

## **Renewing Montreal Square for local people now and in the future**

CHS Group, the local social enterprise and charitable housing association, announces its decision to go ahead with plans to redevelop the site to replace the current 18 homes with 45 new affordable and energy-efficient homes.

The CHS Board has taken the decision following consultation with residents at Montreal Square, taking into account their views and the desperate need for more affordable homes in Cambridge<sup>1</sup>.

The residents occupying the current households will all be temporarily relocated during the redevelopment and all residents will be able to return to Montreal Square once the redevelopment is complete. The planned redevelopment proposes homes which will be 15% larger than the current houses, and returning residents will pay a rent in line with current levels. The redevelopment will create an additional 27 homes, expected to consist of 18 further homes at affordable rents, and 9 shared ownership homes.

Nigel Howlett, CHS Chief Executive said: "It is imperative that we invest in the renewal of Montreal Square, for the benefit of local people. We have listened very carefully to concerns expressed by a number of residents who do not want their homes and community to be disrupted. However, the Board's obligation is to balance residents' concerns with the wider social benefit that a redevelopment could provide through more new affordable homes. Through careful consideration of the design plans and an extensive support package in place for residents, we believe we will be able to address the majority of residents' concerns."

During consultation all residents were encouraged to provide opinions and raise questions on the redevelopment, in writing and in person, which the CHS Board has taken under consideration throughout the initial phase. The new homes will offer a mix of terraced 2, 3 and 4 bedroom houses and 1 and 2 bedroom flats, all at social or affordable rent or for shared ownership. The plans have been through the City Council's initial pre-planning process and its views have also been incorporated. The plans are still subject to the formal planning process with the City Council and CHS Group will keep residents involved in progress and timescales.

CHS Group is a charity and community benefit society which means it cannot distribute any financial surpluses to shareholders; any surpluses are reinvested in new affordable homes or new services for vulnerable people. Further information about the support available to residents can be found at <https://www.chsgroup.org.uk/housing/montreal-square-consultation/>. Any resident with further queries or concerns should contact their housing officer directly.

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<sup>1</sup> Nearly 2,500 households in housing need on the housing register in Cambridge (City Council Jan 2019)  
House prices in Cambridge are 70% higher than in 2008 (Hometrack data August 2018) and have increased faster than anywhere else in the UK  
A lower quartile home in Cambridge costs over 14x the average salary (Hometrack November 2018 & CACI)  
Median private rent for a 2 bed property in Cambridge is £276pw (Hometrack November 2018)  
Average CHS rent for a 2 bed property in Cambridge is £108pw  
A typical household with an income of £30,000 would be able to afford only 6% of one bed private rented properties in Cambridge (Savills' Affordability Analysis June 2017)