

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Cabinet – 18 March 2019

Report Title

Rotherham's Housing Strategy 2019-22

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

Yes

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This report presents the new Housing Strategy 2019-22. The strategy has been developed in consultation with tenants and residents, officers and key stakeholders.

Its purpose is to set out the updated strategic priorities for housing over the next three years.

Recommendations

1. That the Housing Strategy 2019-22 be approved.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Housing Strategy 2019-22
Appendix 2 Key Achievements
Appendix 3 Housing Strategy Consultation Summary
Appendix 4 Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel
Improving Places Select Commission – 09 January 2019

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rotherham's Housing Strategy 2019-22

1. Background

1.1 Rotherham's 30 year Housing Strategy was published in December 2012 and set out our long term vision for housing in the borough until 2043:

- People living in high quality homes
- Rotherham Council being the best housing provider in the country
- Reducing the gap between the most and least deprived neighbourhoods, so that everyone can live in safe, healthy and vibrant communities
- Households living in energy efficient homes
- A revitalised town centre with a new urban community

1.2 The Housing Strategy is refreshed every three years, to ensure it remains up to date and addresses the most recent challenges and opportunities, and references the latest statistical evidence. Though the overall aims of the original 30 year plan remains broadly the same.

1.3 Progress against the 2016-19 strategy has been good and a selection of achievements is included on page 31 of the strategy (also see appendix 2 – Key Achievements).

1.4 The next three year 'instalment', covering April 2019 to March 2022, has been developed, see appendix 1 – Housing Strategy, and will have an increased emphasis on housing growth and regeneration of the town centre, as well as good health and independence.

1.5 The new Housing Strategy reflects the views of people living and working in Rotherham; extensive consultation took place between July 2018 and February 2019 (see appendix 3 - Consultation Summary).

1.6 The Housing Strategy:

- has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders
- recognises the key issues affecting housing in Rotherham and the impact these have on local residents
- sets out how the Council will work, in partnership, to address the issues identified
- demonstrates alignment to other key strategies and plans
- provides residents with a clear and accessible document which demonstrates how the Council will responding to local housing issues
- has clear targets and milestones to measure progress

1.7 The Housing Strategy recognises the links with other key strategic plans, including:

- The Rotherham Plan
- Economic Growth Plan
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy (draft)

- Care and Support Accommodation Plan (draft)
- Town Centre Masterplan

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Council has to operate with a much lower level of resources than in previous years due to Government public spending cuts. This is impacting on housing related services, in particular those related to social care.
- 2.2 The previous strategy set out the Council's ambition to have an increased role in building more new homes but shortly after publication a number of national policy decisions were made which negatively impacted on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and as a result reduced confidence around spend, and constrained delivery. More recent national policy announcements have since put the HRA in a much more favourable position so the Council can now increase investment into new homes whilst continuing to improve existing services.
- 2.3 The main national policy changes since the last strategy are;
- The forced sale of high value local authority Council homes or levy will no longer apply; which would have reduced the overall homes available for social rent
 - Mandatory fixed term tenancies will no longer apply; allowing for a locally tailored approach to managing homes for social rent
 - High earning tenants will no longer be required to pay higher rents; which reduces the administrative burden on the Council
 - The borrowing cap for the HRA has been removed, allowing more freedom for councils with limited headroom to borrow in order to increase delivery
- 2.4 The Government continues to favour the concept of home ownership for all. This is positive in terms of Rotherham's ambitions to develop new products and increase supply of new homes so everyone has more choice. However the increased focus on home ownership without additional resources could also reduce the availability of funding for the delivery of much needed social and affordable housing. A key challenge for the Council will be in finding new ways of delivering affordable and social rented homes within these constraints.
- 2.5 In response to the Grenfell disaster, and the subsequent publication of the Social Housing Green paper, there has been quite rightly been a shift in Government thinking around social housing. For the Council, it means continued positive engagement with tenants as well as increasing regulation, and a heavier focus on health and safety compliance around social housing assets. These are all areas where the Council is performing well but would welcome additional support and guidance in terms of tackling social stigma and increasing the role of the tenant voice.

2.6 The key outcomes to be delivered over the next three years are as follows;

- Increasing numbers of new homes being built which meet local need
- The Council playing an increasingly active role in shaping the local housing market by the introduction of new tenures
- The allocation of Council assets to enable more new homes
- Innovation and cross boarder collaboration to solving housing issues, including the completion of the Modern Methods of Construction Pilot and its role in meeting specific needs
- A new Care and Support Accommodation Plan which will support people to live in their homes for longer or help them find homes that meet their needs
- Improvements across the private housing sector, created through both support and enforcement
- A vibrant Town Centre which includes high quality accommodation
- Improved levels of tenant satisfaction with their home and neighbourhood
- A new Homelessness prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy in place to support the most vulnerable residents
- A stronger tenant and resident voice where people feel confident to help shape the future of their homes and neighbourhoods
- Improvements in our ability to measure and demonstrate the wider social value of housing investment, with a focus on health and economic outcomes

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 It is acknowledged that the social, economic and political environment in relation to housing issues evolve at speed and Housing Strategies can quickly become dated and require regular review. It is important that the Council continues to monitor external factors and demonstrates an understanding of local housing issues in order to continue setting the strategic direction.
- 3.2 Publication of a Housing Strategy is no longer a statutory requirement however local housing issues are complex and impact socially, financially and environmentally on the lives of all local people. The Housing Strategy provides clarity around how the Council will address housing related issues.
- 3.3 It is recommended that the Housing Strategy be finalised and published.
- 3.4 The final design will be in line with the new corporate strategy template.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 Extensive tenant and resident consultation has been undertaken. Feedback from events such as the annual Tenant's Conference and the Rotherham Show assisted in forming the four key themes of the strategy and ensured that local issues were highlighted.

4.2 A wide range of officers from across the Council, as well as from partner organisations have been consulted and their views have been taken into account in the strategy. The Rotherham Together Partnership structure and Strategic Housing Forum have supported the engagement of organisations across the borough.

4.3 A fully summary of consultation is provided in Appendix 3.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The Housing Strategy is presented to Cabinet and subject to approval, the Strategic Housing Team will be responsible for publication to the Councils website would take place from the 1 April 2019.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 The relevant financial implications are identified within the strategy itself. The strategy and delivery plan is also aligned to the HRA business plan.

6.2 The Council's medium Term Financial Strategy assumes housing growth, which in turn delivers additional Council tax to support the Council's overall budget.

6.3 There are no direct procurement implications specific to this report.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 As implemented by the Deregulation Act 2015, there is no longer a legal requirement to have a Housing Strategy; however such a strategy is deemed as good practice to set out the Councils approach to housing and allows Members to scrutinise delivery

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 None.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The Children and Young Peoples Service, and Adult Care and Public Health have been consulted and have had an input into the Housing Strategy.

9.2 Specific accommodation requirements for young people and adults with identified care and support needs will form part of the Care and Support Accommodation Plan 2019.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 The housing needs of various groups, including young people and adults with identified care and support needs, will be addressed by the provision of care and support ready housing.

- 10.2 The surveys which formed part of the early consultation captured equalities and diversity monitoring information and having cross-referenced this data against the Census data for Rotherham, the sample was broadly representative of Rotherham's diverse communities.
- 10.3 The Council is aware of its duties under the Equalities Act 2010 to promote equality, diversity, cohesion and integration and has ensured that the Housing Strategy is compliant with that duty.
- 10.4 An equality impact assessment has been completed and is attached in appendix 4.

11. Implications for Partners

- 11.1 The Housing Strategy includes projects that will be delivered in partnership with other Directorates particularly Adult Services and Children and Young People Services.
- 11.2 The Housing Strategy will be owned and monitored by the Strategic Housing Forum which includes representation at a director / senior management level from Adult Services, Children and Young Peoples Services, Planning, Economic Development, Public Health and Policy. Other partner and voluntary sector organisations, social housing providers, landlords and developers are also represented at the Forum.

12. Risks and Mitigation

- 12.1 There is a risk that some elements of the document will become out of date during the three year period; as national legislation and policy continues to change under the current Government. Where this happens we will include a note on the Council's website explaining any updates.
- 12.2 There is risk of not being able to deliver on our housing growth ambitions due to unforeseen government policy change and its potential impact on the Housing Revenue Account. However we expect this to be minimal and will continue to monitor government announcements and will continue to look for innovative ways to work in partnership to deliver new housing which is key to the borough's overall economic development. This occurred during the last strategy and it was managed well.

13 Accountable Officer(s)

Anne Marie Lubanski, Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing & Public Health.

Tom Bell, Assistant Director of Housing Services

Jane Davies, Head of Strategic Housing and Development Services.

Approvals obtained on behalf of:-

	Named Officer	Date
Chief Executive	Sharon Kemp	03/03/19
Strategic Director of Finance & Customer Services (S.151 Officer)	Judith Badger	28/02/19
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Stuart Fletcher	28/02/19

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This report is published on the Council's [website](#).