

ROTHERHAM'S HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2025



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TABLE OF CONTENTS	
FOREWORD	3
INTRODUCTION	4
CONTEXT	5
EVIDENCE USED TO INFORM THE HOUSING STRATEGY	8
PRIORITY 1 - HIGH QUALITY NEW HOMES	9
PRIORITY 2 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEED	11
PRIORITY 3 - INVESTING IN EXISTING HOMES	14
PRIORITY 4 - BRINGING EMPTY HOMES BACK INTO USE	16
PRIORITY 5 - SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY	18
PRIORITY 6 - STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES	20
KEY DOCUMENTS AND DATA SOURCES	22

FOREWORD

By Councillor Amy Brookes, Cabinet Member for Housing



I am glad to introduce Rotherham Council's Housing strategy for 2022 – 2025. Having a long-term vision that is refreshed every three years shows how seriously we take the commitment of providing good housing policy across the Rotherham borough.

Our strategy is not just about building more homes at any cost. Our priorities are focused on the right homes to meet the needs of Rotherham's people. The right homes are safe, comfortable, affordable and energy efficient. Sustainability and design interventions are just as important as how many new homes are built.

We have started and will continue to deliver this purpose through a range of themes as outlined in this document, and across a range of scales. From larger urban regeneration projects to individual initiatives at street and neighbourhood level, the strategy aims to address a wide spectrum of housing needs and aspirations.

Within this, we face both challenges and opportunities. Drawing partners and stakeholders together to share resources collectively is essential. We must reach across the public, private and third sectors to develop innovative ways of working to help guide the action across Rotherham and deliver solutions.

An important part of shaping the strategy was involving and consulting as many people as possible; people who live or work in Rotherham, including residents and tenants, key organisations, professionals, and stakeholders. We look forwards to working with all to turn the words into action.



Westgate Riverside – One of three Rotherham Town Centre sites providing new homes for council rent and home ownership

INTRODUCTION

THE VISION FOR HOUSING

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

The vision;

- 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.

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



Westgate Riverside

The six key priorities for the 2022-25 period 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

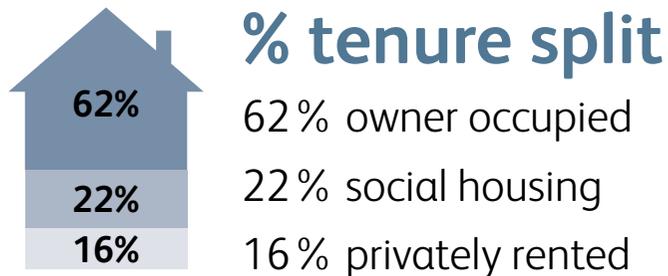
Each key priority directly links to the five themes in the Council Plan 2022-25 and will contribute to delivering its vision of:

Every neighbourhood thriving, People are safe, healthy and live well, Every child able to fulfil their potential, Expanding economic opportunity, A cleaner, greener local government.

CONTEXT

Much has changed in Rotherham since the previous update of the Housing Strategy in 2019, largely resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. The response to the pandemic led to changes in government policy, including an increase in funding to support those in financial difficulty and an initial drive to house everyone sleeping rough. However, as these temporary measures are withdrawn, alongside the rising cost of living, increasing house prices and private rent levels and the ongoing impact of changes to the welfare benefits system, it is likely that the number of people facing fuel poverty, eviction and homelessness will increase. It is therefore important that the Council provides advice and support to its residents, as well as keeping up with an increasing demand for affordable housing.

The Council owns 20,127 homes which puts it in the top 20 local authority stock owners in England. In addition to this, 28 housing associations provide 5,085 affordable homes across the borough. However, despite the Council's ambitious housing delivery programme, and the ongoing support and investment from our housing association partners, the supply of affordable housing has not kept up with overall demand. The Housing Strategy therefore focuses on increasing the supply of affordable housing, both through new build and from bringing empty homes back into use.



In June 2018, the Council's Local Plan was formally adopted, replacing the Unitary Development Plan. The Rotherham Sites and Policies Local Plan sets out policies and identifies specific uses for potential development sites across the borough.

Over the next three years, it is forecasted that sites currently under construction will deliver 1,474 homes, sites with either full or outline planning permission granted will deliver 881 homes and allocated sites will deliver 593 homes. This relates to overall housing delivery in the Borough and has been included at the request of Planning colleagues. It does not relate to the Council homes target, although some of the homes delivered may well contribute to that target.



CONTEXT

The Strategy also reflects the need to invest in our existing homes and work towards the Council's target for Rotherham's carbon emissions to be 'net zero' by 2040. 'Net zero' means not adding to the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and reducing emissions as much as possible, as well as balancing out any that remain by removing an equivalent amount. The Housing Strategy includes key over-arching priorities to ensure new homes are built to high quality standards (safe, comfortable, affordable and energy efficient), and that we also invest in Rotherham's existing homes.

The charter for social housing residents: **Social Housing White Paper 2020** focuses on the strengthening of regulation and compliance to create safer homes in the wake of the Grenfell tragedy, and this is reflected in the Strategy's focus on investing in existing homes. It also aims to ensure that tenants' voices are heard, and landlords are held accountable. So, we must continue to embed resident engagement in everything we do. This is set out in detail in the Council's **Tenant Engagement Framework** and **Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy**, but the Housing Strategy also reflects this through the priority of *Strengthening Communities*.



Wellgate Place show home

Equality and Diversity

Rotherham Council is committed to ensuring all parts of the community can access, engage with and benefit from services, and its Equalities Strategy sets out the three key priorities of:

- Understanding, listening, and engaging across all communities
- Delivering fair, inclusive, and accessible services
- Empowering people to engage and challenge discrimination and to promote good community relations

Having access to good quality and affordable homes is important for all of our diverse communities, and the Housing Strategy seeks to remove barriers people can face in accessing a home to meet their needs. We use data and consultation 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. We will continue to engage with our communities and make sure the homes we provide and enable, meet their changing needs.

GOVERNANCE

The Housing Strategy is approved by Cabinet, and the Improving Places Select Commission will receive annual reports and provide scrutiny and challenge, to ensure we are focusing on and monitoring the right outcomes. The Rotherham Strategic Housing Forum meets bi-monthly and members include representatives from housing associations, developers, health services, voluntary and community organisations, and this group will also play an important role in overseeing progress against the Housing Strategy.



Rotherham's Housing Involvement Panel at Springwell Gardens Community Centre

EVIDENCE USED TO INFORM THE HOUSING STRATEGY

Strategic Housing Market Assessment – a research study (carried out in 2018) that helps us understand the nature and level of housing demand in Rotherham. It tells us that between 500 and 650 new homes are needed each year, but that we also have a significant overall shortfall of affordable homes.

Council housing demand data – the number of bids we receive on Council homes demonstrates the demand for different sizes, types and locations of our current Council housing and how this changes over time. It also informs us of the demographics of those on the Housing Register and their needs.

Rotherham Data Hub – this is part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which is a Council-wide collaboration bringing together data to assess the health needs of the local population. Housing is a wider determinant of health and has a significant impact on the wellbeing of our residents.

Private Sector Stock Condition Survey – this was conducted by the Building Research Establishment on behalf of the Council in 2018, to provide data on the condition and energy cost and efficiency of owner-occupied and privately rented housing, to complement what we know about our Council stock.

The Census – we are currently awaiting publication of the data from the 2021 Census, and in the meantime continue to use demographic data from the previous Census, the Office for National Statistics, and data captured from previous resident surveys.

Evidence from surveys – the Council commissioned the ‘Where do you want to live?’ survey in 2012 to capture the current and future housing needs and aspirations of our residents. The exercise will be repeated in 2022 to update this intelligence and analyse any changes over the past ten years. We also conduct surveys of people who have moved into new Council-built homes and use this feedback to inform the development of future schemes.

CONSULTATION

We engaged with residents to develop the six priorities for the Housing Strategy 2022-25. This involved an online survey, a postal survey and discussions at resident meetings. We also reviewed the outcomes from consultation carried out during 2021 on Rotherham’s overall Council Plan. We have worked with colleagues across the Council to ensure a One Council approach and consulted with partners and stakeholders, for example through Rotherham’s Health and Wellbeing Board and the Rotherham Strategic Housing Forum, and held a dedicated consultation session with Elected Members.

Partnership working

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.

PRIORITY I – HIGH QUALITY NEW HOMES

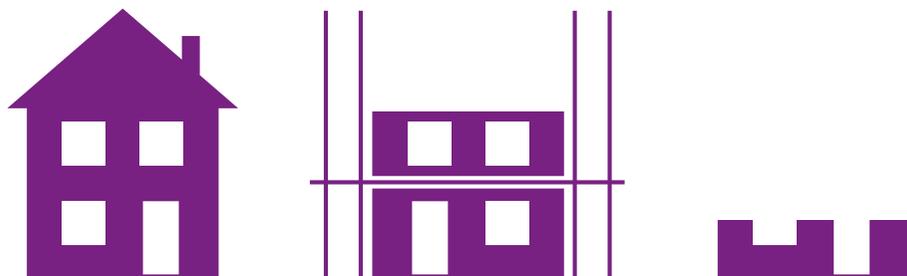
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Given the significant contribution made by housing to overall carbon emissions it is essential that future developments are designed and built to be energy efficient, low carbon and sustainable, which also supports the Council's commitment to becoming carbon net zero.

A new Future Homes Standard will be introduced in 2025 which will require all new homes to meet these design goals, including the installation of energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating.

By providing and enabling new, safe, comfortable, affordable, and energy efficient homes we will be able to help improve the quality of life for Rotherham's residents.

1,544 homes in Rotherham built over past three years



WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- We have built high quality, energy efficient Council homes on a range of sites across Rotherham – including Wellgate Place in Rotherham Town Centre (pictured above) and The Bellows in Rawmarsh (pictured on page 10).
- We have introduced a new build survey to capture customers' feedback on the quality, space and functionality of their new home and use this to plan new developments.
- We have commissioned consultants to provide different designs with financial assessments, to help us understand how we can achieve the quality and environmental standards we aspire to in the future for Council homes.

PRIORITY I – HIGH QUALITY NEW HOMES

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS

- We will deliver our current Housing Development Programme ensuring quality and sustainability.
- We will listen to what residents tell us and continue to engage with local communities and stakeholders on all Council-led developments.
- We will promote the benefits of high quality homes through our annual Developer Summit, and the Council's website.



The Bellows, Rawmarsh: 58 brand new homes for council rent and council shared ownership



New homes for council rent in Thorpe Hesley

PRIORITY 2 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEED

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Due to the rising costs of living, including rent and purchase costs, there is a pressing need for more affordable housing in Rotherham.

‘Affordable housing’ essentially means homes for people who cannot afford to rent or buy on the open market. It includes Council rented homes, housing association rented homes, and affordable home ownership products such as shared ownership (where people can buy a percentage share of the home they can afford and pay rent on the rest) and First Homes (where people can buy a new home with a 30 per cent discount off the full value).

The Council is playing a major role in building and enabling more affordable homes alongside housing associations, and has committed to delivering hundreds of additional homes for council rent by March 2026. However more homes are needed, as demonstrated by the fact that there are more than 6,000 people on the Council’s Housing Register.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- Since 2018, the Council has completed 356 new council homes, with a further 127 under development or negotiation, and opportunities have been identified to deliver several hundred more council homes over the next three years.
- We have worked with housing association partners to bring forward affordable housing on council land, for example in August 2021, Arches Housing completed ten bungalows on various small Council sites in Wickersley and Bramley, and Great Places and Sanctuary housing associations are providing 157 affordable homes at Chesterhill Avenue in Dalton and Whinney Hill in Thrybergh.
- The Council has received nomination rights to the majority of these housing association homes meaning people from the Council’s Housing Register can access them.
- We have worked with private developers to purchase the affordable homes provided as part of Section 106 Planning policy requirements, to bring into the Council’s housing stock.
- The Council has adopted an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, which clearly sets out affordable housing needs and requirements to potential developers and we continue to work with developers to unlock sites and deliver more homes in the borough.

PRIORITY 2 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEED

All data relates specifically to Rotherham unless stated.

1,347
Council homes
let in 2020-21



£ 5.8:1
House price
to earnings ratio



Average private rent per week:

£/week	Jan 19	Jan 22
1 bed	£87	£101
2 bed	£106	£122
3 bed	£126	£150

57
Average
bids per
Council home
advertised
in 2021.
35 in 2019



£27,903
Median gross annual
workplace-based earnings
Lower quartile: **£20,899**



392
Right to Buy sales
over past three years



716 shortfall
of affordable homes



6,606
on housing
register*
*1st April 2022



17% increase
in average house
price.
£139,502 → **£163,716**
December 2018 December 2021

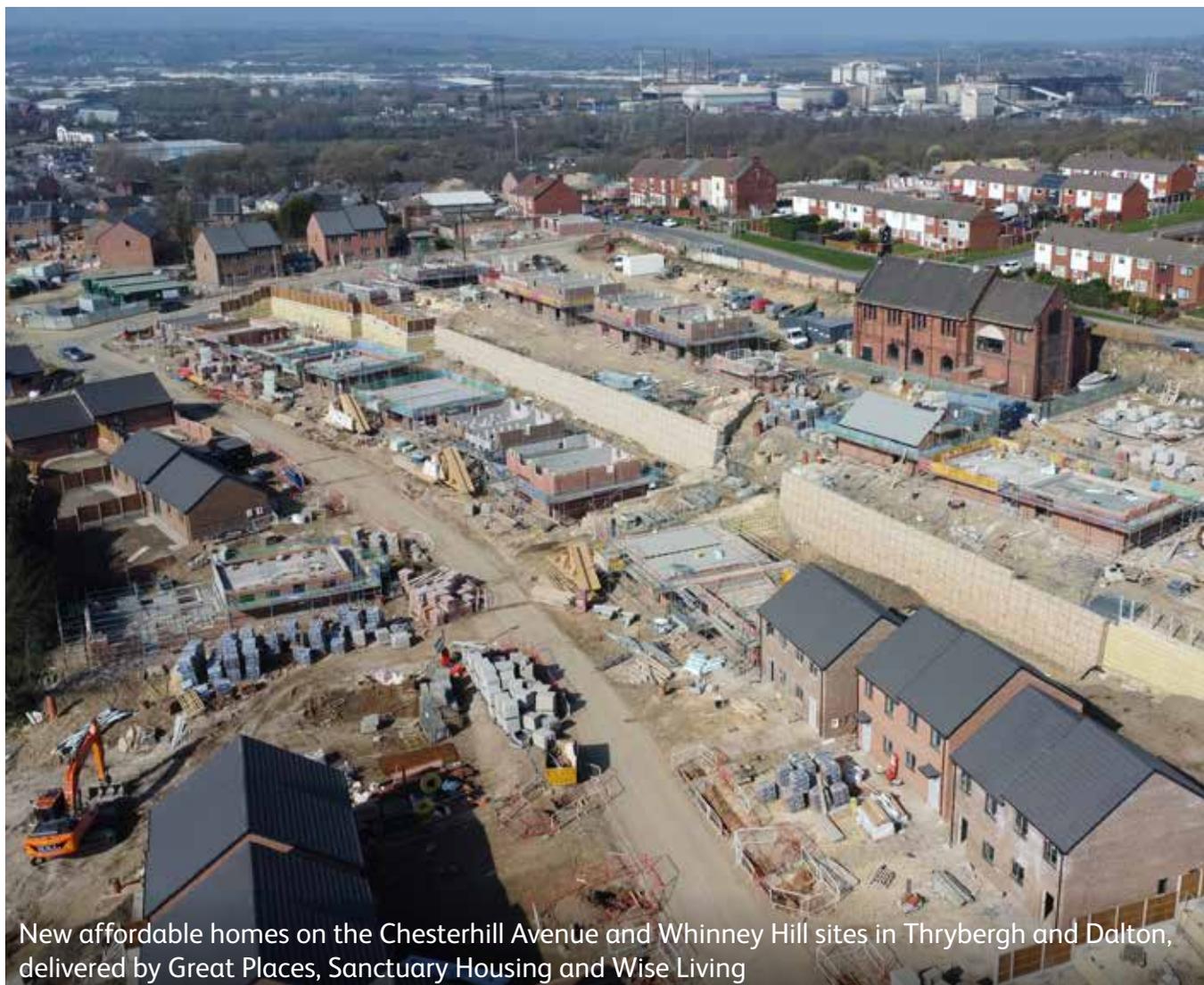


356
new Council
homes
completed
since 2018

PRIORITY 2 - AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO MEET LOCAL NEED

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS:

- We will continue to deliver our ambitious, Housing Revenue Account funded new build programme, to add hundreds of additional affordable homes to the 356 already completed by the Council since 2018.
- **171** Council built homes are in progress in Rotherham town centre, and we will go over and above Planning requirements to ensure that 75% of these are affordable tenures.
- We will continue to support other organisations to deliver affordable homes.
- We will continue to promote Shared Ownership homes and provide general advice and information to residents about other affordable home ownership opportunities.
- We will work with developers, landowners and funders to accelerate the delivery of key housing sites, which will lead to the creation of affordable homes through planning policy requirements.



New affordable homes on the Chesterhill Avenue and Whinney Hill sites in Thrybergh and Dalton, delivered by Great Places, Sanctuary Housing and Wise Living

PRIORITY 3 - INVESTING IN EXISTING HOMES

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

We recognise that poor quality homes have a negative impact on health, disproportionately on older and younger people, and people who have additional care and support needs.

We are committed to invest in existing homes where we can help our most vulnerable residents, helping to reduce energy bills (through improved energy efficiency), and improve overall health and wellbeing.

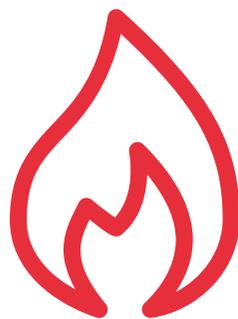
And whilst the Council has high level of decency, we are committed to further investment in our stock.

Currently 17 per cent of Rotherham households live in Fuel Poverty when measured by the government's Low Income Low Energy Efficiency (LILEE) definition, where households are considered fuel poor if they are living in a property with an energy efficiency rating of band D or below AND when they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line. With rising energy costs, an increasing number of residents are likely to struggle to heat their homes.



5.7%

of all private homes are in a state of disrepair



17%

Population in fuel poverty



1.6%

of all private homes have excess cold



11%

of all private homes have a category 1 hazard

PRIORITY 3 - INVESTING IN EXISTING HOMES

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- Measures such as Selective Licensing have been introduced to improve the standards of privately rented housing in specific areas across the Borough.
- **7,215** energy efficiency measures have been installed in private sector houses under the Energy Company Obligation (ECO3).
- We have invested millions of pounds into existing Council homes, working with our contract partners Equans and Mears.
- **217** homes at The Lanes neighbourhood in East Dene have been brought up to EPC rating band C through a widescale retrofit programme.

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS:

- We will deliver energy efficiency improvements to more than 140 Council homes in Maltby, with support from the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.
- We will maintain decency standards in Council stock and implement the findings of the ongoing Decency Review resulting from the Social Housing White Paper.
- We will provide information to homeowners about the support available to help them improve their homes.
- We will make use of Banning Orders to tackle poor housing conditions and protect vulnerable people in privately rented homes.



The Lanes, East Dene: 217 homes brought up to EPC rating band C

PRIORITY 4 – BRINGING EMPTY HOMES BACK INTO USE

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

We recognise that meeting the housing needs and aspirations of Rotherham's residents relies on both building new homes and maximising the use of as many existing homes as possible.

On average, around 2.7 per cent of Rotherham's private housing stock is empty at any given time and while some of these properties can be considered part of a well-functioning housing market, some properties can be problematic, especially when left empty for long periods or if they fall into disrepair. We also recognise the wider social, economic and environmental benefits of bringing these empty properties back in to use.

2.7% 
of all houses are empty

On average over 1,000 are classed as long term empty properties

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- We have published the [Empty Homes Plan](#).
- We have put a new process in place to monitor empty properties.
- We have increased Council Tax charges for long term empty homes.



PRIORITY 4 – BRINGING EMPTY HOMES BACK INTO USE

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS:

- We will continue to deliver against the Empty Homes Plan.
- We will help owners understand how they can help meet local housing need, for example by promoting success stories.
- We will explore options to transform empty homes into new affordable homes.
- We will make use of the enforcement tools available.
- We will consider how other empty spaces (such as derelict buildings and spaces above shops) could be repurposed to provide new homes.



Block of empty homes in East Herringthorpe

PRIORITY 5 - SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Care and support needs change over a person's lifetime. So, it is important that a range of homes and support options are available to help people make planned and informed choices about where they live. Choices which encourage good health and independence.

Demand for accessible homes and supported housing is increasing and this is not just driven by an ageing population. Increasing and more complex needs relating to homelessness, mental health, learning disabilities and autism are more prevalent than ever before.

By increasing the supply of accessible homes, we can offer a personalised approach, ensuring people have their own space to call home, where the support is tailored to meet their own needs and can adapt as their needs change, so they are able to live as independently as possible for much longer.

Promoting self-management and increasing independence of care for all people is one of the strategic priorities of Rotherham's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- We have delivered brand new purpose-built, accessible respite care facilities at Conway Crescent in East Herringthorpe, with capacity to support eight adults with support needs.
- We have built homes which provide an alternative to residential and out of area care for young people to meet the priorities agreed in the Looked After Children Sufficiency Strategy.
- We have delivered Council Shared Ownership apartments for older people in Maltby.
- We have purchased bungalows from private developers that allow people to downsize to homes that better meet their needs.
- We have worked with Children and Young People's Services to extend the House Project, where Council homes are used to support care leavers into independent accommodation.
- We have provided funding of £9.4m (between April 2019 and February 2022) for aids and adaptations into Council and private homes.
- We have secured funding to increase activity provision within neighbourhood centres making the best use of these valuable community spaces to help reduce loneliness and isolation.



PRIORITY 5 - SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS:

- We will build more bungalows on small Council-owned sites, and purchase more bungalows from private developers, in order to increase housing that is suitable for people with accessibility needs.
- We will develop apartments for older people in Rotherham Town Centre.
- We will maximise the use of aids, adaptations, and assistive technology to support independence in the home.
- Accessibility and adaptability will be designed into the fabric of new Council housing developments to ensure we can meet the needs of a range of people and support the creation of mixed communities.



19.8%

Population
over 65 years old

Nationally: 18.6%

20,127

Council homes of
which 4,787 are
bungalows



PRIORITY 6 – STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Our vision for Rotherham is for every neighbourhood to thrive, where people are able to work together to achieve a good quality of life. The right type of housing development can help achieve this. Strong and resilient communities depend on safe and accessible housing. By involving communities at an early stage in the development process, we can help create a sense of ownership, pride and inclusion. Placing communities at the heart of the process when planning large housing developments is essential to understanding and building on the existing strengths within a neighbourhood as well as identifying need.

The Council is investing substantial amounts of money in housing, and it is essential that in return for this, communities receive more than just homes. ‘Social value’ means looking beyond the financial cost of a Council contract, and considering how housing development can improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of an area.

With help and advice from the Council, projects such as Community Led Housing are an opportunity for local community groups to address housing needs in their locality as well as an income route that can be reinvested into the community and assist in their future sustainability.



Our contract partner Willmott Dixon donated materials, offered careers advice and led fun learning activities at Abbey SEND school's 'construction zone'

PRIORITY 6 - STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

- We have supported the creation of mixed, sustainable communities by delivering a range of different tenures on Council-developed sites.
- We have committed to procuring local services and organisations through the Social Value Policy.
- We have worked with our partner Willmott Dixon to generate over £200,000 of added social value whilst working in partnership with the Council on the three Town Centre housing sites. This includes work with local schools and colleges and support to local charities.
- We have achieved additional benefits from our repairs and maintenance contracts by investing shared savings into the development of new Council bungalows.
- We have supported a local organisation to develop a community-led housing scheme in Eastwood.

OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS:

- We will continue to ensure social value is embedded in all housing development contracts – all projects will be challenged to ensure they positively contribute to the local economy, provide jobs and training opportunities and maximise the use of local supply chains.
- We will review the current community-led housing scheme and explore opportunities for further community-led housing development in Rotherham.
- We will produce surveys to measure the impact and outcomes of our housing developments on local communities.



Women in construction event: our Town Centre contractors, Willmott Dixon, partnered with The Skills Academy to offer the opportunity to 'have a go'

KEY DOCUMENTS AND DATA SOURCES

Other key Rotherham strategies, plans and reports:

[Community Infrastructure Levy spending protocol cabinet report Sept 2021](#)

[Council Plan 2022-25 and Year Ahead Plan](#)

[Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

[Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan](#)

[Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – Rotherham Data Hub](#)

[Local Plan \(including Sites and Policies Document and Core Strategy\)](#)

[Thriving Neighbourhoods Strategy](#)

[Rotherham Town Centre Masterplan](#)

[Strategic Housing Market Assessment \(SHMA\)](#)

[Tenant Engagement Framework](#)

[Ward Plans](#)

Data sources used within the Housing Strategy:

[Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[Fuel poverty statistics – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Hometrack](#)

[House price to residence-based earnings ratio – Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

[Local authority housing data – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Private registered provider social housing stock in England – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[The charter for social housing residents: social housing white paper – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK House Price Index \(data.gov.uk\)](#)

[UK Housing Review 2021](#)

All data reflects current data at time of reporting.

