



## Homes for Our Future

### Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2024-2029

#### Annex 8: Key Achievements 2019-2023

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Since the publication of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy in 2019, both councils have made good progress in meeting its key priorities and actions. This Annex looks to celebrate some of its successes as described below.

### 2. New Homes

#### Both councils have:

- Supported and contributed to delivery of 2,209 affordable homes across Greater Cambridge between April 2019 and March 2023.
- Introduced a set of policy annexes to this Strategy detailing our requirements around: Build to Rent; the delivery and clustering & distribution of new affordable housing; and the setting of Affordable Rents.
- Published our interim position on implementing the government's First Homes policy.

#### Cambridge City Council has:

- Built over 500 net new high quality, energy efficient council homes as part of mixed tenure developments on council land, with funding from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority; and established a longer term programme through a range of land options and funding streams.
- Earmarked 16 new council homes, and purchased 17 additional market homes with government grant, for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.
- Worked with partners on delivery of 22 specially designed, system-build accommodation pods for rough sleepers or those at risk of rough sleeping, with four more in the pipeline for 2024.

#### South Cambridgeshire has:

- Delivered 369 new council homes between April 2019 and March 2024.
- Delivered 76 homes under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) scheme, providing 61 homes for refugees and 15 homes for temporary accommodation.
- Piloted one of the First Homes schemes in the country at Great Abington.
- Implemented a bespoke Northstowe discounted market scheme
- Supported the delivery of 6 Solohaus pods to support those in the Emmaus community in transitioning to independent living.
- Supported delivery of two Rent to Buy schemes



- Supported outline planning permission for the expansion of the Wellcome Genome Campus at Hinxton, which will provide a range of homes for its workers.

### 3. Existing Homes

#### Both councils have:

- Worked with partners in securing grant funding, providing tailored advice to residents, and delivering improvement interventions and projects to make homes warmer and more energy and water efficient across all tenures.
- Carried out focused work across a range of areas, targeting help at people particularly affected by the cost of living crisis.
- Worked with residents to understand the implications of the government's [Social Housing White Paper](#) and prepare for implementation of the new [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act](#) to help improve housing management and maintenance, home and fire safety, and resident engagement.
- Improved our approaches to dealing with damp and mould, including setting up dedicated pathways for reporting issues in council homes, and using data collected to help target investment.
- Developed plans for service improvement following our most recent STAR resident satisfaction surveys.

#### Cambridge City Council has:

- Published detailed advice for owners and landlords on retrofitting their homes. (CC, Retrofitting Your Home, 2022).
- Carried out a programme of energy efficiency improvements to council homes with poor energy ratings, including installing external wall insulation to 379 properties, with around 140 of those also having solar PV panels fitted. This ensure they were improved from Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating D or E to at least a C rating. Additional grant funding has been secured to help fund further retrofitting of council homes with solid walls.
- Introduced targeted enforcement of Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the private rented sector, to ensure that properties with the lowest energy efficiency ratings are brought up to the required minimum 'level E' rating where feasible.
- Started a programme of tenancy audits, aimed at visiting all council tenant households to identify and address issues arising and help target resources where they are most needed.



### South Cambridgeshire District Council has:

- During the last 10 years carried out a programme of energy efficiency improvements to council homes, including 295 air source heat pumps, 4,971 double or triple glazing, 524 external wall insulation, 3,628 cavity wall insulation, 4,187 loft insulation, 1,837 modern storage heaters.
- Introduced a new [Asset Management Strategy](#) for its own stock, as well as publishing its Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy for council tenants and its Council Tenants Disabled Adaptations Policy.
- Procured a new long-term repairs contract for council homes enabling tenants to report and track repairs online.
- Set up the Housing Engagement Board which includes both tenant representatives and district councillors, to ensure tenants views are taken into consideration when making decisions on any service changes.
- Established other resident involvement groups to help monitor contractor performance and policy development; as well as involving tenant reps in the recruitment of key housing roles, and the procurement of the new repairs contract.
- Undertaken a stock condition survey to get a better understanding of the condition of the council's own housing stock.
- Raised awareness of tenancy fraud by way of a key amnesty campaign that gave the opportunity to voluntarily hand in keys with no further action taken where residents were illegally occupying or subletting council properties.
- Improved its approach to bringing empty homes back into use, including employing a dedicated Empty Homes Officer. Following recruitment, 20 homes were brought back into use in 2023/2024.
- Employed a dedicated support worker to support those struggling with their mental health & wellbeing who may struggle to maintain their tenancy.
- Employed a dedicated damp, mould & condensation surveyor and published a damp & mould policy for council tenants.
- Published a Disabled Adaptations Policy for council tenants.

## 4. Settled Lives

### Both councils have:

- Published Homelessness (South Cambridgeshire) and Homelessness & Rough Sleeping (Cambridge City) Strategies, developed within the context of the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023. Actions are being implemented.
- Successfully achieved Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, highlighting our commitment to supporting survivors of domestic abuse.



- Introduced a new [Repairs and Adaptations Policy](#), being delivered through the Home Improvement Agency.
- Increased support to people with mental health issues or who are experiencing financial hardship.

### **Cambridge City Council has:**

- Published a revised Anti-Poverty Strategy, replaced more recently with a new Community Wealth Building Strategy aimed at reducing poverty and inequality in Cambridge, and supporting a more inclusive, fair and sustainable economy.
- Introduced a pilot Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) to help identify households most in need of support.

### **South Cambridgeshire District Council has:**

- Published a Cost of Living Support Programme
- Run a pilot 'Through the Door social prescribing project' through one of the local GP practices, which has now been established nationally.
- Delivered Tenancy Workshops at locations within the district to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, focussing on skills needed to manage a tenancy.
- Implemented safeguarding training corporately across the council.
- Reviewed the mutual exchange policy, including offering financial support to help tenants secure transfers to more suitable accommodation.
- Supported 246 Ukraine guests to move onto live more independently
- Secured Public Health funding to deliver a series of Employment Hubs across the District to help long term unemployed into sustainable work.

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