



Putting the HEART into Housing

APPENDIX 1



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Affordable Homes Service Plan

2015/16

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Corporate Long Term Vision and Aims

South Cambridgeshire will continue to be the best place to live and work and study in the country. Our district will demonstrate impressive and sustainable economic growth. Our residents will have a superb quality of life in an exceptionally beautiful, rural and green environment.

The Council will be recognised as consistently innovative and a high performer with a track record of delivering value for money by focusing on the priorities, needs and aspirations of our residents, parishes and businesses.

- **Engagement:** Engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure we deliver first class services and value for money
- **Partnerships:** Work with partners to create opportunities for employment, enterprise, education and world-leading innovation
- **Wellbeing:** Ensure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer an outstanding quality of life for our residents

Relevant Corporate objectives for the Housing Service 2015-2020

- (1) Develop the property company pilot scheme into a full business plan to deliver affordable housing and generate income
- (4) Work with tenants, parish councils and community groups to sustain successful, vibrant villages
- (5) Build new council houses to provide affordable homes to meet the needs of local communities
- (9) Work with GPs and partners to link health services and to improve the health of our communities
- (10) Ensure the impacts of welfare reform are managed smoothly and effectively
- (12) Increase the range and supply of temporary accommodation to help minimise the use of bed & breakfast accommodation for homeless households

Housing Vision and Aims

To be the best housing service by providing good quality housing across all tenures that is accessible to all – that enhances residents' quality of life, their health and wellbeing, that supports economic growth and social opportunities, alongside improved energy security and reduced carbon footprints.

- **Affordable Housing Provision** – To deliver a range of homes that are affordable to all and where people want to live that will support economic growth and economic activity
- **Better Homes** – To improve the living conditions across all tenures, to help make homes more energy efficient and to reduce fuel poverty
- **Making Best Use of Existing Stock** – To promote safe and sustainable communities, ensuring people are living in the right homes at a time that is right for them
- **Securing Housing with Specialist Support** – To promote fully inclusive communities and to work with partners to provide support and assistance to enable independent living
- **Preventing and Tackling Homelessness** – To reduce homelessness through being proactive in preventative measures and ensuring there is sufficient suitable accommodation available to people who are, or who may become homeless
- **Improving housing options and extending choice** – To work in partnership to provide housing advice so that people understand their housing options, help them to sustain their current home or access alternative suitable accommodation
- **Monitoring and Performance** – To provide a housing service that is transparent and accountable, that is developed in consultation with our tenants, partner agencies and the wider public and demonstrates value for money

Housing Service

This service plan covers both strategic housing functions of the Council and also its landlord role. The service plan for Affordable Homes should be read in conjunction with the [Housing Strategy 2012 to 2016](#) and the [Housing Revenue Account \(HRA\) Business Plan](#)

Monitoring of the Service Plan is completed by our Housing Services Management Team and progress reported in our [Annual Report for Tenants and Leaseholders](#) published in Autumn, as well as up to date information contained in our twice yearly [Tenant and Leaseholder Newsletter](#).

Potential operational risks to the service are identified at an early stage through the HRA Business Plan Risk Register and Housing Risk Register, which are monitored quarterly by the Housing Services Management Team (HSMT) and Executive Management Team (EMT). High level risks identified will also be included in the Strategic Risk Register for monitoring by EMT and approval by the Corporate & Customer Services Portfolio Holder. Where service plan projects help to mitigate the risks identified in the Risk Registers, these are noted in the project tables below (page 6-11).

The Housing Service has three primary functions:

- Landlord service - providing housing management and property maintenance services to over 5,750 homes. This also includes housing related support and the management of gypsy & traveller sites.
- Housing strategy and development – providing a strategic lead on housing issues within the District including assessing housing needs, bringing empty homes back into use, performance management and the Council's new build programme. This also includes an enabling role working in partnership with other local authorities and housing associations to deliver new affordable homes within the District and in partnership on strategic sites close to Cambridge City.
- Housing advice and options – providing a homelessness prevention service and to provide accommodation for those in housing need (including those who are already homeless), through a choice based lettings scheme and other housing options. The provision of this service delivers several statutory requirements for the local authority.

Key Stats (note: details can be located from the [‘Housing Statistical Information Leaflet’](#))

Housing Stock as of December 2014

General Needs homes = 4239
 Supported homes = 1068
 Equity Share homes = 343
 Leasehold homes = 111 (sold flats)
Total homes managed = 5,761

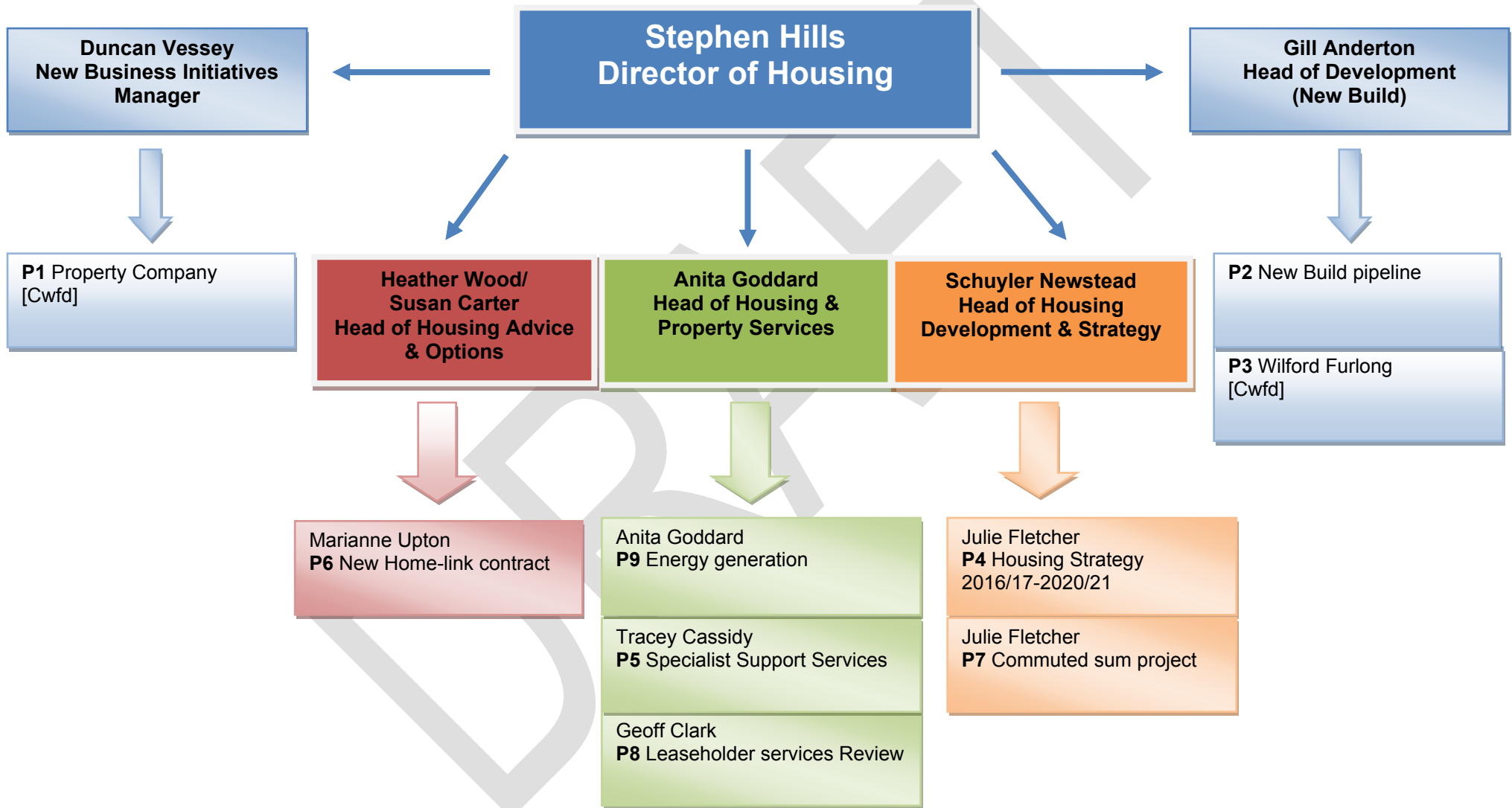
There are also 25 First Time Buyer homes and 30 shared ownership properties

In 2013/14

Total council homes let = 292
 Total housing association homes let = 244
Total homes let through Home-link = 536

Homelessness acceptances = 127
 Homes receiving capital works = 3359
 Affordable homes built = 159
 Homes fitted with solar panels = 1634

Service Improvement Project Overview



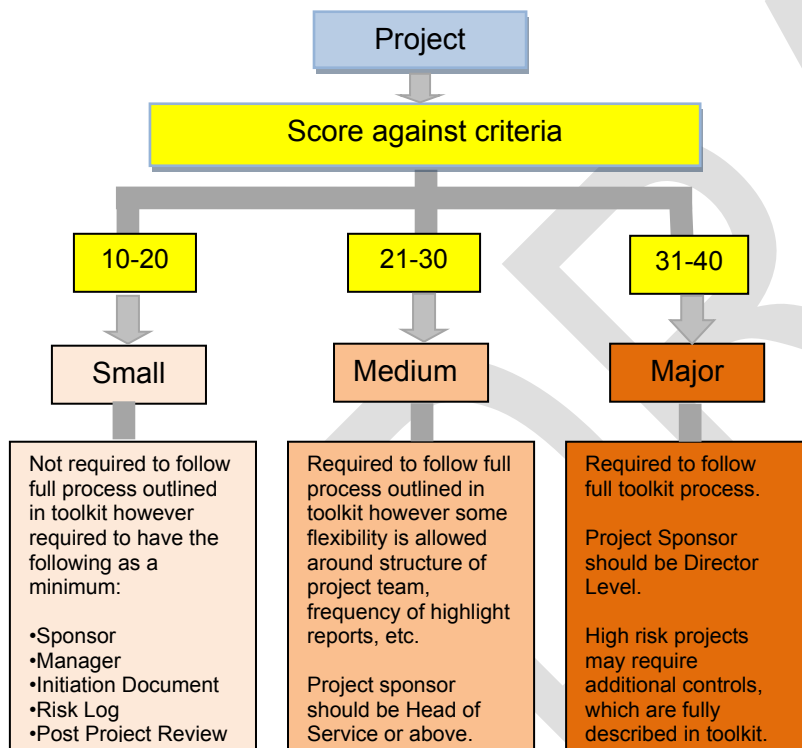
Project Programme

The following pages set out the project programme for each project identified. The prime objective for each project and the expected outputs to be completed during the life of the service plan are detailed, alongside agreed timescales. Each project is scored using the corporate project scoring matrix, aligned to the corporate aims and assessed against the social value relating to Value for Money. Projects are also assessed as to how they help mitigate identified risk from the Risk Registers and if any additional resources are required.

Scoring Projects and Resources

Project scores are based on the level of management that needs to be put in place. The projects are scored against criteria set out in the project management toolkit to give a total score which will indicate whether the project is small, medium or major.

The resource implications for each project within the service plan are identified in the project tables below (see pages 6-11).



The service plan for Affordable Homes includes:
3 Small; 3 Medium and 3 Major

Value for Money (VFM)

We will achieve our aims in the most efficient manner at the best possible price and be able to demonstrate it.

This will include:

- Doing the right things to meet the aims of Affordable Homes (effectiveness)
- Using our assets in the best way to deliver these aims
- Having the right assets to deliver (asset management)
- Having the right processes in place to deliver (efficiency)
- Achieving the right outcomes – meeting standards (quality) aimed for

To ensure we are a high performing housing service and to help identify areas for improvement, we compare ourselves with other housing organisations using Housemark – see our Annual Core Benchmarking Reports. The Annual Report for 2014 highlighted how we provide value for money for our tenants, which was sent to all tenants in Autumn 2014. See also the Affordable Homes Value for Money Framework.

For the service plan, each project is measured against the social value element relating to VFM, this is broken down into four components:

Social and economic benefits

- To individuals and communities

Service Quality

- Consumer benefits to paying customers

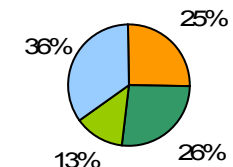
Environmental Benefits



- Quality of neighbourhood, bio-diversity, energy efficiency, etc.


Financial Benefits


- A return (surplus) for reinvestment
- Knock-on benefits to other local services and taxpayer

Overview of social value for all projects



P1 Property Company Ermine Street Housing [Cfwd]						
Prime Objective:	Council owned housing company to buy, sell and rent properties on the open market to provide a rate of return for the council. This is a pilot project reporting to cabinet in Nov 2015					
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish branding (completed) Set up back office policy & procedures (completed) Marketing profile/market research (completed) Acquire portfolio of 20 properties (completed) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service Level Agreement with the Council Prepare timeline and report structure Report to Council on analysing performance, outlining options for the future 			
Timescales:	Start Date: 01/01/2014	End Date: 30/11/2015	Project Duration: 22 months	Review Date: Feb 2015	Project Score: 37 Major	Corporate Aim(s): 1
VFM – Social Value: Social and Economic Benefits		10%	There is generally a lack of private rented accommodation in the District and it is likely that there will be increased competition for this tenure type with 'lower' income families being squeezed out of the area. The Housing Company will have the potential to meet a wide range of housing need.			
Service Quality		10%	Providing good quality, well managed private rented accommodation			
Environmental Benefits		5%	Where possible we will look to provide well insulated, energy efficient homes, in some cases solar panels are installed			
Financial Benefits		75%	The Housing Company will generate a significant revenue stream for the Council in future years. The limited nature of the pilot will enable the Council to test the concept and limit the financial risks before committing to a larger scale investment.			
Mitigating Risk:	Risk STR08 – Medium Term Financial Strategy					
Additional Resources:	£7m borrowing capacity / £100,000 revenue support					
P2 New build pipeline						
Prime Objective:	To source a pipeline of schemes to deliver a council house new build programme. To explore options for a Housing Development Vehicle with potential of working with City and City Deal partners. To contribute council new build homes to the City Deal target of 1000 additional new homes on rural exception sites by 2031					
Outputs:	Phase 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Exception site pipeline for 5 years delivering around 25-30 homes a year Risk appraisal process set up in house Look at options for procurement of a development service to take exception sites forward in the short-medium term/alternative inhouse options Revise the Design Brief for Council new build working with property and management colleagues 			Phase 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on council owned sites & non trad sites Explore all windfall sites & county sites Governance -Create a sign off process for schemes, working with Internal Audit Create a site registration process Set up an online filing system for programme Establish more partnering approach with Planning New Build strategy renewal 		
Timescales:	Start Date: Jan 2015	End Date: July 2015	Project Duration: 6m (possibility to extend)	Review Date: July 2015	Project Score: 33 Major	Corporate Aim(s): 5
VFM – Social Value: Social and Economic Benefits		35%	Provision of additional affordable housing for those unable to access the private sector			
Service Quality		10%	Improving systems to help bring forward sites more quickly			
Environmental Benefits		20%	Energy efficient homes			
Financial Benefits		35%	Potential for increased rental income from additional homes and leverage of additional funding through City Deal			
Mitigating Risk:	Risk HS25 – New Build Strategy					
Additional Resources:	Head of Housing Development (new Build) post on 6m secondment. Sharing learning and expertise with the City Council. Business case to leverage additional funding to establish a Housing Delivery Vehicle being sought as part of the City Deal.					

P3 Wilford Furlong & Brickhills, Willingham [Cfwd]						
Prime Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work closely with residents to create a sustainable and viable scheme of regeneration of the estate. Focus on property condition, hard and soft landscaping, roads and parking. Added value in terms of extra homes as infill development 					
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property Condition surveys and EPC's – additional stock condition information (completed) Creation of a Project Team (completed) Questionnaires, surveys, open days, planning for real days (completed) Support creation of a Residents Panel to act as conduit between residents and council Agreed scheme Planning permission 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tender(s) and building works on site Improved energy efficiency of homes Safer and improved estate layout Use of unused areas for infill developments of new housing Enhanced hard and soft landscaping Intensive liaison with residents throughout all stages 		
Timescales	Start Date: Jan 2014	End Date: Sept 2015	Project Duration: 20 months	Review Date: Dec 2015	Project Score: 29 Medium	Corporate Aim(s): 5
VFM – Social Value		30%	Potential for increased housing. Improving the community through involvement, enhancing the community and higher satisfaction levels for existing tenants			
Social and Economic Benefits		25%	Improved quality of housing for tenants			
Service Quality		25%	Energy efficient homes			
Environmental Benefits		20%	Potential for increased rental income from additional homes and reduced expenditure on day-to-day repairs due to current condition of homes			
Financial Benefits						
Mitigating Risk:	Risk HS25 – New Build Strategy					
Additional Resources:	Part time tenant liaison officer x 16 hrs PW; Survey & Consultation ; Appraisal software (ProVal already in place) As scheme gathers momentum we will need a dedicated officer for 18 months with support from a senior manager (Head of Housing Development (new build))					

P4 Housing Strategy 2016 – 2021						
Prime Objective:	To update the existing Housing Strategy for 2016 – 2020					
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up project group to review strategy objectives Prepare draft Strategy Consult all key stakeholders, including parish councils Approval by Portfolio Holder March 2016 					
Timescales	Start Date: 01/06/2015	End Date: 31/3/2016	Project Duration: 9 months	Review Date: November 2015	Project Score: 20 Small	Corporate Aim(s): 4, 5, 6, 9,10
VFM – Social Value		25%	Strategic direction on promoting health & wellbeing, economic growth & development, affordable housing, reducing fuel poverty and tackling homelessness which will have a beneficial impact on residents in the District			
Social and Economic Benefits		25%	Providing a good quality strategic housing service that sets out the housing aims and objectives for the next 5 years			
Service Quality		25%	Strategic direction on promoting energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty			
Environmental Benefits		25%	Ensuring value for money in service provision			
Financial Benefits						
Mitigating Risk:	Overarching strategy that will help to mitigate all risks identified for strategic housing					
Additional Resources:	None					

P5 Specialist Support Services (part of the Commercialisation programme)						
Prime Objective:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an arms length entity/business An activity to bring in funding from a variety of other sources Deliver a service which plugs the gap between housing, health and social care Potential to make financial return for the council 					
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce a business plan for the project Commence implementation of actions identified within the business plan 					
Timescales	Start Date: 20/10/2014	End Date: 30/9/2016	Project Duration: 84 weeks	Review Date: As per commercialisation programme	Project Score: 29 Medium	Corporate Aim(s): 7, 9
VFM – Social Value Social and Economic Benefits		45%	Providing housing related support cross-tenure with enhancement to service that will be available for those that need it.			
Service Quality		25%	Enhanced service provision – providing greater support to all residents			
Environmental Benefits		5%	Potential to link in with those affected by fuel poverty and signposting as appropriate for support			
Financial Benefits		25%	May by some financial benefits to residents through sign posting for budgetary/money advice. Potential income generation.			
Mitigating Risk:	STR19 – Demands on services from an ageing population STR08 – Medium Term Financial strategy (MTFS)					
Additional Resources:	To be identified within the Business Plan					

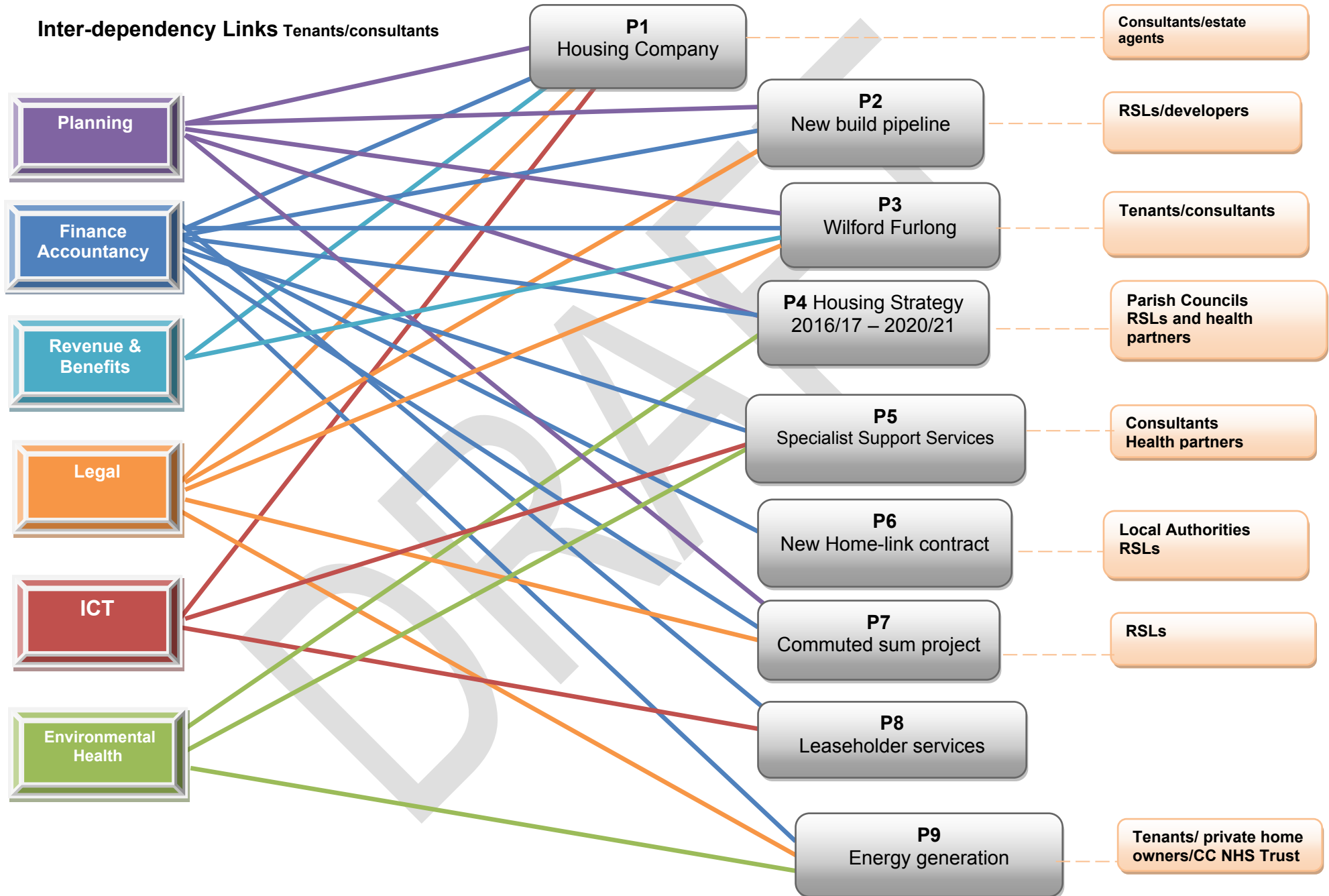
P6 New Home-link contract						
Prime Objective:	Procurement of a new contract with an IT supplier to ensure the continuation of the current sub-regional choice based lettings scheme.					
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New specification for IT system Long term contract for quality and value for money IT system Continuous seamless service for partners and their customers 					
Timescales	Start Date: 02/02/2015	End Date: 22/05/2015	Project Duration: 3 months	Review Date: 12/03/2015	Project Score: 25 Medium	Corporate Aim(s): N/A
VFM – Social Value Social and Economic Benefits		5%	More opportunity to move across areas Good quality adverts provide enough information for realistic housing choices			
Service Quality		45%	Easy to use Single access point for social housing and options			
Environmental Benefits		5%	Predominantly on-line service with limited paper based service			
Financial Benefits		45%	Stability over 8 years for budgets as whole life costs will be used in procurement			
Mitigating Risk:	N/A					
Additional Resources:	SCDC part fund and host 2 full time Home-Link staff, some cost for legal and procurement expertise but cost split 7 ways (across all sub-regions)					

P7 Commuted sum project						
Prime Objective:	To implement a transparent and fair system for the allocation of commuted sums within a set timescale and establish a process for a preferred partner list with registered providers					
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing procedures Invite registered providers to apply to be registered on a preferred partner list to help take forward affordable housing in the district Look at options for expenditure of commuted sums, including the potential for establishing a bidding process 					
Timescales	Start Date: 01/06/2015	End Date: 31/12/2015	Project Duration: 6 months	Review Date: Sept 2015	Project Score: 18 Small	Corporate Aim(s): 2
VFM – Social Value		70%	Providing grant funding to help bring forward affordable housing sites, using a preferred partner list to ensure quality of services provided and good working relationship			
Social and Economic Benefits						
Service Quality		10%	Improved system that is fair and transparent on how commuted sum payments are spent			
Environmental Benefits		10%	Funding could help to improve the energy efficiency of new homes			
Financial Benefits		10%	Providing financial contributions to housing providers and/or other organisations to help bring forward affordable housing			
Risk:	N/A					
Additional Resources:	None					

P8 Leaseholder services						
Prime Objective:	Review of existing Leasehold Services					
Outputs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential joint working with the Housing Company with regards to equity share properties Assess impact on the team re duties relating to Land officer role & Land and property surveyor role Assess the Land Terrier system to ensure fully operational Undertake review of Right to Buy process Review the current Valuation contract with Pocock & Shaw 					
Timescales	Start Date: 01/04/2015	End Date: 31/03/2016	Project Duration: 12 months	Review Date: July 2015	Project Score: 20 Small	Corporate Aim(s):
VFM – Social Value		0%				
Social and Economic Benefits						
Service Quality		80%	To ensure the correct processes are in place to deliver an efficient and cost effective leasehold service.			
Environmental Benefits		0%				
Financial Benefits		20%	Potential for increased efficiency improvements			
Mitigating Risk:	N/A					
Additional Resources:	Existing resources					

P9 Energy generation project (part of the Commercialisation programme)						
Prime Objective:	To generate an income stream for the Council through opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations for the installation of solar panels (PVS) as well as other initiatives in relation to energy efficiency.					
Outputs:	Reduced carbon emissions and reduce fuel costs					
Timescales	Start Date: 01/04/2015	End Date: 31/03/2017	Project Duration: 104 weeks	Review Date: As part of commercialisation project	Project Score: 33 Major	Corporate Aim(s): 7
VFM – Social Value		5%	Develop and equip individuals within the organisation with new skills and experience, being of benefit to staff and the council			
Social and Economic Benefits		5%	Improve the quality of service provisions either in scope, scale or standard of delivery			
Service Quality		30%	Reduction in carbon emissions and fuel costs			
Environmental Benefits		60%	Reduce annual draw on the general fund account through the reduction of expenditure and/or an increase in revenue generation			
Financial Benefits						
Mitigating Risk:	STR08 – Medium Term Financial strategy (MTFS)					
Additional Resources:	Within existing resources					

Inter-dependency Links Tenants/consultants



Project Plan – Milestones

	Project Type	April 2015	May 2015	June 2015	July 2015	Aug 2015	Sept 2015	Oct 2015	Nov 2015	Dec 2015	Jan 2016	Feb 2016	March 2016	Carried Fwd.
P1	Property Company [Cfwd]	Complete financial profile of pilot	Complete Governance proposal, Tax & VAT advice Agree initial management model (50% complete)	Complete draft report	Update to HSMT			Members Briefings (75% complete)	Report to Cabinet (100% complete)					
P2	New build pipeline	Informal report EMT				Report to PFH to approve process (100% Complete) with review to extend								
P3	Wilford Furlong [Cfwd]	Resident survey complete – further resident events April / May dependent on survey results				Report to PFH to approve process (50% complete)							(100% Complete)	Phase 3
P4	Housing Strategy 2016/17-2020/21			Set up project group Agree scope for Strategy (25% complete)	Draft new strategy/consult internally				Update to HSMT (50% complete)	Consult stakeholders on draft strategy (75% complete)			Report to PFH for approval (100% complete)	
P5	Specialist Support Services (review as per commercialisation programme)													
P6	New Home-link contract		Tender of contract complete (100% complete)											
P7	Commuted sum/ preferred partner project			Review existing practices	Report to HSMT on recommendations for implementation (25% complete)	Report to PFH to approve process (50% complete)	Implement process for expenditure (if necessary) (75% complete)			Allocation of funding complete (100% complete)				
P8	Leaseholder services				Update to HSMT (25% complete)								Review Complete (100% complete)	
P9	Energy generation (review as per commercialisation programme)	Contractor to be appointed												Complete by April 2017