

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Places Select Commission – 21 March 2023

Report Title

Housing Strategy 2022-25 Progress Report Q2/Q3

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

No

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

The Housing Strategy 2022-25 was approved by Cabinet in June 2022 and published in July 2022.

The Strategy recognises the key issues affecting housing in Rotherham and the impact these have on residents and sets out how the Council will work in partnership to address the issues identified.

The report is presented for information and provides an update on progress over the period July to December 2022 (Q2/Q3).

Recommendations

1. That progress against the Housing Strategy priorities is noted.
2. That the next progress update will be presented to Improving Places select Commission in 12 months' time (March 2024).

List of Appendices Included

None

Background Papers

Rotherham Housing Strategy 2022-25

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Housing Strategy 2022-25 Progress Report Q2/Q3

1. Background

- 1.1 The Housing Strategy 2022-25 was approved by Cabinet in June 2022 and published in July 2022.
- 1.2 The Strategy recognises the key issues affecting housing in Rotherham and the impact these have on residents and sets out how the Council will work in partnership to address the issues identified.

The six priorities of the new Housing Strategy are:

- 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

2. Key Issues

2.1 Housing Market

- 2.1.1 The overall average house price in Rotherham was £183,176 at December 2022. This was an increase of 13.5% since December 2021. National figures for the same period were at 10%. Governments budget announcements towards the end of 2022 resulted in some major changes in the financial sector, particularly in relation to borrowing and mortgage availability. House price data is published three months behind, and lower levels of house price growth are expected to follow this year.

Average House Price

	December 21	December 22
Rotherham	£161,361	£183,176

- 2.1.2 As changes in the housing market take hold and it becomes increasingly difficult for people to access mortgages and get on the property ladder, more people turn to private rent. As demand for private rented accommodation outstrips supply, rental costs begin to rise.

Average Private Rent V's Local Housing Allowance

Cost p/w	Jan 22	Jan 23	Increase	LHA* rate
1 bed	£101	£109	8%	£86
2 bed	£122	£138	13%	£98
3 bed	£150	£167	11%	£110
4 bed	£230	£253	10%	£158

*Local Housing Allowance

The average increase in private rent locally over the last year was between 8-11%, and in many cases is higher than Local Housing Allowance,

meaning people on low incomes or those who are reliant on benefits to assist with housing costs may be unable to find suitable accommodation in the private sector.

This in turn creates pressure on the Council housing service as people look for more affordable housing options.

2.2 Challenges

2.2.1 The housing market and general economic climate will remain one of the key challenges but there are other issues that may impact on the Councils ability to achieve the priorities of the Housing Strategy and it is important to recognise these. The Housing Service will monitor and continue to mitigate against these over the life of the strategy.

2.2.2 Cost of living crisis continues to impact on the lives of tenants and residents, and as a result there will be an increased demand for Council support and services.

2.2.3 There will be increasing regulation and compliance, across both the social and private rented housing sectors, including a focus on damp and mould.

2.2.4 Council housing stock is ageing and as investment programmes continue there needs to be consideration around improving efficiency.

2.3 Performance

2.3.1 The Housing Strategy will deliver against the Council Plan, to increase the number of new homes built or enabled and help assist more people access affordable housing.

Current target is 225 with 147 homes delivered up to the end of Q3. On track to meet target by year end.

The number of new homes built or enabled also supports the Councils ambition to deliver 1000 new homes by 2026.

2.4 Progress

Progress is reported against the six priorities of the Housing Strategy.

2.4.1 High quality new homes

- A total of 147 high quality new homes built across the borough, including;
 - 89 council delivery
 - 58 new homes enabled through local providers and developers
- Of the 89 council delivery;
 - 58 were direct build and 31 acquisitions
 - 67 were for rent, 16 shared ownership and 6 for market sale

- Customer feedback is captured and analysed to understand the wider impact of new homes and so customers views can help shape future development activity

2.4.2 Affordable homes to meet local need

- There were 67 new council rented homes completed
- 16 shared ownership homes completed
- Continued promotion of shared ownership to assist first time buyers and people wanting to downsize, with a further 16 new shared ownership homes complete
- 12 new affordable homes were also complete by Great Places at Rawmarsh, and families will be nominated from the Council housing register
- SME *Homebuilder* Initiative launched to encourage and support more small, local developers can get involved in the delivery of new homes.

2.4.3 Investment in existing homes

- Stock investment programme continues.
 - Gas compliance is 99.98%
 - Decently levels remain high at 99.995%
 - Customer satisfaction at 94%
- Secured £1.4m of funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve thermal efficiency in 131 homes in Maltby
- Continued investment in existing stock has brought average EPC rating up from Band D to Band C.
- Proactively attempted 248 mould treatment surveys, resulting in works being undertaken to a third of properties. Focussed on areas identified as mould hot spots.

2.4.4 Bringing empty homes back into use

- Secured further temporary funding for Empty Homes Officer resource, with over 200 enquiries handled to date
- Continue to contact empty property owners to understand their intentions
- Four empty properties brought back into use with Council intervention, 27 to date.
- Case studies have been developed to showcase some examples of homes brought back into use

2.4.5 Supporting people to live independently

- 678 properties let to applicants on the housing register
- Completed 11 new council bungalows at Aston to support tenants as they age
- Elizabeth House council rented apartments complete and let specifically to applicants over the age of 55
- Supported the launched of the Adult Care Market Position Statement
- Assisted 385 households completing major adaptation works

- Aids & Adaptations Provided 3246 minor adaptations, fixings and key safes to facilitate early discharge from hospital and also allow customers to carry out their daily tasks.
- Evictions remain low despite challenges, 6 in total during Q2/Q3
- 18% of tenancy health checks complete
 - 1442 visits in Q2
 - 945 visits in Q3
 - On track for 25% by year end, four year rolling programme

2.4.6 Strengthening communities

- Tenant and resident support teams have;
 - Supported around 1400 tenants per year
 - Helped 468 residents complete accredited training
 - Secured 488 residents into sustainable employment
 - Generated an additional £543,405 in income for tenants and residents so far this year
- Awarded TPAS exemplar status in recognition of the work we do to ensure our tenants are at the heart of everything we do
- The town centre development social value (accumulative);
 - £315,000 in added value (social and community investment)
 - 94% Local labour and 86% of spend is from within 40 miles of the site
 - 95% waste diverted from land fill
 - Hosted over 1000 apprentice weeks
 - Employed 62 local people
- The Energy Crisis Support Scheme has approved payment awards of up to £400 per household for 4,368 applicants

2.5 Key areas of focus – next 6-12 months

- All three town centre developments complete, handed over and occupied
- Complete outcomes report and customer satisfaction surveys for Town Centre developments
- Support partners to complete the final phase of the Chesterhill Whinney Hill Development
- Continue to work with Homes England and the MCA to access funding to deliver more homes
- Responding to and implementing the requirements of the Social Housing White Paper
- Continuing to address the needs of homeless households
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy refresh complete
- A review of the Aids and Adapts Policy
- Empty Home Plan refresh
- Mid-point review of the selective licensing scheme
- Hold the annual Developer Summit
- Zero-carbon prototype project at Thrybergh
- Continue our programme of tenant engagement and support

3. **Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 The report is presented for information

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 The report is presented for information

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The report is presented for information

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications due to the recommendations detailed in the report. The HRA Business Plan provides a financial assessment over 30 years, taking into account planned actions as part of the Housing Strategy, and its impact on the management and financing of the Council's housing stock.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no substantive legal issues arising from the content of this report.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications specific to this report.

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. 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 of 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, and through all the priorities within the Housing Strategy will deliver 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.

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 aimed to be net carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030, and for Rotherham as a whole to achieve the same position by 2040.

- 11.2 Through its own delivery programme, the Council has the ability to ensure that the new homes are high quality and energy efficient, which will contribute to reducing domestic carbon emissions.

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 preferred Housing Association partners to help meet the wide range of housing need across the borough. Working with Homes England and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to access funding opportunities is vital to make housing delivery schemes viable.
- 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 Adult Care, Children and Young Peoples Services, Planning, Public Health and Policy. Other partner and voluntary sector organisations, social housing providers, landlords and developers are also represented on the Forum.

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 every three years

Accountable Officer(s)

James Clark, Assistant Director of Housing
 Peter Kandola, Interim Head of Strategic Housing and Development
 Sarah Watts, Strategic Housing Manager

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

	Name	Date
Chief Executive		Click here to enter a date.
The Strategic Director with responsibility for this report	Ian Spicer, Strategic Director of Adult Care,	07/03/23

	Housing and Public Health	
Consultation undertaken with the relevant Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing - Councillor Brookes	Click here to enter a date.

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