

Rotherham Housing Strategy - Consultation Summary

Purpose of the consultation

Between July 2018 and January 2019, consultation was carried out with Rotherham residents, Council staff and a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

Consultation summary

Consultation took the form of;

- Attendance at community events
- Online and face to face surveys
- Dedicated email address
- Discussions at various groups and forums where information went on to be cascaded via wider sessions
- Strategic Housing Forum
- Social media coverage
- Desktop review of existing consultation evidence

Consultation methodology

The consultation was promoted, both externally (of the council), and internally. External consultation was conducted between July 2018 and September 2019 via community events, conferences, meetings, and the council website using an online survey.

Internal pre-consultation took place with housing officers and related services by way of meetings, briefings and an online survey ran throughout July to October 2018. Wider internal consultation followed in the form of a shared draft strategy for comment in December 2018, where many services have provided valuable input into the strategies development.

The use of other sources of feedback such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Private Sector Stock Condition Database, STAR survey, and new homes feedback have all captured elements of tenant and resident views on key housing issues. These have been used to shape the new strategy.

The following report presents an overview of the responses to this consultation;

1. Tenants conference 03/07/18

Over 200 people attended the tenant's conference where a presentation was given on the next Housing Strategy.

The views of tenants were gathered using an electronic voting system as well as paper surveys. The following key housing issues emerged from the conference;

- under 35s want housing for young people
- over 60s want housing for older people
- strengthening communities was most popular answer overall when asked about the role of housing
- 80% of over 60s felt their home met their needs
- Housing for households with a low income was popular overall

Where attendees represented an organisation or tenant groups, they were asked to share the information wider and provide feedback.

2. Landlords Forum 24/09/18

Representation from 12 landlords provided with an overview of the key themes and where private sector will fit in. The landlords present agreed and recognised where each theme could relate to or influence the PRS. The group will be provided with the online survey to complete as part of the consultation and a discussion will take place at the next forum to capture any key issues. The Association were happy to receive updates on the progress of the revised Strategy at future meetings.

Ruth Millington, National Landlord Association (NLA) local representative, has been informed of the intentions to revise the Strategy and she is interested to understand how the Strategy reflects the growing PRS. Ruth has agreed that the Housing Strategy can be discussed at future NLA hosted landlord forums and that she would be happy to contribute, on behalf of the PRS as NLA representative, on the Strategic Housing Forum.

Maurice Healey also represented local landlords at the Strategic Housing Forum 05/12/18 where the final draft of the Strategy was presented.

3. Housing Hub feedback

The key themes of the Housing Strategy were discussed at a number of 'Housing Hub' community sessions over the summer. The Housing Hub was used to engage with tenants on a range of housing related issues and to promote further tenant involvement opportunities. Events were held in local communities with hundreds of local residents attending each event. Feedback was positive in terms of the key themes emerging. Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback via a survey or email.

4. Rotherham Show 08/09/18

The Strategic Housing and Development Service attended to Rotherham Show to speak to attendees about key housing issues including new build development and the emerging themes of the Housing Strategy. The show attracts around 70,000 visitors over the weekend. The team were able to discuss the strategy with attendees and collated feedback which has shaped the themes and key priorities of the strategy.

5. Learning from customers forum 04/09/18

A presentation was given on the achievements against the current strategy and the proposed structure for the new survey. General feedback included;

- Attendees were invited to take part in the survey
- The general feeling was that the key themes covered the main issues
- They were particularly happy that independent living was addressed as they saw this as a top priority.
- They asked that when building new accessible homes that the threshold between doors be seamless to allow for wheelchair uses.

- All bungalows should be disability friendly including accessible light switches, sockets etc.

6. Health & Wellbeing Board 19/09/18

Presentation well received with very few comments. Pleased to see housing and health working together better and that this had been recognised in the key themes of the new strategy. The group were keen to receive the draft document for comment. The draft has been circulated through the Rotherham Together Partnership Officers Group for dissemination.

Where attendees represented another organisation, they were asked to share the information wider and provide feedback.

7. Improving Places Scrutiny Committee 20/09/18

Presentation was well received, very few comments but supportive of the key themes emerging. The group would like to receive the draft document, plus delivery plan, for comment in November as well as a return to IPSC in December prior to Cabinet so they can make formal recommendations.

Additional questions were asked but these were in relation to specific projects or services rather than the strategy itself. A recommendation was made to bring the final draft back to the committee before Cabinet in February – a separate session is scheduled for the 9th January 2019.

8. Business growth Board 26/09/18

Well received, with general agreement for the vision and priorities / themes. Keen to understand the relationship with wider council assets including town centre regeneration and general fund sites which have potential for housing development. Request to share the draft for comment in November and to come back to a future board meeting with an update on wider progress.

Where attendees represented another organisation, they were asked to share the information wider and provide feedback.

The draft has been circulated through the Rotherham Together Partnership Officers Group for dissemination.

9. Key consultation partners 04/12/18

The draft strategy was disseminated via the Rotherham Together Partnership Officer Group.

10. Strategic Housing Forum 05/12/18

The draft strategy was presented at the forum. Attendees included representatives from across council directorates, housing associations, landlord sector, developers and supported housing providers. The strategy was well received and comments were made on specific areas including loneliness, homelessness, selective licensing and the private rented sector. All of which have been incorporated in the draft.

It was agreed that progress would be reported back to the group on a 6 monthly basis and the Forum would be responsible for holding the council and partners to account for delivering the strategy.

Where attendees represented another organisation, they were asked to share the information wider and provide feedback.

11. Improving Places Select Commission

The strategy was welcomed by Members and a number of housing related questions were raised. The group were keen to see the final targets and an action plan in the final strategy. The draft strategy was reviewed and amended in light of comments received and it was agreed that the annual report for Strategic Housing Forum will be shared with the chair of Improving Places, with the potential to attend a future session to update on progress if required.

12. Publication on the Council website

The draft strategy has been published on the website during the period leading up to Cabinet. The public have been given the opportunity to comment on the emerging document however only one comment has been received to date.

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