

Housing development

How the Council enables new affordable housing development

The Council works in partnership with housing associations to provide affordable housing.

There are two main ways that the Council enables the development of affordable housing:

1. Through section 106 agreements

If a site meets certain size criteria, the Council negotiates a proportion of the land to be used for affordable housing. This is then developed by a housing association to provide homes for people in housing need.

2. Rural exception sites

As housing associations cannot generally afford to purchase land within the development envelope for affordable housing, they are reliant on cheap or subsidised land for development. Section 106 provides most of the land on which to build. However, there are certain cases where the Council will permit the development of a site that is outside of the development envelope if it meets the criteria set out in the Local Plan. East Cambridgeshire has a very active programme of rural exception sites and has already completed such developments in Bottisham, Burwell, Isleham, Fordham, Little Downham, Wicken, Burrough Green and parts of Soham. The council works with the Rural Housing Enabler, based at Cambridgeshire Acre, to encourage parishes to identify land for rural exception sites.

New schemes in the pipeline

Development of new affordable housing to meet the needs of local people is a priority for the Council. The policies described above have produced an increasing amount of new affordable housing for the district.

New properties are allocated to people on the basis of housing need. To apply, please contact Hereward Housing on 0845 8505757.

Table 1: Expected completions of new affordable housing by March 2007

Address	Settlement	Housing Association	Rent	Shared Ownership	Key Worker	Total
Foxwood south	Soham	Flagship (CHS)	2			2
The Brook	Sutton	Hereward	4	7		11
St Mary's close	Mepal	Hereward	6			6
Mereside	Soham	Flagship (CHS)	66	38		104
Highfield Farm	Littleport	Hereward/Flagship	39	29		68
Prickwillow	Ely	Flagship	4	3		7

Road						
Hawes Lane	Wicken	Flagship	6	2		8
Brinkley Road	Burrough Green	Hereward		8		8
Totals			127	87		214

Table 2 Expected development programme for 2007/8

Address	Settlement	Housing Association	Rent	Shared Ownership	Key Worker	Total
Weatheralls close	Soham	Flagship	14	8		22
Newmarket Road	Burwell	Hastoe housing	16	4		20
The Birches	Soham	Flagship	5	4		9
Duchess drive	Newmarket	Flagship		12	6	18
Longfield road gges	Littleport	Hereward	20			20
Limes Close	Littleport	Hereward	6	2		8
Stretham Road	Wilburton	Hereward		2		2
Brewhouse Lane	Soham	Hereward		6		6
Berry Close	Stretham	hereward		7		7
Townsend	Soham	Circle Anglia	9	9		18
Tunbridge Lane	Bottisham	In negotiation	6	3		9
Westfield Farm	Ely	Circle Anglia	27	11		38
Barrats, Prickwillow Road	Ely	?		30		30
St Johns Ave	Newmarket	Flagship	8			8
Totals			111	98	6	215

East Cambridgeshire is part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth area identified by government. This region has been given targets for large numbers of new dwellings. East Cambs is working to maximize its share of the grant money available for new affordable housing, but is competing for the same pot of money as the new settlements at Cambourne, Northstowe and the Cambridge fringes. The Council is therefore developing many innovative approaches, especially to getting new affordable housing in rural settlements.

Local Development Framework and Guidance on Affordable Housing

This is likely to be one of the more significant policy areas in finding new sites for new affordable housing. Currently the Local Development Framework is at consultation stage. Matters being considered by Councilors include:-

- What proportion of new developments should be affordable housing. The current policy has a double target of 20% or 30% depending how the housing is produced. This is likely to increase in the LDF. The precise proportion will be decided by councillors based on economic modeling which is being done during 2007.
- What thresholds to set for affordable housing. That is, should there be new affordable units on all new developments or should there only be a requirement to produce new affordable housing on developments over a certain size, and if so, what size?
- Allocating particular sites for affordable housing in rural areas. Councillors will consider whether there are any particular sites which could be allocated for affordable housing development only.
- Allocating sites for pitches for gypsies and travellers when further guidance on this is completed at regional level.

The supply of affordable housing in East Cambridgeshire District is currently buoyant, and is likely to remain so for 3 or 4 years, but it does not meet the requirement identified in the 2002 Housing Needs Survey, which suggested that 529 new affordable units are required every year to meet the need and house prices in the district are still out of reach of local people of median incomes.

Table 3 Completions Of Affordable Housing In 2005/6

Address	Settlement	Housing Association	Rent	Shared Ownership	Key Worker	Total
Cannon St	Lt Downham	Hereward	4			4
Browns	Burwell	Circle Anglia	12		2	14
Riverside Ct	Prickwillow	Hereward	1			1
Aldreth Road	Haddenham	Hereward	2	2		4
Bancroft Lane	Soham	Circle Anglia		18		18
Wisbech Road	Littleport	CHS		6		6
May Gurney	Sutton	Hundred	5	6		11
Allotment Site	Isleham	Hereward	9	7		16
Cambridge Road	Ely	Flagship	19	5		24
The Brook	Sutton	Hereward	20	4		24
Clayway	Ely	Hereward	8	10	2	20
St Johns Road	Ely	Circle Anglia	6	8	15	29
Highfield Farm	Littleport	Hereward		10		10
Mereside/Townsend	Soham	CHS		11	27	38
Totals			86	87	46	219