

**CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL PROPOSAL C
AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN CAMBRIDGE**

The Sustainable Communities Act proposal form

Using this form

This form should be used to submit proposals under the Sustainable Communities Act to the LGA for short listing. Please complete all sections and then email a copy to selector@lga.gov.uk . These must be received by July 31st 2009, and you will receive confirmation that the form has been received. Please note that mail administrators may have restrictions on the size of email able to be sent and received. We are unable to accept anything over and above 10mb in size. Please also use this email address to request copies of this form in a different format

Once submitted, information within this form may be made publicly available, unless you request for it to be kept private. We will treat information submitted sensitively.

We are able to accept information in addition to the form if it directly relates to the proposal, however we would encourage information to be included where possible within the confines of the form. If you wish to attach any relevant presentations or graphs etc. please attach them separately to the email - noting the 10mb size restriction we have on receiving emails.

For questions regarding the act or the role of the Selector, please see our [FAQs](#) . Any further questions can be directed to selector@lga.gov.uk .

Section 1: Proposal Summary

Proposing Authority

Under the terms of the Sustainable Communities Act, all proposals must be submitted by a local authority, or group of authorities, in England. Any group, organisation or individual may originate or develop a proposal. However all proposals will require Local Authority endorsement and submission to the Selector.

Parish councils and other organisations and agencies must seek support and formal endorsement from a proposing local authority (defined in the Act as county councils, district councils (including metropolitan, non metropolitan and unitary authorities), the common council of the city of London or the Council of the Isles of Scilly).

1.1 Lead Authority name

Cambridge City Council

1.2 Is this proposal submitted by this authority alone, or is it a joint proposal with other local authorities? (If joint please list authorities)

This is a Cambridge City Council proposal

1.3 Who is the lead contact (s) in the authority for this proposal? Please provide email address and telephone number - The LGA will direct any enquiries to this contact.

**Trevor Woollams, Head of Strategy and Partnerships. Trevor.woollams@cambridge.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 457061**

Supporting Organisations

Whilst proposals may only be submitted by a local authority, we acknowledge that local partners and outside organisations may wish to register support for the proposal. This is entirely voluntary.

1.4 Please provide details below of supporting organisations to your proposal. Please explain if the organisation is a charity, company, unincorporated association or other body. If a charity or company please provide registration numbers. If a local partnership please explain the relationship to the Local Strategic Partnership for the area.

* Cambridge Local Strategic Partnership
* Cambridgeshire County Council
* Community groups and local organisations who were represented on our Panel and who recommended the proposal to our Council. These are listed at 3.1 below. They are a selection of local unincorporated associations and local groups, some aligned to national charities and lobby groups.

Summary of your proposal

Please summarise your proposal. You may wish to include:

- The main elements of your proposal
- What issues your proposal is addressing and how it will promote the sustainability of the local community
- Who is affected by this proposal and how?
- Which public bodies might be affected?
- What are the main actions needed from Government?
- What do you expect this proposal to achieve?

1.5 Please enter your summary below (*word limit 1000 words*)

PROPOSAL C. Affordable Housing in Cambridge

The government should change current arrangements to allow Cambridge City Council to keep ALL revenue collected from Council Housing rents and ALL receipts from Right to Buy sales of Council Homes. The additional money (currently given back to government through negative subsidy) to be spent on:

- a) Building new Council Housing to at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (or higher wherever possible) and in accordance with "Lifetime Homes" standards.
- b) Energy efficiency improvements and maintenance to existing City Council Housing Stock such as improved insulation and renewable energy.

This proposal will have a major impact on the sustainability of Cambridge by:

- * Enabling the Council to build significantly more affordable housing in Cambridge to help satisfy a huge demand from residents, especially key workers who have been priced out of the private sector housing market.
- * Enabling the Council to build new exemplar affordable housing schemes to the highest possible sustainability standards, setting examples to developers and encouraging them to increase sustainability standards in the many new private sector homes that will be built in Cambridge.
- * Enabling the Council to further improve the sustainability of its current housing stock by making it more energy efficient.

This proposal was developed through a community workshop and through scrutiny by our 'Panel of Representatives of Local Persons', panel of young people and the City Council's Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

The Government could implement this proposal by permitting Cambridge City Council to retain all rental income from its Council Housing stock and by retaining all receipts from 'Right To Buy' (RTB) sales.

We are aware of government proposals which would allow local authorities to use rental income to build new homes. However, the government proposal would appear to rely on Cambridge City Council tenants taking on significant new debt in return which would be much more restrictive than this proposal.

Cambridge sits in the middle of a major growth area. The City is planned to grow by 40% by 2025. Additional affordable housing is desperately needed and yet Cambridge City Council tenants currently pay a 'negative subsidy' of £11.8m (2008/9) to the national HRA. Currently around 75% of our RTB receipts are handed over to government. Although, due to the economic climate, RTB sales are currently low (6 in 2008/9 down from 42 in 2007/8), the City Council expects them to pick up again in the coming years.

Based upon 2008/9 figures the City Council estimate that 100 new affordable homes could be built p/a (if this proposal is implemented in full) assuming they are built on Council owned land.

City Council tenant's money should remain in the City and be used to build affordable homes to the highest sustainability standards for the key workers that are needed to support the local economy.

Section 2: About your proposal

The form asks a set of questions to gather as much information as possible to allow for assessment and short-listing by the Selector. A word-limit is stated for each part of the form.

We appreciate that SCA proposals will vary in range and scope, and some questions will be more relevant than others for any one proposal. Please do not feel that answers are required for every question or that the full word limit need be used in respect of each and every question box. If you are submitting a joint proposal, please include evidence for all areas.

Impact on sustainability (word limit 2000 words)

2.1 Please explain how your proposal promotes sustainability as defined locally (for example in your Sustainable Communities Strategy or LAA)

The Cambridge Sustainable Community Strategy was developed with partners through consultation with our residents. It has 3 priority areas:

- * Tackling Climate Change
- * Building Sustainable Communities
- * Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities

This proposal, if fully implemented, will have a major positive impact in terms of taking forward all 3 priorities set out in the strategy for the reasons set out in 1.5 above.

The Cambridgeshire Vision, which informed our Local Area Agreement, has 5 key goals:

- * Economic prosperity
- * Environmental sustainability
- * Safer and stronger communities
- * Accommodating growth
- * Equality and inclusion

This proposal, if fully implemented, will have a positive impact on all 5 goals.

Cambridge sits firmly within one of the country's biggest growth areas. It is set to grow by around 40% by 2025. House prices are simply unaffordable for many people on moderate or low incomes.

The local economy will only prosper if the City can retain existing key workers and attract new key workers. Failing this, more people will need to commute into the City, increasing pressure on the City's already congested roads, more businesses will relocate away from the City and staff costs for the City's public sector and educational organisations such as Addenbrookes Hospital and the Universities will increase.

The City Council will ensure that any new affordable housing it builds will be built to the highest possible sustainability standards including the highest energy efficiency ratings. The City Council wants to build exemplar homes that set the standard in terms of sustainability and challenge private sector developers to match them.

Decent affordable housing for everyone, not just those on high wages, is key to ensuring the City's communities are strong and cohesive.

2.2 Over which geographic area will your proposal impact? (e.g. neighbourhood, town, city, sub-region)?

This proposal will promote and improve sustainability within Cambridge City. However, the proposal could be implemented in other local authority areas where negative subsidy is paid.

2.3 Who would benefit from your proposal?

There would be significant benefits for existing and new Cambridge residents, local businesses, public sector and educational organisations through:

- * availability of more affordable housing for key workers and those in housing need which will make it easier for organisations to recruit and retain staff.
- * more sustainable housing built to higher energy efficiency standards which mean they would be cheaper to run in terms of heating, lighting, and water use.
- * stronger and more cohesive communities because more people will have decent affordable homes in which to live.
- * reduced CO2 emissions and improved air quality through more energy efficient homes and less commuter traffic.

2.4 What steps will you take to mitigate any adverse affects on sustainability from your proposal (if relevant)?

The City Council does not consider there are any adverse affects on sustainability from this proposal.

2.5 What project, activities and changes would take place in your area if your proposal was successful?

There will be more affordable homes available to more people on lower incomes. These homes will set the standard in terms of sustainability and energy efficiency for future housing growth in the City and beyond.

2.6 Does your proposal involve transfers of responsibilities between public bodies in the area? If so what are these? What budgetary implications might be involved?

No. There are no budgetary implications if the proposal is implemented in full.

Local authorities are required to 'have regard' to a set of specific issues when deciding whether to support SCA proposals. These are matters listed in Schedule 1 of the Act, as passed by Parliament¹. It is worth noting that the issues listed in the Act are not supposed to be exhaustive and that ideas can cover anything that promotes the sustainability of the local area.

Many of these matters may not be relevant to any one proposal. If you are submitting a joint proposal please include evidence for all areas.

2.7 Please identify which, if any, of the issues authorities are required to have regard to, are relevant to this proposal and include any data and information which you feel would be helpful in the assessment process.

a) the provision of local services

¹ The Sustainable Communities Act is available here :
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2007/ukpga_20070023_en_1

Local businesses, public sector and educational organisations would benefit from this proposal because they will be more able to retain and recruit key workers.

- b) the extent to which the volume and value of goods and services that are- i) offered for sale, ii) procured by public bodies, and are produced within 30 miles (or any lesser distance as may be specified by a local authority in respect of its area) of their place of sale of the boundary of the public body.

The building of more local affordable homes will help create and sustain local jobs

- c) the rate of increase in the growth and marketing of organic forms of food production and the local economy
- d) measures to promote reasonable access by all local people to a supply of food is adequate in terms of both amount and nutritional value
- e) the number of local jobs

The building of more local affordable homes will help create and sustain local jobs

- f) measures to conserve energy and increase the quantity of energy supplies which are produced from sustainable sources within a 30 mile radius of the region in which they are consumed

The new affordable homes will be built with the highest energy efficiency standards. The energy efficiency standards of 8,000 existing council owned homes will be further improved over time.

- g) measure taken to reduce the level of road traffic including, but not restricted to, local public transport provision, measures to promote walking and cycling and measures to decrease the amount of product miles

The high cost and lack of availability of affordable homes in Cambridge is increasing the number of commuters into the City. This proposal will reduce commuting.

- h) the increase in social inclusion, including an increase in involvement in local democracy

Decent affordable housing for all those people who need it is vital to maintaining and strengthening social cohesion.

- i) measures to increase mutual aid and other community projects
- j) measures designed to decrease emissions of greenhouse gases

This proposal will reduce greenhouse gases through higher sustainability and energy efficiency standards for new and existing homes.

- k) measures designed to increase community health and wellbeing

Decent affordable housing is crucial to good community health and wellbeing.

- l) planning policies which would assist with the purposes of this Act, including new arrangements for the provision of affordable housing

The City Council is doing all it can under existing planning powers to deliver more affordable housing. For example, developers are required to provide for 40% affordable housing (social rented or shared ownership) on all new developments of over 15 homes.

- m) measures to increase the use of local waste materials for the benefit of the community

Existing Barriers

(Please do not write more than 1000 words for 2.8 and 2.9)

2.8 What are the existing barriers to implementing your proposal?

The government takes £11.8m p/a in negative subsidy from the City Council's tenants through the Housing Revenue Account and 75% of RTB receipts.

2.9 What actions are needed by Government to make your proposal possible?

The government should change current arrangements to allow Cambridge City Council to keep ALL revenue collected from Council Housing rents and ALL receipts from Right to Buy sales of Council Homes. The additional money (currently given back to government through negative subsidy) to be spent on:

- a) Building new Council Housing to at least Code Level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes (or higher wherever possible) and in accordance with "Lifetime Homes" standards.
- b) Energy efficiency improvements and maintenance to existing City Council Housing Stock such as improved insulation and renewable energy.

Part 3: Local Authority Endorsement

This section should be completed by the proposing local authority. (Under the terms of the act this means a county council in England, a district council (including metropolitan, non metropolitan and unitary authorities), a London borough council, the Common Council of the City of London or the Council of the isles of Scilly)

3.1 Have consultation requirements been met? (500 words max)

Please confirm that your authority has met the statutory requirements for consultation on this proposal, via one or more panels of local representatives and persons from under-represented

groups constituted in accordance with the Act and statutory guidance as set out in [Strong Safe and Prosperous Communities](#).

You may wish to describe who has been involved in discussions and development of the proposal (e.g. council, local community organisations and residents groups, parish or town councils, local partnership bodies, local or national organisations, political parties, church and faith organisations, local businesses or chambers of commerce and others).

If you have not done so already please give brief details of relevant panel meetings.

Please note if you are submitting a joint application please provide details of consultation and local support across all areas.

The process we used was agreed by the Cambridge LSP in January 2009. The process was very much 'bottom up' with all the ideas and eventual proposals coming from the communities themselves.

The City Council held a community consultation event on 5th February 2009 where community groups were invited to present ideas that would help to improve the sustainability of Cambridge. This event was well publicised through the LSP, Council for Voluntary Services, community groups grant aided by the City Council and tenants and residents groups.

Around 40 people attended the event which was chaired by the Council's Leader, Cllr Ian Nimmo-Smith. A short presentation was given to outline the aims of the Sustainable Communities Act but more emphasis was put on encouraging ideas. 3 big posters were placed on the walls, each one having a theme from the City's Sustainable Community Strategy:

- * Tackling Climate Change
- * Building Sustainable Communities
- * Ensuring Strong and Inclusive Communities

Participants wrote their ideas on coloured post-it notes and stuck these on the most appropriate poster. Similar ideas were grouped together. Participants were then given 10 sticky 'voting' dots and they stuck these against their favourite ideas. They were able to stick all 10 against their top favourite or spread them over a number of ideas.

Before they left the event, people were asked to register their interest in becoming a member of our 'Panel of Representatives of Local Persons'

The outcome of this event was reported to the City Council's Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on the 16th March 2009. Councillors agreed that 4 of the ideas should be considered by our Panel but that the Panel should be given the freedom to consider some of the other ideas if they wished.

Our main panel comprised 15 members from the following groups:

Cambridge Campaign for Better Transport
Cambridge Carbon Footprint
Cambridge Cycling Campaign
Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum

Cambridge Federation of Tenants, leaseholders and Residents
Cambridge Older Persons Enterprise
Cambridge Transition Town
Cambridgeshire Celebrates Age
Camsight
Cambridge Polish Community
Living Streets
Hawkins Road and Campkin Road Residents Association
Trumpington Residents Association

Our main Panel met twice in late April. Because we did not manage to recruit a 'Business Representative' we undertook to consult LSP members (including the Chamber of Commerce), Love Cambridge (our City Centre Management Company) and Cambridge Independent Traders on the Panel's recommendations.

We ran a Young People's Panel in May with a group of 9 young people aged 11 to 18 who considered the recommendations from the main Panel. We kept the local County and District Councils informed of progress throughout the process. We also formally consulted the County Council about the Panel's recommendations. The County Council Cabinet considered them on 7th July. The report and Cabinet decision can be seen at:
<http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/db/council2.nsf/af8076762df199c580256b14003ef043/55b20edc800a6668802575e10046470f?OpenDocument>

The Panel recommended 4 proposals to the Council including this one. The proposals were considered by the Strategy and Resources Committee on 29th June alongside written submissions from Love Cambridge members and the County Council. 2 members of the Panel attended the meeting to support the recommendations.

The Scrutiny Committee endorsed the recommendations and the Leader of the Council formally agreed that the 4 proposals should be submitted.

The scrutiny committee reports explain the process in more detail and describe the many groups involved in this process. They can be viewed at:

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2009/0316sr/00.pdf> see item 14
<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/agenda/2009/0629sr/00.pdf> see item 14

The minutes of the 29th June meeting containing the formal decision of the Leader of the Council can be viewed here:

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/minutes/2009/0629SR.pdf> see page 13

3.2 What are the views from this consultation? You may wish to provide evidence of local support for your proposal? This might include petitions or letters of support from the public, local councillors, Members of Parliament, businesses, public bodies and agencies? Please describe this evidence below. *(The local authority submitting the proposal is likely to wish to review such material and to summarise its content. Onward submission to the Selector of all original documentation will not normally be required).*

Detailed information from our consultations can be viewed at the above links.

Community Event attended by 40 people

* 150 initial ideas generated at the start of the process.

* Strong support for the process – some wanted to join our panel

Main Panel

- * Recommended 4 proposals to the Council
- * 2 panel members attended the Council's scrutiny committee to lend support

Young People's Panel

- * Fully supported all 4 proposals

Cambridgeshire County Council

Supported this proposal:

Love Cambridge

- * Concerned that there was no business representation on the panel but appreciated being given the opportunity to comment on the Panel's recommendations.

Stagecoach Cambridgeshire

- * Concerned that "such a small group of people" (40) seemed to be deciding the future of Cambridge, but no specific comments on this proposal.

John Lewis Cambridge

- * Has concerns with the balance of local versus corporate responsibility in the context of the Act.
- * need to understand how local authorities across the country can support this broad agenda without derailing elements that are common to a national organisation.
- * It would be extremely difficult if a retailer trading in many cities and counties was faced with disparate proposals driven by local authorities.
- * No specific comments on this proposal.

Proposals may include a change/transfer of functions from one person to another. If this is relevant to your proposal please confirm that the duties under clause 2, subsection 3 of the act (consulting with organisations affected by a change in location of a function) have been carried out.

3.3 Please give brief details of consultation with any affected organisations

Not relevant to this proposal

3.4 Confirmation of council support

The process for formal endorsement is a matter for local discretion; however we anticipate that authorities will wish to gain political endorsement and clearance for the proposal through the relevant processes at local level. Please give details of how formal approval has been attained.

By the Leader of the City Council in his role as Executive Councillor for Strategy, following scrutiny by the Council's Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 29th June 2009.

<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/minutes/2009/0629SR.pdf> see page 13 for formal minute of decision.

3.5 General comments

This is an opportunity for the local authority to express any additional comments or views on the proposal: This may include: (1500 words max)

- the council's view of levels of local support for the proposal
- any local opposition or objections that the Selector should be aware of
- relevance of the proposal to the area's Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
- outcome of any local authority discussions with agencies or public bodies affected
- potential regional/national significance of the proposal, if replicated elsewhere
- any major resource implications for the council or its local partners
- any other factors influencing viability and achievability of the proposal

This proposal received unanimous support from our Panels (which included representatives from the Cambridge Federation of Tenants, leaseholders and Residents and 2 Residents Associations), City Council Members and from the County Council's Cabinet.

Lack of sufficient decent affordable housing is one of the biggest issues for Cambridge. This proposal presents a simple way forward that will enable local people to use their own money to help address this issue.

Part 4: Assessment by the Selector

SCA proposals will be assessed by the LGA as Selector. This will include consideration, short listing and negotiation with the Secretary of State via the LGA Selector panel made up of councillors from the four parties represented on the LGA

The LGA Selector Panel is committed to undertaking the role in a transparent manner; as such reasons for decisions on proposals will be made available.

There will be no appeals process in relation to decisions of the Selector Panel.

4.1 Do you confirm your agreement to abide by the outcome of the Selector's assessment and decision-making processes?

Yes

4.2 Would your council, accompanied by the originators of the proposal, wish to make a short verbal presentation to the Selector Panel, should this opportunity be available?

Yes

Thank you for completing this form.

Please email it to selector@lga.gov.uk by 31 July 2009.