

## **Planning the Housing Service**

### **Identifying Housing Need**

In 2002 the Council and its four main housing association development partners commissioned Fordham Research to undertake a housing need survey in the district. A total of 500 people completed personal interviews and a further 3,500 people were asked to complete postal surveys. The survey included owner occupiers, housing association and private tenants.

The results of the survey help the Council to understand the dynamics of the housing market and to create its Housing Strategy accordingly. The information also helps the Council to negotiate new affordable housing development and to strengthen its bid to central government for money to build new affordable housing.

[View the Housing Need Study Summary](#)

### **Key Workers**

Using an Innovation and Good Practice grant from the Housing Corporation with match funding from Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association, the Affordable Housing Sub-Group commissioned a piece of research to identify the needs of key workers in the Cambridge sub-region. The work specifically defines a key worker, identifies the need for key worker housing in each District, identifies the type of housing required by key workers and recommends a way in housing can be allocated to this group.

[View the Innovation & Good Practice report](#)

### **Meeting Housing Need**

Every year the Housing Service produce a Housing Strategy that sets out the key issues facing housing in the district and how the Council plans to intervene in the housing market to balance housing need with supply. The document is submitted to the Government Office for the Eastern Region (GO-East) who assess and grade the document. In producing the document the Council consult with a wide range of partners. In 2003, to prepare for the Housing Strategy the Council undertook the following consultation events:

- Forum with Parish Councils considered the issue of rural exception sites
- Two roadshows were held with the public – one in Ely and one in Newmarket
- Residents of the mobile home sites were surveyed to assess the need for future site improvements
- Homeless Service users were consulted on their experience and satisfaction with the homelessness service
- Two stakeholder events were held on homelessness and private sector renewal
- The draft Strategy was placed on the website and all partners and the community were alerted to its presence.

The Council values feedback on the provision of services and would welcome any views or comments that will help us to improve the way we work.

[View the Housing Strategy](#)

### **Cambridge Sub-Region**

The Cambridge sub-region is one of the four national growth areas identified in the

Governments Sustainable Communities Plan. A report commissioned by the Districts and County Council, and completed by Roger Tym and Partners identified a need for a three fold increase in the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of the sub-region. In order to achieve this an Affordable Housing Sub-Group has been established. This group comprises the County Council and District Councils, the Housing Corporation, Government Office for the Eastern Region and the East of England Development Agency. The Group have produced a Housing Strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region.

For more information on the other infrastructure partnerships within the Cambridge sub-region use the link below:

[Go to The Cambridge Sub Region Study Page](#)

### **Cambridge Chief Housing Officers Group (CCHOG)**

The Chief Housing Officers from the five District Councils in Cambridgeshire meet every two months to discuss strategic housing issues facing the region, the implications of any new government legislation and directive and to share good practice.

### **Supporting People**

Supporting People is a new programme that aims to provide housing related support services to people. Some of the services that come under the umbrella of Supporting People include:

- Sheltered housing for the elderly
- Hostels for homeless people
- Supported housing for people with learning disability or mental illness
- Funding for home improvement agencies

Supporting People is being implemented in Cambridgeshire by a partnership of the County and five District Councils, the Probation Service and the Primary Care Trusts. A strategy has been agreed that enables the Councils to strategically review schemes and to plan for new supported housing services. For further information, please see the Cambridgeshire Supporting People web site.

[Go to the Cambridgeshire Supporting People website](#)

### **Service Plan update 2005**

Every year each Council is required to produce a Service Plan that sets out the main activities to be undertaken each year and the resources required to undertake them. The Service Plan is also a way that performance can be measured and Services can be held accountable for their actions.

[View Housing's Service Plan for 2005](#)

### **Best Value Review of Housing**

In 2000 the Council undertook a fundamental Review of the Housing Services that it provides and how it provides them. This Review was based on the '4 C's' which means that we analysed our Service to see how we:

Compare - with others

Consulted - with partners and customers to see what they think of us

Challenged - what we do and how and why we do it

Compete – we looked at whether other organisations could do what we do in a better way

[View Best Value Review report](#)

### **Best Value Inspection**

As a result of the Review, the Audit Commission inspected our Service in September 2001. They decided that the Council provide a Fair (1star) service that is likely to improve as a result of its improvement plans.

[View the Audit Commission's Best Value Inspection](#)

### **Best Value Improvement Plan**

Based on the findings of the Review and Inspection we produced a Best Value Improvement Plan. This sets out the things that we will change over the next five years. This is used to inform both the Housing Strategy and the Service Plans.

[View Best Value Improvement Plan](#)