 to 59	35.8	43.5	45.0	45.2	41.4	40.3	42.8	41.5
60 to 74	10.0	14.0	12.6	11.8	15.7	12.0	13.9	13.3
75 and over	6.9	7.5	7.0	5.9	8.8	7.2	7.8	7.6
Average age	36.0	39.5	38.9	37.6	40.7	37.3	39.6	38.6

(Source: 2001 Census)

The districts have similar proportions of young people under 16, around a fifth of the population, with the exception of Cambridge at 14.7%.

Cambridge has more than double the national average of 20 to 29 year olds, largely due to its student population.

The more rural districts have a higher percentage of older people.

The **economic activity** of the population was:

Resident population aged 16 to 64 (percentage)

	Cambridge	East Cambs	South Cambs	Huntingdonshire	Fenland	Forest Heath	St. Edmundsbury	England & Wales
Employed	54.0	68.4	70.9	70.5	61.8	69.0	68.3	60.6
Un-employed	2.3	2.2	1.6	2.0	2.7	2.2	2.2	3.4
Economically active full time students	4.2	1.8	2.2	2.2	1.6	1.9	2.0	2.6
Retired	8.6	13.5	12.2	11.7	16.5	11.7	13.6	13.6
Economically inactive students	21.8	2.6	3.4	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.2	4.7
Looking after home/family	4.2	6.3	5.6	6.1	7.0	6.8	5.6	6.5
Permanently sick or disabled	2.8	3.2	2.3	2.9	5.3	3.0	3.4	5.5
Economically inactive (other)	2.3	2.1	1.8	2.1	2.9	2.9	2.6	3.1

(Source: 2001 Census)

All the districts except Cambridge had employment rates higher than the national average. However, the position in Cambridge is distorted by the high proportion of economically inactive students - if these are excluded, employment rates in Cambridge are equivalent to other districts in the sub-region. Excluding students, Fenland has the lowest employment rate in the sub-region; one reason behind the district's success in being selected as a neighbourhood management pathfinder for the North of the district.

Cambridge has over a quarter of its population as students.

The more rural districts have higher proportions of retired people.

The **tenure** of households in the 2001 census was:
(percentage)

	Cambridge	East Cambs	South Cambs	Huntingdonshire	Fenland	Forest Heath	St. Edmundsbury	England & Wales
Owner occupied	53.4	72.9	75.2	76.2	75.2	61.7	70.8	68.9
Social rented	23.7	14.4	14.5	13.0	13.8	14.8	17.2	19.2
Private rented or rent free	22.9	12.8	10.3	10.8	11.0	23.5	11.9	11.9

(Source: 2001 census, with 'rented from Council' and 'rented from housing association' combined as 'social rented'.)

Most of the districts, with the exception of Cambridge and Forest Heath, had higher rates of owner occupation than the national average.

These two districts had a much higher rate of private renting, at around double the national average. This is largely accounted for by the high levels of students in Cambridge and USA service personnel in Forest Heath.

The proportion of social housing ranged from nearly 23% in Cambridge to 13% in Huntingdonshire.

Household growth

The Cambridge sub-region is one of the fastest growing areas of the UK. This reflects a local economy that contains a range of businesses that are relatively highly focused on technology based activities and with a high value output. There is significant potential for the continued expansion of this local economy with consequent benefits for the East of England and the UK as a whole. There are, however, severe supply side constraints to the expansion that need to be overcome if the area's economy is to achieve its potential. Key priorities are to deal with the severe level of traffic congestion and to improve labour supply by bringing forward more housing which is affordable to all sections of the labour market.

Population and Household Change, 2003-2008

The following section looks at projected changes in population and household structure up to 2008 in the Cambridgeshire districts of the sub-region. The analysis is based on a special run of the County Council Research Group's population model and is therefore not available for Suffolk. However, the broad demographic trends – which are as much national as local – are applicable to the whole sub-region. The forecasts assume that house-building will continue around current annual rates except in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire, where rates are assumed to rise towards Structure Plan targets

Over the five years from 2003, the population is forecast to change as in the table:

Resident Population (thousands)

		0-15	16-19	20-29	30-59	60-74	75+	Total
Cambridge	2003	16.1	7.9	28.3	39.5	10.6	7.3	109.8
Cambridge	2008	16.8	7.8	32.8	39.9	10.7	7.1	115.1
East Cambs	2003	14.8	3.3	7.4	32.4	10.1	5.7	73.7
East Cambs	2008	15.3	3.6	8.0	33.4	12.2	6.4	78.9
South Cambs	2003	26.7	6.5	13.2	60.1	17.2	9.6	133.3
South Cambs	2008	27.9	6.8	14.7	61.0	21.0	10.9	142.4
Huntingdons.	2003	33.8	7.5	16.5	72.1	19.6	9.6	159.1
Huntingdons.	2008	32.7	8.2	18.5	72.8	23.9	10.6	166.6
Fenland	2003	16.6	3.7	9.3	35.0	13.7	7.4	85.7
Fenland	2008	17.4	3.9	11.5	35.0	14.9	8.4	91.1
Cambs	2003	108.0	28.9	74.8	239.1	71.3	39.6	561.7
Cambs	2008	110.1	30.2	85.5	242.1	82.7	43.4	594.0

(Source: CCC Research Group – Totals may not add due to rounding)

Total population will increase by between 5% and 7% in all five districts. The age-groups showing the smallest increases (around 1% or 2%) will be those aged under 16 and 30-59; the age-groups with the largest percentage increases (around 14% to 16%) will be those aged 20-29 and 60-74. These are complex patterns, reflecting the recent decline in the birth rate, an expected increase in migration of young adults into the area and the general ageing of the population, particularly as members of the post-war baby boom enter their sixties.

These demographic changes will have a significant impact on household structure, as can be seen in the table below, which shows the numbers of households in 2003 and 2008 classified by the age of the household reference person (as defined by the census – roughly the equivalent of the superseded “head of household”).

Private households (thousands)

		16-29	30-44	45-64	65-74	75+	Total	Average Household Size
Cambridge	2003	6.5	13.4	12.8	4.8	4.9	42.4	2.18
Cambridge	2008	7.7	13.7	13.5	4.5	4.7	44.1	2.20
East Cambs	2003	2.5	9.3	11.2	4.5	3.7	31.2	2.34
East Cambs	2008	2.7	9.5	12.8	4.9	4.1	33.8	2.32
South Cambs	2003	3.8	16.5	20.7	7.1	6.0	54.0	2.44
South Cambs	2008	4.2	17.0	23.0	7.8	6.7	58.7	2.39
Huntingdon	2003	5.9	20.9	24.0	7.9	5.9	64.6	2.45
Huntingdon	2008	6.8	20.5	26.7	9.1	6.5	69.6	2.38
Fenland	2003	3.3	9.7	12.4	6.2	4.5	36.1	2.36
Fenland	2008	4.0	9.6	13.1	6.4	5.1	38.2	2.37
Cambridgeshire	2003	22.0	69.8	81.1	30.5	25.0	228.3	2.37
Cambridgeshire	2008	25.4	70.3	89.1	32.7	27.1	244.4	2.34

(Source: CCC Research Group – Totals may not add due to rounding)

Overall, the number of households in Cambridgeshire will increase by some 7%, a somewhat faster rise than that of the population as a whole (5%). This difference reflects the continued long-term decline in average household size (although this decline will be less evident in areas where household size is already low).

The increase in numbers of households will be spread across all age-groups, with the smallest rise amongst households formed by adults aged 30-44. The largest rise will be in households formed by adults aged 16-29, due to increased birth rate in the 1970s and the larger number of migrants expected in this age group.

Relatively large increases in numbers of older households should be noted, with increases of over 10% in Huntingdonshire, East and South Cambridgeshire. A very large proportion of older households consist of couples or single people (at the 2001 census, 43% of all households in Cambridgeshire containing pensioners were one-person households, rising to 68% amongst the over-75s).

House prices

Affordability is one of the primary reasons preventing households accessing the housing they need. House prices in the Cambridge sub-region have increased substantially in the last few years, leading to increasing numbers of households on moderate incomes being priced out of the market. Data from the Land Registry demonstrates this trend:

Average prices of detached properties (£000's)

	Cambridge	East Cambs	South Cambs	Huntingdonshire	Fenland	Forest Heath	St. Edmundsbury
Oct-Dec 2000	300	153	231	155	91	124	162
Oct-Dec 2001	285	172	238	174	105	134	178
Oct-Dec 2002	367	208	285	210	134	165	220
Oct-Dec 2003	396	236	289	231	156	185	228
% increase 2000 to 2003	32%	54%	25%	49%	71%	49%	41%

Average prices of semi-detached properties (£000's)

	Cambridge	East Cambs	South Cambs	Huntingdonshire	Fenland	Forest Heath	St. Edmundsbury
Oct-Dec 2000	158	93	120	89	59	76	92
Oct-Dec 2001	172	108	133	93	70	95	96
Oct-Dec 2002	198	126	170	121	85	116	133
Oct-Dec 2003	223	143	177	141	110	128	146
% increase 2000 to 2003	41%	54%	48%	58%	86%	68%	59%

Average prices of terraced properties (£000's)

	Cambridge	East Cambs	South Cambs	Huntingdonshire	Fenland	Forest Heath	St. Edmundsbury
Oct-Dec 2000	143	85	96	67	47	67	76
Oct-Dec 2001	175	98	114	80	54	82	88
Oct-Dec 2002	204	119	140	102	75	105	106
Oct-Dec 2003	233	128	154	113	86	106	124
% increase 2000 to 2003	63%	51%	60%	69%	83%	58%	63%

Average prices of flat/maisonette (£000's)

	Cambridge	East Cambs	South Cambs	Huntingdonshire	Fenland	Forest Heath	St. Edmundsbury
Oct-Dec 2000	100	60	71	52	32	113	51
Oct-Dec 2001	118	58	94	66	36	86	61
Oct-Dec 2002	160	88	106	83	47	107	79
Oct-Dec 2003	161	93	126	85	57	92	104
% increase 2000 to 2003	61%	55%	77%	63%	78%	-19%	103%

(Source: Land registry)

It is important to note that the use of average house prices tends to somewhat over-estimate house price levels, since they can be distorted by the inclusion of a small number of very expensive dwellings. Nonetheless, the trends in price increases shown above apply equally to mean and median prices. For all types of properties, the highest prices are found in Cambridge, followed by South Cambridgeshire. The lowest are in

Fenland, although areas furthest from Cambridge have been experiencing the sharpest increase in house prices in percentage terms. .

There have been substantial price increases in almost all categories and districts over the last three years. The highest percentage increases have tended to be in the (relatively) cheaper areas; and for terraced houses and flats/maisonettes.

Further analysis shows the availability of dwellings in different price bands

Properties in various price bands, October-December 2003

	<£40K	£40-60K	£60-80K	£80-100K	£100-120K	£120-150K	£150-200K	£200-300K	£300-400K	>£400k
Cambridge	0.2	1.0	1.4	1.7	4.6	16.4	31.9	24.8	10.7	7.4
East Cambs	0.0	0.7	5.6	7.0	16.6	19.2	22.2	21.3	4.4	3.1
South Cambs	0.5	0.1	0.8	2.1	6.3	22.4	27.8	26.8	7.9	5.2
Huntingdonshire	0.0	2.0	4.3	13.1	16.1	18.1	23.0	17.1	4.1	2.5
Fenland	0.9	6.5	10.5	19.7	18.3	21.2	14.7	7.1	1.0	0.1
Forest Heath	1.2	6.4	8.1	16.2	15.3	20.3	21.4	7.5	2.8	0.9
St. Edmundsbury	1.2	2.0	2.2	13.0	16.9	18.7	23.8	16.4	3.4	2.1

(percentage)

(Source: Land Registry)

Housing Needs

The authorities in the Cambridge sub-region commissioned David Couttie Associates to undertake a sub-regional housing needs survey, published in December 2003. As one of the first sub-regional housing needs surveys, it represents an innovative approach to assessing needs across the sub-region. Individual district level surveys, which collect more detailed local data, and are used to support planning policy developments, concur with the findings of the sub-regional survey.

The survey estimates the annual shortfall of affordable housing for the seven districts as 4427 dwellings, calculated as follows:

Backlog of existing need (eliminated over five years)	1084
Net new household formation	2533
Existing households falling into priority need	2375
Ex-institutional population moving into the community	11
In-migrant households unable to afford market housing	1931
Total annual need	7934
Total supply from relets (3074) New delivery (433)	3507
Overall annual shortfall	4427

The average house prices of the smallest units were assessed to enable threshold income levels to be calculated. These are based on a 95% mortgage and a 3x gross income-lending ratio. Threshold incomes were also calculated for the lower quartile of property prices.

Local Authority	Income thresholds (£)		Income required to access lower quartile dwellings
	Flat	Terraced	
Cambridge	46000	67600	45350
East Cambs	33600	36900	34850
South Cambs	30250	46800	42275
Huntingdonshire	23500	32600	29500
Fenland	15700	25000	23400
St. Edmundsbury	26000	34700	31650
Forest Heath	27400	31300	26900

Source : Land registry Residential Property Price report, 1st Quarter 2003; Lower Quartile House Prices, Land Registry 1st quarter 2003

The survey refers to a Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2003 publication, 'Can work - Can't buy', which calculates affordability ratios for 4/5 bedroom properties (4th Quarter 2002). Results for the authorities in the Cambridge sub-region and the East Anglia region were:

Area	Working Households		
	2002 prices £	Income	Ratio
Cambridge	159048	31608	5.03
East Cambs	116500	33677	3.46
South Cambs	142627	35232	4.05
Huntingdonshire	101887	34487	2.95
Fenland	83301	24302	3.43
St. Edmundsbury	108209	28643	3.78
Forest Heath	105109	23424	4.49

Key workers

There is a growing concern in the South East of England that essential public sector workers (so-called 'key workers') are being priced out of the housing market, and that public services are experiencing recruitment and retention problems as a result.

The authorities in the Cambridge sub-region commissioned Roger Tym and Partners to undertake key worker housing research, and the report was published in September 2003.

Overall, the study identifies problems in recruiting younger workers (aged under 30 years) and in retaining older workers, particularly those aged 30-34 years. It recommends an annual key-worker-housing programme of 432 homes per annum over three years beginning in 2004. Of this amount, 57% is attributable to the needs of Addenbrookes hospital in Cambridge, and 43% to the rest of the sub-region. The report recommends that the annual programme consist of 134 homes for sub-market rental and 298 low cost home ownership.

The vast majority of key workers aspire to be owner-occupiers, and families want houses as opposed to flats, and want to be near good schools. All key workers aspire to live near good transport connections. Single people do not articulate a desire for central town living, but want to live near work/family/friends, and near good shops and recreational facilities.

The development and allocation of homes for key workers in the sub-region is coordinated by the Key Worker Zone Agent, Bedfordshire Pilgrims HA. BPHA work closely with the Cambridgeshire Key Worker Employers Consortium, according to a protocol agreed by CKWEC and districts in 2003.

5. Housing Growth and Infrastructure

Background

The vision and objectives for growth in the Cambridge sub-region are expressed in the Sustainable Communities Plan, and Regional Planning Guidance; targets and locations for growth are then set out in county level structure plans for Cambridgeshire and Suffolk, and devolved to the districts and boroughs and captured within their Local Plans (Local Development Frameworks). Key links with the Sustainable Communities Plan and Regional Housing strategy are set out in Section 2.

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG 14) / Regional Spatial Strategy

A new regional spatial Strategy is being prepared by the East of England Regional assembly (EERA) and is expected to be available for consultation in November 2004, at the same time as the regional Housing Strategy. It builds on previous regional planning guidance issued as RPG6 and parts of RPG 9, 9a and 9b, and is due to be adopted in 2004. Draft RPG14 is and is expected to be available for consultation, in early 2005.

The vision of the RSS requires that, within the overall environmental constraints of the Region, growth is led by improvements in quality of life and prosperity. This requires pursuit of the following set of headline targets related to housing:

- The Region should meet the housing needs of all sections of the community. This means meeting the needs arising from the natural change in the existing resident population and ensuring that the Region provides sufficient additional housing to allow for a realistic level of in-migration from other Regions (mainly London) to deliver the wider needs of London, the East of England, and the South East based on continuing to meet the present levels of in-migration.
- Increasing the provision of affordable housing from the present level of approximately 10-12% of total housing supply, to at least 33% of total housing supply. 40% or more of the new housing in the sub-region needs to be 'affordable' housing. Employment development will also be expected to contribute towards affordable housing.

Structure Plans

Suffolk Structure Plan 2001

The current structure plan provides for 2,650 additional dwellings per annum between 1996 and 2016. Only Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury are included within the Cambridge sub-region and their details are as follows:

District	Dwellings (per annum)	Achievement
Forest Heath	260	160+
St Edmundsbury	440	500+

(Details provided by Suffolk County Planning Department)

The key reason for St Edmundsbury's good performance was that a number of schemes were already in the pipeline, which came to fruition during this period. This structure plan will need to be revisited in order to take account of the changes brought about by RPG 14.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003

The Structure Plan was adopted in October 2003. Provision is made in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough for 70,200 additional homes between 1999 and 2016 and are distributed as follows:

Area	Dwellings (total)	Average annual total
Cambridge City	12,500	735
East Cambridgeshire	7,300	429
Fenland	8,100	476
Huntingdonshire	9,500	559
South Cambridgeshire	20,000	1176
Peterborough	12,800	753
Total	70,200	4128

Monitoring of housing completions by Cambridgeshire County Council for the period 1999 to 2003 shows the following:

	1999-2001 (2 years)	2001/02	2002/03	Annual average
Cambridge	337	145	267	187
East Cambs	802	754	523	520
South Cambs	1423	526	656	652
Fenland	638	600	718	489
Huntingdonshire	1579	273	573	606

It is evident that in the first four years covered by the Structure Plan targets, East Cambs, Fenland and Huntingdonshire have met their dwelling completion targets, while there is a shortfall in Cambridge and South Cambs. A key issue is to work more closely with developers, through the Infrastructure Partnership, to increase the dwelling construction rate in these districts.

Local development documents

Local Development Documents will identify land for housing and related development for schools, services, and other facilities, in the following order of preference:

- Within the built up area of Cambridge, subject to capacity and environmental considerations;
- On the periphery of the built up area of Cambridge on land to be removed from the Green Belt by 2006;
- In the new settlement of Northstowe close to Cambridge;
- Within the built up area of market towns and rural centres where it would contribute to the specified social and economic needs of the community where good public transport to Cambridge exists or can be provided; and
- By extensions to market towns and rural centres where good public transport access to Cambridge exists or can be provided.

Within Huntingdonshire, employment generation associated with the reuse of Alconbury Airfield may require some modification of this sequence in nearby parts of the district, to secure a sustainable pattern of development.

The Infrastructure Partnership

An Infrastructure Partnership has been established for the Cambridge Planning sub-region, as a Delivery Vehicle for growth. The Partnership is a Limited Liability Partnership, with a formal board, including representatives of all authorities involved, as well as representation from Housing Associations, health and private sector interests. It will work closely with Government on removing blockages and restraints to growth and ensuring the delivery of the supporting infrastructure, including roads, utilities, community facilities, as well as affordable housing.

The authorities involved in the IP are Cambridgeshire County, Cambridge City, South Cambs, East Cambs, Fenland, Huntingdonshire (Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury are not included).

The key benefits the Partnership will deliver are:

- A clear and single focus on delivery to ensure maximum progress against targets
- Co-ordination of joint working to maximise efficiency and effectiveness
- Collective lobbying voice and greater ability to lever funding
- Specialist skills and resources e.g. housing, land assembly, funding
- Local accountability

A business plan has been put together with a number of key milestones to measure success; further work on this business plan will inform the resourcing plan for this strategy.

Major sites and schemes are expected to commence in the next few years, e.g.:

- Start development on site of the Cambridge Northern Fringe - Arbury Camp by 2004
- Start development on site of the Cambridge Northern Fringe - East site by 2005/06
- Complete the Rapid Transit Scheme by 2007
- Start development on site of the Cambridge East site by 2005/06
- Start development on site of Northstowe, the New Town by 2005/06

Key Action Points

The following key action points relating to the growth area status form part of the action Plan for the sub-regional strategy (see Section 9)

- Monitor the process of developing the final housing targets in RPG 14, particularly as they effect the Cambridge sub-region
- Facilitate the development of housing as required by the Cambridgeshire and Suffolk Structure Plans and Regional Planning Guidance
- Agree respective roles and accountabilities with the Infrastructure Partnership
- Participate in delivery of Infrastructure Partnership Business Plan (to be finalised October 2004)
- Monitor the achievement of housing targets, as set out in Structure Plans, and amended by RPG14 (annually)
- Participate in the emerging co-ordination structures for the London-Standed-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor

6. Affordable Housing

Research and market monitoring points to the increasing difficulties for many households in the Cambridge Sub-region in accessing affordable housing. The groups involved include:

- The 'traditional' clients of social housing, including vulnerable groups, and those on statutory incomes or in low-paid work;
- Increasing numbers of households on moderate incomes priced out of the market as a result of rising house prices and rents. This includes essential public sector workers (key workers).

In developing new homes across the sub-region, attention must be given to ensuring a balanced housing market. House prices are high, and have increased considerably, as indicated in section 4. In the past three years, proportionately higher house price rises in areas further from Cambridge show the increasing area covered by the "Cambridge effect." This price rise has had a particularly detrimental effect on some rural communities, making existing housing unaffordable for local people. House price rises have not been matched by salary increases, with salary to house price ratios in the sub-region of 1:7.

Affordable housing targets

One of the key issues for the Cambridge sub-region is to establish challenging but achievable targets for increasing the supply of affordable housing, as the basis for a delivery plan. The housing needs survey identifies an annual shortfall of affordable housing in the sub-region of 4427 dwellings. This is a larger requirement than the total new housing requirement for the sub region, estimated at around 3000 a year.

The housing needs survey suggests a target for affordable housing of 40% of new housing supply; and this target is included in the Cambridgeshire structure plan, although it is expected that different targets may apply in different districts. To achieve this level of affordable housing would imply annual affordable housing output of 1200 dwellings.

The Cambridge sub-region authorities, working with partners, have identified sites where affordable housing is expected to be developed throughout the period of this strategy. The partners have compiled pipeline information on schemes coming forward, which indicates that over 6,000 new affordable homes might begin construction in the period (see Appendix 1).

Many of these sites will be developed primarily as market housing, with affordable housing secured through section 106 agreements, so it is difficult to predict exactly when development of the affordable component may commence. This depends on the state of the housing market locally, and the wider economy, influencing the rate at which house builders will wish to bring new sites onto the market, and is also influenced by the speed of negotiations of planning agreements and availability of resources to deliver the affordable housing.

The pipeline information contained in Appendix 1 is therefore indicative only. Some sites may commence development sooner than expected, others later, or possibly not within this plan period; similarly, there are likely to be "windfall" sites which will come forward for development within the plan period, and hence a degree of flexibility about moving investment between sites and projects will be required if opportunities are to be maximised.

A further key issue is to determine the balance of the affordable housing programme across different needs groups, and this will of necessity be determined on a site by site basis within a strategic framework, which itself is regularly reviewed to take account of the changing population as we undergo this period of growth. There is a range of factors to take into account:

- The need to increase the supply of housing to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, and meet targets for the rehousing of homeless people
- Developing options for people on modest incomes, currently priced out of the market
- Determining the level of priority to be ascribed to housing for key workers, particularly in the light of Government targets in this area.
- Ensuring that new communities, and especially larger new settlements, include a range of housing types and do not become “ghettoes” for any one type of household

Ensuring that such developments are able to cope with changing needs of population over time, e.g. as initial occupiers – and population as a whole

Each of the authorities will need to operate flexibly in determining the appropriate mix of types of affordable housing for particular sites, balancing types of affordable housing in line with local needs. As far as possible, different forms of affordable housing will be encouraged on larger sites, to support mixed communities.

The ability to deliver this balanced programme will depend on levels of funding from the Housing Corporation or other sources for different types of affordable housing, the development economics of particular sites, and the capacity of housing associations and the key worker housing zone agent (see below) to deliver in the sub region.

Cambridgeshire authorities are negotiating, through Cambs County Council, a Local Public Sector Agreement (LPSA) with government for the delivery of some of the required affordable housing without grant from the Regional Housing Board/ Housing Corporation. To deliver housing without grant, Housing Associations have agreed to flexible approaches to sites, and local authorities will work closely with them to identify other mechanisms for supporting affordable housing. Such innovative grant free housing will enable local authorities to be more involved in determining tenure and occupancy conditions.

Planning framework for affordable housing

Local authorities have powers to require affordable housing to be delivered as part of new residential developments where there is a demonstrated housing need. The effective use of this power is critical to the delivery of the proposed affordable housing programme in the Cambridge sub-region, given the demonstrated need across the sub-region, and the anticipated high level of residential development in the growth area.

The national planning framework for affordable housing is changing, with the consultation draft of a revised PPG3. If adopted, this will lower the normal threshold for affordable housing to be included on sites of 15 or more dwellings (0.5 hectares); and allow lower site thresholds to be justified in local development frameworks.

The Cambridgeshire structure plan includes Policy 9/2: "40% or more of the new housing in the Sub-Region will be affordable, which will include key worker housing. Most or all housing development will be expected to contribute with size thresholds being set in Local Plans according to local circumstances."

The Suffolk Structure Plan, adopted in 2001, has the following policy on affordable housing (CS9): "Where a local need for affordable housing is identified to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, the local authority will: (a) on local plan housing allocations and in determining development proposals, seek an appropriate proportion of affordable housing; (b) give favourable consideration to affordable housing on appropriate small sites adjoining villages.

The different authorities in the sub-region have different policies on the proportion of affordable housing sought and on site thresholds. One of the proposals of the Affordable Housing Delivery report (see below) is that the policies, and associated Supplementary Planning Guidance, should be aligned across the seven authorities.

Affordable housing delivery report

During 2003, the Cambridge sub-region commissioned a report on the delivery of affordable housing. The report, by Three Dragons with De Montfort University and Eiluned Morgan, was published in December 2003. The report examines the planning and delivery framework for affordable housing in the sub-region, and makes proposals for a more robust and systematic approach to increase the proportion of affordable housing delivered on development sites. The key proposals, which are to be taken forward through this Housing Strategy are:

- Establish, monitor and review annual affordable housing targets for each district
- Developing a consistent approach to affordable housing policies in the Local development Frameworks.
- Working with planners of the sub-region to agree and implement a standard Section 106 agreement with a Section 106 strategy.
- Establish a sub-regional Affordable Housing Provider Liaison Group (local authorities, housing associations, developers) to meet at least quarterly
- Ensure the inclusion of appropriate affordable housing skills and expertise within the Infrastructure Partnership - see below

Partnerships for delivery

As set out in section 5, the five Cambridgeshire authorities in the sub-region have agreed to establish an Infrastructure Partnership to co-ordinate their activities in securing and delivering the infrastructure needed to support the levels of growth in population and housing proposed in the *Sustainable Communities Plan*. The Infrastructure Partnership is considering the establishment of a sub-regional strategic housing function, to co-ordinate the overall housing development programme across the sub-region, and in particular the delivery of key worker and affordable housing. The specific housing functions and resourcing of these functions within the Infrastructure Partnership are still being developed, but it is envisaged that they could include:

- Assisting the local authorities to draw up their targets for different forms of affordable housing, taking into account the indicative proportions of different types of affordable housing set out in this strategy
- Monitoring the delivery of these targets
- Agreeing a forward funding programme for affordable and key worker housing in the sub-region with the Regional Housing Board and the Housing Corporation
- Co-ordinating the development of planning policies for affordable housing across the sub-region, including the development of common affordable housing policies in local plans, and a common affordable housing Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Providing technical support to local authorities in negotiating affordable housing agreements (Section 106 agreements), including the provision of development economic appraisal capacity.
- Organizing the proposed Affordable Housing Liaison Group

It is also proposed to explore the potential benefits of establishing a preferred partner group of housing associations to deliver affordable housing across the sub-region. This approach has been adopted elsewhere, and can have the benefit of encouraging a limited number of associations to engage strategically in delivery of the sub-regional programme, but the appropriateness of such arrangements, alongside Housing Corporation Pilot Partner arrangements, needs to be evaluated.

Resources for affordable housing

A key issue for the delivery of affordable housing is the extent to which public subsidy is to work alongside planning gain in delivering the targeted numbers of affordable housing dwellings. It is proposed to develop a sub-regional partnership approach within the framework of this sub-regional housing strategy between the seven local authorities, the Housing Corporation and key housing associations. The resources to be planned around include:

- Housing Corporation funding for social rental, shared ownership and supported housing
- Housing Corporation funding for key worker housing
- Local authority capital funding for affordable housing
- The application of commuted funds for affordable housing
- Housing association funding, including loans and the use of assets (including land)
- District- and County Council-owned land released for affordable housing
- National Health Service land, released for housing purposes
- Other employer-owned land, released to assist in the housing of key workers
- Other subsidies from employers, e.g. capital grant

If the LPSA negotiations (referred to earlier, page 22) are successful, additional pump-priming and reward monies linked to LPSA may become available for affordable housing. This is directly linked to achieving delivery of homes without grant.

The resource-planning framework will take the indicative programme for different types of affordable housing over the four year period of the strategy (see below) and allocate the various sources of funding across the sub-region to support the programme. Key issues are:

- The ability to achieve affordable housing through planning gain without public subsidy - particularly for shared ownership, key worker housing and intermediate housing
- The Housing Corporation's position on the use of public funds in conjunction with planning gain, particularly to achieve social rented housing as part of mixed tenure schemes
- The extent to which Regional Housing Board resources will be committed to the Cambridge sub-region to recognize its particular growth status within the eastern region
- Priorities for public funding of particular forms of affordable housing, in particular the emphasis on key worker housing, and how new key worker housing will be planned across the region and sub-region

- The potential to allocate funding as a shared pool across the sub-region, with priorities determined through the sub-regional partnership

The resource planning approach will take into account the Housing Corporation's 2004/05 and 2005/06 funding allocations in the sub-region, which were announced in April 2004. They are as follows:

Housing Corporation allocations 2004-2006

	Social Housing grant (£millions)	Homes
Cambridge City	£12.678	262
East Cambridgeshire	£6.568	234
Fenland	£1.998	55
Forest Heath	£2.744	338
Huntingdonshire	£6.015	165
South Cambridgeshire	£10.277	253
St Edmundsbury	£8.504	205

The types of affordable housing to be achieved by these allocations is:

Housing Corporation allocations 2004-2006 - types of affordable housing

	Homebuy	Social Rented	Shared Ownership	Inter-mediate rental	Key worker Homebuy	Key worker shared ownership	Key worker inter-mediate rental	Total
Cambridge	16	143	31		16	49	7	262
East Cambs	25	113	57		12	18	9	234
Fenland		47			8			55
Forest Heath		264	66		8			338
Huntingdonshire	26	107			12	9	11	165
South Cambs	38	164			16	31	4	253
St Edmundsbury		142	49	6	8			205
Total	105	980	203	6	80	107	31	1512

Sub-Regional Investment Priorities

For the period 2006 and beyond, for which regional investment priorities have not yet been decided, the Cambridge sub-region would wish to adopt locally agreed investment priorities which prioritise growth in the sub-region, and ensure that new housing can be delivered both in larger new settlements and sites to meet the priorities of the growth area, and within existing communities to meet locally arising housing need and prevent homelessness. Full details of our proposed investment priorities are set out at Section 11.

It is intended that a sub-regional resourcing plan be agreed during 2004/05, and be put forward to the Regional Housing Board to inform its recommendations for funding priorities for 2006/07 and 2007/08. This will be based on expected dwellings starts, as set out in Appendix 1, which predict that construction will commence on just over 2,000 affordable homes per annum, with the possibility of a considerable number of homes delayed from optimal starting dates in 2004/5/6 due to lack of available funding to allow commencement.

Key action points

The following key action points on affordable housing form part of the Action Plan for the sub-regional strategy (see Section 11)

- Establish annual targets for different forms of affordable housing in the seven local authorities in the sub-region
- Share best practice on models for funding different forms of affordable housing
- Deliver 290 homes without grant as set out in the local public service agreement for affordable housing without grant funding (or other target as agreed with ODPM)
- Establish a sub-regional Affordable Housing Liaison Group
- Determine whether it is practical to establish a group of preferred housing association partners

7. Homelessness and social housing lettings

Background.

This section of the report outlines some of the key issues across the sub-region relating to homelessness and lettings issues.

Each local authority has been required by the Homelessness Act 2002 to conduct a review of homelessness within their areas, and to develop a strategy setting out how homelessness issues are to be tackled in the future. Each local authority published a separate homelessness strategy in July 2003.

This sub-regional strategy pulls the common threads from these separate homelessness strategies together, and identifies common issues, and more importantly areas for joint working and jointly resolving sub-regional issues.

HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness data

The following table gives an indication of the levels of homelessness (not housing advice) activities across the seven districts in the sub-region.

Local authority	Applications	Acceptances
Cambridge	241*	176*
East Cambridgeshire	177	138
Forest Heath	125	43
Fenland	147	102
Huntingdonshire	367	251
South Cambridgeshire	203	148
St Edmundsbury	182	146

Based on 2002/3 P1e data ; * based on estimates



An analysis of the main causes of homelessness for each of the authorities reveals that the main causes are common across the sub-region:

- Parental eviction
- Eviction from other family and friends
- Termination of assured shorthold tenancy
- Violent relationship breakdown

Common issues

Across the sub-region there are number of common tasks required to tackle homelessness and improve services. Each authority has work programmed in over the life of the homelessness strategy document. Common issues identified in all homelessness reviews are set out below:

Rising house prices are putting more pressure on homelessness & housing advice services, as housing in the private sector becomes increasingly out of the reach of those on average or below average incomes. The impact of this is worsened by the decline of the number of social housing lettings

Making more use of the private rented sector – the need to engage effectively with landlords and agents, tap into what resources are available, developing more effective access schemes (rent deposit schemes etc), formalising relationships with the private sector generally.

Issues with counting homeless people and the problems associated with double counting and tracking individuals across agencies / boroughs. This is a particular issue for single homeless people, who tend to migrate into Cambridge City. Good quality data is required in order to assess the impact on provision / lack of provision

The need to set up formal and effective links and referral arrangements with some of the key agencies such as health, prison services, social services, locality mental health teams. Links with social services are of critical importance and there is a need for greater integration of services. There is a need to assess the housing needs of offenders prior to release from prison.

The need to “modernise” services to ensure prevention and early intervention are at the forefront of housing needs services.

The need to identify and tackle relatively high levels of repeat homelessness in some areas, and linking this to the need to be able to offer adequate support to vulnerable households. The development and expansion of tenancy support schemes is key, and therefore working with the Supporting People regime is central.

The need to tackle domestic violence and have creative ways of finding housing solutions for women presenting as homeless.

Initiatives planned to tackle homelessness issues

Each local authority homelessness strategy has an action plan setting out key actions. Most planned tasks are about improving service provision and meeting ODPM targets. However, the most important action in preventing and addressing homelessness in the sub-region is to increase the supply of affordable housing. The high costs of housing locally make it difficult for households to access housing, and can lead to homelessness. In such circumstances, a ready supply of affordable housing – of a range of tenures – would allow some households to access housing without becoming homeless, and for others would reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation.

For this reason, the investment priorities for the Cambridge sub-region do not include homelessness as a separate theme, but include housing for homeless and potentially homeless households as part of an overall need to increase supply.

Homelessness strategies identify a range of other actions to improve services to homeless people, and prevent homelessness. The box below gives examples of the type of work planned over the short to medium term.

Initiatives underway or planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using mediation services to reduce evictions by family and friends• Improving data monitoring and collection for both advice and homelessness• Increase supply of temporary accommodation• Looking at support services for homeless people living in temporary accommodation• Developing joint working arrangements with Social Services, and others• Improving housing advice and work on prevention• Working with housing associations to prevent homelessness and embrace early intervention and ultimately reduce evictions

Actions

These common issues raised in reviews form the backbone of the issues that need to be addressed over the next four years at a sub-regional level. This section sets out what the authorities plan to do on a sub-regional level.

Multi-agency monitoring system

There is a need to effectively count customers of housing advice and homelessness services, particularly young people. The system already in place in Cambridge City will be evaluated to establish whether it could be effective on a sub-regional level.

Sharing best practise on private sector housing

This is a crucial area of work if the targets on bed and breakfast usage and rough sleepers are to be achieved and maintained. The feasibility of a sub-regional landlords accreditation scheme will be researched.

LETTINGS

One of the issues identified for potential joint work through the sub-regional strategy is to examine lettings to ensure wide access to affordable housing across the sub region. This may include examination of options for joint needs registers, or joint work to examine options for achieving greater choice in social housing lettings. Some authorities are about to commence reviews of allocation processes, and where possible these reviews will be run together to ensure opportunities for joint working are fully explored.

The Government has been promoting the introduction of choice-based lettings (CBL) systems for Council and housing association lettings. A pilot programme to establish such systems was funded to March 2003. The national evaluation of the pilot programme was published in March 2004. The Housing Minister has signalled the intention to issue further guidance, encouraging local authorities and housing associations to introduce CBL in some form, following the evaluation.

In addition to choice, the issue of developing sustainable communities is one that is of concern and interest for the authorities in the sub-region. Joint work will be carried out to investigate how lettings can be made to stock in a way, which positively contributes to

creating sustainable communities, without disadvantaging homeless people. This is particularly relevant to lettings/ home ownership sales in new communities where establishing a stable community in the early phases of its existence is extremely important to future sustainability.

Key action points

The following actions on homelessness and choice in lettings will be pursued through the Action Plan (see Section 12)

- Evaluate the Cambridge pilot and consider implementing a multi-agency monitoring system
- Share best practise on making the best use of the private rented sector
- Explore the potential for joint work on policies and for social housing lettings especially in relation to strategic sites
- Investigate how current and future lettings impact on sustainability issues on strategic sites

8. Decent Homes

In an area of high housing stress and homelessness, it is particularly important to make the best use of existing housing stock. This can be done by ensuring that stock turnover is well managed, and lettings policies enable people in need to move within the housing market system. It is also important to make sure that stock condition does not prevent habitation, or cause poor health and social disadvantage, and that homes are not left empty for prolonged periods.

The government has set the clear target that all council homes should achieve its “Decent Homes” standard by 2010. Targets for other public sector dwellings, and for ensuring vulnerable households in the private sector have also been set.

Council owned properties

Three councils in the sub-region manage their own housing stock: Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire and Fenland. All three expect to meet the Decent Homes target of 2010, with both South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge expecting to achieve Decent Homes early, by 2006. As debt-free authorities, they are not dependent on borrowing to achieve this standard, but have based projections on current levels of government support through maintenance allowances and major repairs allowance. For Fenland, an allocation from the Single Regional Investment Pot (previously known as “HIP”) is essential to ensure that the Decent Homes programme can be delivered on time.

All three councils are currently pursuing stock options consultation and evaluation exercises with tenants, to consider the best way to deliver services to tenants in the future, and to ensure the continued maintenance and improvement of council homes, to standards agreed with tenants, which go beyond the Decent Homes standard to reflect tenants’ local concerns and aspirations. These consultations will be complete by Summer 2005.

Housing Associations

For other public sector stock – including the large numbers of homes transferred by the remaining four districts to Housing Associations, some of which includes older properties – there are no significant areas of poor repair, and the LVST authorities all expect to achieve Decent Homes throughout their stock by 2010 without investment from the

Regional Housing Board. All Housing Associations in the sub-region expect to achieve Decent Homes by 2010.

Private Sector Housing

The position for private sector stock varies considerably across the sub region, with some forms of disrepair scattered across the sub region, and no large areas of concentrated disrepair. Some concentrations of poorer housing – also associated with vulnerable households – may be found in areas where economic regeneration is also a priority, especially in parts of Fenland.

Recent stock condition surveys indicate that the finances required to improve private sector dwellings to an acceptable standard are very significant – £138M in South Cambs alone – but individual districts are developing their own private sector renewal strategies to respond to this, and using the powers of the Regulatory Reform Act 2003 to minimise the call on public money to fund the improvement of privately owned dwellings.

Huntingdonshire operates a very effective scheme to enable vulnerable homeowners to access council funds as a loan for property repairs; this may be adopted as good practice by other authorities in the sub region. Most authorities are already investing resources in private sector renewal, including discretionary grants to vulnerable households, non-statutory DFGs and specific schemes, e.g. to bring vacant properties into use. Cambridge City has an effective grant to landlords scheme, operating through King Street Housing Society, to bring unfit dwellings up to standard, or empty dwellings into use, so long as they are made available to homeless households.

Public funds are required to meet the statutory obligations of councils for Disabled Facilities Grants, which enable disabled people to continue to live in their own homes, and reduce the need for specialist or supported housing. Investment also enables authorities to contribute to the preventative agenda of health and social services (now operating in Cambridgeshire as integrated teams).

The demand for DFGs has increased in recent years, and demographic trends – the ageing of the population, and the increasing numbers of people living into a period extreme frailty – as well as a specific service commitment to move away from institutional models of care for the elderly, and instead to support independence at home (or in extra care housing), suggest that the demand for DFGs in this sub-region will continue to increase. In some areas, withdrawal of Housing Corporation funding previously allocated to Housing Associations for aids and adaptations has further increased the demand for DFGs. In the light of this, capping of DFG budgets is unhelpful and the sub-region identifies the need for separate ring fenced resources, sufficient to meet current and future demand.

Actions for Decent Homes:

All Council and Housing Association stock to meet DH Standard by 2010

Development of comprehensive private sector renewal strategies across the sub-region, including to meet targets on decent homes in the private sector

Make the case to the ODPM for more funding for disabled facilities grants

Share good practice in private sector renewal

9. Supported Housing

Although there is a large number of supported housing schemes already operating in the sub-region, enabling many people with diverse needs to live in the community, the needs of the population are increasing. The population growth and ageing (set out in chapter 4) indicate an increase in supported housing will be needed across many client groups, and provision needs to be made early in the development of new communities. There is currently a lack of both revenue and capital to support such schemes.

Supporting People

Since April 2003, most supported housing has received its revenue funding through the government programme "Supporting People" (SP). SP funding in the Cambridge sub-region is administered through two separate administering authorities, one for Suffolk and one for Cambridgeshire. Each administering authority has its own strategy for prioritisation of its resources, and to identify future investment needs and priorities.

Both authorities produced shadow SP strategies in 2003, and will be required to produce new SP strategies for government by Spring 2005. The Cambridgeshire strategy is expected to be agreed during Autumn 2004, and the Suffolk strategy to be signed off by February 2005.

The SP administering authorities are themselves partnerships between relevant districts, County, Primary Care Trusts and Probation, and close partnership working has been essential to establishing appropriate decision-making structures and developing joint strategies. There is little value in attempting to mirror these within a sub-regional context, and hence the sub-regional strategy draws from the county-based arrangements.

Investment needs

The authorities of the sub-region have identified new supported housing as a key priority for additional investment, both capital and revenue.

Several of the SP client groups are already facing a significant undersupply in appropriate supported accommodation, and this is expected to increase, due partly to changes in the existing population, and partly to growth pressures.

For example, there is expected to be an increase in the numbers of frail elderly people requiring extra-care (also known as very-sheltered housing), as the population ages, and as institutional models of care for very frail older people become unacceptable and undesirable.

In terms of growth, it is expected that increases in population of the size outlined in Section 4 will include significant numbers of people who require some support in order to live independently. This will include people from most if not all the SP client groups, and the Cambridge sub-region authorities do not wish to see new settlements developed without provision for those who need support, as this will create unbalanced communities, and difficulties in meeting needs in the future.

Some needs may be met through floating support, where support is not tied to a specific property but to an individual. These schemes have proved to be a cost-effective solution in meeting the needs of a number of groups. Floating support can be flexible in reaching people in rural settings and preventing homelessness. Additional capital investment would not be needed to progress such solutions, but significantly increased revenue

would be required. However, for some groups, including those with severe needs or high degrees of physical frailty, specialised buildings will continue to be the best option.

Revenue

Supporting People Administering Authorities are responsible for a locally held budget that is allocated by central government (known as the Supporting People Grant). A number of factors affect the management of the Grant including central government allocation, inflation, service delivery relating to value for money, local charging policies and new service development allocations.

In 2003/04 the Grant was affected by a nationally imposed cost reduction of 2.5%, plus no increase for an expected 2.9% inflationary element. In essence this meant that authorities were required to manage a 5.4% reduction from the expected budget.

Recent announcements (September 2004) of national resources suggest that there is unlikely to be a positive change with respect to SP revenue, and that the administering authorities will find it increasingly difficult to make revenue available for any capital linked projects.

Continuing budget reductions will have implications for service users, and would hamper the ability of the authorities to meet the needs of a growing population.

Proposed investment priority

As shown above (section 6) it is proposed that if a funding allocation were made available for the sub-region, it should be top-sliced for Supported Housing schemes, so long as those schemes are able to demonstrate revenue funding (from SP streams or health/social care). Given constraints on revenue, it is not expected that this top-slice would jeopardise a general housing programme, but to ensure this, the top-slice should be limited to a maximum of 20% of the overall programme.

Identified Priorities and Schemes

Cambridgeshire has identified the top three groups for priority investment as:

- Young people at risk
- Frail elderly
- Ex-offenders

The last SP strategy for Cambridgeshire (2003) identified priority lists of schemes requiring funding. Revenue was made available for all high priority schemes, but several still do not have the required capital funding to progress, and remain a priority for investment. Further investment priorities will be identified in the Cambridgeshire SP strategy, and the sub-regional housing group will use this as the basis for future investment planning in respect of supported housing in Cambridgeshire.

Suffolk plans service priorities through a 3 year rolling programme. Its Commissioning Body agreed revenue funding in September 2003 for service priorities up to 2006 provided that they had, where necessary, capital commitment. Bids identified in this strategy require new capital and/or revenue commitment and form part of the continued rolling programme of identified priorities.

Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC have identified a number of priority schemes across a wide range of client groups. Supporting People acknowledge that not all of these schemes will receive revenue funding in the next twelve months, but commit to ensuring that the SP grant will be allocated within the conditions and against the priorities that the Commissioning Body agree.

Service reviews and improvements

All supported housing services are subject to review within the first three years of their contracts.

In Cambridgeshire, a combined Best Value and SP review of sheltered and extra care housing took place in 2004, which has informed the local priorities, and the models of care planned for future services. Smaller scale reviews of other groups have taken place, and a larger review of mental health services is underway, jointly with social services commissioners of such services, due to complete March 2005.

In Suffolk, reviews are taking place according to a review plan, floating support and services to people with learning disabilities are to be reviewed in 2004, reviews for sheltered housing start in 2005.

Priority Schemes

Both administering authorities will publish proposed priorities as part of the Supporting People Strategies currently under development. As these lists are not yet agreed, they are not included here, but will be available separately from Cambridgeshire County Council and Suffolk County Council.

Sub-Regional Actions relating to Supported Housing

- Make bids for funding to be up to 20% of the total available to the sub-region programme.
- Co-ordinate investment planning between the two administering authorities in respect of capital for new supported housing.

10. Black and minority ethnic housing

One of the key issues which has been identified for joint work between the seven local authorities in the context of the Cambridge Sub-Regional Housing Strategy is to investigate and address the housing issues faced by the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) populations in the sub-region. In national terms, there is considerable research demonstrating the relative housing disadvantage of BME populations, although this picture is not universal. In the Cambridge sub-region, relatively little research has been undertaken, and the responses to the specific needs of BME groups are underdeveloped – although again, with some exceptions.

Regional research on the needs of refugees and asylum seekers is proposed for 2005. This will be coordinated by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA).

Census data on ethnicity

The 2001 census provides information on the ethnicity of the population in the seven districts:

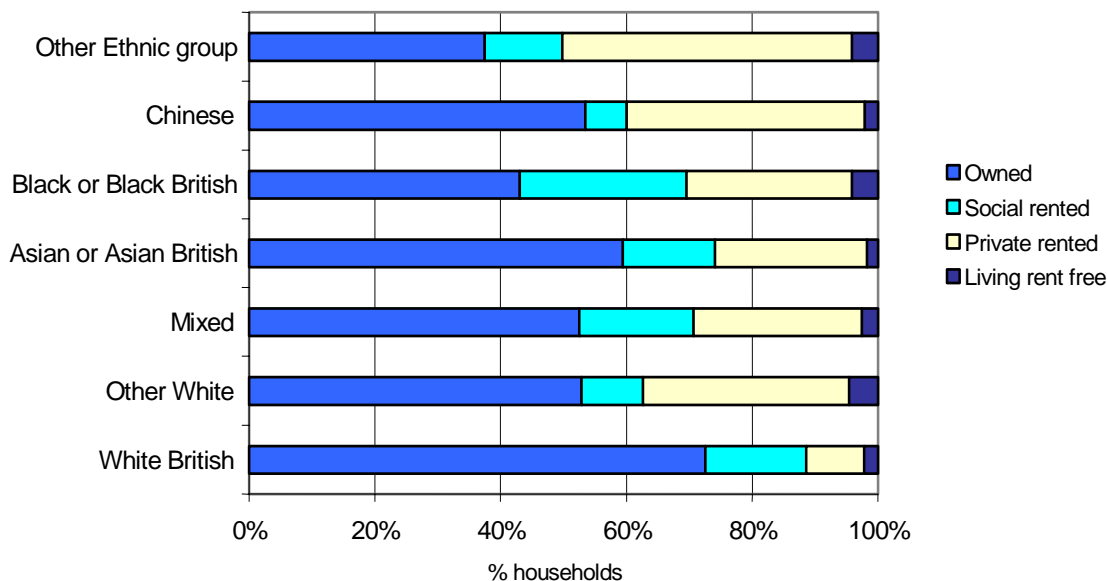
(resident population - percentage)

	White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese or other ethnic group
Cambridge	89.4	2.0	3.8	1.3	3.5
East Cambs	97.9	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.6
Fenland	98.6	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.2
Huntingdonshire	97.2	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.5
South Cambs	97.1	0.9	0.9	0.4	0.8
Forest Heath	93.9	2.4	0.6	1.9	1.2
St Edmundsbury	98.0	0.7	0.5	0.3	0.4
England	90.9	1.3	4.6	2.1	0.9

Most of the districts have a BME population of under 3%, the exceptions being Cambridge and Forest Heath, with 10% and 6% respectively.

Additional census analysis has been undertaken concerning the housing circumstances of BME groups in Cambridgeshire.

Housing tenure by broad ethnic group (% of households) *Source: 2001 Census*



The highest proportion of owner-occupation was shown in households with a White British head, where just under three quarters of households were either owned outright or owned with a mortgage. Lowest levels of home ownership were found in Black or Black British and Other Ethnic Group headed households, both at around 40%. Conversely, the highest proportion of households living in social housing was in households with a Black or Black British head, at 27%. The proportion of people renting privately was lowest in households with a White British head, at 9%, and highest in those with a head from an Other Ethnic Group, at 46%.

It is interesting that, while the second highest level of owner-occupation was found in the Asian or Asian British groups, this masked considerable variation within the Asian group. Indian, Pakistani and Other Asian headed households showed home ownership of over 60%, whereas only 32% of Bangladeshi headed households were owned outright or with a mortgage. Even greater variation was found within the Asian groups for the proportion of households living in social housing. Between 8 and 15% of households with an Indian, Pakistani or Other Asian head were rented from the Council or another social landlord, whereas 53% of households with a Bangladeshi head fell into this group.

Travellers

Travellers are the largest ethnic population in the sub-region, with particularly large traveller populations in Fenland, South and East Cambridgeshire, together giving Cambridgeshire the largest traveller population in the country.

Information about traveller needs is particularly poor, as they are not identified separately by the 2001 census, making it difficult for authorities to plan appropriate responses in terms of housing, other accommodation solutions (e.g. traveller sites) and other services.

The authorities of the sub-region recognise a need to increase services for travellers, but need to establish more information before this can be planned and delivered. Therefore, the Cambridgeshire authorities, working with the Primary Care Trusts, have jointly commissioned a Traveller needs survey to be carried out through the later part of 2004, and early 2005. This will collect detailed demographic information on travellers to permit modelling of future needs. It will also investigate travellers' needs for a range of services, and their preferences, e.g. in terms of accommodation solutions. It is expected to report in Summer 2005. It is hoped that the methodology adopted may be of use in profiling traveller needs across the region.

Joint work in the sub-regional housing strategy

There is considerable scope for the seven authorities to work together and share experience in investigating and addressing the housing issues of BME groups in the sub region. The following areas of work will be pursued (see section 11):

- Evaluate outcomes of Huntingdonshire's BME research and consider future needs for research
- Joint work on the needs of travellers and gypsies for Cambridgeshire
- Working with housing association partners to develop BME housing schemes to respond to the specific needs identified through research
- Examining the potential for incorporating BME schemes in new settlements
- Sharing information on ensuring that housing services are accessible to BME groups
- Evaluate regional research on refugees (led by EERA) and consider implications for sub region

11. Investment Priorities for the Sub-region

For the period 2006 and beyond, for which regional investment priorities have not yet been decided, the Cambridge sub-region would wish to adopt locally agreed investment priorities. These reflect the two national PSA targets of achieving balanced housing markets and decent homes. The former provides the greater challenge for this sub region particularly in the context of delivering growth and the need to meet housing needs and tackle homelessness. Hence investment in new affordable housing is clearly the top priority for the sub-region.

Decent Homes in the public sector is being addressed by all stock owning local authorities through Options Appraisal, and the majority of authorities can achieve decent homes within the public sectors through the use of MRA and/or their own capital resources. RSLs, including four stock transfer RSLs, will deliver Decent Homes through their asset management and business planning processes.

There are needs for resources in the private sector, and these have not been prioritised in his strategy in view of the overriding need for affordable housing. Local authorities will continue to develop their private sector strategies using all possible resources, including utilising the powers of the Regulatory Reform Act 2003. However, in the event that public funds are available for renewal in the private sector, there is a strong case for investment in this sub-region to facilitate reaching the government target for decent homes/ vulnerable households.

In summary, the investment priorities are:

1. Maximising affordable housing investment is the prime objective of the sub region and would be allocated as follows:
 - a. All schemes receiving investment would have to meet Housing Corporation criteria, such as deliverability, and value for money, as well as meeting high standards of design and environmental sustainability.
 - b. Capital for Supported Housing schemes which have revenue in place, whether from Supporting People or health and social care funding streams, and which meet local priorities identified in Supporting People Strategies, should to be prioritised, with a top slice of up to a maximum of 20% of the overall programme.
 - c. The rest of the programme to be directed towards new investment in general needs affordable housing, with such investment distributed spatially according to the distribution of Structure Plan allocations. This would ensure that schemes are developed both in growth locations to meet the needs of in-migration and the economy (new settlements and urban fringe) and in sustainable rural locations/ market towns to meet local housing need and alleviate homelessness.

2. Funding for decent homes in the private sector to be allocated to enable the government target to be met, only if funding is available for private sector renewal at a national or regional level.

12. Delivery Plan: Cambridge sub-region Affordable Housing Group

This plan contains actions at a strategic level. Some of these strategic aspirations are addressed by more specific actions contained within the annual business plan of the Infrastructure Partnership, due to be agreed October 2004. It is the intention of the Cambridge sub-region affordable housing group to work closely with the IP to develop more detailed action plans for both the Group and the IP to deliver, with clear leads and timescales, and regular monitoring by the Group.

Action	Key actions	Policy Development	Monitoring	Key partners
Growth Area				
Facilitate the development of housing as required by the Cambridgeshire and Suffolk Structure Plans and Regional Planning Guidance.		Monitor the progress of developing the final housing targets in RPG 14 as they affect the Cambridge sub-region.	Monitor the achievement of housing targets, as set out in Structure Plans, and amended by RPG14. ANNUAL	Infrastructure Partnership
	Agree respective roles and accountabilities with the Infrastructure Partnership. Participate in delivery of Infrastructure Partnership Business Plan (to be finalised October 2004).	Participate in the emerging co-ordination structures for the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor.		District and County Councils GO-East Other sub-regional groups
Affordable Housing				
Ensure the delivery of sufficient affordable housing	Establish annual targets for different forms of affordable housing in the seven local authorities in the sub-region.	Share best practice on models for funding different forms of affordable housing.	Monitor the levels of affordable housing delivered. ANNUAL	
	Deliver 290 homes without grant as set out in the local public service agreement for affordable housing without grant funding.		Monitor the levels of housing developed in this way ANNUAL	
	Establish a sub-regional Affordable Housing Liaison Group.	Determine whether it is practical to establish a group of preferred housing association partners.		Housing associations Housing Corporation
Homelessness and social housing lettings				
Ensure that action is taken to prevent and reduce homelessness.		Evaluate the Cambridge pilot and consider implementing a multi-agency monitoring system.		

Action	Key actions	Policy Development	Monitoring	Key partners
		Share best practise on making the best use of the private rented sector.		
Ensure that current stock of affordable housing is used in the most effective ways.		Explore the potential for joint work on policies and for social housing lettings especially in relation to strategic sites.		
		Investigate how current and future lettings impact on sustainability issues on strategic sites.		
Decent Homes				
Ensure that all housing meets the Decent Homes Standard.	All Council and Housing Association stock to meet DH Standard by 2010.		Report progress. ANNUAL	
Ensure that all housing is suitable for those in occupation		Making the case to the ODPM for more funding for disabled facilities grants.	Number of properties adapted by sector. ANNUAL	
		Share good practice in private sector renewal.		
		Development of comprehensive private sector renewal strategies (inc to meet targets on decent homes for vulnerable people in the private sector).		
Supported Housing				
Ensure that there is sufficient Supported Housing for the Sub-Region.	Make bids for funding to be up to 20% of the total available to the sub-region.		Ensure sufficient quality bids. ANNUAL Monitor allocations of funding. ANNUAL	
		Co-ordinate investment planning between the two administering authorities in respect of capital for new supported housing.		

Action	Key actions	Policy Development	Monitoring	Key partners
Black and Minority Ethnic Housing				
	Working with housing association partners to develop BME housing schemes to respond to the specific needs identified through research.	Evaluate outcomes of Huntingdonshire's BME research and consider future needs for research.		
		Joint work on the needs of travellers and gypsies for Cambridgeshire.		
		Examining the potential for incorporating BME schemes in new settlements.		
		Sharing information on ensuring that housing services are accessible to BME groups.		
		Evaluate regional research on refugees (led by EERA) and consider implications for sub-region.		

Appendix 1: Future Pipeline of Schemes

FUTURE PIPELINE OF SCHEMES

This programme becomes less accurate in future years and is subject to change

SUMMARY

NUMBER OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES REQUIRING FUNDING PER YEAR

	Fenland	Forest Heath	City	Huntingdonshire	East Cambs	Sth Cambs	St Eds	TOTAL
2004/05	206	198	617	215	207	588	217	2248
2005/06	198	117	400	303	231	327	64	1640
2006/07	137	138	982	290	187	423	151	2308
2007/08	98	147	849	215	175	478	60	2022
2008/09	95	126	899	100	126	478	70	1894
	734	726	3747	1123	926	2294	562	10112

FUNDING REQUIREMENT PER YEAR

	Fenland	Forest Heath	City	Huntingdonshire	East Cambs	Sth Cambs	St Eds	TOTAL
2004/05	6,532,911	7,150,017	26,062,018	7,023,163	2,822,246	22,293,368	8,911,583	80,795,306
2005/06	4,952,300	3,440,520	21,011,753	11,970,739	3,977,000	11,710,701	2,234,500	59,297,513
2006/07	2,110,000	4,373,870	41,489,528	11,290,000	3,789,000	19,265,356	3,824,000	86,141,754
2007/08	2,040,000	4,676,048	37,200,000	7,575,000	4,196,617	24,895,000	1,700,000	82,282,665
2008/09	1,350,000	3,736,004	39,450,000	3,600,000	3,200,000	24,895,000	2,100,000	78,331,004
	16,985,211	23,376,459	165,213,299	41,458,902	17,984,863	103,059,425	18,770,083	386,848,242

Appendix 2: additional contextual information

Focused on the city of Cambridge, the Cambridge sub-region is the main driver for indigenous economic growth in the East of England. Economic growth is strongly orientated towards high-technology industries and is concentrated around the city and in areas with close access to the key M11 and A14 transport corridors.

In the context of economic growth, housing provision must be seen as a key element of the local infrastructure. The sub-region has experienced substantial household growth in recent years where in-migration has been fuelled by the combined effects of a buoyant local economy and fast rail commuting to London. The housing infrastructure, however, has not kept pace, and the sub-region has consequently experienced an overheated local housing market in terms of the current prices for property, construction and land. This has extended the housing market area away from the main areas of employment to settlements that lie at or beyond a comfortable commuting distance to Cambridgeshire and this impacts on the sustainability of local communities.

The rise in house prices and market rents has made it increasingly difficult for local people on low and modest incomes to gain access to suitable affordable accommodation. This has naturally led to both a real and projected increase in the demand for social housing, which is provided at subsidised costs. However, restrictions on the volume of subsidy, the general lack of land for development, and the loss of social housing through the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire have placed severe constraints on the ability of social housing providers to meet demand. This is projected to worsen in the coming years.

A more recently recognised problem is the growing number of households who are not eligible for subsidised housing and are also unable to access housing through the market. They are effectively falling into a growing gap. These include workers who are considered key both in providing public services and in supporting the commercial businesses on which economic growth depends. When this is combined with the existing supply problems facing low income households, it raises a question mark over the longer-term sustainability of existing housing settlements as balanced communities.

The following provides a brief overview of the main characteristics of each of the seven participating authorities:

Cambridge City

Cambridge City covers an area of 40.6 square kilometres with a population of 108,863. It is an urban area entirely surrounded by the rural area of South Cambridgeshire. The interface between the two administrative areas – mostly current green belt – is a key element to address jointly.

The city is a historic town, which brings its own difficulties – especially in terms of infrastructure and transport. But it also brings in benefits such as tourism. The city is of economic importance not only to the sub-region or county, but nationally as well, with particularly significant clusters of high-technology companies, especially in software, biotechnology, plant science, pharmaceuticals, and telecommunications. Local government needs to give a vision to the area, which supports rather than frustrates the realisation of future prosperity, whilst protecting the needs of local people.

East Cambridgeshire

East Cambridgeshire covers an area of 649.4 square kilometres with a population of 73,214 and is an LSVT housing authority. East Cambridgeshire lies approximately 96 kilometres to the north of London, on the western edge of East Anglia. Its southern and western boundaries lie close to the City of Cambridge, whilst in the south-east they almost entirely enclose the town of Newmarket. East Cambridgeshire adjoins the districts of Fenland, Kings Lynn and West Norfolk, Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury, South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. East Cambridgeshire is the third largest district in Cambridgeshire in terms of land area but has the smallest population density. The area has some of the richest farm land in Europe, with agriculture remaining important as a source of local employment and economic wealth.

The district's proximity to Cambridge, combined with good access to the national road and rail network has encouraged the rapid growth of both housing and employment in the area. The largest settlement within East Cambridgeshire is Ely with the other main settlements being Littleport, Soham and Burwell.

The planning sub-region includes all of East Cambridgeshire except Littleport and surrounding parishes. However, for the purposes of this strategy the whole of the district is included. Littleport has a direct rail link to Cambridge and is only five minutes drive from Ely. The whole of East Cambridgeshire's housing market is affected by the Cambridge phenomenon.

Fenland

Fenland covers an area of 545.5 square kilometres with a population of 83,519. It is mainly rural in character and contains the 4 expanding market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey and Wisbech along with numerous Fen villages spread amongst 12 rural parishes. The two nearest cities are Cambridge to the south and Peterborough to the west.

Although Chatteris is the only area of Fenland classified within the Cambridge planning sub-region it is felt that the "Cambridge effect" impacts throughout the district. Along with Chatteris it is particularly prevalent in the market town of March with its direct train link to Cambridge along with the rural villages of Wimblington, Doddington and Manea

Forest Heath

Forest Heath covers an area of 376.3 square kilometres with a population of 55,510 forming the western part of Suffolk bordering on Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. Forest Heath has three main towns (Newmarket, Mildenhall and Brandon), 22 villages and 2 large American airbases at Mildenhall and Lakenheath.

Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire covers almost 909.5 square kilometres with a population of 156,954. It is an LSVT housing authority. It forms the western part of Cambridgeshire bordering East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, and South Cambridgeshire. There are 5 market towns and around 80 villages in the District. The main population centres are the market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives, Ramsey and Godmanchester. The District is well served by national road links with the A1 running north-south and the A14 running east-west across the district. The east coast main railway line from London to Scotland also passes through the District.

St Edmundsbury

St Edmundsbury is an LSVT authority and covers an area of 663.6 square kilometres in West Suffolk and has a population of approximately 98,193. It has 2 main towns, Bury St Edmunds (estimated population 33,260) and Haverhill (estimated population 19,536) with the remaining population living in rural areas. Ethnic minorities make up around 1.3% of the population. It has a rural character with a low population density of 1.4 persons per hectare compared with the national average of 2.4%. Bury St Edmunds and surrounding villages are linked to Cambridge by the A14 and are within extremely easy commuting distance.

South Cambridgeshire

South Cambridgeshire covers an area of some 898.6 square kilometres with a population of 130,108. It is a predominantly rural area currently without any towns inside its boundaries, although it includes land directly on the edge of Cambridge City, and a new town is proposed to the north west of Cambridge. The district consists of 101 parishes, and its villages range in size from Childerley with only 50 inhabitants to Sawston with slightly less than 8,000. The city of Cambridge is located at the centre of the District and exerts an important urban influence upon it. The interface between the two administrative areas is a key element to address jointly.

The area has good road and rail links - the M11 runs through the south and west and connects with the A1 via the A14 to Huntingdon. The main Kings Lynn, Ely and Cambridge to London railway line runs north-south through the District with stations at Waterbeach, Shelford and Whittlesford. There is also a railway service to London via Royston with stations at Foxton, Shepreth and Meldreth.