

**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Cabinet – 15 September 2025

**Report Title**

Housing Strategy 2025 – 2030

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

Yes

**Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Ian Spicer, 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 Housing Strategy ('the Strategy') for 2025-30 for Cabinet's approval.

The Strategy has been developed following a twelve-week consultation period with tenants and residents, officers and key stakeholders, and in the context of government policy, data and housing intelligence. Its purpose is to set out the Council's strategic priorities for housing over the next five years.

The Strategy recognises the key issues affecting housing in Rotherham and the impact these issues have on residents. It sets out how the Council will work in partnership to address the issues identified and demonstrates alignment with other key Council strategies and plans.

## **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the Housing Strategy 2025-2030.
2. Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health to approve the action plan and minor data amendments to the Strategy prior to publication.

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix 1 Rotherham's Housing Strategy 2025-30  
Appendix 2 Housing Strategy consultation summary  
Appendix 3 Initial Equality Screening (Part A)  
Appendix 4 Equality Analysis Form (Part B)  
Appendix 5 Climate Impact Assessment

## **Background Papers**

Rotherham's previous [Housing Strategy for 2022-2025](#)  
[Housing Strategy 2022-25 Final Progress report](#)

## **Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

None

## **Council Approval Required**

No

## **Exempt from the Press and Public**

No

## Housing Strategy 2025 – 2030

### 1. Background

1.1 Rotherham's 30-year Housing Strategy was published in December 2012. It sets out the Council's 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 Since 2012, the Housing Strategy has been refreshed regularly to ensure it remains up to date and addresses the current challenges and opportunities and references the latest statistical evidence. This Strategy will be the fifth chapter of the 30-year Housing Strategy.

1.3 The current Strategy (fourth chapter) was approved on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and concluded at the end of March 2025.

1.4 The strategy period will be increased from three years to five to allow sufficient time for progress to be made against each of the priorities and to allow for alignment with the Council Plan.

1.5 A summary of the achievements, covering the period between **April 2022 and March 2025**, are set out below.

As part of the Council's ambitious Housing Delivery Programme, 304 homes have been delivered for council rent and 37 for Shared Ownership across the Borough during the last three years, which is over a third of the Council's 1,000 new homes target. This includes:

- The completion of three housing sites in the Town Centre, leading the regeneration of housing in the Town Centre. This created 109 new homes for council rent, and 20 Shared Ownership homes. In addition to this, 42 homes were built for open market sale.
- The Housing Acquisitions Policy was approved by Cabinet with approval to acquire 100 homes by March 2026. 64 have been acquired by March 2025, including former council homes sold through the Right to Buy scheme, homes from other social landlords seeking to dispose and new build homes from a local developer at Wath-upon-Dearne.
- The Small Site Homebuilding Initiative was launched in 2023 and the first seven homes for council rent were delivered at a site on Infirmary Road, Parkgate in September 2024. The initiative provides a fast-track route for local developers to bring forward sites which they either own or can acquire.

- 1.6 The completion of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Pilot has improved the thermal efficiency of 130 council homes in Maltby from a D or E rating, 125 of which now have an Energy Performance Certificate rating of C.
- 1.7 62 privately owned empty homes have been brought back into use, through the work of the Empty Homes Team.
- 1.8 The Housing Service was awarded TPAS exemplar status for demonstrating long-term commitment to community engagement. TPAS: The Engagement Experts are a not-for-profit tenant engagement organisation and offer the only independent evidence-based accreditation scheme that assesses resident involvement arrangements.
- 1.9 Over the last three years the Council have facilitated 2,203 major adaptations, 13,372 minor fixings and 3,893 minor adaptations to support people in their homes.
- 1.10 A full summary of outputs and achievements was presented to Improving Places Select Committee June 2025.

## **2. Key Issues**

### Consultation

- 2.1 Between 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2024, consultation was carried out with Rotherham residents, officers and a wide range of partners and key stakeholders to inform the priorities for the Strategy. The proposed aims and priorities of the draft Strategy were shared with a range of groups, including:
  - An online survey – shared with key groups, including Rother Fed
  - Social media coverage / press release of online survey
  - Housing Involvement Panel with council tenants
  - Tenant Open Day with council tenants
  - Strategic Housing Forum with housing associations and other key partners
  - Staff sessions
  - Rotherham Show
  - Employment Solutions recruitment event
  - Improving Places Select Committee members
- 2.2 The twelve-week consultation period shaped the Strategy, alongside housing knowledge, intelligence and data maintained by the Strategic Housing team, including the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Rotherham Datahub. A summary of the consultation was presented to the Improving Places Select Commission session on 12<sup>th</sup> December.
- 2.3 Further consultation was then carried out on a draft Strategy. This included a presentation to the Housing Involvement Panel, the Strategic Housing Forum and Health and Wellbeing Board. Key council officers were asked for input to

ensure all directorates were represented; presentations were made to Directorate Leadership Team meetings.

- 2.4 The Strategy 2025-30 (Appendix 1) has four priorities that will remain important and relevant over the next five years. The Strategy reflects the following key challenges that have continued or arisen since the Strategy was last refreshed and represents a continuation from the previous Strategy 2022-25 (chapter 4) of the need to support our residents, improve the quality of existing homes and build more affordable housing:

Priority 1: Building high quality, sustainable and affordable new homes

- 2.5 The Council will continue to deliver homes for council rent and Shared Ownership, achieving the 1,000<sup>th</sup> home milestone by Summer 2027.
- 2.6 The cost-of-living crisis continues which disproportionately affects those residents on the lowest incomes. House prices and private rent levels continue to increase at a faster rate than annual earnings in Rotherham. The average house price in Rotherham is now 5.5 times the average annual wage. It is common for lenders to offer a maximum of 4.5x mortgage to salary ratio, therefore it is increasingly difficult for residents to purchase a home in Rotherham.
- 2.7 A new government was elected in July 2024, with a manifesto promising the delivery of 1.5 million new homes across the Country over the course of the parliament. Housing targets are now mandatory, and the new National Planning Policy Framework methodology to formulate these targets has increased the housing target significantly for Rotherham, to 1,080 new homes per year. This is around 200 homes per year more than current delivery, therefore strategic sites in the Local Plan and enabling development is a key priority. The target includes private, social and affordable housing delivery.
- 2.8 The climate crisis is addressed throughout the Strategy, with emphasis on building new homes that are zero-carbon ready and retrofitting existing homes with systems that use renewable energy and insulation to decarbonise homes.
- 2.9 Actions in the Strategy contribute to the above elements by:
- Increasing the number of new homes built in the Borough.
  - Ensuring a minimum 25% of new homes, on private developments, are affordable housing.
  - Increasing the number of council homes available, including through new build and acquisitions.
  - Ensuring all Council new build homes are zero-carbon ready and acquisitions are a minimum EPC C when let.

Priority 2: Improving the safety, quality and energy efficiency of our homes

- 2.10 The Council continues to work towards reducing fuel poverty across the Borough.

- 2.11 16.6% of households in Rotherham live in fuel poverty. This is as high as 50% in some neighbourhoods across the Borough.
- 2.12 Fuel poverty is where a household spends a high proportion of their income to adequately heat their home. It is influenced by household income, property size and type and energy prices. Living in fuel poverty can lead to mental and physical health issues, and increased risk of homelessness, as households choose to reduce spend in other areas of their lives to heat their homes.
- 2.13 Therefore, it is important that investment is made in existing homes to improve energy performance and remove hazards to improve health outcomes. The Government has confirmed a target for all social housing to have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) with a minimum of a C rating by 2030. The Government is also consulting on setting the same target timescale for privately rented properties. For private homes, the Council will continue the EC04 funding programme until March 26, and EC05 from April 26 for our most vulnerable residents and/or homes with the lowest energy efficiency.
- 2.14 The Social Housing Regulation Act has driven regulatory change for social landlords, setting out new standards for accountability and compliance around complaints, repairs and tenant data. To ensure the standards are being met, the Regulator of Social Housing will hold an inspection of the Council by April 2028. This is part of a national programme of inspections for all social housing providers.
- 2.15 Health issues such as overcrowding, poor stock condition, hazards in the home and poor energy efficiency are more prevalent in private-rented housing in areas around the Borough.
- 2.16 The Renter's Rights Bill was presented to Parliament in September 2024 and seeks to alter the balance of rights for tenants in the private-rented sector. This includes abolishing Section-21 'no-fault' evictions and giving greater security to tenants, introducing a Decent Homes standard, and making it illegal for landlords to discriminate against tenants. The Bill also includes an extension of Awaab's Law, which requires landlords to address hazards, such as damp and mould, within strict timescales.
- 2.17 Actions in the Strategy contribute to the above elements by:
- Increasing the percentage of satisfied tenants in all regulated social housing Tenant Satisfaction Measures
  - Increasing the proportion of our council homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard and continue to improve our repairs and health and safety compliance performance
  - Increasing the number of private sector landlord actions addressing Category 1 and 2 hazards following Council intervention.
  - Reducing the percentage of households living in (Low Income Low Energy Efficiency) fuel poverty in Rotherham

### Priority 3: Supporting our residents to live independently, including through prevention of homelessness

- 2.18 Housing is a key wider determinant of health. The number of people in Rotherham who identify as disabled, 21.3%, is significantly higher than the national level of 17.7% (Census 2021). The population of Rotherham is ageing, and average healthy life expectancy levels are decreasing. Therefore, accessible homes and adaptations to existing homes are important to our residents.
- 2.19 The Council will aim to end rough sleeping in Rotherham and work to prevent our residents from becoming homeless.
- 2.20 Tackling homelessness remains a priority for the Council. In 2023-24, 1,444 households were assessed as owed a homelessness prevention or relief duty by the Council. This is increasing year on year. An increase in available temporary accommodation is required for households where homelessness cannot be prevented.
- 2.21 Actions in the Strategy contribute to the above elements by:
- Increasing the number of affordable homes built in Rotherham that meet a specialist need.
  - More residents able to benefit from adaptations to their homes, within smaller waiting times.
  - Increasing the proportion of households approaching the Council for help who are prevented or relieved from homelessness, rather than requiring longer term support.
  - Further reduction in the use of hotels as emergency accommodation.

### Priority 4: Ensuring that our neighbourhoods are safe, happy, and thriving

- 2.22 The Council will continue to reduce the number of long-term empty homes.
- 2.23 Empty homes and anti-social behaviour were prominent issues when engaging with residents. Long-term empty homes can be a blight on neighbourhoods, and although the number of long-term empty homes has decreased in Rotherham, there is still work to do. The [Empty Homes Plan 2025-2029](#) will help target support to owners of empty homes.
- 2.24 Working with community groups and planning housing development and regeneration to make best use of land and spaces can have a positive impact on neighbourhoods and can help to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- 2.25 Actions in the Strategy contribute to the above elements by:
- Reducing the number of long-term empty homes.
  - Increasing the percentage of Council tenants satisfied that the Council makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.

- Increasing the percentage of tenants satisfied with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour.

### Housing Strategy Action Plan and Publication

- 2.26 An action plan is being developed to monitor progress and delivery against the Strategy across the five-year period. Cabinet is asked to delegate this to the relevant Strategic Director to approve.
- 2.27 Improving Places Select Commission will receive updates on delivery against an Action Plan annually to provide scrutiny to the progress being made.
- 2.28 There are likely to be minor data updates, which will require amending prior to publication. Cabinet is asked to delegate this to the relevant Strategic Director to approve.

### **3. Consultation on proposal**

- 3.1 Initial consultation was undertaken as detailed in section 2 and appendix 2.

### **4. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 4.1 Option 1: That Cabinet approves the Housing Strategy 2025-2030 and delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health to approve the action plan and minor data amendments to the Strategy prior to publication. **This is the recommended option.**
- 4.2 Option 2: That Cabinet does not approve the Housing Strategy prepared for 2025-30. This option is not recommended because it will not adequately address the issues highlighted in section 2 of this report.

### **5. Timetable and accountability for implementing this decision**

- 5.1 The Assistant Director of Housing has overall accountability for delivering the Housing Strategy's commitments.

### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications resulting from the proposals within this report. However, the actions set out within the Housing Strategy will require engagement with finance to ensure that the aims and objectives can be contained within existing budgets and resources.
- 6.2 There are no direct procurement implications within this report. However, the actions contained within the Housing Strategy itself will require engagement with the procurement team to ensure value for money and legally compliant contracts are awarded following robust procurement procedures in relation to new build housing, repairs and maintenance contracts and decarbonisation schemes.



## **7. Legal Advice and Implications**

- 7.1 There are no substantive legal issues arising from the content of this report other than as may be dealt with in the body of the report.
- 7.2 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 Council's approach to housing and allows Members to scrutinise delivery.

## **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

- 8.1 There are no HR implications associated with this cabinet report.

## **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

- 9.1 The Children and Young People Service, and Adult Care and Public Health have been consulted and have had an input into the Housing Strategy. By ensuring a range of affordable homes are delivered to meet a wide range of different needs, the Housing Strategy will help to provide safe, high-quality homes for children and young people, and vulnerable adults, allowing them to live safely and independently.

## **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

- 10.1 Having access to good quality and affordable homes is important for all the Borough's diverse communities, and the Housing Strategy seeks to remove barriers people can face in accessing a home to meet their needs. Data and consultation are used to understand Rotherham's communities. The priorities set out in the Housing Strategy will focus on the delivery of homes that meet the needs of older people, people with disabilities, larger families, single people and couples. The Council will continue to engage with communities and make sure the homes provided and enabled, meet their changing needs.
- 10.2 Both an Initial Equalities Screening Assessment and an Equality Analysis Form have been completed and are attached as Appendices 3 and 4 and explains how equality and diversity will be considered in the consultation period.

## **11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change**

- 11.1 Climate change poses a significant threat to environments, individuals, communities, and economies on local, national, and international scales. In recognition of this the Council has an aim to be net carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and for Rotherham as a place/ Borough to achieve the same position by 2040.
- 11.2 One of the themes throughout the Housing Strategy is the climate crisis. Dwellings emit around 20% of total greenhouse gases so the Housing Strategy rightly focuses on decarbonisation of existing homes in the Borough. The Council has a target of achieving an EPC of C or above for all social

rented homes by 2030 and government consultation is ongoing to set similar targets for the private-rented sector. For residents in privately owned homes, the Community Energy team manage grants for energy efficiency improvements for vulnerable residents and dwellings with the worst EPC ratings.

- 11.3 Through its own council housing delivery programme, the Council can ensure that new homes are high quality and energy efficient, which will contribute to reducing domestic carbon emissions. Planning permission has been secured for various housing sites for council build homes around the Borough and all homes will be zero-carbon ready.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

- 12.1 The aims set out in this Strategy will only be achieved by working in partnership with a range of local and regional stakeholders. The Council works strategically with partners through the Rotherham Strategic Housing Forum and with Housing Association partners to help meet the wide range of housing need across the Borough. The Council works with Homes England and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority as part of the South Yorkshire Housing Partnership to accelerate housing delivery and access funding opportunities.
- 12.2 The Housing Strategy has been developed in collaboration with, and will be monitored by, Rotherham's Strategic Housing Forum, which includes representation at a senior level from voluntary sector housing organisations, social housing providers, landlords and developers.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

- 13.1 The risk of failing to deliver the commitments set out in the Housing Strategy and action plan will be mitigated by ensuring the correct staff resources and processes are in place, and through regular and robust progress monitoring including an annual report to the Improving Places Select Commission.
- 13.2 The risk of the Housing Strategy becoming out of date due to policy and context changes at the national and local level, is mitigated by refreshing the Housing Strategy after five years. Housing intelligence is continuously updated and published, including through Rotherham's Data Hub / Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

## **14. Accountable Officers**

Michael Hellewell, Head of Strategic Housing and Development  
Sarah Watts, Strategic Housing Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of Statutory Officers: -

	<b>Named Officer</b>	<b>Date</b>
Chief Executive	John Edwards	22/08/25
Assistant Director, Financial Services (Deputy S.151 Officer)	Rob Mahon	19/08/25
Assistant Director of Legal Services (Monitoring Officer)	Phil Horsfield	18/8/2025

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