

The Cambridge City Council (Hanover Court and Princess Court) Compulsory Purchase Order 2026 (CPO/PLA/10002)

Summary Statement of Evidence of Ross Jones (Senior Development Manager, Cambridge City Council) (CD 9.2)

dated 15 September 2026

1 Introduction

1.1 Qualifications and Experience

I, Ross Jones, hold a BSc (Hons) in Building Surveying and have been a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (MRICS) since 2005. I am currently the Senior Development Manager in Cambridge City Council's Development team, a post I have held since 6 March 2023.

1.2 Involvement with the Scheme

I have been the Council's Development Manager and lead for the redevelopment of the Estate since the redevelopment was approved at Housing Scrutiny Committee on 14th March 2023 (**CD 2.1**). In that role I have coordinated the Cambridge Investment Partnership (**CIP**) team and carried responsibility for financial, communications, risk, governance, design, planning, decant and post-planning contract and programme management, working alongside the Council's Regeneration Manager and Regeneration Officer who manage resident relocation.

1.3 Scope of Evidence

My evidence covers: the necessity for vacant possession by reason of fire safety risks and structural issues, and why remediation is not a viable alternative; the justification and public benefits of the redevelopment; the evolution of the Scheme including engagement, options appraisal and design development; negotiations with leaseholders and the mitigation and offer packages provided; the deliverability of the Scheme including approvals, budgets, grants, contracts and the steps required to commence on site; interim estate management measures relating to health and safety and antisocial behaviour; compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Impact Assessments (**CD 7.2 and 7.5**) undertaken; and responses to objections and Objectors' Statements of Case (**CD 5**).

2 The Order

2.1 The Order is sought to secure vacant possession so that the Council can demolish the existing blocks at Hanover Court and Princess Court and deliver 165 new homes and a new community centre, representing a net gain of 38 dwellings. The need for demolition and redevelopment arises from Notices of Deficiency (**CD 6.1 and 6.2**) issued in respect of inadequate fire compartmentation (which carry a prosecution risk for the Council) and from structural concerns regarding the risk of disproportionate collapse. The existing buildings cannot practicably be remediated and redevelopment is the only viable option.

2.2 The key decisions leading to the Order include the consultation and decant approval on 20th January 2022 and the redevelopment approval with delegated authority to commence CPO proceedings on 14 March 2023 (**CD 2.1**). The Order was made pursuant to section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, was published in March 2026, and was submitted for confirmation on 8 April 2026.

2.3 The Council has prioritised acquisition by agreement throughout, and 38 of the 45 leasehold interests have been acquired. A further three have been agreed in principle subject to conveyancing, and four remain to be agreed. In relation to secure tenants, 80 of 82 tenant households have been rehoused, with one further rehousing progressing and one outstanding case involving complex circumstances. CPO powers remain necessary to

secure the remaining interests and vacant possession, while the Council continues to negotiate.

3 Planning Policy

- 3.1 The Estate comprises large dilapidated residential blocks on a 0.76 hectare site in central Cambridge. The buildings have fire compartmentation deficiencies and structural risks of disproportionate collapse which create significant health and safety risks for occupiers and others. The buildings are at the end of their design life and cannot practicably be upgraded to modern standards, do not comply with modern spatial standards, and are unsuitable for residents with mobility needs. Demolition is the only viable option.
- 3.2 The Scheme will replace 127 existing flats with 165 new homes, representing a net gain of 38 dwellings, together with increases in habitable rooms, bedrooms, bed spaces and cycle parking. The redevelopment proposes 72 affordable homes (44%) and 93 private homes (56%). The affordable housing provision is 4% above the Local Plan requirement of 40%, and the Council will deliver the 72 affordable homes with the support of Homes England funding. Wider public benefits are set out in further detail in my Statement of Evidence (**CD 9.2**).
- 3.3 The decision to decant residents was taken in January 2022 and redevelopment was approved in March 2023, at which point I became the Council's lead officer for the Scheme. An Options Analysis (**CD 7.3**) considered four scenarios: do nothing; essential repairs only; refurbishment; and full redevelopment. Redevelopment aligned best with the Council's strategic objectives and was also financially the most favourable option. Since then, the Scheme has been developed through multiple pre-application meetings with the LPA, buildability and demolition assessments, design reviews, Historic England engagement, accessibility reviews and a Secure by Design review, leading to the submission of the planning application in October 2025. The Planning Committee resolved to approve the application at its meeting on 24th June 2026 subject to completion of a section 106 agreement and agreement of certain conditions.

4 Negotiations with Leaseholders

- 4.1 The Council has worked for over 3.5 years to secure acquisitions by agreement, adopting a personal approach to each leaseholder, reimbursing reasonable professional fees, offering relocation assistance and rehousing options where relevant, and providing information about the CPO process and the support measures available.
- 4.2 38 leasehold interests have been acquired by agreement. Three further acquisitions have been agreed with conveyancing ongoing. Four cases remain outstanding and negotiations are continuing, as described in more detail in my Statement of Evidence (**CD 9.2**).

5 Funding and Deliverability

- 5.1 The Planning Committee resolved to approve the application on 24th June 2026. I expect planning permission to be granted once the section 106 agreement and the remaining conditions have been finalised. As of 3rd September 2026, drafting of the section 106 agreement has concluded and it is to be circulated for engrossment. Draft condition wording for the demolition condition and the new Site Waste Management Plan condition has been circulated for agreement.

- 5.2 The Council has an approved redevelopment budget of £31,094,000. Homes England's strategic partnership funding allocation totals £96,360,000 across 803 homes, of which £8,640,000 has been allocated to the Estate, supporting the delivery of 72 affordable homes. The forecast Council spend is £26,181,000. In addition, a BLRF2.4 grant of £975,000 was awarded in February 2026 to fund demolition and a new sub-station.
- 5.3 A conditional JCT building contract with Hill Partnerships Ltd was entered into in March 2026 for design, demolition and enabling works. Site mobilisation and demolition are programmed to commence in 2027, subject to the grant of vacant possession and discharge of pre-commencement conditions.
- 5.4 The Scheme has secure funding and I am not aware of any impediment to delivery once planning permission is issued and vacant possession is secured.

6 Interim Estate Management

A waking watch commenced on 8 March 2024 at a cost of approximately £34,000 per month and ran for two years until the end of March 2026, at a total cost of approximately £800,000, before moving to security patrol following fire engineering advice. Approximately £20,000–£30,000 has also been spent on security screens to deter antisocial behaviour whilst maintaining safe access and egress. Antisocial behaviour has been escalating, including a garage fire on 20th January 2025 and a further fire in August 2026. These risks will continue until the Estate is vacated and demolished.

7 Public Sector Equality Duty and Human Rights

- 7.1 The Council has identified potential impacts of the use of CPO powers on protected groups, in particular those with disabilities, medical conditions and the elderly, and has balanced those impacts against the significant benefit of moving residents from unsafe housing into safe, modern accommodation. Equality Impact Assessments were prepared in 2023 and updated in February and June 2026 (**CD 7.2 and 7.5**).
- 7.2 In relation to human rights, I conclude that any interference is justified and proportionate, given the significant public benefit of the Scheme and the consultation, mitigation and offers provided to affected parties. There is a compelling case in the public interest for confirmation of the Order.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 Based on my evidence and that of Paul Belton (**CD 9.4**), I am satisfied that the Council has complied with the Guidance and that there is a compelling case in the public interest to confirm the Order. I am not aware of any impediment to the demolition and redevelopment of the Estate once planning permission has been issued and vacant possession secured.
- 8.2 Confirmation of the Order will enable the Council to ensure resident safety, remove the enforcement and prosecution risk arising from the fire safety deficiencies, and deliver additional safe and sustainable housing, community facilities and local improvements. The existing dwellings are at the end of their life, the estate is experiencing escalating antisocial behaviour and the Council is incurring significant financial losses in managing a predominantly empty estate.