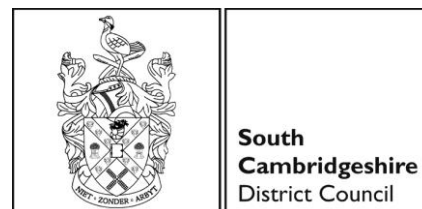


South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne  
Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

t: 03450 450 500  
f: 01954 713149  
dx: DX 729500 Cambridge 15  
minicom: 01480 376743



1 March 2021

To: Chair - Councillor Pippa Heylings  
Vice-Chair – Councillor Dr. Martin Cahn

Members of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee –  
Councillors Geoff Harvey, Grenville Chamberlain, Graham Cone,  
Peter Fane and Jose Hales

Substitutes: Councillors Heather Williams, Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya,  
Nick Wright, Tom Bygott, Dr. Richard Williams, Eileen Wilson and  
Judith Rippeth

Dear Sir / Madam

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Climate and Environment Advisory Committee**, which will be held in **Virtual meeting - Online** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **Tuesday, 9 March 2021 at 2.00 p.m.**

Yours faithfully  
**Liz Watts**  
Chief Executive

**The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you**

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Agenda		Pages
1.	<b>Apologies</b>	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
3.	<b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b> To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2021.	1 - 4
4.	<b>Matters Arising from the Minutes</b>	
5.	<b>Chairman's report</b>	
6.	<b>Cambridge Nature Network, presentation from James Littlewood of CPPF</b>	5 - 14

<b>7.</b>	<b>OxCam Arc Environmental Principles (Cllr BZ Smith, Liz Watts)</b>	<b>15 - 24</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>SCDC Housing Asset Management Strategy Report (Peter Campbell)</b>	<b>25 - 88</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>ZCC Grant Update (Emma Dyer) and Presentation from Cambridge Carbon Footprint on Plans for their Net Zero Now project</b>	<b>89 - 98</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Green Investments Update (Jonathan Bell)</b>	<b>99 - 106</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Review of the Cambridgeshire &amp; Peterborough Independent Commission on Climate Initial Recommendation Report Focusing on Transport and Buildings (chair)</b>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Forward Plan and Date of Next Meeting</b> Items for the next meeting of the Committee on 11 May at 2pm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UK Youth Climate Coalition</li> <li>- HECA Report on progress and plans relating to measures to improve energy efficiency of residential properties</li> <li>- Local Energy Advice Project report (LEAP)</li> <li>- Follow-up to the Chalk Streams Report</li> <li>- Green Investments Update</li> </ul>	

## **Guidance For Members of the Public at Remote Meetings**

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Any person who participates in the meeting in accordance with the Council's procedure rules, is deemed to have consented to being recorded and to the use of those images (where participating via video conference) and/or sound recordings for webcast purposes. When speaking, members of the public should not disclose any personal information of any individual as this might infringe on the rights of that individual and breach the Data Protection Act.

For more information about this meeting please contact [democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk)

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# Agenda Item 3

## South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee held on  
Tuesday, 12 January 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

**Chair:** Pippa Heylings

**Vice-Chairs:** Dr. Martin Cahn and Geoff Harvey

**Committee Members in attendance:**

Grenville Chamberlain

Peter Fane

Dr. Richard Williams

**Councillors in attendance:**

Bridget Smith and Hazel Smith

**Officers:**

John Cornell

Jane Green

Siobhan Mellon

Trevor Nicoll

Alex Snelling-Day

Natural Environment Team Leader

Built and Natural Environment Manager

Development Officer - Climate and  
Environment

Head of Environment and Waste

Green Energy Investment Manager

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Jose Hales and Graham Cone.  
Councillor Richard Williams substituted for Councillor Graham Cone.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

**4. Fens Biosphere Project - Presentation**

Mark Nokkert the Programme Manager of the Fens Biosphere Project and Roger Mitchell its Chairman gave a presentation to the Committee on the benefits of achieving UNESCO Biosphere status for the Fens.

In response to questioning, Roger Mitchell explained that:

- The aim was to create “buffer zones” alongside the statutory protected sites.
- The boundaries to the Project were the legally defined administrative boundaries.
- Quantitative data was being used to measure the targets such as doubling nature.

In response to questioning, Mark Nokkert explained that

- The Lowlands Agricultural Task Force was promoting low carbon farming techniques.
- Project were working with 11 local authorities and seeking their support.
- The Project was self-financing and so by endorsing the aims of the project the Councils were not committing to any expenditure.

The Built and Natural Environment Manager stated that the aims of the Fen Biosphere Project complements the Council's existing policies. She explained that a recommendation from the Committee to Cabinet would be required to make support of the Project corporate policy.

The Committee unanimously recommended that the Lead Cabinet member ensures that the Council supports the aims of the Fens Biosphere Project and encourages other local authorities to do the same.

## **5. Green Energy Investment Programme Update**

The Green Energy Investment Manager presented this report that updated the Committee on the approach being taken to finding, prioritising and progressing green energy investment opportunities.

In response to questioning, the Green Energy Investment Programme explained that the Council should be able to continue to borrow funds from the Public Works Loans Board as the projects were for the public benefit and not just for profit. It was noted that officers in Accountancy would be able to provide Members with more information regarding this.

Members of the Committee suggested initiatives for widening the programme by working with the owners of neighbouring properties when installing solar panels or heat pumps and purchasing land for wind turbines. The Green Energy Investment Manager agreed that the Council should work in partnership to deliver the investment programme.

The Committee **Noted** the report.

## **6. Doubling Nature Strategy and Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document for Greater Cambridge**

This report was discussed after agenda item 4.

The Climate and Environment Development Officer introduced this report on the draft Doubling Nature Strategy, which provided details on how the Council would achieve the aims agreed at the meeting of Full Council on 4 July 2019. The Natural Environment Team Leader gave an oral update on the Supplementary Planning Document, which was a key component of the Council's strategy to double nature.

It was agreed that the Council should have challenging, aspirational targets.

Councillor Pippa Heylings noted the links between the Council's work managing awarded watercourses and the Fens Biosphere. The Head of Environment and Waste suggested the Fens Biosphere project might consider extending its boundary into South Cambridgeshire to include more of these watercourses and Mark Nokkert was invited to contact him to follow this up.

The Committee noted plans for the Biodiversity SPD and **Recommended** adoption of the Doubling Nature Strategy by Cabinet at their meeting on 3 February 2021.

## 7. **Retrofit Opportunity**

The Development Officer, Climate and Environment presented a report outlining an opportunity arising from the EU funded Eastern New Energy Research Collaboration Project (ENE) to support the development of retrofit services for the benefit of South Cambridgeshire residents.

Soren Nellesgaard and Warren Pope from the co-operative Retrofit Works gave a presentation on the working being done through the ENE project which included the retrofit of 40 homes, and the aspiration to develop a one-stop shop retrofit service enabling further retrofits beyond the end of the ENE project.

It was clarified that Retrofit Works will be working with local installers to help build capacity, and the aim was to retrofit far in excess of the 40 properties funded through the ENE project.

The Committee **Recommended** that the Council purchase a one year licence for the relevant software and champion the project in the wider area.

## 8. **Forward Plan**

The following topic was suggested for future discussion:

- The Ox-Cam arc project and its environmental principles

## 9. **Date of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on Tuesday 9 March at 2pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.**

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# Agenda Item 6

## **Cambridge Nature Network: A Nature Recovery Network for Cambridge**

**Presentation by James Littlewood, Chief Executive, Cambridge Past, Present & Future to South Cambs District Council Environment & Climate Change Committee, 9 March 2021**

### **1. Request to the Committee**

- I. The Committee is asked to give its support, in principle, to an emerging Cambridge Nature Network.
- II. If the Committee is supportive, how could South Cambs Council be involved in helping to deliver a Cambridge Nature Network?

### **2. Summary**

A partnership of local NGO's is developing a local nature recovery network for the Cambridge area. This is based around ecological principles at a landscape scale. Surveys and research have been carried out over the past 2 years which have identified 5 priority areas that would comprise a nature recovery network within a 10km radius of Cambridge.

This Cambridge Nature Network has been adopted by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Partnership as one of their 6 priority landscape areas for nature recovery, as part of their programme to double nature by 2050.

One of the purposes of the nature recovery network is to target limited resources where they will have the greatest benefit.

Discussions have been carried out with landowners and are ongoing, these have generally been positive.

The research and information produced by this work is being submitted to the Local Plan process in stages and dialogue has taken place with Land Use Consultants and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service.

The work has also considered how a Cambridge Nature Network could be funded and sustained financially.

An advisory group has been helping to inform the project, chaired by Dame Fiona Reynolds and including John Torlesse, Kim Wilkie, Robert Myers and Sir Nicholas Bacon.

The next steps include:

- Raising awareness of the network, building support for it, and encouraging stakeholders to get involved and to take action.
- Creating new nature-rich green spaces through the opportunities identified.
- Advice and support for farmers to adopt more nature-friendly farming.
- Collaborative working to make the best use of limited resources and maximise opportunities.

### **3. Introduction**

Since 2018, Cambridge Past, Present & Future, the local Wildlife Trust and other organisations have been carrying out work to identify a Nature Network for the Cambridge area that could halt the decline in nature and enable it to recover.

This is a network of wildlife friendly habitats that would be of sufficient scale to make a difference in tackling the biodiversity crisis and achieve the Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Vision and also help to meet the greenspace and access to nature needs of the rapidly growing population. It will also help our prosperity by making our area an attractive place to live, learn or do business.

The network takes a hierarchical approach based on the Lawton principles for the design of ecological networks (Lawton et al, 2010). The key elements of this are that natural green spaces should be (in order of importance): Of better quality > Bigger in size > There should be more of them > They should be more connected to each other by stepping-stones of habitat and nature friendly farming > Or connected through corridors of habitat.

A Cambridge Nature Network is not a giant park or nature reserve, instead it would consist of clusters of individual parks, nature reserves and natural habitats that are linked together. The land between these places is mostly farmed or urban and is likely to mostly stay that way in the short-term but there are opportunities for nature friendly farming that can buffer, connect or provide stepping-stones between high quality nature sites.

Over time, there will be opportunities to expand or create new nature areas and green spaces through philanthropy, fund-raising and to support new developments or economic growth. In relation to development this could be either through biodiversity net gain or provided as ancillary to new developments, as we have seen at Trumpington.

The nature network is not a new designation. It is about prioritising areas for action because of their existing value to nature or their potential to contribute to a functioning nature network. Nevertheless, adoption of the nature network within the OxCam Arc Spatial Framework, in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, in supplementary planning documents, or recognition that it meets the requirements of a [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#), would provide formal recognition and this in turn would facilitate access to funds to help achieve it. For example, to benefit from Biodiversity Off-setting or to benefit from the new Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS, which will replace Countryside Stewardship from 2024).

### **Where is it?**

It is focussed on an area that includes Cambridge and a 10 km radius. This was partly for practical purposes and the amount of funding available, but also recognising the benefits of being close to population and where growth is most likely.

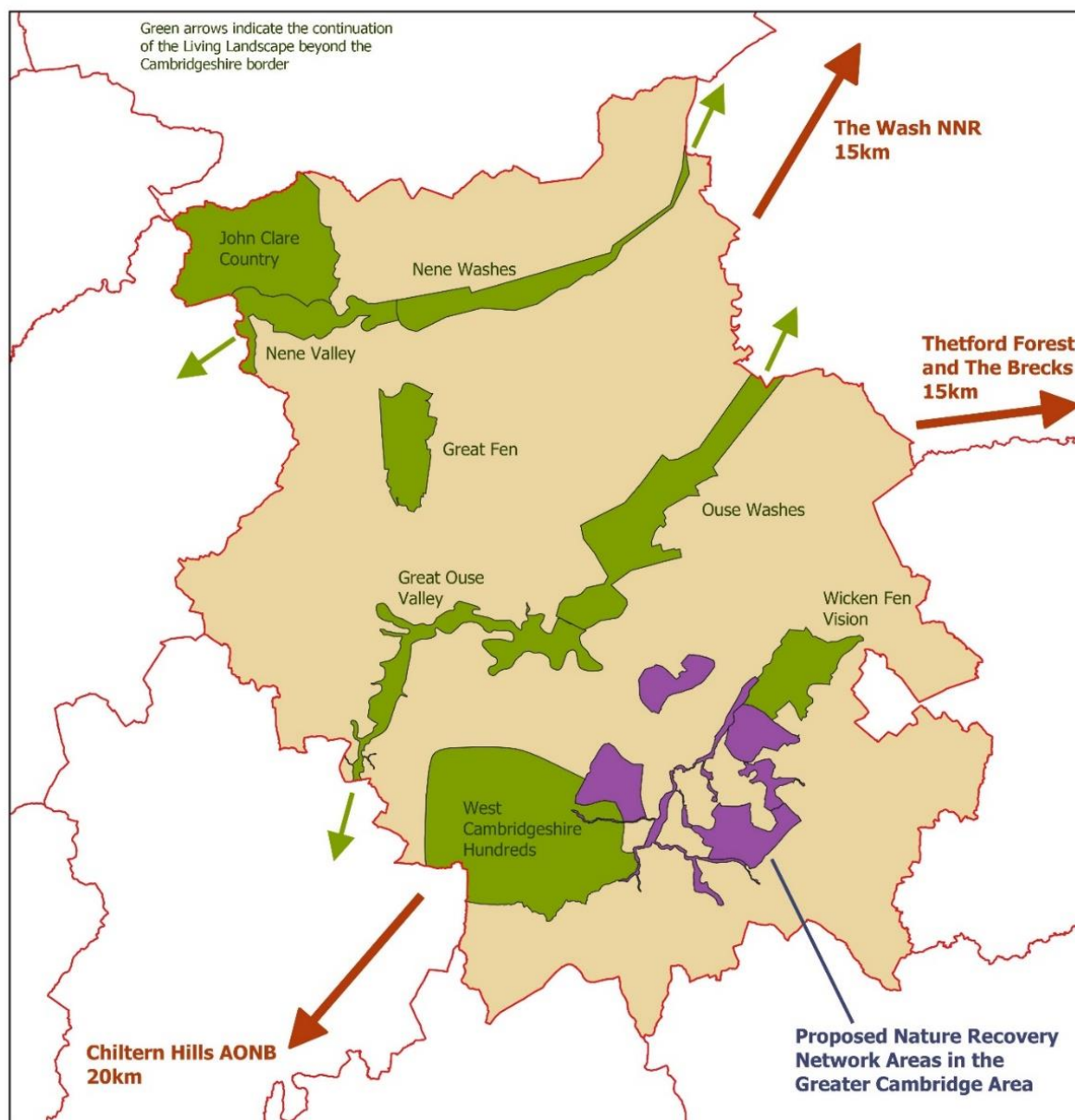
However, nature knows no boundaries and the Cambridge Nature Network is connected to other landscape scale conservation initiatives, such as the Wicken Fen Vision to the north east and the West Cambridgeshire Hundreds to the west. To the north east is the Ouse Valley Priority Landscape Area (Fen Drayton).

The Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Partnership has agreed 6 priority landscape areas for nature recovery, including the Cambridge Nature Network (Map 1).

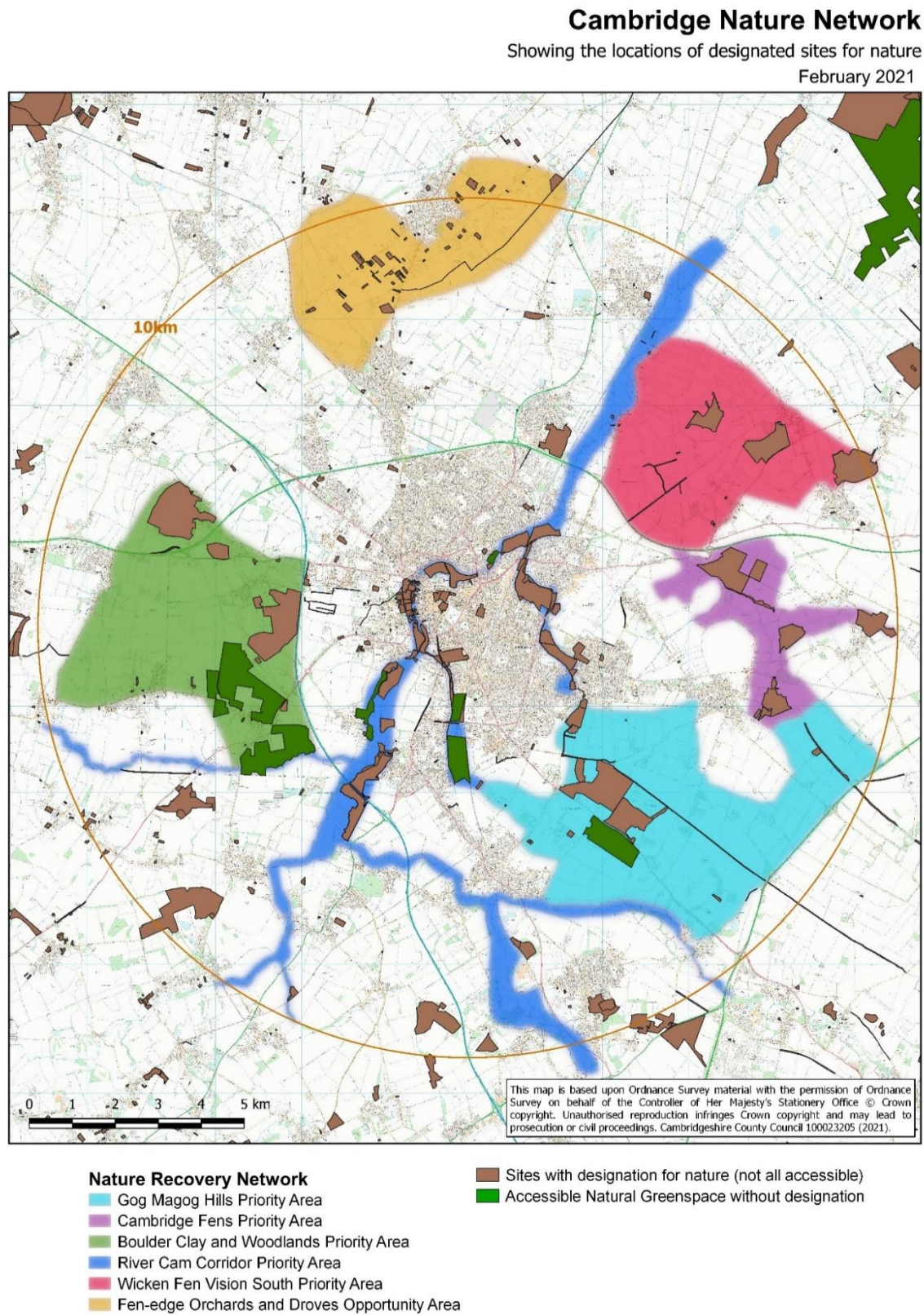
Based on analysis of data, land ownership and ground-truthing surveys, the Cambridge Nature Network is composed of five nature priority areas and one opportunity area, which are shown on Map 2.

The precise boundaries of these areas are not totally fixed, but they are mostly based on landscape features which reflect habitat quality - such as contour levels, floodplain and soil types.

Map 1. Priority Landscape Scale Nature Recovery Network in Cambs & Peterborough



Map 2: Overview of Cambridge Nature Network



Below is a description of each of these areas. We are developing a vision for each of them and a detailed map showing the best opportunities for creating new habitats and natural green spaces in each area. Maps for the Gog Magog Hills are shown as an example of this approach.

### **Gog Magog Hills**

This large area of approximately 25km<sup>2</sup> south-east of Cambridge is defined by where the underlying chalk geology comes to the surface, which corresponds well to the 25m contour line. The southern boundary is marked by the A11, with the urban areas of Cambridge defining the northern boundary and the River Granta and riverside villages the western boundary. The area directly connects with both the Cambridge Fens and River Cam priority areas. It includes the chalk grassland SSSIs of Cherry Hinton Chalk Pits, Fleam Dyke, Gog Magog golf course and Roman Road, as well as other Wildlife Sites and accessible natural greenspaces such as Wandlebury Country Park, Magog Down and Beechwoods LNR.

### **Cambridge Fens**

East of Cambridge, Fulbourn, Teversham and Wilbraham Fens mark the edge of the Fens landscape character area. Three SSSIs - Fulbourn Fen, Wilbraham Fen and Great Wilbraham Common - form the core of this 7km<sup>2</sup> area, which connects them. The area is largely defined by the 10m contour line in the north and 15m contour line to the south and the surface geology comprises both peat and Holocene river terrace gravels. The A14 forms the northern boundary, separating this area from Wicken Fen (South), while the villages of Teversham, the Wilbrahams and Fulbourn also form discrete boundaries being located on the higher ground.

### **Wicken Fen (South)**

The National Trust has a long-term vision to extend its Wicken Fen reserve southwards towards the edge of the city of Cambridge, covering an area of over 50km<sup>2</sup>. The southern part of this vision area (approx. 17km<sup>2</sup>) provides a gateway from the city into the fen proper. Defined by geographical constraints, this area has the A14 to the south (marking the northern edge of the city), the River Cam Corridor to the west, the B1102 to the east and an approximate distance of 10 Km from the city centre as its northern boundary. The area is characterised by low-lying, wet, clay soils on top of the underlying Cretaceous marly chalk. It lies beneath the 10m contour line and is cross-cut by a series of drains, including Quy Water and Bottisham Lode. Quy Fen SSSI sits at the heart of this area and demonstrates the potential habitat which could be restored across it. Further north, the fen peats come to the surface, forming a direct link to the core, northern part of the Wicken Fen vision area.

### **River Cam Corridor**

Amounting to a total of 15km<sup>2</sup>, this is a linear area stretching through the Greater Cambridge area and connecting many of the other Priority Areas. It encompasses the River Cam, its floodplain and catchment tributaries including the Bourn Brook, Cherry Hinton Brook, River Granta and the River Rhee. The underlying geology is Holocene river terrace gravels overlying Cretaceous gault clay, though the River Granta from Babraham flows down on the Cretaceous marly chalk. This area includes many sites which are already part of the green infrastructure within Cambridge, for example Grantchester Meadows, the college Backs, many of Cambridge's commons and Ditton Meadows. It also includes several County or City Wildlife Sites e.g. Cherry Hinton Brook and Skater's Meadow, LNRs such as Paradise and Bryon's Pool and other more recently created strategic green space such as those at Trumpington Meadows and Hobson's Park (Clay Farm, Great Kneighton).

### **Boulder Clay Woodlands**

This area of approximately 18km<sup>2</sup> covers the higher ground (over 25m) to the west of Cambridge and sits upon the glacial boulder clay deposits, which overlay the Cretaceous marly chalk and gault clay. Maddingley Wood SSSI lies on the plateau and the ground conditions are conducive to woodland cover, which has been expanded in recent years through small-scale woodland planting. The area

extends down to the A428 and M11 in the north and east. Although at present the majority of the area is intensive arable farmland with scattered hedgerows and woods, it does include or adjoin the Coton Countryside Reserve (CPPF), Burwash Manor Farm and Lark Rise Farm (CRT), all of which are farms not only demonstrating wildlife-friendly practices, but also engaging with the public through a series of permissive footpaths. Thus, this area presents an opportunity to extend this network, increasing the quantity and quality of habitats and accessible countryside. The long-distance footpath the Harcamlow Way passes through the area and could provide a nucleus for a green corridor. The Bin Brook flows through the area, and the Bourn Brook lies to the south, connecting this priority area to the strategic West Cambridgeshire Hundreds landscape area to the west beyond the study area. This area forms a significant part of what has been termed the quarter to six quadrant of Cambridge.

### **Fen-edge Orchards and Drovers**

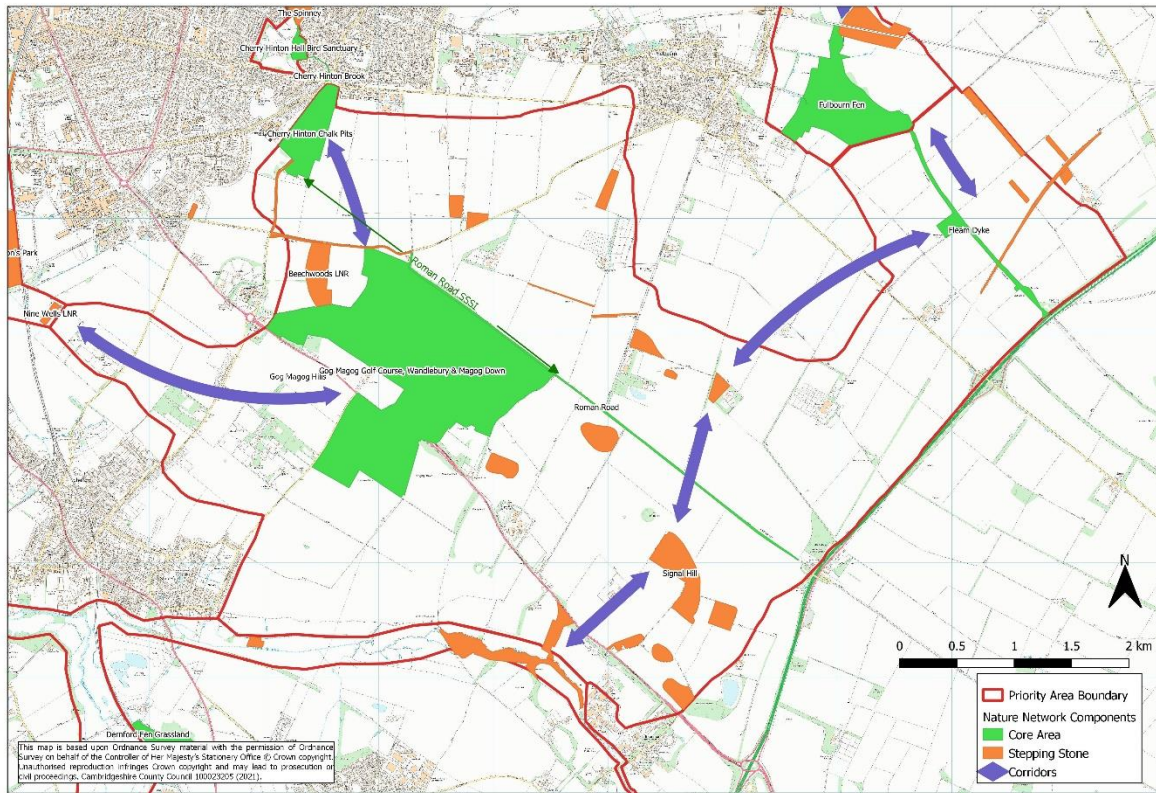
In addition to the five Priority Areas listed above we have also identified a sixth Priority Area to the north-west of Cambridge. This area does not have the same existing concentration of wildlife-rich habitats or countryside as the other five Priority Areas and as such it should be considered as a “stepping-stone” for nature between Cambridge and the wildlife-rich areas in the Ouse Valley. This fen-edge area links well to the wider strategy for a connected fens landscape set out in the Fens for the Future Strategy, the proposed Fens Biosphere as well connecting to the New Life on the Old West project area.

In the past, this area of approx. 15km<sup>2</sup> was a major producer of fruit, and was covered in orchards, a small number of which remain. This area is underlain by Jurassic and Cretaceous clays and sands, is mostly beneath the 10m contour line and is well drained by a series of ditches and drains, including Beach Ditch, a County Wildlife Site. This could become a strategic area to provide residents of Cottenham, Histon, Oakington, Rampton and Landbeach with an area of countryside to explore by a series of newly created pathways along ditches and old droves, which could provide wildlife corridors through the area for the benefit of the aquatic plants and animals. To the west, this area also connects to Northstowe and could provide an area of accessible countryside beyond the relatively constrained urban greenspaces of the new town. The condition of the remaining orchards would need to be assessed but allowing public access into some of these would provide a link to the heritage of the area. There is scope to create a number of community orchards, combining wildflower areas and orchard trees, including local varieties of which there are many that have been developed in this area.

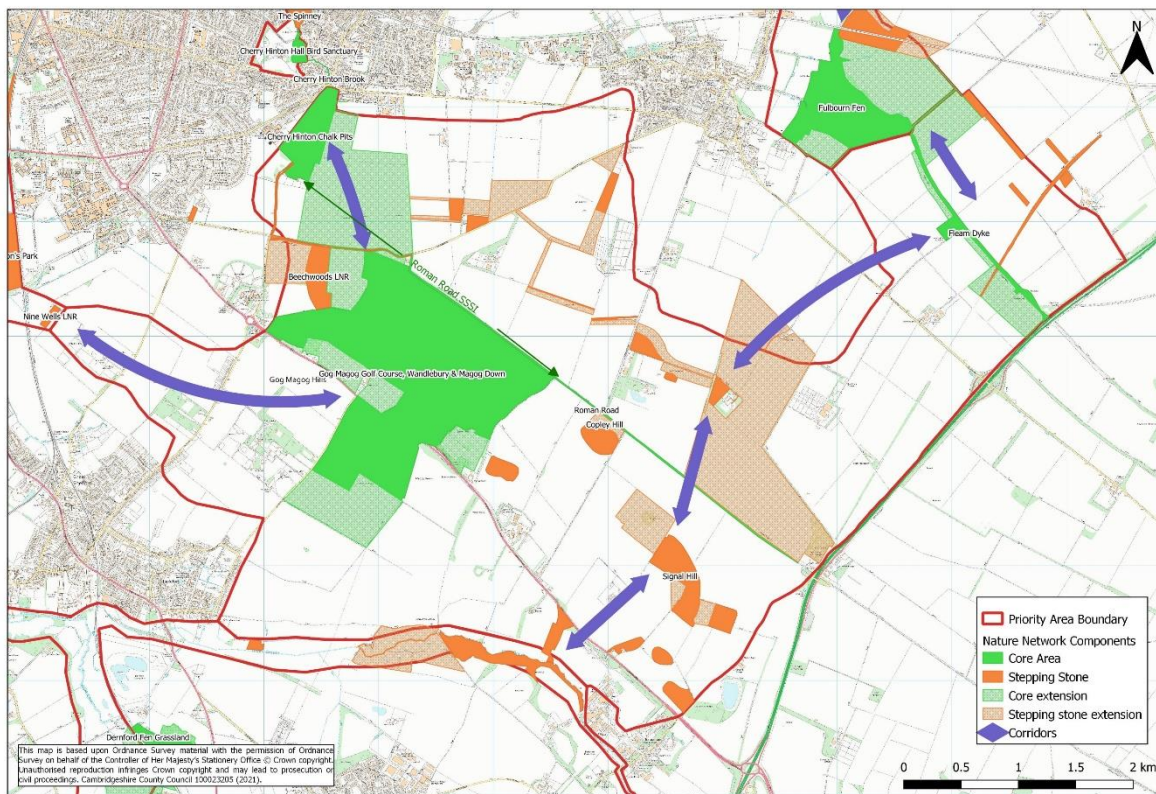
### **Land Outside the Priority Areas**

Outside of the priority areas there are important nature conservation sites and areas of semi-natural habitat, but these are fewer and more isolated. In these areas, at the present time, it will be very difficult to achieve the agglomeration benefits of landscape scale conservation. However, nature can and should occur everywhere, so being outside of the Nature Network does not preclude actions that contribute to nature recovery. Nature friendly farming can occur anywhere. Wildlife friendly management of open spaces, gardens and buildings can occur throughout the City and villages. Ideally these should also follow the same principles of the Nature Network: Better site quality > Bigger sites > More sites > Stepping stones & nature friendly farming > corridors. There may also be opportunities to connect with the Nature Network priority areas.

Map 3. Gog Magog Hills current situation



Map 4. Gog Magog Hills priority opportunities for nature recovery (future vision)



#### 4. Key Findings

Within each of the priority areas there are already areas of green space and natural habitats and there are already examples of nature friendly farming. In some areas there is already a network of habitats that link places for nature together, for example the cluster of sites on the top of the Gog Magog Hills.

**However, in all the priority areas the habitats are too poor quality, too small and too isolated and considerable effort and resources will be needed over decades to restore a healthy nature network.**

As part of our research, we have examined public access to natural greenspace in the Cambridge area. This shows that historically Cambridgeshire has lacked the large-scale open access land found in other southern counties, such as downland, heaths, forests or coasts. Over the past 20 years the population of Cambridgeshire has grown by around 30% and in addition, over the past 10 years research suggests that nationally there has been a 27% growth in visits to the countryside. Our research indicates that since 2000, the provision of natural greenspace in Cambridgeshire has not kept pace with population growth, let alone rising demand. We conclude Cambridgeshire also has one of the lowest percentages of open access land and accessible natural greenspace.

One consequence of this is that natural green spaces in our area are under pressure, impacting on nature and heritage and in some cases being full, so that people cannot even get in. The pandemic has exacerbated this, giving us an insight into what will happen if the amount of green space is not increased in-line with population growth and demand.

People want access to nature for their health and well-being and this is increasingly seen as a key determinant of quality of life. In a recent survey of young employees in the Cambridge Area (aged 21-35) conducted through Cambridge Ahead, access to nature was the top ranked concern, ahead of housing, transport or traditional political topics.

There is clearly a need for more natural greenspace in the Cambridge area, both for nature and for people.

There are, of course, reasons why this situation has arisen:

- Cambridgeshire has a lot of high-quality agricultural land, resulting in higher land prices, higher tenancy costs and little marginal land.
- Land around Cambridge has very high hope value (as demonstrated by the Local Plan call for sites) disincentivising it for non-economic uses and making it (too) expensive for purchase by NGOs or public sector.
- Since 2000 large development sites have mostly provided adequate levels of natural greenspace but smaller development sites have not, and they account for around 50% of population growth.
- Many nature sites are water or wetland, so that the area available for recreation is small compared to the size of site (eg Milton Country Park, Fen Drayton Lakes, Wicken Fen, etc)

#### 5. How will it be funded?

Resources for this work are likely to be limited, and so targeting investment where it will have the biggest benefit for nature and people is crucial. Despite political rhetoric, public sector funding for this type of work is minimal and the amount that can be fund-raised by NGOs is limited. Future agricultural subsidies have the potential to deliver nature friendly farming. Biodiversity net-gain from new developments might provide some funding and any new developments that are close to the

Nature Network could provide new natural green spaces (eg redevelopment of Cambridge airport or Cambridge North East). There is evidence that income can be generated from users of green spaces in order to fund the ongoing care of nature sites (eg through admission charges, car parking, catering, events, etc) and maximising this will be essential. We are also exploring whether there are opportunities for collaborative marketing that would encourage more individuals and local companies to help pay for the network.

The work that we have undertaken on the finances has been supported with expertise from Cambridge Ahead and is also linked to the Cambridgeshire Future Parks Accelerator Project.

## **6. Who is responsible for the Cambridge Nature Network?**

We all are. A Nature Network will take decades to create and it can only happen if everyone works together towards a shared vision. It will need the support of landowners, local authorities, parish councils, government agencies, business, charities and the wider community.

Nature can only recover on land (or water) and therefore landowners are fundamental to the delivery of a Nature Network.

Individual landowners will be responsible for what happens on their land.

We are engaged in discussions with farming landowners and in general they have been positive about improving biodiversity and more nature friendly farming. We are providing reports for each landowner highlighting opportunities for biodiversity improvements on their land. We hope to be able to establish nature friendly farming clusters which can encourage and support them.

Being part of the Nature Network is also likely to help farmers access financial support from the ELMS when it is introduced.

The City Council and charities are likely to be those providing green spaces with access for the public. A meeting has taken place between CambridgePPF, Wildlife Trust, National Trust, Milton Country Park, Magog Trust, RSPB, botanic garden and city council and in principle they are all supportive of the nature network and can see how their individual work and projects can help to deliver the nature network.

We are also talking to some of the landowners who have put forward their sites for future development so that we can discuss how any new green infrastructure provided as part of their schemes could also help to deliver the Cambridge Nature Network. For example, the development of Cambridge Airport. These discussions are on a without prejudice basis.

The initial work to identify and progress a Cambridge Nature Network has mostly been carried out by CambridgePPF and the Wildlife Trust funded through a grant from the Gatsby Foundation.

Cambridge Ahead are working on the financial sustainability of the network.

An advisory group is helping to inform the project, chaired by Dame Fiona Reynolds and including John Torlesse, Kim Wilkie, Robert Myers and Sir Nicholas Bacon.

A final report will be published by the end of March 2021.

We have provided draft reports of our work to the local councils as part of the evidence base for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process.

## 7. Next Steps

We are still working on the next steps for this work, but they include:

- Incorporation into Greater Cambridge Local Plan as part of the NPPF requirement for Local Plans to set out a strategy for a coherent ecological network. We would also like to see the nature network form part of the OxCam Arc Strategic Framework (along with the other 5 LNP priority landscape areas).
- The work we have done is supported by government policy as set out in the Environment Bill, which will require local areas to prepare nature recovery strategies. The Cambridge Nature Network would meet this requirement for the area around Cambridge.
- Development of a pipeline of projects that can be put forward for funding opportunities. This would include individual projects within the network delivered by landowners, for example creation of a new integrated sewage filtration wetland at Coton Countryside Reserve or the expansion Wandlebury (both CambridgePPF). It would also include themed collaborative projects, such as chalk streams or health.
- Provide support for farmers/landowners to adopt nature friendly farming. This is likely to involve employing a farm adviser to support new farmer clusters as well as working with institutional landowners.
- Working with developers and planners to ensure that new housing, employment and transport schemes do not damage the network and that any opportunities to help deliver the network are maximised.
- Communication with parish councils, local communities and businesses in the network, seeking their support and asking them what they can do. The Local Nature Partnership has developed a [Local Nature Recovery Toolkit](#) that could be used for this purpose.
- Exploring governance and communication arrangements for the nature network.

# Agenda Item 7

## **Environment Principles – Final Draft**

### **Report by Cllr Bridget Smith, Environment Group Lead**

#### **Background**

In 2020 the ARC Environment working group agreed to produce a set of ARC wide Environment Principles. The principles are attached. They are the result of a collaborative piece of work led by a sub group of the working group, and have had input from a range of partners and stakeholders including:

- Environmental NGOs (who drafted the first document)
- Local Nature Partnerships
- Local Government environment and planning policy representatives (we received responses from c. 20 local authorities, with representation from across the Arc)
- DEFRA
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- MHCLG (planning policy lead)
- University representative from the Universities' Environment Group
- A LEP representative
- Anglian Water
- An Energy Hub representative

#### **Status of Principles**

The principles are a statement of ambition for the Arc. They are intended to:

- support our position with respect the environment policy emerging from the Arc Spatial Framework
- use the Arc as a place for DEFRA to test and apply its 25 year plan and funding through pilots and projects
- support Local Planning Authorities with a frame of reference to develop the principles through Local and Strategic Plans at a local and sub-regional level

## **An Outline of the Principles**

The Environment Principles are grouped under four themes:

- 1. protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets, including nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and priority habitats, through the implementation of the spatial planning mitigation hierarchy of avoid, mitigate, compensate and gain.**
- 2. be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development, in line with the ambitions set out in the government's 25 year plan. This will incorporate a systems-based and integrated assessment and implementation approach. We will aim to go beyond the minimum legislated requirements for development.**
- 3. Ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc.**
- 4. Use natural resources wisely.**

Each theme has a number of sub-principles (and one or two principles are still being developed, for example, a waste/circular waste principle).

**The principles were supported by the Arc Leaders' Executive Group on 19 February and will now be considered by the Arc Plenary In March 2021**

### **Next steps**

Following adoption of the Environment Principles, they will be shared amongst a wider audience including the development community. The next piece of work for the Arc Environment Group is to develop an Environment Strategy which will set out a comprehensive plan for how the principles will be delivered in the Arc. This piece of work has been initiated through a collaboration with Cranfield University MSc programme; over the next ten weeks a project will map out what the strategy should include, referring to best practice in similar regions globally. It is likely that the strategy will take 12-18 months to complete.

**Attached: Draft Principles**

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## Shared regional principles for protecting, restoring and enhancing the environment in the Oxford to Cambridge Arc

**In March 2019, Government and local partners set out their ambition for the Arc in a joint declaration<sup>1</sup>:**

“We want better places to live, which are beautiful and inspiring, to benefit the Arc’s residents today as well as tomorrow. The Government has already set out its intention for the Arc to embody England’s 25 Year Environment Plan, which we will work together to deliver, including through planning for local natural capital. We want new developments to use intelligent and sensitive design to create or enhance habitats and improve habitat connectivity, in situ and in the surrounding area. We also want to improve access to the environment for existing and new communities in order to improve health and wellbeing.”

“Conserving and enhancing the natural environment is at the heart of Government’s ambitions for the Arc. The 25 Year Environment Plan also sets out our comprehensive approach to improving landscapes and habitats, and the aspiration to move to a policy of net environmental gain. We expect the policy for the wider Oxford-Cambridge corridor to embody this approach.”

An Environment Working Group (EWG) has been established to take forward the environmental pillar outlined within the ambition document. The EWG will work with partners in the Arc, including those responsible for the other pillars, to ensure that the protection and enhancement of the environment is at the heart of decision-making and any actions are based on a clear and agreed evidence base.

**In October 2020 an economic prospectus for the Arc was published jointly by local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships within the Arc. It outlines the following vision:**

“By 2050, the Arc will be a world leading place for high-value growth, innovation and productivity. A global hub where ideas and companies are generated and thrive, home to exemplary models of 21st century development, with a high-quality environment and outstanding quality of life, and with a strong economic focus that drives inclusive clean growth.”

The environmental principles supporting this vision are set out in this document. They are ambitious and will require the collective effort of all partners in the Arc if they are to be delivered.

**The regional principles have been written and agreed by the Arc’s local partners and stakeholders. They are informed by Government policy. They are a clear statement of regional intent that will help to clarify that ambition, and the commitment to adopting an approach that results in environmentally sustainable economic growth. This includes the protection, restoration and**

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<sup>1</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/799993/OxCam\\_Arc\\_Ambition.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799993/OxCam_Arc_Ambition.pdf)

**enhancement of the environment (air, water, land, soil, biodiversity), net biodiversity and net environmental gain, net zero carbon, the sustainable use of resources.**

The principles align with the government's 25 Year Environment Plan<sup>2</sup> and the commitment in the joint declaration to embody the 25 year plans goals and ambitions. We will also take account of other appropriate government strategies, plans and guidance. Our aim is for the principles to inform and become an integral part of developing plans and statements in relation to the Arc, local plans, local council activities and the plans and activities of activities and delivery programs for all bodies operating in the Arc. It is also our ambition to see universities, private sector development and third sector organisations adopt these principles.

**The principles address how we will tackle some of the biggest challenges of our time: achieving net zero carbon, climate resilience, biodiversity net gain, environmental net gain, doubling the area of land actively managed for nature, restoring, protecting and enhancing the natural environment and ensuring renewable natural capital (resources derived from living things that if properly managed can be replenished) remains available for future generations.**

## The principles

### The Arc partners will seek to:

1. **Work towards net zero carbon at an Arc level** no later than 2040. This will include:
  - a. Ensuring all **decisions about development and new infrastructure support this goal.**
  - b. Working with Government to **enhance building regulations and planning policy to actively reduce the carbon footprint of, and energy consumption in, new buildings.**
  - c. Pursuing a **major programme of transformation** in existing settlements and infrastructure to reduce energy intensity and carbon emissions.
  - d. Construction, operational and transport activities.
2. **Protect, restore, enhance and create new nature areas and natural capital assets**, including nationally and locally designated wildlife sites and priority habitats, and links between them. We will implement the spatial planning mitigation hierarchy of avoid, minimise, remediate, compensate and gain. This will include:
  - a. Doubling the area of land managed primarily for nature in the Arc (**'Doubling Nature'**). To contribute to Government's commitment to protecting 30% of land for nature conservation by 2030. We will seek to maximise public, private and third sector funding opportunities **to protect, restore and enhance the natural environment** and maintain existing, and increase investment in, natural capital assets, working with partners including major landowners and our important agriculture sector across the Arc.
  - b. Coordinating work on local nature recovery strategies and the Arc's contribution to **the Nature Recovery Network for England** by creating more, bigger, better-

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<sup>2</sup> [A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment](#)

connected places, in the required condition, for nature including landscape scale interventions.

- c. Delivering **biodiversity net gain for Town & Country Planning Act developments of 20%**. This is above the 10% Government mandated minimum to reflect the Arc's world leading environmental ambitions.
  - d. Delivering **biodiversity net gain for all developments of 20% with a minimum requirement of 10%** including Nationally Significant Infrastructure and projects brought forward outside of the Town & Country Planning Act. This is to reflect the Arc's world leading environmental ambitions.
  - e. **Working with Government to develop a suitable net environment gain metric that** incorporates biodiversity net gain and, once available, to set an ambitious target to reflect the Arc's world leading environmental ambitions.
  - f. Establishing **human and nature mobility corridors** across the Arc – using existing or new transport corridors for maximum environmental benefit/gain.
  - g. **Increasing tree and woodland cover across the Arc from 8.3%<sup>3</sup> to 19%<sup>4</sup>. This is** in recognition of the ability of trees and woodlands to deliver a wide range of environmental, health, social and economic benefits. We will ensure the right trees are planted in the right places.
  - h. Protecting and enhancing protected landscapes. Enhancing landscape character areas, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the wider countryside.
3. **Be an exemplar for environmentally sustainable development, in line with the ambitions set out in the government's 25 year plan. This will incorporate a systems-based and integrated assessment and implementation approach and will fully recognise the associated health and wellbeing benefits. We will aim to go beyond the minimum legislated requirements for development. This will include:**
- a. **All new settlements, urban extensions and infrastructure contributing to the achievement of delivering net biodiversity gain, net environmental gain, and net zero carbon** both in site and route selection and in the design of settlements and transport corridors. In addition, areas of tranquillity will be protected and measures taken to avoid light pollution and protect dark sky areas. Making cycling and walking more attractive ways to travel and investing in zero emission public transport of the future.
  - b. **Understanding the impact of development on the natural environment**, including cumulative and indirect impacts (taking into account associated housing and other forms of development), so that these can be addressed in line with the mitigation

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<sup>3</sup> Data relates to woodland cover as taken from the Forestry Commission's National Forest Inventory

<sup>4</sup> Based on recommendations of the Committee on Climate Change advice to Government on how to achieve net zero emissions by 2050

hierarchy, and carrying out environmental and strategic assessments as appropriate for the type and scale of development programmes including options and proper community consultation.

- c. Understanding the Arc's environmental capacity to accommodate different levels of growth and development in different locations and **ensuring that planned growth and development remains well within environmental capacity limits.**
  - d. Working with Government to **enhance the building regulations and the role of planning policy so that they align with sustainability principles, and actively reduce the carbon footprint, water and energy consumption** in new and existing buildings. We will encourage Arc local partners to exceed the minimum standards required by building regulations.
  - e. Promoting the switch to renewable and other sustainable energy supplies, improving travel choices, and supporting changing working practices. This will enable **improvements to the design and development of sustainable communities and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.**
4. **Ensure that existing and new communities see real benefits from living in the Arc** including through:
- a. **Maximising the health and wellbeing benefits of nature** by providing sector-leading areas of accessible nature-rich greenspace in, and accessible to, new settlements, urban extensions and commercial zones and increasing and enhancing greenspace, and access to it, for existing settlements in the Arc.
  - b. **Promoting and increasing equality of sustainable access to nature and its benefits** by investing in, increasing and enhancing nature-rich greenspace in the places and communities where it is most lacking. We will improve access to greenspace and nature, ensuring Natural England's Access to Natural Greenspace standards, and (once available) Green Infrastructure Standards, are maximised for existing housing and delivered for future developments.
5. **Use natural resources wisely by:**
- a. Working to address existing **water resource, water quality and flood management issues** and through an integrated approach across the water agenda ensure future issues and risks are managed, including in the context of climate change, with a focus on nature-based interventions.
  - b. Ensuring that soil quality is properly protected and improved including within development, infrastructure and agricultural activities.
  - c. Making **more efficient use and management of waste and resources**, working towards a circular economy with no net waste and promoting the use of sustainable building materials and construction guidelines.

- d. Working with local authorities to share best practice and coordinate action being taken on local **air quality management plans** including addressing emissions from agriculture and from installations regulated by the Environment Agency.
- e. Supporting the development of interventions that reduce the **impact of agriculture on the environment** and support productivity.
- f. Helping to build collaboration between farmers to generate catchment and landscape scale environmental improvement under the **Environmental Land Management Scheme**.
- g. Ensuring that the required mineral resources for the Arc are sourced in an environmentally sensitive manner and that mineral sites are restored in a coordinated manner to after-uses that benefit nature and people, as well as helping to provide ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and water management.

We will continue to work with the other Arc pillars to develop appropriate environmental principles for incorporation within these workstreams.

We will review and update the environmental principles in the light of developing policies, practices, evidence, experience, knowledge and governance arrangements.

## 6. Resourcing our ambitions

**To achieve delivery of these principles we will need to work collaboratively across the public, private and third sectors. Some resources are already in place and there are many more that we will need. As a starting point we will:**

- Build on the work of the Arc Local Natural Capital Plan and the associated work in the 5 counties to **make publicly available, agreed baseline maps for natural capital and ecosystem services across the Arc**. Resources will be required to maintain the data and make it accessible.
- Work with the statutory agencies and with local councils to ensure ready **access to the wide range of environmental data** currently collected by them.
- **Work with government to agree methodologies** for both net biodiversity gain and net environment gain for use within the Arc. We will establish a technical group(s) to

assess net gain propositions on behalf of local planning authorities and provide planning committees with independent advice.

- **Support and promote a 5 yearly environmental census** across the Arc including promoting public engagement through citizen science approaches.
- Use **evidence on health, deprivation and ecosystem services demand** (e.g. for air quality improvement) to inform planning for greenspace, habitats and **natural capital assets**.
- Work with all those that fund nature improvement work across the Arc including the Defra Group, water companies, environmental Non-Governmental Organisations, local councils, catchment partnerships, housing and commercial property developers and infrastructure providers, together with those allocating Environment Land Management System funding, and private investors to **take a more efficient and effective systems based approach to natural capital and ecosystem systems based interventions**. We will seek to ensure that funding is used strategically and not in a piecemeal way.
- **Invest in projects that deliver natural capital and environmental benefits**, such as carbon sequestration, pollinator habitats, soil improvement, flood alleviation and water resource resilience, and establish Arc-wide and more local Natural Capital Investment Plans to inform and support the emerging Arc Spatial Framework.

## **Monitoring**

We will pursue our commitment as outlined within these principles and will work with government and local partners on the development of associated metrics and targets in line with the 25 Year Environment Plan, carbon reduction commitments and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

## **Engagement**

We will engage and consult with communities, residents and people working in the Arc, as well as businesses, other organisations and NGOs, on the vision and ambitions for sustainable environmental growth in the Arc.

**This document is supported by the Arc Leadership Group, Arc Universities Environment Group, Arc Local Enterprise Partnerships, England's Economic Heartland, and has been drafted with input from the Arc Local Nature Partnerships whose members include representatives from environment NGOs, local councils, LEPs, developers, businesses, business representation bodies, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and the Forestry Commission and important contributions from central government departments, other environment NGOs and businesses.**



<b>Report to:</b>	Climate and Environment Advisory Committee 9 March 2021
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Hazel Smith
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Peter Campbell

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## Housing Asset Management Strategy - Update

### Executive Summary

1. This report provides an update to members on the development of the Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) that is currently being developed
2. The report asks members to consider establishing a working group to review and contribute to the development of the strategy and associated action plan.

### Key Decision

3. No – not at this stage.

### Recommendations

4. It is recommended that
  - a. Members of CEAC establish a working group to work with officers to review and feed into the development of the HAMS.
  - b. That members review the main aims of the HAMS and
  - c. That members review and the associated draft action plan.

### Reasons for Recommendations

5. The HAMS is an important strategy that will determine the approach that the Council takes to the HRA assets. Member input into the development of this approach will make the most of their local knowledge and experience and strengthen the emerging strategy.

### Details

6. This document should be read in conjunction with the Draft HRA Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) and the associated actions plan included as appendices A & B.
7. Both these documents are presented in draft form. The purpose of presenting these documents at this stage is to allow members an early opportunity to comment on the scope, ambitions, and actions within the HAMS. However, member should be aware that because of this approach the reports have not been quality checked and do contain errors and omissions, these will be picked up in later iterations of the developing strategy.

## **Background**

8. The HAMS has been developed to provide a clear strategy around the way the council manages its housing stock within the Housing Revenue Account. This consists of over 5,550 properties with an open market value of around £1.3 billion.
9. The HAMS represents a change of focus in asset Management from providing decent homes, to meeting new challenges such as carbon reduction, increased customer expectation, demographic changes, and all this against a background of increased government legislation.
10. The HAMS aims to meet the need for Asset Management Strategy that reaches beyond traditional 'property maintenance'. Effective asset management will ensure that our homes continue to provide a high quality, suitable and sustainable contribution to the district.

## **Options**

11. Members can choose not to be involved in the development of the HAMS, however the risk is that the strategy would then not reflect the views and priorities of members.

## **Implications**

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

**There are no significant implications arising directly from the decisions for members to be involved in the development of the HAMS. However, once developed the HAMS may have significant implication to all aspects listed below:**

**Financial:**

13. The final strategy will involve considerable expenditure

**Legal:**

14. There are significant legal implications to managing housing stock, for example compliance with a range of regulations. These are covered in detail within the draft strategy.

**Staffing:**

15. New legislation within the Housing White papers makes it clear that the council will need to identify named officers with overall responsibility for element of safety

**Risks/Opportunities:**

16. A risk register will be developed as part of the final strategy.

**Equality and Diversity:**

17. The draft strategy lays out in detail the approach to equality issues.

**Climate Change: T**

18. The draft strategy has a main theme of carbon reduction within the Housing stock.

**Health & Wellbeing:**

19. The draft strategy makes specific reference to providing support and adaptations to properties to assist people in housing need.

**Consultation responses**

20. The proposal to setting up a working group from members of CEAC is part of the consultation process and will help to shape the strategy. It is also intended to consult tenants on a later iteration of the strategy.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in**

21. The main focus of the HAMS is about providing better quality housing, The focus on carbon reduction and energy efficiency will lead to reduced costs and reduce fuel poverty.

### **Being green to our core**

22. There is a strong focus on Carbon reduction with the aim of ensuring the housing stock is zero carbon by 2050. The strategy also looks at issues such as 'doubling nature; across HRA land.

### **Modern and caring Council**

23. The HAMS aim to reflect the views and needs of existing and future customers.

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: Draft Housing Asset Management Strategy

Appendix B: Draft HAMS Action Plan

Please note the appendices are working documents and do currently contain known errors and omissions.

## **Report Author:**

Peter Campbell - Head of Housing

# Draft Action Plan (from Housing Asset Management strategy (HAMS))

Headline	ref	Action	Lead / Resources	Target Date	Intended / Actual Outcome
Business Planning	B1	Use information from the stock condition survey (ref i2) to develop a new holistic and sustainable 30 year investment plan that reflects both normal decent homes type work as well as zero carbon work		6 months after completion of stock survey.	Stock condition survey will give expected lifespan of each elements of existing stock allowing better planning.
Business Planning	B2	Model the stock's net present value to determine financial performance in light of the zero-carbon standard and confirm the long-term future to support the levels of investment required			NPV will help to determine which, if any, properties cannot be economically maintained and/or improved.
Business Planning	B3	Develop an agree a disposal strategy for properties that are uneconomic to repair and/or uneconomic to introduce carbon reduction.			Properties that cannot 'was their own face' to be replaced with other stock.
Business planning	B4	Review the appropriateness and 'fit for purpose' characteristics of each of the sheltered and older/vulnerable person's housing schemes, examining issues such as property archetypes, locations, accessibility, individual attributes and demand in order to draw conclusions as to the investment works needed to ensure their ongoing sustainability			To ensure that the council makes best use of all HRA housing assets. Analysis of need suggests there is less demand / greater supply of housing for older people.
Carbon Reduction	G1	Following the stock condition service (i2) - develop a plan to improve thermal efficiency of the worst performing stock.			Intended to focus on more challenging properties. Details to be confirmed once outcome of Stock Condition Survey is available – but may <i>for example include</i>

					<i>'bringing all properties to a minimum EPC rating of D within 2 years'</i>
Carbon Reduction	G1	Continue to explore and trial technical solutions across building archetypes to ensure suitability and affordability for net carbon zero as part of the wider work of the Net Zero Collective			Field testing, what works best.
Carbon Reduction	G2	Explore options of a zero-carbon new build scheme within the housing stock.			Consider exemplar scheme to demonstrate new zero housing. Intention to monitor effectiveness
Carbon Reduction	G3	Ensure that the programme of zero carbon measures identified within the Savills report are reflected in the new investment plan			Investment plan needs to balance existing needs and carbon reduction measures.
Carbon Reduction	G4	Complete a survey of all trees across HRA open spaces			
Carbon Reduction	G5	Develop a open spaces maintenance policy reflecting the councils doubling nature strategy.			
Carbon Reduction	G6	Working with others departments, the Net Zero Collective and local colleges to explore options of training local people in the installation and maintenance of low carbon technologies.			
Compliance	C1	Establish a suite of indicators to demonstrate compliance and ensure regular to reports. To include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas Safety</li> <li>• Electrical Upgrades</li> <li>• Water Safety (Legionella)</li> <li>• Fire Safety</li> <li>• Asbestos</li> </ul>			Increasing important from green paper.
Compliance	C2	Embed the HHSRS within the department including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Provide training to all staff who survey properties to identify HHSRS failures and ensure contractors offer similar training.</li> </ul>			Housing Health and Safety Rating System used to assess other safety issues within the home.

		<p>b. All HHSRS failures to be recorded on the asset management IT system and works carried out as a high priority by including in planned works</p> <p>c. Continually review the programme of HHSRS work undertaken to ensure the Council maintains compliance with the Decent Homes Standard</p>			
Compliance	C3	Undertake a programme of works to replace all fires doors with composite FD30 doors over the next 12 months.			Priority
Compliance	C4	Develop practical advice for tenants to minimise risk of Legionella			Although individual properties are out with current legislation, it is considered good practice
Compliance	C4	Ensure that responsible officers are identified for all aspects of compliance (gas, electricity, water safety, fire risk, and asbestos) and that all staff have appropriate training.			Compliance with all aspects of the Homes standard and the requirements of the white paper.
Improve Information	I1	Appoint specialist contractors to conduct 100% stock condition survey of all council properties.	Service Manager – HRA assets		Specialist consultancy advice may be needed to tender for this work.
Improve information	I2	Fully implement Orchard Housing Management System.	Service Manager – HRA assets		Full implementation includes mobile surveys, population of database and ability to use this to plan future capital projects/
Involving Customers	T1	Ensure that customers are involved in setting a range of new standards (eg South Cambs Standard, Relet Standard)			
Involving customers	T2	Conduct a 100% satisfaction survey using agreed methodology to allow comparisons over time and with other organisations.			To use the industry standard STAR survey methodology. Consider option of using external contractors.
Involving customers	T3	Establish a Housing Engagement Board in 2021 and implement the new tenant engagement framework			As in existing plans

Performance	T1	Develop a new set of performance indicators for the new repair contract.			Need to be a mix of management information and information that allows comparison with others (eg House mark)
Performance	T2	Develop a new suite of indicators to measure overall service performance		1 September 2021	Monitoring is given high priority within the HAMS and the green paper.
Repairs Contract	R1	Retender the repairs service. New contract to start q2 2022'	Head of Housing	1 July 2022	To develop a new repairs service that allows the council to deliver its priorities /services improvements and is cost effective.  ARK are currently engaged to deliver options appraisal
Service Improvement	S1	Develop and agree new 'South Cambs' standard(s) for Council Housing reflecting needs to go further than Decent Homes	Service Manager – HRA assets		This reflects aims contained within Housing Green Paper. Additional standards to be considered for sheltered housing.  Tenant input into process is essential
Service Improvement	S2	To review the property relet process with the aim of increasing efficiency and avoid loss of rental income.			Empty properties are a very visual measure of performance. Need to minimise rent loss.
Service Improvement	S3	Establish options to allow leaseholders to benefit from carbon reduction work and for the Council to recover costs from the leaseholders			Many blocks of flats contain a mix of council owned properties and leaseholders. The council may want/need to recover costs from leaseholders who benefit from work (eg external insulation)
Service Improvement	S4	To establish a regular inspection regime of non-housing assets to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estate Inspections</li> </ul>			The implications from the white paper is that housing providers need to pay more

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open space inspections (including footpaths and lighting)</li> <li>• Travellers sites</li> <li>• Garage batteries and sites.</li> </ul>			attention to the appearance and liveability within Council Estates.
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# **Building Strong Foundations**

**South Cambridgeshire District Council**

**HRA Asset Management Strategy**

**Peter Campbell  
Version 1.6  
January 2021**

**(Note this version has not been quality checked and some figures may be blank or need confirming prior to publication.)**

## Foreword

(to be inserted from Hazel)

## HRA Asset Management Strategy

### Date:

### Contents

1. Introduction and Vision
2. The National and Local Drivers
3. The Housing Stock
4. Involving Customers and Their Priorities
5. Strategic Priorities for Asset Management

**Overall aim – To provide good quality homes that are affordable to live in and where people choose to live.**

### Specific Aims

- a. To ensure that our housing stock provide homes that are safe and secure and that we meet or exceed all statutory safety standards.
- b. To have in place well designed repair and maintenance systems which ensure the stock is well maintained and kept in a good state of repair
- c. To have a long-term strategy and programme in place to improve the thermal efficiency of the housing stock, with the aim of being carbon neutral by 2030.
- d. To ensure the housing stock is brought up to and maintained at a locally determined standard, remaining attractive and meeting modern requirements and tenant expectations.
- e. To replace obsolete or uneconomic stock with new properties, which are better designed to meet future needs and create a better-balanced portfolio.
- f. To identify opportunities to acquire through purchase or direct build, additional homes to increase the number of Council owned properties available of the type and quality needed in locations where people want to live.
- g. To ensure that our housing stock meets the specific needs of clients
- h. To use procurement processes to best effect to ensure value for money in the delivery of all repairs, maintenance and improvement works
- i. To use the housing asset base to help deliver the wider corporate priorities and statutory duties of the Council

6. Other assets/activities
7. Equality and Diversity
8. Impact of the strategy
9. Delivery of the strategy
10. Responsibility for the strategy
11. Review of the strategy
12. Action plan

## 1. Introduction and Vision

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) has been developed to inform the strategic medium and long-term approach to maintaining, improving, and developing the Council's housing assets.

This document, sets out the priorities for the physical care and improvement of the housing stock and surrounding environment as well as explaining how, through sound planning, the Council can ensure that its housing offer continues to meet the needs of the local people of the District. It also sets out how the housing asset base can be used to assist in the delivery of some of the Council's other strategic priorities.

This strategy is based on the Council's strategic needs within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This follows a period of uncertainty for housing finances, with initial enthusiasm around self-financing followed quickly by needing to adjust to a government driven reduction in rents. This period is now ended and with more certainty over future rent levels the Council can make firm plans to make the most of the opportunities offered. This includes new Council housing from both acquisitions and new build, and at the same time maintaining a high quality of service to tenants and improving customer satisfaction.

Together, the Council's housing stock comprises its highest value assets and its repair and maintenance costs form its largest liability. The housing stock is valued at **over £xxxx million (Social Housing Value) and at over £3xxxx million** (open market value with vacant possession), therefore successful planning for its sustainable future is vital.

### What is Asset Management?

*"Asset Management is the activity that ensures that the land and buildings asset base of an organisation is optimally structured in the best corporate interest of the organisation concerned"* (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors)

### Why is a Housing Asset Management Strategy needed?

A pro-active Housing Asset Management Strategy ensures that stock decisions are made through effective business planning protocols rather than in the face of an impending crisis. The Housing Asset Management Strategy is one of the key tools, which will be used by the Council to meet and respond to varying housing need and demand.

The Council's housing stock is generally well maintained and has benefited from a range of upgrade and investment works. The Council successfully achieved the Government's Decent Homes compliance target. However **124** properties remain non decent due to tenants declining to have decent homes works undertaken. These works are being completed when homes become void or where tenants change their mind.

Whilst the Council will continue to have a focus on the management, maintenance and refurbishment of its existing stock over the coming years, it also looks at wider asset

management issues such as the acquisition/development of new properties or pursuance of other regeneration activities.

The Council's total housing stock has decreased steadily over the years, largely as a result of tenants exercising their Right to Buy (RTB). Since the introduction of the RTB in 1980, about xxxx units of housing stock have been sold with the losses being predominantly of family sized houses. Over recent years, the rate of stock losses has reduced significantly, and in recent years the Council has built or purchased new stock, with the reduced number of Council owned properties translating into a sustained demand for the remaining housing stock.

The Council's current stock comprises xxxx dwellings spread across all parts of the District with a significant proportion, almost 50%, being designated for occupation by older people.

#### **Our Vision**

**To provide good quality homes that are affordable to live in and where people choose to live.**

The HAMS has been prepared to support this vision, together with other broader strategic objectives of the Council.

## 2. The National and Local Drivers

A number of key national and local drivers have informed the development of, and have an impact upon, the Housing Asset Management Strategy.

### The National Drivers

#### Housing Revenue Account Reform

On 1 April 2012, the Government abolished the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system and introduced self-financing for council housing. This represented one of the most radical reforms of public housing policy for many years.

Under the new system, councils collectively controlled over £300bn of rental income, and could build up some £50bn of new investment capacity. This gave increased capacity to invest in housing assets but also responsibility for long term investment planning.

The key aspects of HRA reform are that:

- Efficient operation of the HRA could lead to the build-up of new investment resources.
- Councils can regard their housing as a real asset capable of generating additional investment resources.
- Councils can shape their “housing business” to deliver against their local service and investment priorities.
- Meaningful HRA strategic financial planning is now be essential, whilst hitherto it has been impossible.

The Council's debt settlement figure in 2012 was £xxxxx which means a debt take on of £xxxxm when taking into account notional debt. There was the potential for additional borrowing up to the debt cap of £xxxm available to borrow, excluding access to internal borrowing.

In 20xx the government ended the debt cap for local authorities which offered the opportunity for increase prudent borrowing within the HRA.

In 2020 the actual debt was £xxxx . The Council has been able to build and purchase xxxx new properties up to 2020 without the need for additional borrowing, this ability was reduced as an impact of the governments 4 year compulsory rent reduction and as a consequence of the rent reduction future rents will remain below those used to calculate the debt settlement. By 2020 rental income was around £5m per year less than the amount used by government to calculate debt settlement, as a consequence the has been a reduction on the Councils ability to invest to improve or increase number of HRA properties.

#### Social Housing Reform

Since the Localism Act 2011 Government has again made changes to the way in which social or ‘affordable’ housing is provided by introducing new measures legislated in the:

- Housing and Planning Act 2016, and;
- Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.

Key changes include:

- Offering fixed term tenancies to most new tenants and phasing out 'Lifetime Tenancies'.
- Building and promoting low cost forms of owner occupation (such as starter homes) in favour of affordable rented properties.
- 1% Social Housing rent reduction for four years from April 2016 to 2019
- Welfare reforms including the introduction of Universal Credit.

In 2017 Government published a 'White Paper' (Fixing our Broken Housing Market) which is a statement of various aspirations on the part of Government.

Key proposals in the 'White Paper' for social and affordable housing include;

- Supporting developers to build more quickly
- Encouraging diversification of tenure including build to rent
- Changing the way the Homes and Communities Agency works (now renamed Homes England)
- Help Local Authorities to build including on public land - cross tenure
- Encouraging the use of modern methods of construction.
- National housing need assessment method to take account of the needs of different groups such as older and disabled people

All of these reforms, in their own way, had an impact on the way in which the Council maintains, improves and develops its housing assets.

## The Charter for Social Housing Residents

The Government published a white paper in November 2020, The Charter for Social Housing Residents, this was based around commitments from social landlords to residents. The commitments to tenants are:

1. **To be safe in your home.** We will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure.
2. **To know how your landlord is performing,** including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how it spends its money, so you can hold it to account.
3. **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly,** with access to a strong ombudsman who will give you swift and fair redress when needed.
4. **To be treated with respect,** backed by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
5. **To have your voice heard by your landlord,** for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The government will provide help, if you want it, to give you the tools to ensure your landlord listens.
6. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in,** with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
7. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership,** so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should your circumstances allow

## **Homes England**

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) was relaunched as Homes England with objectives and powers to deliver more new and affordable homes across all tenures.

## **Decent Homes**

The government's target was for all social homes to meet the Decent Homes Standard by December 2010. The Council was able to meet this target except for situations where tenants declined to have works undertaken.

However, unless the council develops a programme of ongoing maintenance of replacement of key elements, more properties will fall into 'non-decency' over time. This is because the standard considers the age and condition of property elements and not just their presence. The Council will need to make investment in the current stock to prevent properties become non-decent.

There is also an opportunity for the Council not just maintaining its housing stock at a decent level but working to achieve a higher South Cambs Standard, investing capital and using its HAMS to ensure that pre-emptive improvements are delivered so that its homes do not fall below the agreed Standard. Where stock cannot be brought up to and/or maintained at the desired Standard the Council will need to explore alternative options.

## **Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018**

Place an obligation on landlord to ensure that each property is fit for habitation at the start and throughout the tenancy. The implication for the Council is that there is a need to offer an effective repairs system, to act quickly when repairs are reported and backed up by investment programme that is pro-active and ensures that stock does not fall into disrepair.

## **Lifetime Homes**

The Lifetime Homes Standard is a design benchmark for housing, which is comfortably accessible for people of all ages and abilities and is the result of careful study and research. The design criteria forming the Standard relate to both the interior and exterior features of the home.

## **The Local Drivers**

### **Supporting Corporate Aims**

The HAMS plays a key role in the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities as set out below.

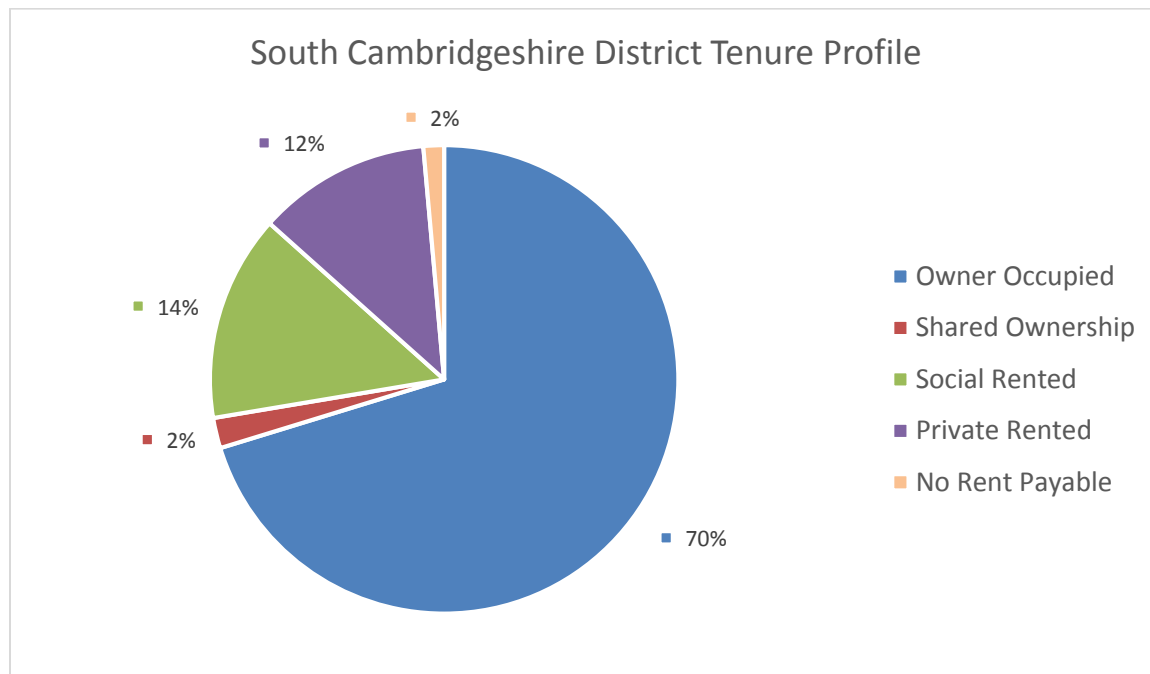
- Helping businesses to grow
- Building homes that are truly affordable to live in
- Being green to our core
- Putting our customers at the centre of everything we do

### 3. The Housing Stock

#### The area

There are around 59,960 dwellings located in the District with 5,248 properties in the Council's ownership and management (including 1090 sheltered homes) and a further 458 leasehold properties to which it provides management services. The Council provides around 10% of the total housing stock located within the District.

Despite a significant loss of properties through the Right to Buy since its introduction in 1980, the District Council remains by far the largest provider of rented accommodation in the District. Whilst Registered Providers (RPs) have some housing stock within the District they own around 5% of the total stock of properties.

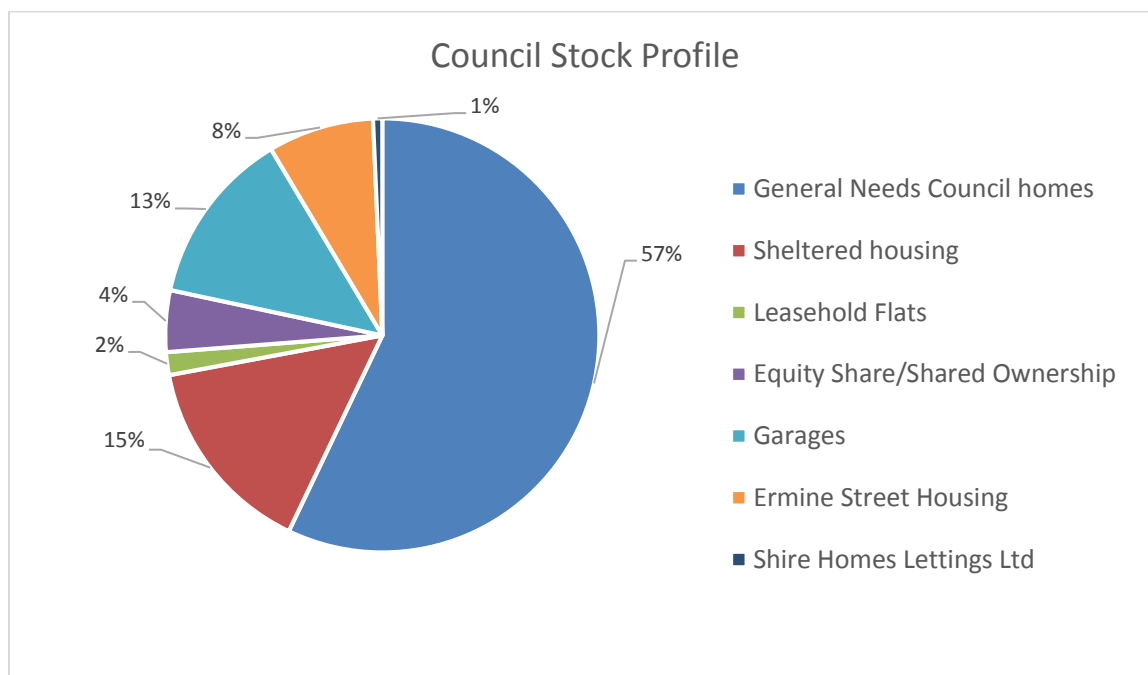


Source: Census 2011

The Council remains firm in its view that it has a valuable role as a major housing provider and is keen to ensure that the Housing Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) provides the framework for it not just to maintain and improve the existing stock to the best possible standard, but to facilitate the acquisition/building of new council homes.

#### Stock profile

Of the Council's 5,248 dwellings there are 124 leasehold flats, 285 equity share bungalows and 49 shared ownership properties. 286 properties are of non-traditional construction, and there are 952 garages in blocks throughout the district. There are also a further 474 properties owned or managed by Ermine Street Housing, and 50 properties that are managed by Shire Homes Lettings Ltd. on behalf of private sector landlords.



The Council's own stock is predominantly between 40 and 100 years old, with only 2% having been built since 2002. It also has other significant characteristics with 49% of the total stock (2,558) being bungalows, the large majority of these being two bedroom properties. There are low levels of bedsits and one bedroom accommodation and limited numbers of larger 4+ bedroom accommodation.

Stock Profile by Age		
Age Band	Total Properties	%
Pre 1919	14	0.27%
1919-1944	881	16.78%
1945-1964	1586	30.22%
1965-1982	1748	33.31%
1983-2002	901	17.18%
Post 2002	118	2.25%
	5248	

The stock profile has a strong bias towards provision for older people with 49% of the accommodation being designated for occupation by people aged over 60, of which 21% is sheltered housing.

Type and Size of Council Accommodation (by number of bedrooms)						
Stock category	Bedsit	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+bed	Total
House (general needs)		40	540	1797	69	2446

Flats (general needs)		105	95			200
Bungalow (general needs)	13	391	1076	31	1	1512
Sheltered housing	7	489	592	2		1090
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1025</b>	<b>2303</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>5248</b>

Figure 3.1 Type and Size of Council Accommodation (by number of bedrooms) – Jan 2020

The lack of smaller/single person accommodation is increasingly presenting a potential difficulty in re-housing single homeless people in priority need, a group where presentations have been consistently increasing. This trend is likely to continue as welfare reforms have resulted in an increased demand for smaller accommodation. Meanwhile, pressures remain on the stock of family housing especially for 2 bedroom accommodation. Through the HAMS, the Council will be seeking to establish what action is necessary to ensure its properties are of the right type and in the right locations to continue to meet current and future housing needs.

In addition, the Council owns 41 communal rooms, which are attached to sheltered schemes and are used for a variety of functions. Many have communal kitchens or laundry facilities for the use of the residents. This cost in providing these facilities is met from service charges paid for by sheltered housing tenants and a small element of fees charged for external use.

A detailed breakdown of the Council's stock profile (a Housing Stock Analysis) is provided at Appendix 2.

### Type of Stock

The majority of SCDC housing stock is of traditional construction. With less than 5% (256 properties) that are of non-traditional construction. Some properties that are not of traditional structures can be problematic and expensive to maintain well, and heat efficiently. With some of these properties being near the end of their intended life, the Council will need to consider if further investment in these properties are a worthwhile/cost effective investment when compared to re-provision. The Asset Management Team are looking to develop a methodology to determining these decisions.

Non Traditional Council Stock	
Property Type	Number
Bungalow Aluminium	30
End Terrace Unity House	2
End Terrace Wimpey	15
Flat First Floor Unity	3
Flat Ground Floor Unity	8
Mid Terrace Unity House	6
Mid Terrace Wimpey	18
Semi Detached Addison	10
Semi Detached Airey	26
Semi Detached Swedish	13
Semi Detached Unity	30
Semi Detached Wimpey	123

Terraced Industrial House	2
	286

### Stock condition

The Council's stock condition information indicated that the large majority of the housing stock is of good design and sound construction with life cycle costs showing 'normal' levels of projected expenditure.

The Council has recently invested in a new IT system that allows better use of asset management data and once fully implemented will allow more efficient planning of future works, and better integration between revenue (day to day repairs) and capital (investment) for council housing.

There is however some concern about the accuracy of some of the data that currently exists within the asset management system. This is because the data is based on a sample survey being carried out, and this information is extrapolated across all properties including the majority of properties where no inspection have been carried out. This may lead to errors and inefficiencies in the way that investment decisions are made.

Within the first 12 months of this plan, there will be an appraisal plan produced that considers options to ensure that the information used by the asset management system is sufficiently robust to allow detailed planning.

The average energy efficiency of the housing stock currently provides a SAP rating of 77.04 (using the 0 -120 scale). However, there is a considerable disparity between the best performing stock with ratings above 75 (11.8% of the overall stock, 619 homes) and the worst performing stock which fails to achieve a SAP of 45 (estimated at 12.4%, 650 homes)

This information is more clearly understood with reference to EPC bandings of the existing stock.

EPC Band	No. Properties
A	961
B	969
C	2,284
D	958
E	64
F	9
G	1

The government target is for all homes to be rated at EPC band C or above by 2030. This data suggests that most properties are already at that level, and others can easily be brought to the required level. However, more detailed work is required to understand the demand of properties that currently perform poorly and to understand if it is economical to bring these properties to the required standard.

There are several issues that need to be addressed during the life of this plan, these include

1 – To conduct a 100% stock condition survey to improve the quality of data used for investment planning

2 – Tender the Repairs Service from 2022

3 – To work with tenants to agree the South Cambs standards for properties and a number of other service measures.

The Council intends to review the robustness of its stock condition data, the element lifecycles and costs used as the data provides key information as to the basis for future stock investment expenditure and associated timescales.

Using the existing data, there is a requirement for investment of over £210 million over the next 30 years is needed to keep the stock at its current conditions, with the breakdown of expenditure between key elements provided at. Please note that as this is the cost of maintaining the stock at its current standard it does not include expenditure on new or acquired buildings, or the cost of ensuring that existing and new council properties are net zero carbon contributors by the end of this plan.

### 30 Years Investment Needs – Current Stock.. Broken Down by Element

ELEMENT	COST £1000
Bathrooms	20,605
Chimneys	1,032
Communal Areas	3
Doors	5,509
Electrical	12,044
Externals Works	15,543
Garage Blocks	646
Heating & Water	51,665
Kitchens	31,788
Miscellaneous	1,716
NHER	959
Outbuildings/Extensions	4,783
Roofs	23,756
Safety & Security	806
Walls	6,230
Windows	17,263
Unrepresented Costs	129
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210,478,000</b>

*Figure 3.2 Breakdown of 30 Year Expenditure by Building Element*

## The Approach to Relets

The HAMS is complemented by the Council's approach to reletting properties. The aim is to provide properties to incoming tenants, which meet a good standard, meet their needs and which offer excellent value for money. Moving forward we will be striving to use our improved approach to asset management to explore improvements to the voids management service and to achieve continuous improvement through efficient management of voids at all levels.

## Demographic Profile

The number of households in England is projected to increase by 235,486 households a year by 2040. In Cambridgeshire alone there will be an estimated increase of approximately 2,000 households per year by 2040. It is also anticipated there will be a sharp increase in the ageing population. By 2040 a quarter of all households will be headed by those aged 65 years or over.<sup>1</sup>

By 2040 people over 65 will outnumber those who are aged 19 and under by an estimated 28,600 in Cambridgeshire.<sup>2</sup>

Typically, as the local population increases, so does the number of people in housing need and on the waiting lists for social housing.

South Cambridgeshire District Population Projections for 2040 <sup>3</sup>			
Age Range	Males	Females	All Persons
All ages	82,751	81,929	164,680
0-14	13,859	13,327	27,186
15-29	12,393	11,425	23,819
30-49	19,677	19,180	38,857
50-64	16,551	16,040	32,590
65-84	16,955	17,355	34,311
85+	3,316	4,602	7,917

Figure 3.3 South Cambridgeshire District 2018-based population projections

In 2011, the largest ethnic group in South Cambridgeshire was White British, which constitutes 87.3% of the population, with the second largest ethnic group being Asian/Asian British at 3.7%. A further 1.7% of residents identified as mixed/multiple ethnic groups and 0.9% Black/Black British (*Census 2011*).

Analysis of Census data gives an age profile of ethnic minority groups living in the District. The percentage of ethnic minority groups of working age (aged between 25 to 65) is comparable to those identifying as White at 60.5% and 59% respectively. However, there is a marked difference between the age profiles of those aged under 19, with 36.5% for ethnic minority groups and 23.5% for those identifying as White. In terms of an ageing

<sup>1</sup> Source: Office of National Statistics – 2018 based subnational population projections

<sup>2</sup> Source: Office of National Statistics – 2018 based subnational population projections

<sup>3</sup> Source: Office of National Statistics – 2018 based subnational population projections

population, this is more prevalent for those identifying as White at 12.6% for those aged between 65-79 and 5% for those aged over 80. For ethnic minority groups those aged 65-79 make up 2.5% of the ethnic minority population and only 0.5% of those aged 80 and over.

485 people identified themselves as a Gypsy or Irish Traveller. 51.8% of those identified were of working age, with 42.5% aged between 0-10 years and 5.8% aged over 65. Only 4 people identified themselves as being over the age of 80 in this group.

72% of households which defined themselves as White were owner occupiers, with almost a half owning their home outright. For all other ethnic minority groups, 59% were owner occupiers, with just under a quarter who owned their home outright. The most marked difference in tenure by ethnicity is those living in the private rented sector, with 12.5% of those identifying as White living in this sector and 30.1% of those from ethnic minority groups. In terms of those renting from either the Council or a housing association, 14.4% of those identifying themselves as White lived in this tenure, while 10.8% of the ethnic minority groups lived in social housing.

*[Source: Census 2011, Tables DC4201EW and DC2101EW]*

### **General Needs: Demand**

Whilst the Council's housing stock has decreased over the last 30 years, there is a sustained level of demand. As at June 2020 there were 1,412 applicants on the housing register. This was made up of 552 (39%) transfer requests from current council and housing association tenants and 860 (61%) new applications. This represents a recent reduction but this is attributed to a full review of the housing register where all applicants had to re-register onto the new system during January – March 2019.

The majority of applicants (1123, equating to 80%) are waiting for general needs accommodation, with the highest need for one and two bedroom properties. Those aged over 60 are eligible for sheltered/older people's accommodation, equating to 20% of those on the housing register.

Most of the applicants joining the housing register are in some form of housing need and meet eligibility criteria. Each applicant goes through a robust process to identify the scope of their need and is banded accordingly. The number of applicants in each of the bands as at June 2020 is provided at Figure 3.4. The Council has an obligation to manage all housing needs, so as well as general needs of applicants it must ensure the needs of more vulnerable and homeless families/individuals are considered. This includes adaptations to houses for disabled people or those with a physical impairment; together with supported accommodation for those that have mental health or learning difficulties. This is achieved by working in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council Care Teams, the Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements Group (MAPPA), the rough sleeping outreach service and floating support service P3 and with other support services including the voluntary sector.

South Cambridgeshire District – Housing Applications	
Band	Number of Applicants
A	114
B	362

C	431
D	449
D*	56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1412</b>

Figure 3.4 South Cambridgeshire District – Housing Applications

The Council can only meet a proportion of this need, making in the region of around 200 lettings each year for general needs housing and around 80 lets per year for sheltered accommodation. When including housing association lettings, this figure increases to around 540 new lettings per year, all of which clearly demonstrates a demand for more social housing to meet need arising from the housing register.

Given the significant affordability challenges in the District, the housing register remains high, with over 1,412 applicants looking for a social rented home. The highest demand for properties on the register is for one and two bedroom properties, with over 51% requiring one bedroom and 31% requiring a two bedroom. There is a significant imbalance between the current housing stock and demand for properties, especially for general needs accommodation with only 10% making up one bedroom properties, and 21% of our overall stock being sheltered accommodation.

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Stock Numbers compared to Need								
Property	Stock Numbers				Waiting List Demand			
	General Needs		Sheltered		Aged under 60		Aged 60+	
Bedsit	13	(0%)	7	(0%)				
1 bed	536	(10%)	489	(9%)	460	(33%)	258	(18%)
2 bed	1711	(33%)	592	(11%)	408	(29%)	24	(2%)
3 bed	1828	(35%)	2	(0%)	178	(13%)	5	(0%)
4+ bed	70	(1)	0	(0%)	77	(5%)	2	(0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>4158</b>	<b>(79%)</b>	<b>1090</b>	<b>(21%)</b>	<b>1123</b>	<b>(80%)</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>(20%)</b>

Whilst the majority of council properties in the District are in high demand, there are some sheltered accommodation that are more problematic to allocate due to the high proportion of council owned sheltered properties and such a high natural turnover. Anecdotally larger homes in some of the more rural villages with limited facilities are also harder to let. Bedsit accommodation is also less attractive to tenants and whilst the Council has redeveloped the majority of bedsits, there are still 20 bedsits remaining within the stock.

The Council has started to address the imbalance of demand and supply for smaller homes through its own new build programme and specifying on all new developments the need for more one and two bedroom affordable homes. Moving forwards, the Council will also explore the opportunity to redesignate/redevelop some older persons accommodation for general needs accommodation.

The decrease in the number of council owned family houses in popular areas means it is difficult to match housing demand with available stock. The problem is exacerbated by the difficulties in freeing up under-occupied family housing due to the reluctance of older

people to downsize. The Council's allocation policy aims to address this by giving priority to council tenants who wish to downsize

Based on the latest figures published in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), it identifies the need for an additional 5,573 affordable homes to be built between 2011 and 2031. This equates to around 279 new affordable homes each year. The housing trajectory published in April 2020 identifies that between 2011 and 2019, averaged out across the eight years, around 185 affordable homes have been completed per year, which is an undersupply of around 94 homes per year. It is likely that the findings following an updated study of the housing needs for specific groups (previously known as the SHMA) are likely to see an increase in the numbers required per year. The results of these findings are due to be published in Autumn 2020 as part of the evidence base for the next Local Plan.

The Council has embarked on a new build programme to deliver 70 homes per year, with an aspiration to deliver up to 100 a year if feasible. Since 2018 a total of 209 new council homes have started on site, with a further 81 homes at Northstowe due to start on site in 2020-21. These are a mixture of affordable rent and shared ownership homes.

## **4. Involving Customers and Delivering their Priorities**

The Council recognises the benefits of tenants being involved in the management of their homes and welcomes the vital role they can play in helping improve the housing and repairs service. Tenants are at the heart of the Council's decision-making processes and various options exist to ensure effective tenant consultation and engagement.

Furthermore, the Council is constantly seeking to improve and enhance the way in which tenants are involved in informing, developing and enhancing the accommodation and services it provides. The Council is also mindful that it provides management services to leaseholders with legal rights regarding consultation for larger maintenance contracts or works programmes.

### **Tenant Priorities**

Through its existing consultation methods, the Council aims to seek the views of tenants to better understand their priorities beyond the existing Decent Homes Standard. This work will be completed by September 2022 and be used to develop a South Cambs standard (or standards)

### **Tenant Satisfaction**

As part of its ongoing commitment to seek the views of its residents, intend to commission Research to carry out a survey to establish perceptions of the services provided to both its general needs and supported tenants. This survey will follow a nationally accepted methodology which will allow comparisons with other organisation and over time.

### **Involvement Mechanisms**

Over recent years the Council has significantly increased the opportunities for tenants to become involved in the management of their homes. We recognise that tenants may wish to be involved in a variety of ways and at different levels. Therefore, the Council has ensured that procedures have been developed to enable tenants to have the opportunity to be involved in a way which suits them.

The Council also has Right to Buy properties in blocks of flats. We have developed our procedures to ensure 'Section 20' consultation takes place with these leaseholders when letting larger contracts or works which fall under the requirements for such consultation to take place but realise there is more to be done. .

### **Future Vision**

To ensure that tenants continue to play a valuable role in the development and improvement of the Council's services we aim to effectively scrutinise our performance through service specific panels. This includes providing qualitative information about our services from a customer view in order for the panel to have the ability to challenge both the scope of services and the way in which they are delivered.

The tenant's panel will also play a role in the contractor's complaints process. It is envisaged that the panel will have an active role in contractor complaint handling, ensuring that problems can be resolved locally and that the service improves.

Looking in more detail, the Council will seek to:

- Maximise opportunities for tenants to have a voice and input to the repairs, maintenance, and asset management service
- Give opportunities to tenants to question and discuss issues in relation to repairs, maintenance, and asset management
- Provide tenants with regular progress and performance reports
- Actively promote repairs and maintenance issues
- Develop the arrangements for monitoring and scrutinising the repairs standards, services, and asset management plans
- Ensure value for money for tenants is achieved
- Increase tenant involvement in the development of specifications for programmes of work
- Monitor and scrutinise all contracts and programmes of work
- Increase tenant involvement in contract selection and monitoring

## 5. Strategic Priorities for Asset Management

The Housing Asset Management Strategy has been built around one major aim and seven key strategic priorities that have been developed specifically in response to the range of distinct issues the Council, our stock and future residents' needs.

Accompanying the priorities is an action plan, which clearly sets out what the Council wants to achieve, and by when. It is anticipated that the actions will be monitored, reviewed, and revised during the life of this strategy as works are completed and new actions are established.

**Overall aim – To provide good quality homes that are affordable to live in and where people choose to live.**

### Specific Aims

- a. To ensure that our housing stock provide homes that are safe and secure and that we meet or exceed all statutory safety standards.
- b. To have in place well designed repair and maintenance systems which ensure the stock is well maintained and kept in a good state of repair
- c. To have a long-term strategy and programme in place to improve the thermal efficiency of the housing stock, with the aim of being carbon neutral by 2050.
- d. To ensure the housing stock is brought up to and maintained at a locally determined standard, remaining attractive and meeting modern requirements and tenant expectations.
- e. To replace obsolete or uneconomic stock with new properties, which are better designed to meet future needs and create a better-balanced portfolio.
- f. To identify opportunities to acquire through purchase or direct build, additional homes to increase the number of Council owned properties available of the type and quality needed in locations where people want to live.
- g. To ensure that our housing stock meets the specific needs of clients
- h. To use procurement processes to best effect to ensure value for money in the delivery of all repairs, maintenance and improvement works
- i. To use the housing asset base to help deliver the wider corporate priorities and statutory duties of the Council

**PRIORITY A** To ensure that our housing stock provide homes that are safe and secure and that we meet or exceed all statutory safety standards

The Council ensures that we not only comply with the statutory duties around health and safety, but be more proactive in tackling issues, and to clearly demonstrate to customers and the regulator for Social Housing the compliance is based centrally in everything we do,

This governments increased focus on safety can be traced to the tragedy of Grenfell Tower and has been reinforced with measures in the White Paper. As a consequence, the issue of compliance has been given increased prominence in this Asset Management Strategy, however, that is not to say that these activities are new, the Council has a good track record in ensuring compliance.

There are a wide range of statutory duties which the Council as a landlord must comply with. Failure to comply with these duties could result in action against the Council as a landlord, such as criminal prosecution for offences including corporate manslaughter and/or civil claims for personal injury or damage.

The Council's aim is to ensure that all dwellings meet relevant health and safety requirements allowing tenants to live in a safe and secure environment. This will be achieved by identifying and managing risks including:

1. Housing Health and Safety Rating Defects
2. Asbestos
3. Legionella/Water Hygiene
4. Gas Installations
5. Electrical testing and renewal
6. Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors
7. Fire Risk Assessments
8. Estate Risk Assessment Inspections
9. Fire Doors
10. Aids and Adaptations

### **1. Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

The HHSRS replaced the Fitness Standard element of the Decent Homes Standard. The HHSRS assesses the 29 main health and safety risks inherent in a property. If a property fails the HHSRS, it automatically fails the Decent Homes Standard.

Within the council HHSRS failures are classified as priority works and will be addressed at the earliest opportunity. All Council Officers involved in surveying properties will be trained to identify potential HHSRS failures with key surveying staff receiving full training in HHSRS assessments.

This will enable us to build up an accurate figure of how many homes may be considered non-decent because of HHSRS failure. To achieve the HHSRS aims the Council will:

- a) train staff and to identify failures during their normal day-to-day activities.

- b) ensure that contractors offer similar training to their own staff
- c) record any failures on the asset management IT system
- d) carry out these works as a high priority by including in planned works; and
- e) continually review the programme of HHSRS work undertaken to ensure the Council maintains compliance with the Decent Homes Standard.

## **2 Asbestos**

The Council has an Asbestos Management Policy for all council homes, which sets out how the Council identifies and manages asbestos. The Council conducts surveys and sampling and manage asbestos containing materials in accordance with the Council's Asbestos Policy and Management Plan and the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

Management surveys are undertaken to all properties, including sheltered schemes and shared entrances to flats. This information is held in an Asbestos Register together with an Asbestos Management Plan. All high-risk asbestos containing materials are programmed for removal as they are identified. Medium and Low risk asbestos containing materials are left in-situ and are only removed if the risk should change, e.g. should they become damaged for instance or they require removal to enable repair or alteration work to be carried out. Contractors are made aware where Asbestos materials are located before undertaking repairs or refurbishment work. If Refurbishment and Demolition Surveys are required, these are undertaken prior to work commencing.

## **3 Legionella/Water Hygiene**

The Council has water hygiene policy for Council Homes with some communal facilities. Risk assessments have been completed and are reviewed on a periodic basis regarding the risk of Legionella to our sheltered housing sites and other sites with common stored water as required the HSE Approved Code of Practice L8. The Council will carry out risk mitigation work by flushing hot and cold-water systems to void properties just before they are occupied, and weekly for any void properties in sheltered housing schemes.

Although single household accommodation is not covered by legislation. The council will develop practical advice for tenants to minimise risk

## **4. Gas safety**

We have a Policy that ensures the safety of Tenants in homes that contain a gas supply and connected appliances whereby all reasonably practicable steps to gain access to tenanted properties have been undertaken. This is with the aim of satisfying the legal duties of the current Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations. Landlords have a duty, to maintain all appliances they own, and undertake a safety check and produce a safety record. It is a legal requirement to complete these checks and issue a landlords certificate annually. NOTE: - safety checks do not include tenants' own appliances.

Gas safety inspection and service of Council owned appliances is undertaken by a contractor on the Councils behalf. This does not absolve the Council from responsibility.

Each completed electronic generated Landlords Gas Safety record is checked by the contractors before loading onto the Compliance Document Management System (CDMS) recorded and reported outcomes. The contractor operates their own Risk based engineer audit process which is monitored by the Council.

In addition, the Council employ an independent audit, where 5% of gas servicing is checked by a third-party contractor.

Whilst most tenants cooperate fully with the council, there are a small number who refuse access to their homes. In these cases, we have an agreed procedure and do take action against tenants who do not allow access to undertake gas safety inspection and/or service our appliances.

Note that there is dispensation in the Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998 that a person shall not be guilty of an offence in any case in which he can show that he took all reasonable steps to prevent that contravention. This procedure sets out records that must be kept to be used in evidence to prove the Council took all reasonable steps to gain access.

## **5 Electrical Installations**

Electrical safety inspections of the fixed wiring installations are undertaken every five years, or when the property becomes vacant. If the property is void, we also test the electrical heating if present. The next inspection date is detailed on each certificate issued. At the time the inspections are carried out the essential electrical responsive type remedial work is undertaken in-conjunction with the inspection.

## **6 Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors**

Although there is no statutory requirement in existing dwellings to provide either smoke or Carbon Monoxide Detectors it is considered good practice to do so. The Council provides smoke detectors to all properties. In addition, Carbon Monoxide Detectors are provided to all properties with gas heating. XXX % of the Council's housing stock has hard wired smoke alarms (the rest are battery). The Council has allowed for the full replacement of both CO and smoke detectors on a rolling programme of XXX years for smoke and XXX years for Carbon Monoxide Detectors.

## **7 Fire Risk Assessments**

In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 the Council has undertaken fire risk assessments of communal areas to flats and sheltered schemes. The Fire Risk Assessments are reviewed annually basis and recorded on the Council's Asset Management database. Any remedial work required to mitigate the risks identified is undertaken and management processes put in place.

In additional Council officers carry out regular checks of the common parts of flats and Sheltered Schemes. These activities are recorded on our asset management system via a job being allocated to each member of staff.

The Council has no high rise (six stories or higher) blocks and has never used the Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) implicated in the spread of fire at the Grenfell Tower tragedy. All current and past cladding used on the Council's dwellings meet all British and European standards.

## **8 Inspections of Estate and Common Part Risk Assessment**

Council Officers are regularly out on our estates, as well as formally undertaking inspections of the estate areas, garage sites and common parts of our assets. Alongside formal assessments to the Health and Safety of Tenants, residents and visitors to our estates, Officers are expected and required to identify risks and ensure appropriate action is taken. Where high risks are identified, mitigating works are undertaken either through Planned or Responsive repairs. This will include appraisal of the following options:

- a) Repair, replacement, or improvement of boundaries, including urgent repairs where they are found to be unstable
- b) Repair, replacement, or improvement of paving or tarmac paths, both to make safe and to improve environmental conditions
- c) Repairs, refurbishments, and improvements to communal areas, both external and internal (e.g. refuse areas and stairwells to blocks of flats)
- d) The development of long-term sustainable solutions to problematic garage blocks/sites, ranging from minor environmental improvements to repairs to potential demolition/redevelopment.

More formal Estate Inspections are carried out on a regular basis by housing officers and with the help of local tenants.

## **9. Fire Doors**

After the Grenfell tower disaster SCDC removed all fire doors which were deemed to be high risk and replaced them.

The Council have been pro-active in replacing existing fire doors. We are now replacing all fire doors (approximately 300) over the next 12 months. We are installing composite FD30 doors (ie doors will withstand over 30 minutes of exposure to fire and smoke)

Fire doors will be included within an annual yearly maintenance programme to make sure they are serviced annually and remain fully compliant The installation and maintenance will be carried out by contractors.

## **10. Aids and Adaptations**

The Council has an increasing amount of equipment that is provided for tenants. We have developed an annual servicing and inspection regime for this equipment including the following

- Lifts
- Stair lifts,
- Hoists,
- Wash and dry toilets

### **Reporting**

There is an increased focus on compliance within the Social Housing 'industry' with this there is a need to provide reassurance to both members and customers. It is proposed to develop a new suite of indicators to measure compliance, within the first 6 months of this plan. These will be reported and a quarterly basis.

**PRIORITY B To have in place well designed repair and maintenance systems which ensure the stock is well maintained and kept in a good state of repair**

The Council recognises that the efficient and effective repair and maintenance of the housing properties is an essential requirement of the Housing AMS and that there will always be a need for routine, planned and cyclical maintenance to be carried out. In 2020/21 we anticipate spending £xxxmillion during the year on responsive repairs and a further £xxx million on cyclical/planned works giving a total of £xxxx million on our existing stock. As these figure were effected by the Covid Pandemic the table below shows expenditure over previous years.

(INSERT TABLE)

Whilst the Council's stock already meets the Decent Homes Standard it is clear that considerable challenges will remain in ensuring the existing stock is well maintained for the long term and that, as a minimum, it continues to meet the Decent Homes Standard. To meet these challenges, the Council aims to have in place well designed repairs and maintenance systems which encompass the ongoing requirements for day to day, cyclical, planned and improvement works for its tenant and leaseholder customers.

We will ensure that we have systems in place to develop and maintain:

- A responsive, effective and efficient day-to-day or 'responsive' repairs service.
- A relet service that is efficient and effective so as to help speed the repairs process and minimise loss of rental income.
- A cyclical and planned maintenance programme for inspection and servicing of various installations and for internal and external redecoration, designed to achieve economies by replacing components just before they would otherwise require responsive repairs, anticipating changes in the determined Standards and reducing future requirements for cyclical or planned works.

In this way, we will be equipped to deliver an excellent repairs and maintenance service for tenants and leaseholders, enabling them to live in well maintained, modern and safe homes.

Thus, our repair and maintenance services are grouped into three main categories. These are responsive maintenance, void works and cyclical/planned maintenance.

### **Responsive Maintenance**

These are repairs which are carried out when components fail, and which cannot wait to be undertaken under a planned programme. These works, which are revenue funded, comprise of day-to-day responsive repairs to items such as plumbing/sanitary equipment, door/window fittings, electrical equipment etc.

The Council has made significant investment in ICT and has a good relationship with its repairs contractors who carry out the majority of its responsive repairs. The service is flexible, efficient and highly regarded by customers.

We have taken steps to minimise work being undertaken through responsive repairs and no major works are financed by this budget. Instead, these are covered in the programme to maintain properties at the Decent Homes Standard. In addition to this, repairs to items such as fencing are batched into small programmes to achieve better value for money.

As part of the more proactive approach to asset management that we will be taking through the new Housing AMS our aim is to reduce the proportion of expenditure spent on responsive repairs to no more than 50% of the total repairs and maintenance annual spend.

### **Relet Works**

Relets works refers to the work that is needed to an empty property that is needed to relet the property. This generally occurs when a property is being re-let through termination of the previous tenancy. Relet works include statutory testing of gas and electrical systems, as well as the works required to make the property fit for incoming residents.

Work to relet properties is carried out in accordance with the standard set by the Council. It is proposed to develop a South Cambs relet standard within 6 months of the implementation of this strategy. The Relet Standard should provide a new tenant with a fit for purpose “decent home” to start their tenancy.

We recognise that empty properties are a very visible measure of the performance of the Housing Service and therefore it remains an important target to reduce relet times and report relets and relet performance a regular basis.

### **Cyclical maintenance**

Cyclical maintenance comprises the regular servicing of mechanical and electrical equipment (such as boilers) and would ordinarily include external decoration together with pre-painting repairs. Servicing occurs on regular pre-defined intervals.

Gas servicing is carried out annually. The Council has a statutory duty to inspect every gas appliance within every one of its housing properties every year, therefore it is a requirement under the tenancy agreement for all tenants to provide access to the property for the gas inspection to be completed. Occasionally the Council has to take legal action to enter tenants' homes where access has previously been refused.

The Council achieved a completion rate of 100% for gas servicing within the recent years, therefore to ensure that this excellent record is maintained, further work is planned to ensure that the service continues to operate within best practice and deliver value for money to tenants.

Carbon monoxide detectors are provided in all homes and annual detector testing is carried out.

Cyclical maintenance is essential to maintaining and increasing standards within the housing stock in addition to providing regular inspection of each property to identify any issues with individual dwellings.

### **Challenges**

The current repairs contract will reach the end of its life during 2022 and the service will be put out to competitive tenders. The process to retender the repairs service is covered in Appendix 1 to this report.

**PRIORITY c** To have a long-term strategy and programme in place to improve the thermal efficiency of the housing stock, with the aim of being carbon neutral by 2050

The Council has an ambition of being the leading green district within the country and providing excellent quality homes to our tenants. This is reflected in two of the four corporate priorities

- Building homes that are truly affordable to live in, and
- Being green to our core

### **Savills Report**

The Council aims to be Carbon Neutral by 2050 which includes the housing stock. In 2019 the Council Commissioned a study by Savills on how the council can best meet this aim.

The Savills study looked at both energy consumption and carbon emissions, and with other options being either unavailable (included where the distribution infrastructure is lacking) or prohibitively expensive, electricity is the only realistic option to heat homes once fossil fuels are removed.

The reliance on electricity does however have its own challenges:

1. The electricity grid has insufficient current capacity to take over from gas for all domestic heating and therefore the switch from gas for domestic heating will need to be phased.
2. Electricity is currently more expensive than gas and therefore switching fuels without reducing the amount of fuel required will result in much higher fuel bills for residents and probably resulting in increased fuel poverty.

The report suggests does not advocate switching from gas boilers to heat pumps without considering the overall implications and being selective in respect of property types. However, some dwellings that currently have good insulation levels may already be suitable.

The report suggests that the council approach carbon reduction whilst ensuring overall costs to tenants as the three-stage project

1. The first stage is reducing energy demand in dwellings which involves improving the level of insulation, including external walls (even those with insulated cavities of a certain age) and ground floors. The latter will present significant challenges and probably need to be done when the dwelling is vacant, particularly in the case of solid floors which will probably need to be hacked up and replaced (although there are new thin insulation products coming to market that may be suitable although not yet affordable)

2. The second stage is to install alternative heating systems, right sized to suit the reduced heating requirement, and we have adopted heat pumps as the most likely technology to meet this. The options are either air source or ground source heat pumps, both will require individual building appraisals to determine technical suitability.

Savills calculations show that these measures will reduce the total CO2 emissions from the housing stock from approx. 11,500 tons CO2 per year to 2,274 tons per year with average carbon emissions per dwelling reducing from 2.1 tons CO2/kg per year to 0.4 ton per year.

This residual CO2 emission is due to the fact that the grid has not been de-carbonised in the assessment modelling and the speed that this will happen is obviously uncertain today. 1.9 Similarly, energy consumed by a typical household reduces from an average of over 11,000 kWh/year to just over 3,100 kWh/year. However, as this energy is now all electricity, which has a higher tariff than gas, energy bills per tenant only reduce by an average of 33% from £690 to £465 per year. In some specific circumstances (an existing well insulated property using gas), there is a possibility that fuel costs could marginally increase if the reduction in energy demand does not offset the higher cost of electricity (based on current fuel costs).

3. The final stage is to eliminate this residual carbon in order to become net zero. If the grid has been decarbonised by 2050 in line with UK Govt targets then SCDC will be net zero carbon. SCDC has already installed solar PV to over 40% of its houses and bungalows so if the grid has not been decarbonised then it could introduce additional renewable generation measures such as PV (possibly with battery storage) to those dwellings currently without.

Alternatively, SCDC could invest in community wind farm or solar farm projects which would offset these emissions at the same time as generating clean power and a financial return. The extent of renewables required to offset any residual carbon emissions cannot be determined until the decarbonisation of the grid is more widely understood.

There is a significant financial cost for this work. The estimated budget to become 'near zero carbon' is in the region of £157.6m gross, exc VAT, over the next 30 years inclusive of undertaking ground floor insulation. This equates to an average cost of £30,000 per property. However, taking into consideration the £65.5m estimated of related work contained in the current 30 year capital delivery programme), the additional budget requirement reduces to approx. £92m, or £17,547 per dwelling on average.

These costings conceal the fact that some dwellings actually require investment of over £39,000 whilst others 'only' need £18,000. All costs exclude VAT and fees.

Savills suggest that SCDC should model the wider asset management impact which will inevitably be significant, especially in respect of the NPV of the housing stock. The general implications are that the longer term sustainability of a much wider range of stock may be questionable and ought to be subject to further option appraisals. This proposal is addressed within priority **XXXX of the HAMS**

The report recognises that the Council have undertaken a lot of small scale energy efficiency projects in recent years including the use of various types of heat pump, the installation of solar PV and provision of external wall insulation. And that the Council is well placed to embark on a programme of zero carbon measures.

Savills recommend a strategic approach is adopted that takes advantage of the 30 year timescales and allows informed decision taking.

It is therefore proposed that during this period the Council focus on

- a. Modelling the stock NPVs to determine financial performance in light of the zero carbon standard and confirm the long term future to support the levels of investment required. It must be borne in mind that this represents a significant investment in stock that will be expected to have a life of probably in excess of 50+ years.
- b. Review difficult to treat properties – solid ground floors, historic buildings, complex tenure mixes etc and agree a suitable strategy and work scope. A proportion of the stock will not be physically suitable to install heat pumps or external wall insulation and these need to be identified.
- c. For stock with a long-term sustainable future, develop a new holistic and sustainable investment plan that reflects both normal decent homes type work as well as zero carbon work. As option appraisals are completed, this stock should be added to the investment plan.
- d. Review all work components in relation to life cycle replacements.
- e. Undertake detailed surveys across the stock to identify technical suitability for zero carbon measures. (it is recommended that these surveys form part of the stock condition survey rather than an additional piece of work)
- f. Explore and trial technical solutions across building archetypes to ensure suitability and affordability. This could involve localised scheme upgrades designed to inform the wider strategy. This work commenced in 2020 with the work with the Net Zero Club.
- g. Review affordability.
- h. Embark on the implementation of improvement measures to selected sustainable pilot properties/blocks/estates that reflect the wider agreed strategy and build up a level of expertise internally as well as a supply chain. SCDC may also wish to explore some proprietary solutions currently available for wall insulation. Obtain resident feedback.
- i. Consult with tenants and leaseholders.
- j. Consider affordability, leaseholder implications and funding opportunities as funding becomes available. Agree and confirm long term funding that permits the whole stock to be upgraded.

- k. Develop a long term implementation and procurement strategy that reflects the investment plan and budget availability.
- l. Develop a 25 year plan from year 5+.
- m. Procure additional in-house expertise and external consultancy support as needed together with suppliers and delivery contractors.
- n. Gear up to commence delivery programme from year 6 @ circa 250 dwellings per year until 2045.
- o. Monitor the extent of grid decarbonisation and develop a strategy to offset the residual emissions if required.

### **NetZero Collective:**

South Cambridge District Council joined NetZero Collective in 2019. The Collective, an organisation made up of a number of organisations including the Dept Climate Change, Buildings and Energy, Southampton University and a number of Social Landlords with over 250,000 properties owned or under management.

NetZero Collective has 2 key aims:

1. Determine the most cost-effective way to retrofit properties to deliver 'netzero' using fabric first approach combined with deployment of renewable technologies.
2. Identify how the delivery of decarbonisation of properties at scale can maximise economic regeneration in local communities.

**The methodology for the first aim** has been developed by Southampton University and NquiringMinds a specialist AI company affiliated to Southampton University:

Each Social Housing Provider is contributing properties; 4-20 each providing a total population of 120-180 properties in the first year, including communal accommodation. The aim is to have a research portfolio of 400 properties within 2 years that provide detailed data sets on the efficacy of current technologies for carbon reduction.

Each property will be surveyed, and along with metering and monitoring equipment to gather data on energy consumption, conditions in the property and operating costs. The survey and property data is modelled by Southampton University to determine; what improvements need to be made to the building fabric (in line with PAS 2035) and what combination of low energy heat and hot water – and energy generation will be required to deliver a netzero solution for the property. This is whilst ensuring comfort for the resident.

Southampton University and NquiringMinds will be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the carbon performance of the properties as well as capturing the 'impact' on the residents, their behaviour and perception of the technology and the impact on quality of life.

The intention is to continue monitoring and reporting for 5 years providing a wide range of data for evaluation which would be carried out by Southampton University. It is intended that for longer term insight that the monitoring continue for as long as the asset owner is happy for it to continue.

### **How the Process Works:**

1. Agreement with the resident that their home will be involved in the project
2. The property is surveyed in detail to determine / confirm current SAP rating, identify fabric improvements, at the same visit:
  - a. Basic behavioural residential data is collected to assist with understanding of the 'operation' of the home
  - b. Energy consumption monitors are installed and temperature and humidity loggers are placed in kitchen and lounge
  - c. Energy usage for past periods are recorded
3. The data gathered is modelled to determine the interventions; fabric and renewable combination to provide optimum predicted carbon reduction.
4. The modelled solution for the property is costed and reviewed with the property owner
5. The interventions are carried out with the installation process observed\*
6. The resident is shown how the renewables work and provided with 24/7/365 contact for support
7. Ongoing monitoring: property data and renewables performance data is gathered remotely; temperature and humidity data and resident feedback are gathered bi-annually.
8. The results are used to create a data led model for determining (and costing) the optimum interventions within a property to deliver netzero (or as close as is possible). The model will be capable of large-scale portfolio modelling as well as producing a property by property specification of interventions required.

\*to capture opportunities for improving either installation methods or the physical properties of the equipment

The Council has contributed 5 properties into this first phase. These properties were empty at the time and survey have been completed. Work should be completed by the end of the 20/21 financial year and the properties let shortly afterwards. Incoming tenants will be made aware of the works and out requirement to monitor energy usage prior to accepting the tenancy.

### **The second aim of the Collective is to determine how to deliver lasting economic benefit in local areas – through decarbonisation**

In order to create the capacity and capability to deliver retrofit at scale, we are working with NetZero Collective to create a 'blueprint' for a Centre of Excellence for Decarbonisation to present to members. If successful this Centre will recruit, train, and employ local people to retrofit properties – using the data, tools, methodologies and training programmes developed through the research provided by the Netzero Collective. This provides an opportunity for the local college to become a training hub – delivering accredited programmes that build the capacity required to meet the target for 2050

The proposal being developed will be for a NetZero Collective Centre of Excellence for Decarbonisation will be a new entity, developed and majority owned by the Council – with local people employed either directly through the Centre or through local SME's. This model would allow profits from decarbonisation activity on private homes to be invested in decarbonising socially owned properties. The Council owned properties providing the initial revenues to establish (initially at small scale) teams trained to undertake whole property decarbonisation.

The Centre for Excellence for Decarbonisation would create its own economic hinterland\* to support decarbonisation including supply chain, secondary support organisations and building on Cambridge's technical and science base – the focus for further carbon reduction innovation.

(\*as seen at the Nissan car factory in Sunderland with over 30 years' worth of economic growth as a result of inward development.)

The first steps in creating the Centre of Excellence for Decarbonisation is to create a vision and 5-year strategy which will provide clarity, agreement and direction for the detailed mobilisation plan.

### **Net Zero New Homes**

The Council is keen to demonstrate that new build social housing can be constructed following the principles of Net Zero Carbon.

The council will identify a suitable site for such a build and will consider suitable procurement to deliver a 'proof of concept' development. This will be subject to available funding and the agreements of members.

**PRIORITY D To ensure the housing stock is brought up to and maintained at a locally determined Standard, remaining attractive and meeting modern requirements and tenant expectations.**

The Council is committed to ensuring that the stock it owns and manages not only continues to meet the national Decent Homes Standard (as defined by the government) but that it is brought up to and maintained at a higher, locally determined, South Cambs Standard. This is because the Council recognises that Decent Homes is a 'minimum standard' and acknowledges the House of Commons Select Committee recommendation (2004) that social landlords should aspire and plan for 'decency plus'; in other words, adopt a better standard that also takes into account the views and aspirations of residents.

Some tenants have opted out of having Decent Homes works carried out in their home. In these cases, the Council insists on an electrical safety test and continued annual gas safety testing to ensure the property remains safe. Most people who refused work are older people who did not want disturbance. These properties are monitored for changes in circumstance or tenancy turnover to enable the undertaking of the works when void.

The Council will develop and maintain a detailed 30-year investment programme to sit alongside this Housing AMS. It will be designed to deliver cyclical, planned and improvement works in a timescale determined by the need to ensure the stock continues to meet the Decent Homes Standard as otherwise some homes would become non decent each year without adequate investment. However, the investment programme will also provide for stock which is assessed to be 'long term sustainable' to be brought up to and maintained at a higher, locally determined, Standard.

It is recognised that the data that the Council own about the housing stock is incomplete. Some of the data is out of data, and much is based on inaccurate knowledge of the individual 'elements' within each property. Much of the data is 'cloned' from known 'beacon properties'. The information the council currently has is not fit to be used for detailed investment decisions.

In asset management terms each property is made up of a range of elements, for example roof construction or kitchen units. Each of these elements has several detailed factors, some such as the construction type, its age, its size, its current expected remaining life. The level on detail allows detail to allow detailed plans to be made, and these can be costed. However, this relies on accurate information being available for each element for each property. Some of the data used by the council is cloned (ie assumed to be the same as a similar property). This is inaccurate and means that additional surveys need to be carried out before work can be ordered, and that detailed planning is impossible.

It is therefore proposed to commission external surveyors to carry out a 100% stock condition survey. This will then provide a baseline for future investment planning. Once this baseline is established a sample of properties will be resurveyed each year, and when empty and the database updated in respect of capital and other work to keep the data current.

### **The South Cambs Standard**

During 2021 the Council will work with tenants to develop a new south Cambs Standard to ensure the Council's stock not only continues to meet statutory and/or regulatory minimum standards but offers a quality of accommodation which meets current and future residents' needs and aspirations.

In developing this standard, we will consider

- The desire to have a locally determined, enhanced standard over the required minimum
- The need to meet the climate change agenda and to help reduce levels of fuel poverty
- The need to ensure long term neighbourhood sustainability
- Tenant/customer needs/demands/requirements

In addition to this Standard we will consider the need to ensure flexibility to meet the special needs of particular resident groups, such as older tenants, disabled tenants and if an additional standard should be developed for sheltered housing schemes (this many include both individual accommodation and communal areas).

Once established the Council will put into place procedures for monitoring the attainment and maintenance of homes at this Standard in partnership with tenants to ensure that we continue to meet the changing needs, expectations, and aspirations of residents.

**PRIORITY E Replace obsolete or uneconomic stock with new properties, which are better designed to meet future needs and create a better-balanced portfolio.**

The Council seeks to deliver high quality, well designed, and suitable affordable homes in vibrant communities where people want to live.

The Council recognises that some of its current stock may not be sustainable for the long term and that some schemes and/or property types may be a poor quality design, a type of construction, of in a condition which makes long-term investment in the property either uneconomic or otherwise inappropriate.

This is a particular issue in respect of some of the stock that is of a non-traditional construction, where the fundamental design makes lettings and/or housing management difficult or where the work will be uneconomical e.g. the level of necessary investment over the next 30 years will exceed the level of rental income projected to be received. This may include properties that are in very poor condition and properties where the investment needed to reduce carbon use to an acceptable level is disproportionately high. Thus, in some cases, simply maintaining homes at the Decent Homes Standard or bringing homes up to the South Cambs Standard will not be enough to achieve the Council's wider goals. Rather than simply committing large amounts of money trying to improve stock which falls into this category the Council will consider working with others, as appropriate, to re-provide new, high quality properties which are better designed to meet the future needs of residents in the District and which are of a type which aids the development of a balanced housing stock portfolio.

The Housing AMS provides a methodology to review the future of some of the Council's homes, identifying the obsolete or uneconomic stock through a stock appraisal process and which incorporates:

- Review and analysis of stock condition survey information
- Net Present Value assessment techniques
- Examination of neighbourhood sustainability factors

Decisions about which stock to retain or redevelop, and where to build and for which client groups, will be taken in the context of robust analysis of neighbourhoods and local demand. Opportunities will also be provided to local residents to give their views, become more involved in the process and help shape the future of their neighbourhoods.

In some areas there may be a greater mix of tenures and landlords. Working effectively in such areas will require joint strategies or at least regard for the wider context when considering:

- Whether and on what basis we should retain and invest in the stock
- For what end use the stock is to be retained
- The alternatives to retention and investment in the stock
- The impact on tenants of the alternative approaches
- The impact on the HRA Business Plan and the Council's asset base

Those properties found to be unsustainable will be reviewed to identify the most effective mechanism to remodel or renew them.

In the assessment and planning of any redevelopment programmes the Council will ensure that it has clear processes in place for planning and consultation with residents, working with them to secure appropriate re-housing which meets their needs.

Furthermore, in determining the nature and type of re-provision the Council will work with strategic partners to identify and respond to changing demand within the District, seeking to better understand and anticipate shifting patterns in the housing market. However, this assessment is likely to confirm a particular requirement for more smaller units, partly to counteract the higher level of family homes lost under the right to buy, and partly because of the general pressures for this client group, also for more one bedroom homes for which there is also significant demand.

**PRIORITY F** To identify opportunities to acquire through purchase or direct build, additional homes to increase the number of Council owned properties available of the type and quality needed in locations where people want to live.

Right to Buy (RTB) has eroded the Council's stock considerably since it was introduced in the early 1980s. Whilst the rate of disposals has currently slowed the rate may increase again if proposals to increase discounts come to fruition and if mortgages become more readily available. The large majority of RTB sales have been family sized homes, but demographic changes and welfare reform has seen an increase in demand for smaller units. Therefore, the Council will use its Housing AMS to try and redress this situation through the active purchase of homes focusing on the purchase of:

- New build properties that are offered by developers because of section 106 agreements.
- Properties which have been previously sold under RTB
- Registered Provided (RP) disposals
- Properties which are in the process of being repossessed by lenders
- Newly built properties from speculative house builders
- Open market sales to meet specific housing needs.

Under self-financing, there is flexibility within the Council's HRA allowing it to borrow and therefore to consider the purchase of these types of homes, with the activity helping to boost any new build and bring additional homes on-stream more quickly. The following approach will therefore be used to identify and assess the appropriateness of purchasing new properties.

1. Purchase Appraisal
  - a. Consideration of location and housing need factors
  - b. Viewing and preliminary survey of property
  - c. Determine how property would 'fit' with existing stock profile
  - d. Determine scope and investment needed in the property to bring it up to the South Cambs Standard (not applicable to new properties)
  - e. Determine open market value of property, given its location and current condition
  - f. Determine rent for the property
  - g. Undertake financial appraisal (NPV) to determine viability of potential acquisition
  - h. Subject to above, negotiate acceptable purchase price and proceed with acquisition

In delivering this element of the Housing AMS, the Council will be mindful of the need to ensure long term sustainability of its estates, the retention of an appropriate tenure mix and the way in which acquisitions help meet deliver the broader objectives of the Council's Housing Strategy.

**PRIORITY G** To ensure that our housing stock meets the specific needs of clients

The Council recognises that there is likely to be an increasing need for the Council's housing stock to cater particularly for the changing needs of older people (given the ageing population) and for it to meet the specialist needs of people who are otherwise vulnerable or who have support needs. Therefore, the HAMS will be used as one of the key mechanisms to ensure that the stock and its associated attributes respond effectively to these needs, especially given the lack of suitable accommodation in the private sector.

### Meeting the Needs of an Ageing Population

Over half the Council's general needs tenants are aged over 60 and it is likely that this proportion will increase over time. Throughout the UK, by the end of 2010 around 13 million people were over the age of 65 and almost 2.5 million were over 80. Meanwhile, in the District there has been an increase in the number of people over the age of 60). Moreover much of the increase has been of people over the age of 80. This trend is set to continue

**Fig. 2-1: Older population in South Cambs (projected) 2020 - 2040**

	From	To	Increase	%
Age 65+	31,539	42,228	10,684	34%
Age 75+	14,900	22,960	8,060.	54%
Age 85+	4,450	7,917	3,468	78%

*Office of National Statistics*

The numbers of older people within the District is set to increase including those aged 85+ which is the group most likely to need care and support services to remain in their local communities and out of long term care.

The Council currently has xxxx sheltered schemes across the District containing xxxx units and accounting for just under xxxx of the stock.

Sheltered Housing Schemes	
Scheme Name	No. Bungalows/ Flats
Arrington	21
Balsham	24
Barton	28
Knutsford Bassingbourn	30
The Limes Bassingbourn	28
Bourn	29
Comberton	27
Coolidge Gdns Cottenham	36
Franklin Gdns Cottenham	38
Stevens Close Cottenham	45
Duxford	41
Chaplins Fulbourn	33
St Vigors Fulbourn	24
Avenells Gamlingay	27

Blythe Way Gamlingay	23
Grays road Gamlingay	14
Orchard Close Girton	33
St Vincents Girton	36
Granchester	41
Harston	42
Haslingfield	20
Greenleas Histon	26
Kay Hitch Histon	33
St Audreys Histon	15
Impington	44
Linton Chalklands	35
Linton Flaxfields	2
Longstanton	25
John Impey Melbourn	33
Vicarage Close Melbourn	20
Meldreth	22
Orwell Lordship	21
Orwell Meadowcroft	24
Over	33
Papworth	25
Chapelfield Sawston	42
Plantation Sawston	11
Uffen Sawston	19
Gt Shelford	48
Stapleford	31
Swavesey	25
Waterbeach Chapel Close	15
Waterbeach Denson Close	44
Whittlesford	45
Willingham	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>1247</b>

However, sheltered housing will not be the preference for all older or vulnerable people. Indeed, the Council's sheltered stock is relatively small but, in stark contrast, we have a relatively large stock of designated older person's accommodation in the form of self-contained bungalows and flats. The Council is firm in its belief that specific older person's housing offers an appropriate, attractive solution for many older and/or vulnerable people and anticipates continued demand so long as the product on offer remains of good quality. Therefore, we will work to ensure that over the medium to long term an appropriate level of designated older/vulnerable person's accommodation is retained and that appropriately investment in this category of stock is made to ensure that it continues to respond effectively to people's varied housing and support needs.

The Council intends to use its Housing AMS as a major mechanism to ensure that our sheltered and older/vulnerable person's housing continues to respond to population demographics and housing need. We intend to do this by reviewing the appropriateness and 'fit for purpose' characteristics of each of the sheltered and older/vulnerable person's

housing schemes, examining issues such as property archetypes, locations, accessibility, individual attributes and demand in order to draw conclusions as to the investment works needed to ensure their ongoing sustainability.

The aim is that all of the sheltered and older/vulnerable person's housing stock should be modernised and re-structured as necessary to bring it up to a locally determined 'sheltered housing standard' which ensures that it is 'fit for purpose' to meet local need, focusing on issues such as quality of dwelling, accessibility and provision of appropriate amenities. This Standard will form an Appendix of the AMS. The Council intends to put in place a clear, implementation plan for how it will achieve this by a specific target date and which will include identification of any funding required from the HRA. This process will ensure that the Council continues to provide attractive housing solutions for older and otherwise vulnerable people.

The Council will also need to balance the demand for sheltered or supported housing against the overall demand for 1 and 2 bedroomed properties. We may need to consider redesignating some units that are currently designated for older people into properties that are suitable for general needs housing. However, in doing so we need to be aware of the needs of current residents and take account of their views and the availability of local support networks.

### **Adaptations**

The Council will also continue to undertake work to our existing stock to ensure it continues to meet the needs of the increasing number of older and vulnerable people to remain in their home for longer.

One of the ways in which we will meet the changing needs of our current and potential customers is through the adaptation of our existing stock through a Disabled Adaptations Policy. We will continue to work with stakeholders to identify the needs of tenants and carry out adaptations to meet these needs where appropriate, enabling people to remain in their current home for longer and therefore improving the quality of life for our customers. In addition, where appropriate, customers will be encouraged and supported to move in instances where more suitable accommodation is available.

It is sometimes the case that adaptations are no longer required by the original beneficiary, such as walk-in-shower units or specialist bathing equipment. However, this equipment may be of use to other customers. As adaptations are often expensive to carry out we will maintain a live register of adaptations and adapted properties on the Asset Management System, enabling us to make a re-let to a household with similar equipment needs and/or to recycle adaptation items, ensuring value for money.

### **Other Support needs**

When appropriate the Council will work with other organisations and stakeholder to ensure that local residents with unmet housing or support needs can be offered appropriate accommodation within the district.

**PRIORITY H To use procurement processes to best effect to ensure value for money in the delivery of all repairs, maintenance and improvement works**

Procurement plays a significant role in ensuring that the Council obtains best value for money from its expenditure as well as ensuring that the procurement is conducted in line with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the legislation regarding procurement for public bodies.

The Council has a robust approach to Procurement with detailed procedures set out within the constitution (Contract Regulations) as well as a dedicated qualified Procurement Officer.

The Affordable Housing Service will work closely with the Procurement Officer when examining how best to secure repairs, maintenance and improvement works so as to ensure that it achieves the best value for money.

However, it is recognized that there is no single solution that can be applied in all cases, therefore by flexing the procurement approach to fit the circumstances of the type of works being procured it can be of significant help in delivering the main objectives of the HAMS.

The Council recognises that in delivering its repairs, maintenance and improvement works it is providing a service to its customers and that therefore it is especially the case that 'value for money' is about much more than simply securing the lowest price and involves an assessment of the combination of quality and cost to establish the best outcome for each contract to consider a wide range of other factors, such as:

Service, quality, customer care, project and contract management arrangements, resources with the appropriate skills, modern day slavery considerations, safeguarding, tenant liaison, technological considerations, environmental, sustainability, social value, Health and Safety, Covid-19 related working practices and positive impacts on equality & diversity.

Value for Money can be defined as the relationship between economy, efficiency, and effectiveness

**Economy** is the price paid for providing a service – for example, the all-in unit cost of materials and labour used to install building components.

**Efficiency** is a measure of productivity – how much you get out (outputs) in relation to what is put in (inputs). For example, the number of kitchens installed by a trade operative per hour; number of kitchen units fitted per £100 spent.

**Effectiveness** is a measure of the impact achieved and can be quantitative or qualitative. For example: how long did it take from start to finish to complete the kitchen installation? Are there any remedial works required? (quantitative); satisfaction levels among tenants on the finish of the product (qualitative). Outcomes should be equitable for all tenants, so effectiveness measures should include aspects of equity.

**Life Cycle Costs:** looks at the costs of providing the service over the life of the contract taking into account whole life costs based on expected volumes.

#### **Value for Money (VFM) Vision**

All services and processes undertaken by the Housing Service, will seek to deliver value for money to the tenants and residents.

#### **VFM Aims**

By providing value for money in South Cambridgeshire we will ensure that:

- Our services are fit for purpose - that is - of the right quality.
- We deliver our services as efficiently as possible.
- We make the best use of technology to enhance and improve the service delivery.
- We listen to tenants and plan delivery programmes based on what people tell us, but make a special effort to reach people who cannot easily express their views.
- We always balance the best contract price against the quality of the product delivered, to ensure that our tenants receive a high level of service at the best price.
- We will aim to target financial resources to the areas where maximum impact can be achieved and will work with other agencies and partners to deliver the most appropriate solution.
- Modern day slavery and safeguarding checks are undertaken.
- The operational services, project and contract management arrangements, delivered by qualified resources, provide consistent well run services that minimise disruption to our tenants.
- Environmental and sustainability considerations are taken into account and that Carbon is reduced throughout the supply chain over the life of the contract working towards net zero carbon.
- Safe practices and Covid-19 working practices are integrated into our contracts, protecting the workforce and our residents.
- Social value is considered with regards to benefits for the local community during the procurement process including positive impacts on sourcing locally, equality and diversity.
- Wherever possible we will look to evaluate Life Cycle Costs when undertaking procurement.
- We match our strategy and programme to meet the requirements of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

As part of improvements on the repairs service we will ensure that we work with contractors to improve services. We will establish regular contract management meetings, require information on performance and satisfaction which will be shared with tenants' groups.

Where contractors are unable to meet our expectations, then as part of our regular review process early intervention and performance management will be undertaken to resolve issues quickly and effectively. Following reasonable periods for improvement, where performance issues continue, then appropriate remedies will be undertaken to resolve the issue.

<b>PRIORITY I    To use the housing asset base to help deliver the wider corporate priorities of the Council</b>
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## **Introduction**

To be completed

### **Doubling Nature:**

In 2020 the Council adopted a Doubling Nature strategy this sets out an approach to increasing wildlife-rich habitats and the tree canopy and improving access to green spaces and includes

- giving nature space and help to reverse declines in habitat and species
- providing more areas for people to enjoy nature and benefit their health & wellbeing
- improving the quality of air
- helping to manage water for nature
- creating more resilience to climate change, and
- boosting the economy of the district

The majority of the land owned by the Council is held within the HRA and we recognise that we can make a major contribution toward this strategy.

To do this we will complete a tree survey that covers all the open spaces within the HRA. We will use the data from the survey to inform the development of a HRA open spaces strategy, and work with local residents and communities to develop local schemes to plant trees and other indigenous planting.

**(OTHER POLICIES TO BE INSERTED)**

## 6. Other Assets / Activities

As well as providing council Housing the Housing Service also owns, operates or manages a range of other physical assets these include

- **Communal Areas and Community Rooms is Sheltered Housing Scheme – In scope**

(insert description and activity for all in scope assets)

- **Gardens (private or shared) to Council Properties – In Scope**
- **Leaseholder and Shared Equity Properties – Partially In Scope.**
- **Garages (sites and garages) – In Scope**
- **Communal Spaces, Land and Infrastructure (including pathways and street lighting) – In Scope**
- **Traveller Sites – In Scope (but funding is not within the HRA)**
- **Ermine Street Properties – Out of Scope.**

Ermine Street Housing Limited is operated as a separate entity (insert details)

- **Shire Homes Limited – Out of Scope.**

## 7. **Equality and Diversity**

The Council values and respects the wide variety of people from diverse backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and lifestyles who are part of the community we serve. As such, we are constantly trying to improve our knowledge and understanding of the demographic profile of our residents to ensure that new and existing services reflect the needs of our diverse community. We are also determined to make sure our policies and procedures and working practices reflect this commitment.

In terms of managing and investing in our assets we take the different and varying needs of the people who live in the properties into account. For example, we recognise that in certain circumstances the standard package of works within the proposed South Cambs Standard may not meet the particular needs of some individuals or the way in which the works are programmed may not be consistent with their lifestyle. We will try to identify these instances and will also consider individual requests to be more flexible. Examples of the diverse needs of tenants include replacing a bath with a shower where residents are unable to use a bath due to disability, installing flashing smoke detectors for the hearing impaired and vibrating pillows for the visually impaired or mixer taps over washbasins to allow washing in running water before prayer.

In terms of considering the needs of individuals in the delivery of works programmes, examples include offering same sex interviews, translation and interpretation services and arranging respite care and temporary re-housing during improvement work where necessary. We also work with our contractors and delivery partners to ensure we hold shared aspirations of an equal and diverse work force offering training and development opportunities to the local population.

## 8. Impact of the Strategy

The Council is keen to see that tangible benefits and real impacts are delivered through the Asset Management Strategy for our Customers and for the Council and wider communities.

We anticipate that the Housing AMS will have the following positive impact:

For our customers

- Homes which are well managed and maintained
- Homes which are warmer and energy efficient reducing fuel costs
- Homes which are in high quality and sustainable environments
- Homes that meet the individual needs of residents
- A stock of properties which changes over time to provide a balanced portfolio which responds to customers' needs

For the Council

- Supporting and facilitating wider objectives
- Improving stakeholder satisfaction with the accommodation and maintenance services provided
- Having a well maintained portfolio which allows us to ensure efficiencies (capital and revenue) by managing property running costs effectively and efficiently and releasing capital and then recycling it into corporate priorities.
- Delivering new projects effectively and efficiently.
- Maximising returns on any "investment".
- Delivering continuous improvement through performance management.

## 9. Delivering the strategy

### 30 Year Investment Programme

The Council will develop 30 year investment programme based on the priorities in this document (in the form of an Asset Management Plan) that prioritises and programmes all capital improvement projects. Our aim is to review all relevant evidence to make objective, informed decisions about programmed repair, investment, re-provision and disposal activities.

The Asset Management Plan (AMP) will set out a 30 year profile of annual expenditure in the following principal works categories:

Planned Maintenance	works to the external envelope of properties, e.g. roof, walls, windows, doors etc.
Improving Homes	internal modernisation programmes to bring homes up to and maintain them at the South Cambs Standard, e.g. kitchen and bathroom replacements, floor coverings, ceilings, redecoration, installation of showers over baths etc.
Better Use of Stock	e.g. conversion of bedsits to one bedroom, self-contained accommodation
Asbestos Management	removal of asbestos containing material that is either damaged or is likely to be disturbed or damaged.
Carbon Reduction	installation and replacement of central heating systems and boilers
Insulation/ventilation	improved thermal insulation and ventilation systems
Electrical works	rewires and installation of safety alarm systems including voids, as well as maintenance of existing systems
Sheltered Housing	upgrades/renewals to installations such as lifts and boilers
Disabled Adaptations	adaptations that help allow tenants to continue living in their home

In total, the Council expects to spend XXXXX over a 30 year period repairing, maintaining and improving its stock.

### Performance Management and Measurement

We aim to compare projects to out-turn a better return on Investment. This also enables the Council to track all completed and planned investment works in a co-ordinated approach, irrespective of cost or scale of works. In this way we can ensure that investment is spread across the District on a defensible basis rather than being subject to pressures from other third parties.

### **Information Technology**

The Asset Management Strategy is underpinned by appropriate IT systems informing all relevant decisions on planned investment and maintenance. A robust and integrated system is in place that is able to hold stock condition information, surveys, completions information, decency scoring and so on. The Council's integrated approach allows key housing management data/information be linked with asset management data to ensure that relevant information on investment and the Council's assets is shared across the organisation. The operational benefits of a consolidated IT system are:

- Staff across Housing Services are able to see details of investment completed and planned to enable informed housing management decisions e.g. on allocations or void repair works.
- Properties where tenants have 'omitted' or refused improvement works will be held in the system for re-organising as required at the next change of tenancy.
- Information on warranties, guarantees, asbestos surveys etc. will be available to all users for informed management of front line repairs and CDM compliance, together with enforcement of warranties.
- Servicing programmes can be managed more proactively, taking into account all replacements completed under planned programmes, feeding back recommendations from servicing engineers on condition and likely replacement requirements for the future.

### **Funding**

The Council's aim is to seek to optimise access to funding sources, both capital and revenue, by aligning programmes and priorities to serve the objectives of national and local housing and housing related strategies. The underlying asset management principle of maintaining existing assets in the best condition will underpin and direct the use of resources. This process will direct the application of finance from the following sources:

- Homes England
- The Combined Authority
- Prudential borrowing
- Capital receipts
- General fund
- Internal borrowing
- Major repairs allowance
- Specific initiative grants (e.g. energy efficiency funding)

### **Action Plan**

In order to deliver the strategy and secure the impacts that are sought a delivery Action Plan has been prepared. The Action Plan pulls together all the various tasks which need

to be undertaken to deliver each of the strategic priorities set out in the Strategy, providing brief details of the work needed, assigning of responsibility and a target date for completion.

## **10. Responsibility for the Strategy**

The Council's Head of Housing has overall responsibility for the ongoing development of this strategy and ensuring the successful completion of the action plan.

## **11. Review of the strategy**

This strategy is designed to cover a short period of about three years. This allows for the better collection of data and the development of business plans based on this data.

Once this process is completed it is intended to review this strategy with a view of producing a robust strategy based on sound information.



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9 March 2021

**REPORT TO:** Climate and Environment Advisory Committee

**LEAD CABINET MEMBER:** Cllr Bridget Smith

**LEAD OFFICER:** Head of Shared Waste Services and Environment

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## Zero Carbon Communities (ZCC) grant update

### Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with information on the progress of the Zero Carbon Communities grant funded projects funded in round one, provide an overview of the projects funded for round two and give a brief update on the format for the soon to be launched round three.

### Key Decision

2. This is not a key decision. The purpose of this paper is to:
  - update members on our ZCC grant funded projects; and
  - provide information on the plans for the grant this year

### Recommendations

3. The committee is invited to review the update and highlight to Cabinet any issues of concern and actions recommended to address these.

### Details

#### Round 1

4. In its first year of operation, ZCC applications were invited for projects to both engage communities and support the aim of zero carbon by 2050. 42 applications were received, 19 of which were awarded funding.

5. We are very pleased to report that six of round one grant projects are completed, some finishing within the one year given for completion.
6. Given the impact of Covid, a number of the projects have had to adapt or postpone due to social distancing rules. All projects have started in some form or another- **Appendix A** provides an overview of the progress of each project, with completed projects highlighted in green.
7. Project successes have been shared on social media, on our website, in the South Cambs quarterly magazine and through our ZCC quarterly newsletter. Externally, the grant has attracted the interest of local radio stations such as BBC Radio Cambridgeshire as well as news publications like the Cambridge Independent newspaper. Publicity material has also been provided for all applicants to help promote the work of the Council and we have worked closely with the Communications department to achieve this.
8. The Zero Carbon Communities programme also featured as a case study in a national Local Government Association webinar on engaging communities on climate change, held on 26 February.

## Round 2

9. Round 2 of the ZCC grant, launched in 2020, received 45 eligible applications all focusing on one of three main themes - cycling, community buildings and tree planting. The below table summarises the number of applications received for each theme:

Cycling projects:	10
Community buildings	15
Tree planting	20

10. In November, 17 successful projects were selected and awarded between £1000 to £15,000 out of a total grant fund just short of £100k. A further 10 community buildings within the District will also receive an energy efficiency survey from PECT.
11. An overview of the round 2 funded projects is shown at **Appendix B**

## Round 3

12. Round 3 of the ZCC grant will be launched at the beginning of April and close at the end of July. This year's grant has been devised taking into consideration the views of applicants, members, officers and the number of applications received in the previous rounds.

13. There will be two specific main themes and an extra general theme for exceptional projects; with each theme being allocated a percentage of the total grant fund:

- Community buildings (40%)
- Nature (40%)
- Other projects (20%)

14. We will be providing potential applicants with another opportunity to join a workshop on the grant and will provide an update when a date is confirmed.

### **Implications**

15. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

### **Financial**

16. The awards recommended are within the Council's proposed budget for 2021-22.

### **Legal**

17. Funding agreements with grant recipients will be drawn up in accordance with templates approved by the legal team. Funding agreements will allow variation or recovering of the grant in specific circumstances.

### **Effect on Council Priority Areas**

18. The Zero Carbon Communities grant scheme has attracted significant interest. All the aims below from the SCDC Business plan 2019-24, will be furthered by one or more of the projects recommended for funding

### **Growing local businesses and economies**

19. Investing in renewable technologies

### **Being green to our core**

20. Supporting community groups to promote behavioural change and reduce the reliance on fossil fuels

21. Helping communities to secure grants to fund green projects

22. Protecting and enhancing the district's heritage and environment

### **A modern and caring Council**

23. Funding community and voluntary groups that benefit local people

### **Background Papers**

Climate and Environment Advisory Committee Meeting Monday, 4 February 2019

<http://moderngov.ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=1095&MId=7489>

Grants Advisory Committee Meeting Friday, 29 March 2019

<http://moderngov.ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=1096&MId=7487&Ver=4>

Cabinet, on 01 May 2019

<http://moderngov.ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=293&MId=7365&Ver=4>

Grants Advisory Committee Meeting Friday, 27 November 2020

<http://moderngov.ie/ListDocuments.aspx?CId=1096&MId=7968&Ver=4>

### **Appendices**

**Appendix A** – Overview of the progress of each round 1 project

**Appendix B** – Overview of round 2 funded projects

### **Report Author:**

Emma Dyer – Project Officer, Climate and Environment

Telephone: 01954 713344 (Teams)

## Appendix A

### Overview of the progress of each round 1 project

Applicant	Project	Progress
<b>Cambourne Town Council</b>	Cambourne Community Towards Zero Carbon	Completed in February 2020. With help from pupils from Cambourne Village College, Cambourne Town Council have been able to plant hedgerows and trees around the Great Cambourne cricket outfield.
<b>Waterbeach Cycling Campaign</b>	Waterbeach cycle stands	With some additional funds from Waterbeach Parish Council, three sets of cycle stands have recently been installed in the village. Some publicity has already been provided on the local Facebook page and the Waterbeach Cycling Campaign <a href="#">website</a> . In addition, a newsletter for their supporters will soon be published with news of the stands being the main article.
<b>Teversham Parish Council</b>	Teversham Cycle Plan	Teversham residents, with the help of Cambridge Electric Transport have now been given access to low-cost e-bikes which are based in lockers located in different parts of Teversham. A Community Engagement Day took place on 24th October 2020 to raise awareness of the Cycle Plan and its environmental, economic and health benefits.
<b>Ickleton Village Hall committee</b>	Energy Saving Lighting Project	LED lights installed in the village hall in May 2020.
<b>CycleStreets Ltd</b>	Street Focus - enabling communities to get more out of new developments	Completed February 2021 with the development of the CycleStreets <a href="#">website</a> to help individuals find out where planning applications are and see if new developments could pay for street improvements to help encourage cycling and walking.
<b>Histon &amp; Impington Trees Action Group (known as HITrees)</b>	Restore HI Trees: the Woodland and Wildlife in the Green Gateway to Histon & Impington	HITrees are able to start their project on March 6th with a low-key launch and a COVID-safe contractor to plant about two-thirds of the planned trees. They are aiming for community engagement in the maintenance of the trees and will do the final planting in Winter 2021/22 with the help of the community.
<b>Sustainable Cottenham</b>	Eco Eats: campaign & festival	Have already worked with Cambridge Sustainable food with the Food For Our Future' Campaign & Challenge and are half way through the rest of their project to encourage sustainable eating and the urgent need to reduce the carbon footprint of food production, distribution and waste. An Eco Eats recipe book will also be published.

<b>Cambridge Carbon Footprint</b>	Net Zero Now	<p>Will run a training programme in Summer 2021 to help deliver carbon reduction activities, events and communications that engage people of all backgrounds. Training will focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• taking action on climate change and how to communicate it</li> <li>• improving practical organisational skills and</li> <li>• starting your own carbon reduction project</li> </ul>
<b>Cambridge Cohousing</b>	Orchard Park Shared Electric Cargo Trike Project	The electric cargo trike has been delivered and the launch completed. Currently there are 28 users and the plan is to promote the trike again over Spring/Summer 2021. The trike has also been used in a community litter pick so proving very useful.
<b>Great Abington Parish Council</b>	E-Bikes in the Abingtons	The e-bike has been delivered and the launch completed. The village-owned e-bike scheme is proving to be very popular, being out on loan 100% of the time. They have not yet been able to hold public trials because of Covid restrictions.
<b>Gamlingay Eco Community Group</b>	Gamlingay Eco Community Group	The not-for-profit group is planning to host a monthly pop-up eco shop at the Gamlingay ECO hub in 2021 where they will be giving away samples of plastic-free household items for local residents to try. They have also started to present online sessions on plastic pollution-the first of which took place in September 2020 when they met online with Gamlingay Brownies. Plans are to hold more sessions like this to various youth groups in the village.
<b>Cambridge Sustainable Food CIC</b>	Food Our Future	Adapted their 'Food For Our Future' Campaign & Challenge to ensure it could still continue with the Covid restrictions in place. The online campaign launched on Saturday 24 October 2020 with a food waste challenge, cookery workshops, recipes, talks and storytelling-all to support families in reducing their food waste. They will also be running a community focused meat reduction campaign in the early Summer 2021.
<b>Orwell Benefice</b>	Living Food Bank - Climate Cafes	The project which links local people using existing church-based food boxes to a programme that enables them to build local vegetable plots-living food banks has been affected by both the weather and lockdown. Progress has, however, been made in the ordering of fruit trees, planting of heritage seeds and the donation of tools and plants as well as linking in with all the food banks in the villages. The community cafes should open later in 2021.

<b>Whittlesford Parish Council</b>	Whittlesford Tree Planting	The planting of 80 trees in the village should be completed by the end of March 2021, they are just waiting on some more trees to be delivered. They will also be putting a piece in the local <u>LOOK</u> magazine to let all residents know what has been achieved.
<b>Great Wilbraham Parish Council</b>	Wilbraham Woodlands	The phased tree project for which we funded phase 1 (to plant 6 trees in the village) is hoped to be completed by mid-March 2021.
<b>Melbourn Parish Council</b>	Melbourn Community Young Person's Refill Project	All six water stations have been installed in Melbourn Village College. The rest of the project- which includes issuing pupils with reusable water bottles and educating communities about the effect of wasting resources and plastic pollution is on hold but should be completed when schools re-open.
<b>Fen Ditton Parish Council</b>	Installation of drinking water fountains and install a cycle rack	This project should be finished by the end Feb 2021 but may still need an extension until the end of the financial year.
<b>Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership</b>	Meldreth Station Cycle Park & Cycle Repair Cafe	The installation of the cycle racks, including lights and CCTV at Meldreth Station, is already complete. The cycle repair café is on hold until Covid restrictions are lifted.
<b>Papworth Trust</b>	OWL Bikes Carbon Footprint Project	The Pop-Up Bike Shops and Safe Cycling and Repair Workshops have all been put on hold but will re-open soon once Covid restrictions are lifted.

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## Appendix B

### Overview of the round 2 funded projects

Two projects, one in Milton and one in Waterbeach, were each awarded the maximum grant of £15,000:

- **Milton Cycling Campaign**, a group working to improve cycling and other travel links around Milton, plans to use its award to work with local organisations to provide high quality cycle parking stands at key sites in the parish or on regular commuting routes for Milton residents, focusing on locations where racks will be used often and encouraging efforts to reduce routine car use in the parish.
- **St John the Evangelist Parish Church in Waterbeach** will use its award as part of a £24,200 project to install an air source heat pump, solar PV and energy monitor in its Church room, replacing the current gas boiler and communicating the benefits to the wider community via church services and local events.
- **Willingham Parish Council** received £13,142 for its project to install infra-red panels in its Ploughman village hall, replacing inefficient convection heating panels. The expected savings are £1,600 per year which will be used for other environmental projects.

Five projects have been offered funding between £5,000 and £10,000:

- **Babraham Parish Council** - towards creating a Forest Garden
- **Gamlingay Parish Council** - for the 'Grow Gamlingay' project to increase the parish's tree canopy
- **Northstowe Horticultural Association** to create a community garden and orchard for residents to learn to grow fruit and vegetables
- **Great Shelford Parish Council** for eight mature trees on the recreation ground's play area
- **Eltisley Parish Council** - to plant 3,000 native trees to create new woodlands.

Nine projects have been awarded sums of up to £5,000 each:

- **Great Abington Parish Council**, working with Cambridge Electric Transport to start a commercial share-bike scheme
- **Fowlmere Parish Council** - for 14 cycle stands
- **Camcycle** - to provide support enabling local people to apply for funding and traffic regulation orders for their local schools
- **Cottenham Parish Council** - for secure cycle stands at two community spaces
- **Sawston Parish Council** - to fund consultancy on planting in 12 green spaces
- **Little Shelford Community Orchard and Woodland Project** - for the project's Blennies Patch
- **Barrington Parish Council** - to create the Barrington Community Forest Garden
- **Little Wilbraham & Six Mile Bottom Parish Council** - to plant trees, create paths and plant up village verges
- **Foxton Parish Council** - to create seedbeds for drought-resistant wildflower species to grow in Dovecot meadow.

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**REPORT TO:** Climate and Environment  
Advisory Committee

9 March 2021

**LEAD OFFICER:** Trevor Nicoll

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## Green Energy Investment Programme Update

### Executive Summary

1. At the request of Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, an update report is provided which recaps on the approach being taking to finding, prioritising and progressing green energy investment opportunities, balancing “quicker wins” with more complex investments involving partners. There is a summary of the projects being undertaken on our own operational estate, principally the Greening South Cambs Hall project as well as the approach being taken on our Commercial Property Portfolio. The report also indicates where potential opportunity areas are for green energy investment over the coming year.

### Recommendations

2. The Climate and Environment Advisory Committee is invited to note and comment on the update report for the Green Energy Investment Programme.

### Details

3. Over the last year, the Council has developed a pipeline of green energy investment opportunities which include projects taking place on our own operational estate as well as on the newly acquired commercial property portfolio, and working with energy project developers on land or assets not currently within our ownership.
4. Following the Zero Carbon Strategy, our approach has been to balance quicker wins by “putting our own house in order” with longer-term larger renewable energy schemes working in partnerships which, whilst they will have a greater positive impact on carbon reduction, have additional risks and barriers with a longer timeframe to develop and realise those benefits.

5. The Council's Investment Strategy aims to provide a robust and viable framework for investments and the pursuance of redevelopment and regeneration opportunities that contribute to Business Plan objectives and can deliver positive financial returns for the council. This includes investments in initiatives to address climate and environmental issues, which is where some of these green energy investments are captured. This approach to green energy investments will also have to adapt now to changing guidance on Public Works Loan Board borrowing, a key source of borrowing for the public sector.

### **Green Energy Investments on our Operational Estate**

6. At the November 2020 Climate and Environment Advisory Committee, an update was brought on the Greening South Cambridgeshire Hall project. This project started to mobilise in December 2020 and involves a comprehensive retrofit of the building including a new heat pump system, solar car port, electric vehicle charge points, internal LED lighting and new Building Management System. The carbon footprint of the building will reduce by at least 75% by 2030 and by at least 90% by 2050 compared to baseline 2019 levels (this incorporates projected decarbonisation of the electricity grid).
7. This project follows a smaller 30kW solar pv installation on Waterbeach Depot building which completed in 2018 and a separate project replacing most external and internal lighting at the Depot with LEDs.
8. The Council is also part way through delivery of a project to move footway lighting across to LEDs which supports Parish Councils to reduce their carbon footprint and energy bills associated with this lighting and reduces some maintenance costs for the Council.
9. Looking ahead, analysis of the Council's carbon footprint through our Green House Gas reporting will highlight further areas where we can make green energy investments. These are likely to be associated with how we power our fleet used for waste and recycling collections. As the Doubling Nature Strategy emerges, opportunities for measures to meet these objectives will also be explored.

### **Green Energy Investments on our Commercial Property Portfolio**

10. Through the Council's Investment Strategy, several commercial buildings have been acquired. There is programme in place to complete 'outline business cases' for all Council-owned commercial property to highlight opportunities to improve the energy efficiency of those buildings and opportunities to generate heat and power on site, subject to agreement with existing tenants. Opportunities include maximising solar pv on the roof and ensuring there are on-site charge points for electric vehicles and/or bikes, alongside efficiency measures to the fabric of the building and heating, cooling and ventilation systems. This shows the Council's commitment to supporting the reduction of carbon emissions from local businesses within the District.
11. One of the properties, 270 Cambridge Science Park, requires extensive renovation to make it suitable for businesses requiring office space. The Council

is exploring opportunities to add additional energy efficiency and energy generation measures to reduce the carbon footprint of the building and keep energy costs low for the building occupiers. Initial Outline proposals include an 84kWp solar PV array and 6 x 22kWp EV charge Points

12. In addition, any potential land or property acquisitions are also assessed for green energy investment potential (retrofit or within development designs) and this assessment is part of the due diligence and business case development process. Also, as the Doubling Nature Strategy emerges, measures to support these objectives will also be explored.

### **Green Energy Investment other partnership projects**

13. Directly, and via our Agent, several developers have come forward with renewable energy projects requiring investment. In these instances, the Council has followed the Investment Strategy for stream 2 investments with an initial matrix scoring process and recommendation from officers to an Investment Selection Team and then continuing to a stage of comprehensive due diligence of the parties involved and the business case for the energy project. The types of project that have been explored include solar-only and hybrid schemes involving battery storage.
14. To date, no recommendations for investment have been made to Members as schemes have not met the thresholds within the Investment Strategy or successfully completed the due diligence phase.
15. There is likely to be a refocus on investment opportunities within the 'travel to work' area of South Cambridgeshire and projects which can demonstrate wider benefits other than financial return/yield, for example incorporating measures to enhance biodiversity and address 'Doubling Nature' objectives.
16. The Council is also exploring how it further supports local businesses to reduce their carbon footprint through advisory services but also through potential investment in renewable energy installations.

### **Implications**

17. There are no significant implications.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **Growing local businesses and economies**

18. Having a planned programme of investment in green energy projects supports the development of the retrofit and green energy sectors with certainty over demand for services and skills.

### **Being green to our core**

19. The green energy investment approach ensures the Council “put their own house in order” demonstrating leadership and tackling their own carbon footprint as part of a wider programme to tackle carbon emissions within the district.

## **Background Papers**

South Cambridgeshire District Council Zero Carbon Strategy – May 2020

Source: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/council-adopts-zero-carbon-strategy-for-south-cambridgeshire/>

South Cambridgeshire District Council Investment Strategy

Source: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/performance-and-plans/our-investment-strategy/>

## **Appendices**

None

## **Report Author:**

Jonathan Bell – Green Energy Investment Manager

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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