Looking into Cambridge’s future

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CCHPR

• The Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CCHPR).
• Research centre, Department of Land Economy at the University of Cambridge.
• Over 29 years’ experience of research and policy evaluation and analysis.
Our research is dedicated to understanding and tackling social and spatial inequalities.

Housing and planning sit at the heart of many wider social issues.

Our purpose is to carry out research that is relevant for policy and practice, and to provide an evidence base for making positive change with a view to reducing inequality, improving housing conditions and improving housing affordability.
CCHPR research

Our research falls into four areas of focus:

1. Housing need, supply and affordability: planning obligations, the planning system, land supply, house building, MMC/OSM, the digital agenda, affordability
2. Housing for older people: existing stock, moves in older age, new models, co-living
3. Housing tenure and alternative housing models: PRS, co-living, shared housing
4. Communities: equality, engagement and improving outcomes
Local context - victims of success

- Growth areas – demand
- Cambridge is currently recording the highest growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) of any city in the UK
- High house prices and rents (13 = ratio of house prices to earnings in Cambridge)
- Shortage of land for development
- Competitive market for sites
- Underinvestment in infrastructure
- Green belt and opposition to development
- Areas of low development densities
- Congestion and distance commuting
Housing ownership - affordability

Ratio of house price to earnings

Renting - affordability

Rent to earnings

- Cambridge
- Oxford
- East of England
- England

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Waiting list for social housing

Waiting list (per 1000 households)

- Cambridge
- Oxford
- East of England
- England
Homelessness

Numbers accepted as being homeless and in priority need (per 1000 households)
Income inequality

Income inequality (interquartile range of gross weekly pay; £)

- Cambridge
- Oxford
- East of England
- England

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National context - UK housing crisis

- Lack of supply
- Few house builders
- Lack of innovation
House building
Affordable housing provision

- Tied to market housing provision
- S106
- There has been significant growth in the value of affordable housing secured through planning.
- 68% of the value of agreed developer obligations was for the provision of affordable housing, at £4.0 billion in 2016/17.
- 50,000 affordable housing dwellings were agreed in planning obligations in 2016/17.
Housing growth in Cambridge

• Employment growth is higher than housing stock growth
• “It is not that supply has been unusually low, indeed the housing stock has increased by over 4% in this time. But demand has been exceptionally high.” (CPIER, 2018)
• Housing, growth and inequality.
• There are huge inequalities in this region.
• We’ve got both a booming growth area focused around a knowledge economy, and we have rural areas focused around the agritech industry, and but we have significant pockets of extraordinary deprivation.
Must not lose sight of equality – growth can leave certain people and places behind.

Oxford Centre for Social Inclusion (OCSI) areas are 'left behind' if they are ranked among the most deprived 10% of Wards in England on both the Community Needs Measures and the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Fenland is in the bottom 10 with four wards classified as LBP, with a notable concentration in Wisbech.

Identified the Waterlees ward in Wisbech as having one of the highest levels of ‘community need’ in the country.
Tackling inequality – beyond housing

• Complex and multifaceted – more than affordable housing and tackling homelessness.
• Research with New Horizons - CHS group and delivered by partner organisations across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and West Norfolk (housing associations and advice organisations)
• Coaches work with people who are furthest from the labour market and most at risk of social exclusion
• Participants can access up to 20 hours of one-to-one coaching on money, work or getting online
Living on the edge

• Cambridgeshire’s highest-scoring reason for deprivation is housing affordability and homelessness.
• New Horizons is aimed at the people who are most vulnerable to running up rent arrears, to not managing their debts, to falling out of the system completely.
• Those who face the prospect of a downward spiral of moving towards homelessness.

“I was in a bit of a state financially... I was down the foodbank, getting the food parcels.”

“It was just getting me down and down and down, where I was getting to the point where I’d just had enough.”
Financial and digital exclusion and employability

“She’s got me on a reading class. That is one thing I am absolutely over the moon with. I could just pick words out [before], but now I can read a full sentence.”

“Before I would just say, ‘I don’t care about that [debt]’, chuck it over my shoulder and carry on. It’s easier to move than it is to pay a debt. But this time I’ve paid all my debts. So yeah that sticks out more than anything.”

“She’s set me up with my emails. I had no emails at all, I didn’t know how to do it.”

“It’s made me realise I’m not as silly as I thought I was. I do have a bit of brain power there.”
Final thoughts

• Pay attention to the differential impact of growth
• Support initiatives focused on tackling inequality
• If housing growth is market led – how do we diversify the offer?
• How to build in resilience to changing socio-economic profile – an ageing population, household diversity?
• How to best capture uplift in land value for community good?
• How do we tackle affordability of new housing – new investment partnerships, use of public land, intermediate tenures, new models and mixes?
• Growth should be inclusive as well as sustainable
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