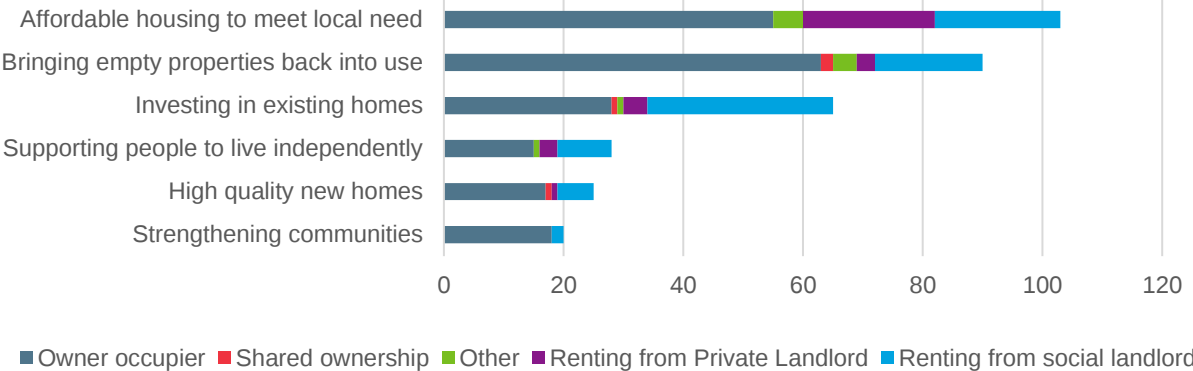
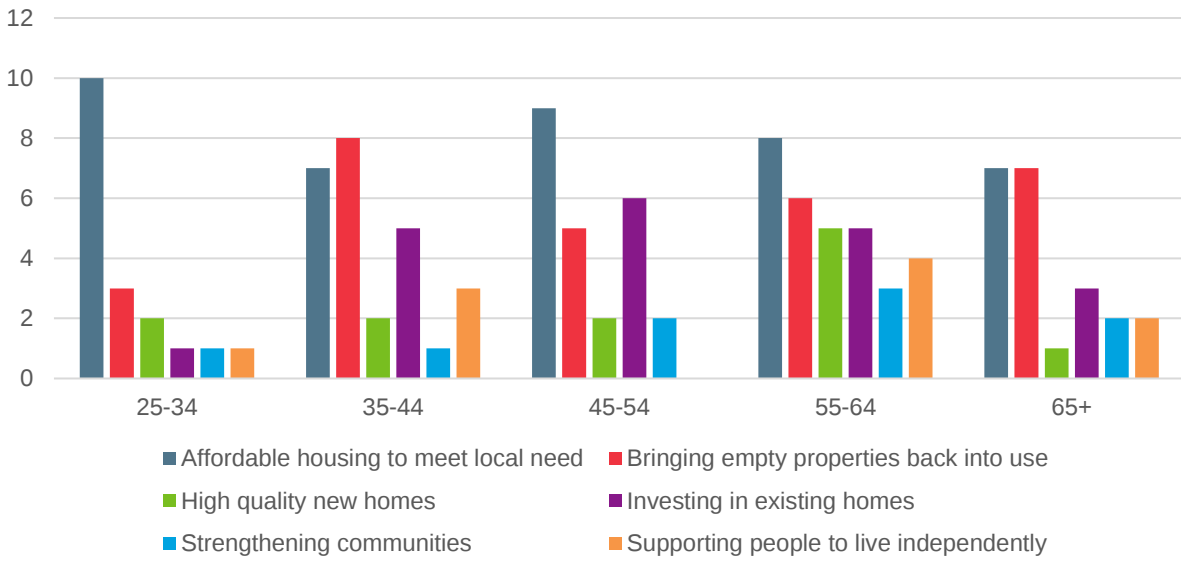


APPENDIX 2

Briefing: Housing Strategy Consultation Summary

1.	Summary
1.1	Rotherham's 30-year vision for housing was established in December 2012; and the Housing Strategy is updated and reviewed periodically to ensure priorities reflect current views.
1.2	The Housing Strategy 2025-30 will be the fifth chapter of the 30-year strategy. The Cabinet Member for Housing approved a plan and timeline for this Housing Strategy refresh on 26th June 2024.
1.3	The twelve-week consultation period started on 19th August 2024 and concluded on 11th November 2024. This briefing sets out how the consultation has been conducted and summarises the findings of the consultation.
1.4	Over 850 tenants, residents, partners and officers have contributed to the strategy update.
2.	Introduction
2.1	The main theme of the consultation was to present the key aims and priorities from the original 30-year Strategy, and the six priorities from the current Strategy (2022-25) and ask stakeholders and residents if the priorities remain relevant to Rotherham, how the Council can help achieve these aims and priorities, and whether there are any other key housing issues that should feature in the next Strategy chapter.
2.2	The vision set out in the 30-year strategy is to see: - People living in high quality homes, whether in the social rented, private rented or home ownership sector - Rotherham Council playing its part by being the best housing provider in the country, delivering high quality services and support, and peaceful and well-managed neighbourhoods - A smaller gap between the most and least disadvantaged neighbourhoods, so that all of Rotherham's people can live in safe, healthy and vibrant communities - No households living in homes that are poor in terms of energy efficiency A fifth aim was introduced in 2015 following consultation: - to create a revitalised town centre with a new urban community.
2.3	The current strategy (2022-25) focuses on the following six priorities: - High quality new homes

	- Affordable homes to meet local need - Investment in existing homes - Bringing empty homes back into use - Supporting people to live independently - Strengthening communities																																																	
3.	Residents Survey and Feedback																																																	
3.1	The consultation was launched on 19 th August with an online survey. This has been publicised through various media, including Home Matters, staff newsletters and ward newsletters, social media campaigns, and a press release which resulted in coverage in the Rotherham Advertiser.																																																	
3.2	The survey asked residents if the priorities for the current Housing Strategy remain relevant, which priority was the most important, and if there are any other housing issues important to them. Which of the following priorities is more relevant to you?  <table><caption>Data for 'Which of the following priorities is more relevant to you?' chart</caption><thead><tr><th>Priority</th><th>Owner occupier</th><th>Shared ownership</th><th>Other</th><th>Renting from Private Landlord</th><th>Renting from social landlord</th><th>Total</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Affordable housing to meet local need</td><td>55</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>103</td></tr><tr><td>Bringing empty properties back into use</td><td>65</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>16</td><td>90</td></tr><tr><td>Investing in existing homes</td><td>28</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>28</td><td>65</td></tr><tr><td>Supporting people to live independently</td><td>15</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>10</td><td>34</td></tr><tr><td>High quality new homes</td><td>18</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>29</td></tr><tr><td>Strengthening communities</td><td>18</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>0</td><td>24</td></tr></tbody></table>	Priority	Owner occupier	Shared ownership	Other	Renting from Private Landlord	Renting from social landlord	Total	Affordable housing to meet local need	55	2	5	20	21	103	Bringing empty properties back into use	65	2	2	5	16	90	Investing in existing homes	28	2	2	5	28	65	Supporting people to live independently	15	2	2	5	10	34	High quality new homes	18	2	2	2	5	29	Strengthening communities	18	2	2	2	0	24
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3.3	Out of 331 respondents, 67% said that the six priorities remained relevant. Affordable housing to meet local need received the most votes from residents (103), followed by Bringing Empty Homes back into use (90), then Investing in Existing Homes in third place (65).																																																	
3.4	When the responses are broken down by the housing tenure of respondents, however, Affordable housing to meet local need is by far the most popular choice for those in the privately rented sector, whereas owner occupiers and social housing tenants had a wider spread of priorities. <table><thead><tr><th>Tenure</th><th>Most relevant priority</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>Owner occupier</td><td>Bringing empty homes back into use (32%)</td></tr><tr><td>Privately rented</td><td>Affordable housing to meet local need (67%)</td></tr><tr><td>Social rented</td><td>Investing in existing homes (35%)</td></tr></tbody></table>	Tenure	Most relevant priority	Owner occupier	Bringing empty homes back into use (32%)	Privately rented	Affordable housing to meet local need (67%)	Social rented	Investing in existing homes (35%)																																									
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3.5	Providing protected characteristics information was optional for those completing the survey as The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the council to analyse the effect of what we do on all protected groups. 123 of 331 (37%) of those completing the survey																																																	

	completed this section. The survey responses were analysed after six weeks in part to ensure that all protected characteristic groups were represented in the response.																																										
3.6	It was noticed that Muslim and BAME groups were underrepresented. In response to this, the survey was pushed out to the Council’s BME network, and RotherFed promoted the survey to all community groups it works with. It is unknown if this increased participation due to the protected characteristics section being optional, however, respondents from these backgrounds completing this section remain underrepresented, in comparison to the local populations. The only protected characteristic group with no responses was ‘refugee or asylum seeker status’.																																										
3.7	There was a good geographical spread of responses, with all localities represented. The map in shows the postcodes of respondents. We also asked respondents for their housing tenure, which is reflected in the key to the map.																																										
3.8	Residents were asked if there were any housing issues other than the six current priorities that should be considered in the new Strategy. Most of the responses could fit under the existing priorities, although residents may have wanted to make specific points rather than under the broader priority names. Anti-social behaviour was an issue for 19 residents, which was not mentioned in the previous Strategy. 25 respondents told us that they were worried about the affordability of housing for the next generation, including children and grandchildren. This was reflected in the responses from those aged 25 to 34 years old to ‘which of the following priorities would be the most relevant to you?’, as ‘Affordable housing to meet local need’ was the clear priority for this group. Most important priority by age group  <table border="1"><thead><tr><th>Age Group</th><th>Affordable housing to meet local need</th><th>Bringing empty properties back into use</th><th>High quality new homes</th><th>Investing in existing homes</th><th>Strengthening communities</th><th>Supporting people to live independently</th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td>25-34</td><td>10</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>35-44</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>45-54</td><td>9</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>2</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>55-64</td><td>8</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>65+</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr></tbody></table>	Age Group	Affordable housing to meet local need	Bringing empty properties back into use	High quality new homes	Investing in existing homes	Strengthening communities	Supporting people to live independently	25-34	10	3	2	1	1	1	35-44	7	8	2	5	1	3	45-54	9	5	2	6	2	0	55-64	8	6	5	5	3	4	65+	7	7	1	3	2	2
Age Group	Affordable housing to meet local need	Bringing empty properties back into use	High quality new homes	Investing in existing homes	Strengthening communities	Supporting people to live independently																																					
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65+	7	7	1	3	2	2																																					
3.9	Twenty respondents thought that rent levels were too high and/or were unable to afford them. 19 respondents thought that it was too difficult to get onto the property ladder. 19 respondents mentioned the need for more affordable housing. 18 respondents mentioned the cost to run houses, or the cost of living. Therefore, affordability was the main key issue facing residents.																																										
3.10	Energy efficiency, improving existing homes, disrepair and damp and mould were also prominent in responses, and holding landlords accountable for addressing these																																										

	issues. As was the need for infrastructure to support new housing and to use existing buildings or brownfield sites rather than building on green spaces/fields.												
3.11	Respondents offered solutions to housing issues. <i>“Looking into problems with elderly seniors who have lived in property most of there life by buying it then stuck in there properties that don't meet there needs but can't move cos they own or can't get a mortgage to move cos there retirement”</i> <i>“Build more housing for older single people. I wouldn't mind an apartment but would like some outside space and that seems to be lacking”</i> <i>“Build houses for our young people and families”</i> <i>“More social and affordable housing available across the borough but split across areas so as not to create areas with only one social mobility group living within. All new housing projects to continue to have a variety of price points for the houses within and to have adequate support for services, transport and schools considered. Maltby is struggling with transport and local services as it has grown without the services and transportation links growing.”</i> <i>“Invest in the infrastructure required to support the volume of residents”</i> <i>“Help older single people to move to smaller properties to allow families to have bigger houses.”</i> <i>“Provide help with buying a house, renting is even more expensive”</i>												
4.	Consultation events												
4.1	Strategic Housing Team Meeting – 10th June 2024 The Strategic Housing Team dedicated a team meeting to shape the Housing Strategy by discussing potential priorities and what had been achieved over the current Strategy period.												
4.2	Rotherham Show – 7th - 8th September 2024 We asked people visiting the Strategic Housing tent to vote for the priorities that they thought were most important to them, by giving out tokens to place in numbered containers (houses). The results are as follows: <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Priority 2 - Affordable Housing to meet local need</td><td>62</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 4 - Bringing empty homes back into use</td><td>54</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 1 - High Quality New Homes</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 5 - Supporting People to live independently</td><td>22</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 3 - Investing in existing homes</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 6 - Strengthening communities</td><td>16</td></tr> </table> Officers working at the event had engaging conversations with residents and found that empty homes and buildings, in particular the town centre, homelessness, worry about affordability issues that may face children and grandchildren in the future, and the need for more Council housing were the main areas of discussion. Comment slips were made available and comments from these included the need for smaller house types, infrastructure for new housing developments, need for specialist housing including learning difficulties and autism, and the cost of living and high rent levels in private-rented homes.	Priority 2 - Affordable Housing to meet local need	62	Priority 4 - Bringing empty homes back into use	54	Priority 1 - High Quality New Homes	26	Priority 5 - Supporting People to live independently	22	Priority 3 - Investing in existing homes	21	Priority 6 - Strengthening communities	16
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4.3	Employment Solutions recruitment event – 27th September 2024 Similarly to the Rotherham Show, those attending the recruitment event were asked to vote for the priorities that were important to them, and officers had discussions about housing issues with visitors to the stall. Again, the top two priorities voted for were Affordable housing to meet local need and Bringing empty homes back into use. <table border="1" data-bbox="335 336 1190 584"> <tr> <td>Priority 2 - Affordable Housing to meet local need</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 4 - Bringing empty homes back into use</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 5 - Supporting People to live independently</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 1 - High Quality New Homes</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 3 - Investing in existing homes</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr> <td>Priority 6 - Strengthening communities</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	Priority 2 - Affordable Housing to meet local need	12	Priority 4 - Bringing empty homes back into use	8	Priority 5 - Supporting People to live independently	5	Priority 1 - High Quality New Homes	4	Priority 3 - Investing in existing homes	2	Priority 6 - Strengthening communities	1
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Priority 3 - Investing in existing homes	2												
Priority 6 - Strengthening communities	1												
4.4	Housing Involvement Panel – 16th October 2024 On 16th October, a discussion was held with tenants to help shape the Strategy at the Housing Involvement Panel. The key themes raised in this session concerned: - Better intelligence and management of Council stock improvements and working better with repairs partners to ensure requests are completed timely and accurately. - Planning works to council homes around the tenant's individual needs – improvements should be planned in advance rather than reactive to repairs. - The Allocations Policy refresh should ensure that new tenants are placed in the right homes first time. - Improvement work such as decarbonisation is an opportunity to get communities together. As new technology is introduced, Council staff can do presentations on how to use the technology in local community centres. - Empty homes lead to run down areas and there is opportunity to use empty commercial properties in the town centre for housing. - Poor standards for tenants in the private-rented sector and how this can be improved. - Strengthening communities – how do private sector tenants feed in and do they have a voice? How can they feel connected and listened to?												
4.5	Housing – whole service event – 17th & 24th October 2024 Alongside an internal Housing Strategy working group with key officers from each Housing Service meeting monthly to help shape the Strategy, two whole service events at Rockingham Professional Development Centre focused on the Housing Strategy. All Housing staff were invited to help shape the Housing Strategy Action Plan by discussing how they had helped to meet the priorities from the 2022-2025 Strategy and how they can meet the priorities in the overall 30-year Strategy over the next three years. The ideas from these sessions were summarised and presented to the Housing Strategy working group in November and the group have started to shape the Action Plan for the Strategy.												
4.6	Tenant Open Day – 23rd October 2024												

On 23rd October, the Housing Strategy refresh was presented to tenants at New York Stadium as part of the open day. The tenants were asked to complete the online survey and also a form to tell us which of the priorities from the current Strategy were most important. Responses were evenly spread:

Priority	Number of votes
Affordable housing to meet local need	5
Bringing empty homes back into use	4
High quality new homes	4
Strengthening communities	3
Investing in existing homes	3

Comments from the forms said that to address the priorities the Council could:

- Run events in the communities, in particular groups for families and new parents and allowing younger people to use neighbourhood centres.
- Build housing to support single people, those with disabilities and families. To help those with disabilities, the Council could do more to support those with mental health issues with regular tenant checks.
- Build fully accessible housing with adequate parking.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour including off-road bikes and drug use to create safer communities and to do more work to identify why empty homes are empty.
- Improve the condition of existing properties, including adapting for storage of scooters, electronic charging points and helping to prevent damp and mould.

4.7 Youth Cabinet

Comments from members of the Youth Cabinet were sought to represent those looking to the future in terms of housing need. Due to full agendas, we were unable to present at a meeting, so the group gave a response via email. From the priorities in the current Housing Strategy, 'Bringing empty homes back into use' was most important:

Which Priority is most important to you?	Count
Bringing empty homes back into use	6
Affordable housing to meet local need	3
Strengthening communities	2
Investing in existing homes	1

The responses from the group included:

- Put Key Choices back to face to face.
- The Council should make it easier to report/complain about neighbours and the community.
- Do up all the empty buildings to a good standard to house people.

5. Housing intelligence

5.1 Alongside feedback from residents and key stakeholders, housing intelligence is used to shape the Strategy. The Strategic Housing team produces the Housing page of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Rotherham Datahub, which includes data on council housing stock and demand, house prices and affordability, homelessness, fuel poverty, stock condition and empty homes. The team has knowledge and insight into

	the private rented sector, social housing policy, planning policy and housing delivery which has also helped to shape the Strategy.
6.	Conclusions
6.1	The priorities in the current Strategy are still important to our residents; affordable housing to meet local need has consistently been the most important priority for residents. Therefore, one of the priorities in the Housing Strategy 2025-30 will be 'Building high quality, sustainable and affordable new homes.'
6.2	There is concern amongst both tenants of private landlords and Council tenants about affordability and lack of quality housing in the private-rented sector. Alongside government aims to decarbonise housing stock and for all social housing to have a minimum EPC rating of C by 2030, and the introduction of Tenant Satisfaction Measures, one of the priorities in the Strategy will be 'Improving the safety, quality and energy efficiency of existing homes.'
6.3	Supporting people to live independently was also important to residents through consultation. Data shows that the population of Rotherham is ageing and has a higher percentage of disabled residents than average. Preventing homelessness is a key duty of all local authorities. Of the 254 residents who engaged with the consultation to inform the new Council Plan, 187 respondents agreed that 'Tackling homelessness' was important. One of the priorities in the Strategy will be 'Supporting our residents to live independently, including through prevention of homelessness.'
6.4	Anti-social behaviour and more inclusive work in the community were themes from the survey and consultation events. Empty homes and land are seen by many residents as a solution to remove blight and create new homes in existing communities. The number of long-term empty homes in Rotherham has decreased between 2023 and 2024 from 1,179 to 963. The figure is lower than the other local authorities in South Yorkshire, however the need to reduce the number of empty homes remains important. This aim is now included in the fourth priority, 'Ensuring that our neighbourhoods are safe, happy and thriving'.