

# DRAFT ROTHERHAM HOUSING STRATEGY 2012 - 2042

Part 1:  
2012 - 2015

*OUR HOUSING COMMITMENTS  
FOR ROTHERHAM*



Rotherham  
Metropolitan  
Borough Council  
Where Everyone Matters

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We have tried to keep jargon out of this document, as we want it to be accessible to everybody, but some of the terms used may need further explanation, and we have therefore included a 'guide to terms used in the housing strategy' on pages 18 and 19.

## **Foreword**

(To be added once consultation has been completed and the final draft produced)

Rose McNeely, Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods

Dave Richmond, Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods

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## Introduction to Rotherham's 30 year housing strategy

We know that good or bad housing has a direct impact on health, educational achievement, economic prosperity and community safety – all of which are important to the success and well-being of our communities in Rotherham. Housing therefore makes a key contribution to delivering Rotherham Partnership's Community Strategy, whose three priorities for 2011-14 are:

- Ensuring the best start in life for children and families
- Providing additional support to vulnerable people in our communities
- Supporting the growth of a sustainable and competitive local economy

The 30 year housing strategy reflects the crucial links between housing and other key services, particularly health. It sits alongside the Council's 30 year housing business plan.

### A picture of Rotherham at the beginning of the 30 year strategy

- Diverse and vibrant blend of people, cultures and communities
- Mix of urban areas and villages (about 70% of the borough is rural)
- Rich industrial heritage and over recent years investment in new areas such as information technology and light engineering
- Population steadily increasing - 256000 in April 2012
- Ageing population – there will be an additional 20,000 residents over the age of 65 over the next 30 years
- Decline in younger population
- Employment rate has fallen below national and regional averages since recession
- Income levels are also below national averages
- The educational attainment of our school leavers is improving each year
- 110,000 households in borough – of which 21000 are Council homes
- Large number of people on the Council's housing register – 33,599 in May 2012
- Vast majority of Council homes classed as 'decent' but significant decency issues in the private rented sector
- There is a low housing demand in some areas and an increasing housing affordability gap between the most and least deprived areas
- The number of new homes built is at an all-time low
- In 2011 18.2% of Rotherham's households were living in fuel poverty, in particular people privately renting
- Low crime rates compared to national and sub-regional averages

More information can be found in the annual Rotherham housing intelligence report.

### Where we want to get to at the end of the 30 year period

- People are living in high quality affordable homes of their choice
- Smaller gap between the most and least deprived areas so that all of Rotherham's people can live in safe, healthy and vibrant communities
- No households living in fuel poverty
- Zero-carbon, sustainable residential development across all tenures

This is our 30 year vision, and we will set out how we will deliver this in three-yearly instalments. The first instalment relates to 2012-15, therefore to the end of the current

Comprehensive Spending Review period. During this period of severely restricted public finance, we must focus on making our resources go as far as possible to continue to improve the quality and choice of Rotherham's housing offer. The next instalment, 2015-18 may have a different focus but the 30 year vision will remain the same.

## **Introduction to part 1: 2012-15**

### **Continuing to improve the quality and choice of Rotherham's housing offer**

#### **Wider strategic context**

Nationally, the Coalition Government has embarked on a massive programme of budget cuts which has caused us to drastically reduce our planned housing and regeneration investment. The Localism Act 2011 has brought about a number of major changes that affect housing including changes to how Council housing is allocated. 2011 also saw the publication of the Government's national housing strategy, *laying the foundations*, that introduces a wide range of new initiatives particularly focused on 'reigniting the housing market and getting the nation building again'. Another key national policy change, Housing Revenue Account Self Financing, has allowed local authorities to control their own rental income which provides opportunities to borrow and invest over a 30 year period.

At the South Yorkshire level, the Regional Spatial Strategy has been superseded as a policy basis in favour of localism and a new approach to driving house building, based on local demand, acceptance and incentives. Also at a sub-regional level, the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership has become the key channel for accessing external funding for housing growth.

#### **Local strategic context**

At the local level, the overarching strategic plan for Rotherham is the Community Strategy 2011-14, which describes the vision for the future of the Borough and sets our key targets and actions that all partner organisations are committed to achieving. It was developed through listening to local people, groups and organisations and embracing their priorities:

- Ensuring the best start in life for children and families
- Supporting those who are vulnerable in our community
- Supporting the growth of a sustainable and competitive local economy

There are also links between housing and each of the Council's corporate plan objectives, in particular *making sure no community is left behind* and *helping to create safe and healthy communities*.

The other key strategic document at the local level is the Local Development Framework, which states that Rotherham requires 850 new homes per year up to the year 2027. RMBC has also maintained its Local Investment Plan, a key document that sets out our geographical housing and regeneration investment priorities, although the majority of this remains unfunded due to the widespread public spending cuts. More recently RMBC has focused its interventions on the most deprived areas, as defined by the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010. These areas have, in the main, suffered from long term

deprivation and have featured amongst the worst in the country based on their rankings in the Index of Multiple Deprivation for many years.

In delivering the housing strategy we also need to make links with other important related documents, particularly:

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – an assessment carried out by the NHS and the Council of the health and wellbeing of the local community,
- Linked to this, Rotherham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy,
- Rotherham's homelessness prevention strategy, which will be rewritten following consultation on commitment 6, and
- Rotherham's Supporting People Strategy (which links closely with commitment 9).

It is clearly the right time for Rotherham to produce its new housing strategy, in order to address the issues that most affect the people of Rotherham, and to align with the key strategies set out above and with our 30 year Housing Revenue Account business plan.

### **Areas of focus within the housing strategy part 1 (2012-15)**

In recent years we have delivered major investments and improvements to Rotherham's housing, some of our key achievements being:

- Delivery of the Housing Market Renewal Programme
- 171 new homes in the town centre
- 132 new Council houses built
- Decent Homes Standard achieved for Council's housing stock
- The number of empty Council properties reduced to an all-time low of 122 (Feb 2012)

However we have many issues to tackle, and we need to focus our resources on the things that will have the biggest impact on Rotherham's residents. We have expressed the areas we intend to focus on as 'ten commitments', that is, the Council's commitments to the people of Rotherham over the next three years. These are:

- 1) We will increase the supply of affordable housing in Rotherham
- 2) We will ensure our Council housing meets the needs of the people of Rotherham
- 3) We will help Rotherham residents to access decent private rented homes
- 4) We will help people who wish to own their home
- 5) We will continue to work with energy providers to help to ensure everyone can afford to heat their home
- 6) We will support people in financial hardship and at risk of homelessness
- 7) We will strengthen our engagement with communities and individuals
- 8) We will help people in our most deprived communities
- 9) We will help vulnerable people to access the housing-related support they need
- 10) We will make communities safe

We have consulted widely to make sure these reflect the concerns and priorities of Rotherham's people (consultation will take place between June and August 2012), and a separate chapter on each of these commitments follows. The commitments can be found on the Council's website [www.rotherham.gov.uk](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk) and progress updates will be published on the website every six months. The Local Strategic Housing Partnership will oversee delivery of the housing strategy and set the next instalment (part 2: 2015-18) in late 2014.

# **Commitment 1: We will increase the supply of affordable housing in Rotherham**

## **Why this is important**

The need for affordable housing in Rotherham has grown dramatically over the past few years and will continue to grow, for many reasons, including the following:

- The population is growing, and ageing, and household sizes are becoming smaller, meaning more people than ever before are seeking a place to live
- The average household income is relatively low, and with the forthcoming changes to welfare benefits more families will find themselves living in unaffordable housing
- It is harder to secure a mortgage and large deposits are required, therefore more people will need to rent for longer, and more 'intermediate' housing is needed
- The amount of Council housing is decreasing due to the Right to Buy
- The economic recession has resulted in delays to building on development sites (stalled sites) – developers are not building enough new homes to keep up with demand

In 2011, RMBC built 132 new Council homes, the first in over 20 years, which signalled the beginning of a new era with the Council in a strong, leading position to get Rotherham building again. We will continue to build new Council housing, however, there is no longer grant funding available from the Homes and Communities Agency and we must therefore look to new ways of delivering more homes.

## **What we will do**

- We will increase the Council's housing stock by up to 150 between 2013 and 2015
- We will keep the level of empty Council properties low – never to exceed 1% of the total stock
- We will investigate the viability of delivering homes of modular, off-site construction in Rotherham in order to cut down time and cost and ensure high quality
- We will work with private owners and housing associations to bring at least 18 empty homes back into use as social rented housing
- We will maximise the number of affordable homes that can be delivered through Section 106 planning gain
- We will maximise the number of affordable homes that can be delivered through the Community Infrastructure Levy
- We will work with private developers to assist them in building new homes on stalled sites. This could be by supporting bids for Government resources, buying properties to rent as Council housing in the early stages to guarantee cashflow, or working with housing associations to take a greater number of homes on these sites.
- We will sell 10 plots of land to people who wish to build their own homes as this may be a more affordable option for some people than buying on the open market
- We will maintain high quality information on the housing needs and aspirations of Rotherham's people, to ensure we understand where new housing is needed and of what size and type
- In particular we will endeavour to increase the amount of rural housing and specialist housing – for example for older and disabled people
- We will continue to ensure that new housing meets high design quality standards and is sustainable and energy efficient

## **Commitment 2: We will ensure our Council housing meets the needs of the people of Rotherham**

### **Why this is important**

As shown above, the demand for Rotherham's Council housing continues to increase, and as housing plays a key part in people's health and wellbeing, it is essential that we ensure our housing meets the needs and aspirations of its residents, now and in the future.

### **What we will do**

As well as delivering new housing (commitment 1), we need to free up existing Council housing by ensuring that the right people are in the right homes. We will do this by:

- Implementing a new allocations policy
- Helping Council tenants that are 'under-occupying' properties that are larger than they need, to move to more suitable accommodation
- Helping Council tenants who wish to move to other areas, for example for employment reasons, to exchange with other tenants via the national Homeswapper database
- Implementing a new strategic tenancy policy, as required by the Localism Act 2011, that sets out information about the length of Council tenancies
- Clamping down on social housing fraud by training operational housing staff on how to identify potential social housing fraud and take appropriate action

We will make sure that in planning new housing that the type and size of property is right for Rotherham's changing demographic needs:

- We will increase supported housing choices for vulnerable adults and their carers including people with a physical and / or sensory impairment, people with a learning disability or mental health problems. We will deliver more specialist housing for households with multiple, complex needs.
- Households are generally smaller and the new benefit rules and our attempts to free up under-occupied properties mean that we need more one and two bedroom homes. We will deliver more smaller homes, including where appropriate remodelling existing stock.
- We will make sure new housing is delivered in the right locations to meet need

We will ensure the Council's housing stock meets high standards:

- We will continue to deliver our comprehensive asset management strategy to ensure the Decent Homes Standard is maintained
- We will identify and pursue every opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of our housing stock, where funding is available (see commitment 4)
- We will ensure that new Council housing meets high design and sustainability standards
- We will deliver environmental improvements in order to make our neighbourhoods safe and attractive



## **Commitment 3: We will help Rotherham residents to access decent private rented homes**

### **Why this is important**

Private renting has grown considerably in recent years, with approximately 3.6 million households (16.5%) in England now living in the private rented sector (PRS). Of these, approximately 25% receive housing benefit, showing that the PRS is increasingly being seen as an alternative to both home ownership and to social housing. The role of the PRS is also set to expand to assist in accommodating homeless people, should RMBC opt to pursue this option as introduced by the Localism Act 2011. It is therefore important that we provide support to the sector to ensure homes are decent and well-managed.

We are already ensuring that minimum standards of accommodation are achieved through the provision of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections, and referring private rented tenants to the Warm Front scheme until the scheme closes in December 2012. However, despite our interventions, we know that 24.2% of vulnerable private sector households in Rotherham are living in non-decent housing, and that 22.8% of people privately renting are living in fuel poverty.

### **What we will do**

- We will consider introducing an accredited landlord scheme
- We will establish an overcrowding policy for the private rented sector
- We will increase the number of houses in multiple occupation which are free from category 1 hazards
- We will develop Landlord Resources page on the Council web site
- We will produce up to date guidance leaflets advising tenants of their responsibilities
- We will promote awareness amongst PRS landlords and tenants of housing-related support services
- We will promote and support local Rent in Advance loan and paper bond guarantee schemes
- We will carry out research to understand private landlords' awareness of the 'Green Deal' and actively market the scheme in areas of hard to target homes
- We will assist owners of empty properties to bring them back into use as private rented accommodation
- We will continue to host the Landlords' Forum and publish regular landlord newsletters
- We will increase access to private sector housing for homeless households
- We will consider introducing a Private Sector Leasing Scheme

## **Commitment 4: We will help people who wish to own their home**

### **Why this is important**

Nationally, 66% of homes are owner-occupied (2010/11) and this will increase steadily as 59% of private renters and 23% of social renters expect to buy a property in the future. The Government is helping social housing tenants and other first time buyers to own or part-own their home through the Right to Buy and shared ownership schemes. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult for people to afford to buy a home due to the following:

- Banks are no longer willing to allow people to overstretch themselves by getting mortgages several times higher than their income. Currently this is compounding the affordability problem. Most lenders are asking for a minimum of 15% deposit.
- House prices have risen in Rotherham but remain lower than the average house price for England and Wales. However, house price inflation has outstripped wage inflation in Rotherham which means that homeownership is becoming more difficult.
- It is documented that there will be an increasing percentage of the population who will not be able to afford to buy their own home in the future

We are already offering sites for open market sale and low cost home ownership and promoting the various HomeBuy products. Equally we are trying to help those facing financial difficulty that already own part or all of their home (see also commitment 6). By doing more to help people who wish to own their own home we can:

- Free up social and private rented accommodation for people who need it
- Help people to access affordable home ownership and enjoy the benefits this can offer
- Provide people with information and support to help them to avoid financial hardship and losing their home

### **What we will do**

- We will continue to promote and market affordable housing schemes
- We will provide information about the new Right to Buy rules to Council tenants
- We will provide quality and up to date advice, support and information on the Council's website
- We will ensure effective marketing of sites
- We will consider self-build and custom build schemes to take advantage of smaller plots and work with small-scale investors
- We will be a point of contact for custom and self builders
- We will work with the Homes and Communities Agency to apply for Government monies being offered to support an increase in the numbers accessing homeownership
- We will provide information to homeowners about making their homes more energy efficient, for example via the Green Deal (see also commitment 5)
- For those facing repossession, we will offer a mortgage rescue package to enable householders to remain living in their property wherever possible

## **Commitment 5: We will continue to work with energy providers to help to ensure everyone can afford to heat their home**

### **Why this is important**

Despite the Council's targeted interventions, in 2011 18.2% of Rotherham's households were living in fuel poverty, in particular people privately renting and those living in pre-1919 terraced properties. We must learn from research programmes such as the Keeping Warm In Later Life Project (KWILLT) and the Warm Homes, Healthy People programme, to improve the health and well-being of our most vulnerable residents. We will work with partners to reduce the risk of cold related illness, and identify ways of helping people out of fuel poverty by increasing the thermal efficiency of their homes and helping to lower fuel costs.

### **What we will do**

- We will continue to work with Energy Companies to improve thermal efficiency through better loft insulation and solid wall improvements and more efficient heating appliances in agreed target areas that qualify for CERT or CESP funding
- We will complete our programme of improving non-traditional Council stock thermal insulation, and are continuing a replacement programme for gas boilers and improving loft, cavity insulation through the decent homes programme
- We will work with private landlords to secure funding for improving the energy efficiency of their properties, through Energy Company Obligations (ECO)
- We will positively seek opportunities to enable Council tenants that are under-occupying, to downsize to a home they can afford to heat
- We will enter into a partnership with a Green Deal Provider
- We will continue under the 30 year business plan to upgrade and improve the thermal qualities of Council housing stock
- We will work with local residents and partners to raise awareness and promote the opportunity to access green deal funding, and seek a whole street approach in more vulnerable areas
- We will raise awareness on self help low cost measures which can aid energy efficiency
- We will ensure that any new Council houses we build after 2013 meet the zero emissions target
- We will produce a revised affordable warmth strategy that will enable and provide opportunities for all Rotherham residents to live in warmer homes

## **Commitment 6: We will support people in financial hardship and at risk of homelessness**

### **Why this is important**

Central Government announced significant changes to the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Scheme in April 2011. Many aspects of welfare reform will have a direct impact on housing providers and those in social and private accommodation. These measures have the potential to lead to increases in homelessness, evictions, child poverty and debt. The Council has taken a pro-active approach to preventing people getting into financial hardship and being at risk of losing their home. The Council carries out statutory homeless duties but 'prevention is better than cure', and so primarily focuses on preventing homelessness. The Council has seen positive results however due to the radically changing culture and economic climate this work has to continue and is a key part of our Housing Strategy.

### **What we will do**

- We will continue to finance and support The Rent in Advance Scheme and paper bond schemes (which help to prevent possible evictions and homelessness), and we will pilot an alternative bond scheme that would offer a recycled bond fund
- We will increase the Homelessness Prevention Advice Service available in the community
- We will develop and implement personalised services to help sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness across the Sub Region
- We will provide information about the 'Impact of Welfare Reform' and signpost customers, via housing benefit letters, to homelessness prevention advice. This will help to ensure that individuals who are either providing or in receipt of services are well prepared for the changes.
- We will train staff on welfare reform and undertake welfare reform advice drop-ins
- We will refresh and update the RMBC private rented sector webpages to ensure information is up to date and appropriate, including signposting to Action Housing who have been awarded a 3 year contract to provide support to tenants within the Private rented sector, through the Supporting People Programme
- We will support local agencies to ensure that vulnerable tenants have access to affordable services, assistance and advice
- Through the Supporting People programme and the Young Persons Moving On Panel we will support the reduction in tenancy failure particularly for young people aged 16-25
- We will encourage homeless households to consider the opportunities that the private rented sector has to offer
- We will work in partnership to provide information sessions on homelessness prevention for school children

## **Commitment 7: We will strengthen our engagement with communities and individuals**

### **Why this is important**

RMBC has a strong track record in providing effective community engagement and empowerment opportunities to tenants and residents. Key democratic channels are Area Assemblies, and Council tenants and leaseholders can get involved via Area Housing Panels and the Quality and Standards Challenge group. The Localism Act 2011 further emphasises the importance of community empowerment and ownership and we must continue to strengthen existing channels and find new ways of empowering residents.

### **What we will do**

- We will continue to support RotherFed and strengthen our partnership working to deliver empowerment and community engagement opportunities to tenants and residents
- Following the review of Area Housing Panels, we will continue to support these including training for tenants, and strengthen the links with Area Assemblies and RMBC
- We will provide support to community groups to help them compete for available funding opportunities
- Community Right to Build - the Localism Act gives new powers to communities to shape their area through neighbourhood planning and a community right to build. It provides planning consent for developments without the need for a planning application. The Council will provide information to any interested parties.
- We will continue to provide tenants and residents with information about the Right to Manage.

## **Commitment 8: We will help people in our most deprived communities**

### **Why this is important**

Priority neighbourhoods have been identified using the English Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010 data. According to the IMD these are typically areas of poor housing and environment, low adult skills, poor educational attainment and participation, high disability rates, poor health, high levels of worklessness and crime hotspots. We know that to create sustainable communities in Rotherham we need to focus on our priority communities and take collaborative action. We have a detailed understanding of the nature and the scale of the challenges Rotherham faces in creating sustainable communities and where we need to focus our efforts in the future.

We recognise that not all areas require the same level of investment. With limited resources we have to look to target services and resources in these priority neighbourhoods to ensure the gap between these areas and the rest of Rotherham is significantly reduced in the future.

- We know that 15% of the Borough's population live within these priority neighbourhoods
- There are high concentrations of vulnerable families and individuals in these areas
- To make a difference we need to join up our physical investment with our social investment to improve these neighbourhoods

### **What we will do**

- We will identify a baseline position of total spend and resources in each of the areas, including partner contributions
- We will ensure our Partners are committed to shifting mainstream resources into areas of greatest need
- We will carry out an analysis and needs assessment for each priority neighbourhood
- We will ensure leadership across all levels of the partnership so that issues are tackled and partners are accountable
- We will develop robust operational and community engagement mechanisms
- We will put in place a small operational team who can help coordinate activity, and engage with the local community
- We will put mechanisms in place to encourage these neighbourhoods to access resources and services they need to improve their own lives
- We will put in place an improvement plan for each area based on needs analysis and consultation
- We will increase community confidence by implementing a number of quick wins to tackle the most urgent issues, and maintaining regular communication with the residents
- We will provide a high level of visible staff working in these areas. particularly at night when issues occur
- We will ensure that housing-related support services are targeted at the most deprived communities

## **Commitment 9: We will help people to access the housing-related support they need**

### **Why this is important**

Good housing and support services for vulnerable people can assist people to live healthy, independent lives and reduce the pressure on families and carers. By providing the appropriate accommodation, advice and support or home adaptations, we can prevent costs to the NHS and social care. Housing related support provides prevention and early intervention to vulnerable and excluded groups to support the maintenance of independence and / or the move from supported / temporary accommodation to independence. This housing strategy sits alongside Rotherham's Supporting People programme whose main aim is to enable individuals to live independently within their own tenancy, preventing homelessness, and social exclusion.

### **What we will do**

- Disabled Facilities Grant helps to fund the provision of adaptations that enable disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their homes. We will continue to support this programme.
- Rotherham presently has a successful handyperson service delivered by Rotherham Stay Put and (Yorkshire Housing) funded through Supporting People. A range of services are offered including advice, hospital discharge and moving to a more manageable property. We will continue to signpost residents to this service.
- As stated in commitments 1 and 2, we will deliver more specialist housing for older people and disabled person units, which will be 'client led' so they are specifically adapted to suit individual requirements
- We will continue to provide furniture solutions to enable vulnerable residents to access private rented accommodation
- In order to better equip residents of vulnerable groups to become good responsible tenants, it is proposed that an Accredited Tenant Scheme for Vulnerable Groups be established in Rotherham. This scheme would be aimed at educating would be tenants and tenants having difficulties in existing properties, on how to behave and conduct themselves as responsible tenants.
- Any new scheme delivered in partnership with the Council will incorporate Lifetime Homes standards
- We will make sure that housing, homelessness and Supporting People services are well-coordinated, to ensure that all individuals who need housing related support have equal access to services

## **Commitment 10: We will make communities safe**

### **Why this is important**

Crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and concerns about being a victim are significant issues for many Rotherham residents, despite low recorded crime and ASB rates compared to national and sub-regional averages. Crime, ASB and feeling safe in their communities remain high on residents' lists of priorities.

The impact that crime and ASB has on the lives of vulnerable victims can be particularly harmful and identifying and supporting those vulnerable individuals is a key priority for the Council and its partners.

Our residents have the right to feel safe in their own home, on the streets and to live free from crime and ASB that affects their quality of life. Tackling these issues through a combination of prevention, diversion and enforcement activities is vital to making people feel safer and improving their quality of life.

### **What we will do**

- We will put in place a faster response to ASB issues through integrating the role of the Housing Champions and ASB Officers
- We will introduce a new risk management process to enable us to identify vulnerable victims of crime / ASB earlier and intervene much more effectively with the problems they are experiencing
- We will ensure the timely and effective use of the tools and powers available to us to tackle crime and ASB in our communities.
- We will robustly address drug related criminality in our communities, particularly cannabis cultivation in Council owned properties, and take swift and effective enforcement action in line with our Tenancy Agreement and in partnership with South Yorkshire Police and other partners
- We will Increase ASB case resolution rates and updates to customers on progress
- We will reduce the incidents of harm caused by rogue traders and those who deal in illicit products
- We will protect local residents by undertaking a programme of environmental improvements for Closed Landfill sites and industrial emissions
- We will endeavour to achieve Secured by Design standards for all new Council housing
- We will endeavour to protect individuals subject to domestic abuse through MARAC (multi agency risk assessment conference)
- We will ensure all Council staff are aware of their responsibility to report concerns regarding the safety of individuals to the appropriate Safeguarding team



## Finance

Each of the actions in this strategy is included in the housing strategy action plan. Some of them will be funded from within existing budgets and staff resources, whereas others require additional funding.

Housing Revenue Account Reform has given Rotherham greater control over our housing budget and how we spend it. The Council has projected the money available over the next 30 years, mainly through rental income, and set out its investment priorities in the Housing Revenue Account business plan. These priorities include:

- Maintenance of housing stock
- Local authority new housing
- Improving the energy efficiency of housing stock
- Remodelling housing stock to meet changing need
- Environmental improvement works such as paving and lighting
- Structural works such as roof replacement programmes

The Council is able to borrow against the future rental income and many of the larger projects will be funded in this way. Priority is being awarded, in the business plan, to increasing investment in the Council stock for example increasing the repairs and maintenance budget by £1m per year.

Projects that focus on the private sector, i.e. home owners and private rented accommodation, are generally financed through the Council's General Fund.

Although we are no longer able to access direct grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency, there are some sources of external finance we can bid for that are controlled either by the HCA or the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership, such as

- Getting Britain Building
- Growing Places Fund
- Empty Homes Fund

We will identify and pursue every potential funding opportunity to help us to deliver our commitments.

We also receive New Homes Bonus, which is an annual grant paid to local authorities based on the number of new homes and the number of empty properties brought back into use during the year, and includes an 'affordability bonus' for new affordable housing. Part of this payment each year will be used to deliver projects set out in the housing strategy.

Some pots of Government money are not directly accessible by the Council, but can be accessed by residents, community groups or landlords, and the Council in its strategic and enabling role will provide support, where possible, to enable people to access this, for example Green Deal funding and the Community Energy Saving Programme.

## Guide to terms used in the housing strategy (A-Z)

**Affordable housing** is aimed at assisting households who are in housing need and unable to afford open market housing. It can either be social rented housing (from the Council or a housing association) or intermediate housing (low cost home ownership). More information can be found on the Council's website.

**Category 1 hazards:** Hazard identified under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System that is deemed to be serious and high risk. More information can be found at [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk).

**CERT and CESP funding:** Carbon Emissions Reduction Target and Community Energy Saving Programme funding to improve the energy efficiency of housing. More information can be found at [www.decc.gov.uk](http://www.decc.gov.uk).

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** The Community Infrastructure Levy will help to harness the value of an increased range of planning permissions to generate additional infrastructure funding and thereby unlock housing growth. More information can be found at [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

**Comprehensive Spending Review:** The HM Treasury led process that allocates public expenditure, the current CSR fixes spending budgets for each Government department up to 2014/15.

**Custom Build:** The government has announced a funding pot to assist Developers, housing associations and community groups to bring forward "Custom Build" housing schemes, whereby individuals or groups will commission or build their own homes either as part of a larger site or on small areas of land.

**Decent Homes Standard:** Housing standard designed to measure the condition of public sector stock, achieved for RMBC's housing by December 2010.

**Energy Company Obligations (ECO):** This funding is raised by energy companies from their customers' fuel bills and is spent on carbon reduction measures. ECO will subsidise the green deal by tackling fuel poverty and hard-to-treat properties, where the works would cost more than the savings made.

**Fuel poverty:** Defined by the Government as a household that needs to spend more than 10% of household income to heat their home. Fuel poverty is caused primarily by a combination of low income and poor energy efficiency in the home.

**Green Deal:** Government initiative that is designed to encourage business and home owners to employ more green technologies in their properties. Costs are repaid through energy bill over a period of time.

**HomeBuy products:** Shared ownership and affordable housing schemes such as Newbuild Homebuy, FirstBuy, Rent to homebuy and social homebuy.

**Homes and Communities Agency (HCA):** Joins up the delivery of housing and regeneration under one roof, bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes previously delivered by Communities and Local Government, including the Thames Gateway, Housing Market Renewal, Decent Homes. See [www.homesandcommunities.co.uk](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk)

**Houses in multiple occupation (HMO):** Dwellings with more than one household living in them.

**Housing Market Renewal Programme:** A programme (now ended) to rebuild housing markets and communities in parts of the North and the Midlands where demand for housing is relatively weak and which have seen a significant decline in population, dereliction, poor services and poor social conditions as a result.

**Housing Revenue Account reform:** Change to the housing finance system which was formerly based on a complex subsidy system controlled by central Government. Councils are now able to keep their rental income, service their own debt and control housing finance.

**Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA):** The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) establishes the current and future health and social care needs of a population, leading to improved outcomes and reductions in health inequalities. The JSNA informs the priorities and targets set by Local Area Agreements,

leading to agreed commissioning priorities that will improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities throughout the Borough.

**Lifetime Homes:** Have 16 design features that ensure that these homes meet the needs of most households. They have accessibility and adaptability built in at the design stage so that a household's home can be easily and cheaply adapted to meet their changing needs.

**Local Development Framework (LDF):** A portfolio of documents comprising local development and planning documents, the statement of community involvement, a local development scheme and an annual monitoring report.

**Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP):** A partnership between local authorities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and job creation within the local area.

**Local Strategic Partnership:** Multi-agency body of local service providers, the private sector and the broader local community with the objective of agreeing a holistic approach to solving problems with a common vision, agreed objectives and pooled expertise.

**New Homes Bonus:** An incentive scheme to encourage house building by offering the local authority extra money for every newly built home and empty properties brought back into use.

**Paper bond guarantee schemes:** This is where a private landlord agrees to a 'paper bond' rather than a deposit.

**Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS):** Regional level planning frameworks introduced in 2004 and revoked in July 2010.

**Rent in Advance loan:** The Rent in Advance Scheme is where loans are offered to potentially homeless people to assist in accessing accommodation in the private rented sector. More information can be found on the Council's website.

**Right to Buy (RTB):** Government scheme to enable Council tenants to purchase their home at a discount.

**RotherFed:** Independent organisation bringing together tenants and residents of Rotherham – [www.rotherfed.org.uk](http://www.rotherfed.org.uk)

**Rotherham housing intelligence report:** Report that sets out key facts about housing in Rotherham such as housing needs survey results, market values, housing needs in different areas etc. Available on the Council's website from November 2012.

**Rotherham Partnership:** See Local Strategic Partnership

**Rural Exception Policy:** Planning policy which will allow more new homes to be built for local people in villages with a population of less than 3000 people.

**Section 106 planning gain:** Through negotiation, a planning condition can be imposed whereby a proportion of new homes must be made available for affordable housing.

**Secured by Design:** Housing design standard based on a crime-prevention initiative which supports the principles of 'designing out crime'

**Under-occupation:** When people are living in homes that are larger than their need for the number of people in the household.

**Warm Front scheme:** Government grants for insulation.

## Linked documents

- Rotherham's Annual Housing Intelligence Report (to be published in November 2012)
- Housing strategy action plan (to be published alongside the strategy in November 2012)
- New allocations policy (to be published in November 2012)
- Strategic tenancy policy (to be published in November 2012)
- HRA 30 year Business Plan
- Rotherham's homelessness strategy
- Rotherham's Supporting People strategy
- Rotherham's Community Strategy
- Rotherham's Corporate Plan
- Rotherham's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Rotherham's Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Rotherham's Local Development Framework / Core Strategy (2009–2026)
- Rotherham's Local Investment Plan
- National housing strategy: *Laying the Foundations*
- Localism Act

## Contact information

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If you require this document in a different format please call the number above to discuss your requirements.

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