



Sheffield City Council

# Housing Strategy 2013-2023

Our vision is to provide more homes and for housing to be at the heart of high quality, safe and distinctive places to enable Sheffield's communities to thrive.

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## Chapter 1:

# The Context

# Chapter 1: The Context



## 1.1 Introduction

Sheffield is England's fourth biggest city and is one of the greenest cities in Europe, with one third of the city's boundary falling within the Peak District National Park. This unique blend of urban and rural communities, combined with the city's industrial heritage, creates a distinct and vibrant city. Sheffield's City Strategy and Corporate Plan explain how we can build on this uniqueness to achieve our ambitions and make the city a place where people from across the world want to live, learn, work, invest and visit.

A good choice of housing helps the city achieve many of its ambitions. For instance, we believe that good quality stable homes can help to improve a child's life chances by providing the right environment to enable improved educational attainment. We also believe that good housing and housing services helps to improve the health and wellbeing of the city's residents, and a city with ambitions to grow its economy will be stronger with a healthy and competitive housing market.

This Housing Strategy sets out the Council's ambitions for housing provision,

investment and management in the city over the next 10 years. It describes how we intend to use our resources and influence partners and the private sector to help us achieve our goals. Our priority actions will be set out in a series of three year action plans. The action plans will include detail about the national and local context, and the actions will reflect the current policy and investment landscape that we are operating within.

More information about how Sheffield is changing and the challenges for the city going forward can be found in the State of Sheffield report. A detailed assessment of Sheffield's housing issues, and the need to invest in new and existing homes and housing services is set out in the Strategic Housing Review Report 2012. Both reports contributed to the evidence base for this Housing Strategy.

## 1.2 Population changes

Sheffield's population is growing and so too is the number of households in the city. The city's population is expected to rise to around 600,000 by 2023. Most of this growth will occur at both ends of the age spectrum, driven by a rise in the number

of children and by an increasingly ageing population.

Sheffield's residents are living longer and the number of people aged 75 and over is expected to increase by over 20% (to approximately 53,000 people) over the course of this strategy. We also expect an increase in the numbers of people living in the city with learning disabilities or suffering from poor mental health.

Sheffield's households are becoming increasingly diverse. This reflects the economic migration from Europe, the increasing number of refugees coming to the city and the higher birth rates amongst Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) families.

BME families tend to live as larger households. The current economic environment also means that a growing number of young people are now either living in the family home for longer or living in shared accommodation. These changes suggest that average household sizes in Sheffield might not fall as predicted by Government and may even grow over the next 10 years.

Increasing the supply of homes for Sheffield's growing population will be a

significant element of this housing strategy. A key challenge will be to provide the range of homes and services that meet the different and changing needs of our communities while ensuring sustainable housing delivery into the future.

### 1.3 Sheffield's housing markets

Sheffield's housing stock contains a high proportion of semi-detached homes built in the 1950s and 60s, and terraced properties built before 1945. The city has lower levels of flats and detached properties when compared to national and regional averages.

Private properties make up three-quarters of Sheffield's housing stock and the largest proportion of these are owner occupied. This tenure is likely to remain the largest sector over the next 10 years, but Sheffield's private rented market is growing and is expected to increase further over the coming years as access to other tenures remains restricted. The remaining properties are social rented through the Council or other Registered Providers.

Approximately 1% of the city's stock has been empty for 6 months or more. However,

the number of long-term empty homes in the city is reducing and we aim to maintain this reduction over coming years.

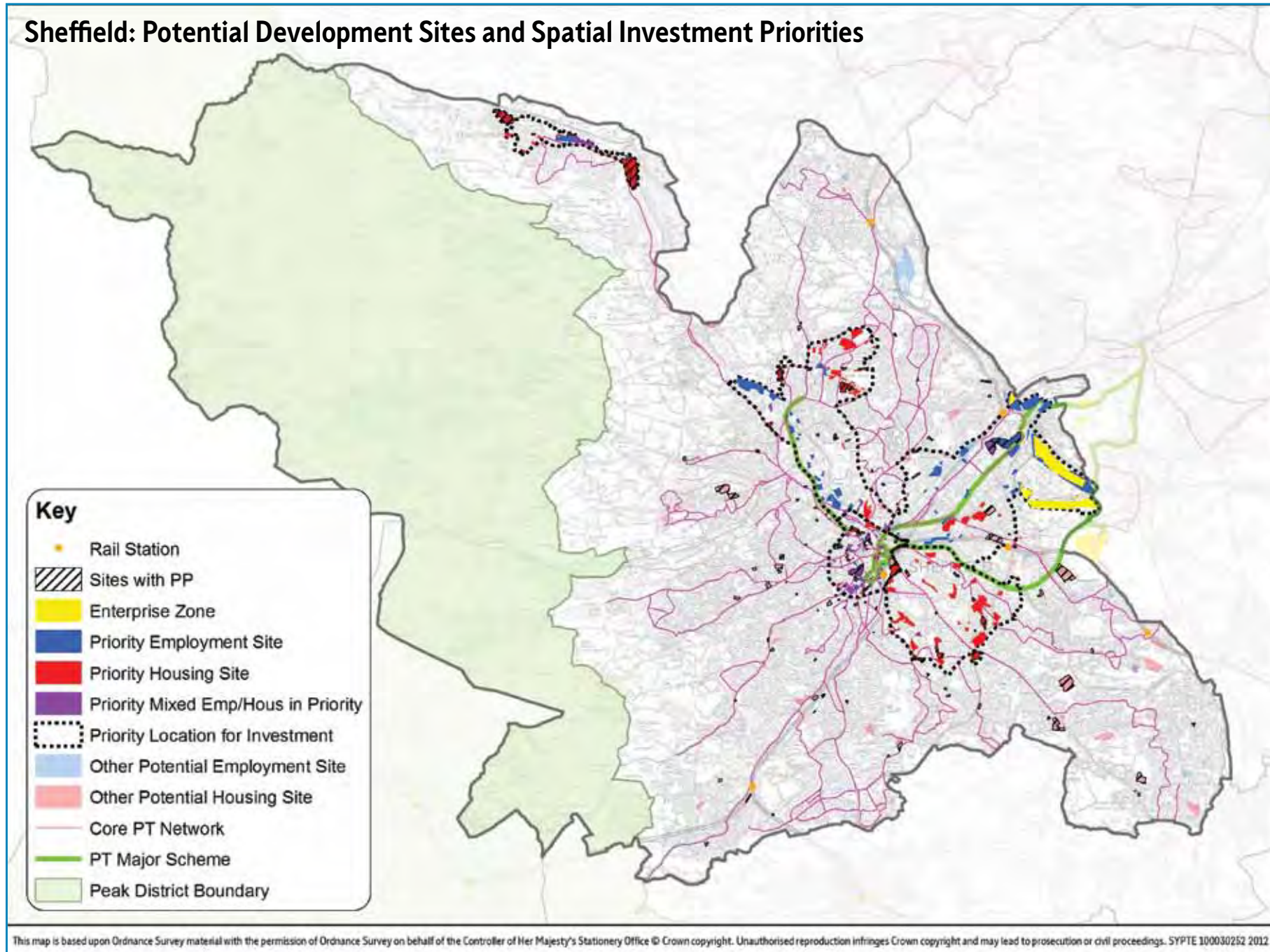
The housing market in Sheffield is characterised by contrasting levels of quality and desirability. The housing market in the south west of the city is extremely popular and house prices are well above the city average. In contrast, parts of the east and north contain some of the most deprived wards in the country, and property prices and rent levels are generally lower here than other places in Sheffield.

Since the last housing strategy, many social housing properties have undergone a substantial programme of investment and improvement and the quality of the social stock in the city is high. However, the private sector currently contains some of the poorest quality homes in the city.

Considerable investment has also enabled us to improve the energy efficiency of our homes and regenerate the housing markets and neighbourhoods in some of our most deprived areas. However, there are still challenges ahead and some of our housing stock and areas still fall short of



## Sheffield: Potential Development Sites and Spatial Investment Priorities





the standard and quality we would expect in a thriving and successful city.

## 1.4 New homes

Private house building in the city over the last 5-7 years has been dominated by apartments, particularly linked to the boom in city centre living. There has also been a big growth in purpose-built student accommodation over the last decade and the demand for student housing generally has a significant impact on housing markets in certain areas of the city.

More recently, the constraints on mortgage lending and the wider economic conditions have resulted in housing delivery rates in Sheffield being much lower than we anticipated and new build currently accounts for approximately 1% of the city's stock. This means a higher future annual build rate is required to deliver the homes Sheffield requires by 2026 to meet the needs of its growing population. However, much of Sheffield's land allocated for housing development is concentrated in the north east of the city and there are limits to the number of homes that the housing market will deliver in any one area each year. Creating more flexibility with our land and improving the choice

of development sites will be a significant element of our plans to increase the supply of homes in the city.

## 1.5 Housing and the economy

The economic case for increased house building and its contribution to the growth agenda is powerful. Construction makes a significant contribution to the economy, around three per cent of GDP, generating at its peak in 2008 £91 billion of economic output and accounting for over 1.5 m jobs.

High quality new homes in the right places will enhance labour mobility and facilitate future local economic growth. Well planned housing development will also support the city's ambition to attract and retain professionals and graduates and to grow our own skilled workforce. Therefore as part of Sheffield's housing offer future housing development opportunities will be identified along with transport and infrastructure priorities.

## 1.6 Sheffield City Region

Sheffield City Region is at the heart of Britain with almost 1.8 million people contributing to a GVA of £25.7bn. The region's leaders are aiming to help drive

the UK's economy forward by supporting key sectors, delivering strong growth and creating jobs.

Work is underway to develop the Sheffield City Region Investment Fund to identify places that have the potential to drive sub regional and local economies, and to ensure the economy is boosted in the right places and in the right way. Housing will play a key role in enabling economic regeneration and Sheffield is working with other local authorities in the City Region to align our strategic activity.

## 1.7 Role of Sheffield City Council

We want Sheffield to have great places and sustainable communities, and our ambition is to ensure that everyone has a high quality of life and people feel proud of where they live.

We will look to pool resources and target investment to achieve maximum outcomes, and extend our ability to lead and influence developments and housing services by working with partners, local people and communities.

We will provide strong leadership and involve local communities in planning and

regeneration matters. We will also use our land and assets to enable sustainable housing growth which supports our ambitions for a strong and competitive economy.

We have recently entered into new arrangements which present an unprecedented partnering opportunity to influence health outcomes for people in the city and also to improve the things that have the biggest impact on health, such as poverty, housing and infrastructure.

The Council is to once again take on the direct management of council housing in the city, allowing us to maintain a first class housing service and make the best use of the Council's role as landlord to help people achieve their full potential.

The introduction of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing has had a significant impact on the Council's role as a landlord. Self-financing allows local authorities to take control of their housing rental income and to plan more effectively for the long term management of Council housing and other assets through business plans over a thirty year period.

## 1.8 What residents have told us

In developing this housing strategy we undertook analysis of a wide range of information about housing in the city. We are clear from this analysis that we must increase the supply of homes in the city to meet the demand from our growing population. However, against the backdrop of increasing the number of homes in the city, it was important to understand the housing priorities of Sheffield's community. A period of extensive consultation with residents, stakeholders and partners was undertaken and the priorities arising from this consultation have played a key role in shaping the development of this housing strategy. These priorities are listed in the local context section of the strategy's action plan.

## 1.9 Objectives for this strategy

Having looked at the current housing policy and investment landscape, the projected population and housing market changes in Sheffield, and having considered the priorities raised by our residents, we have established 3 key objectives for housing in the city over the next 10 years. These are:

- Increase the supply of new homes in the city
- Make best use of the city's existing housing stock
- Help younger, older and vulnerable people to live independently

These objectives will be delivered by the Council and our partners through investment in physical interventions in the places that people live and work in, and by our approach to supporting our residents. This will be outlined in more detail in the following chapters about Great Places and Sustainable Communities.

# Over the life of this strategy we aim to:

- Increase the supply of new homes in the city
- Make best use of the city's existing housing stock
- Help younger, older and vulnerable people to live Independently





## Chapter 2:

# Great Places

# Chapter 2: Great Places



## 2.1 Great place to live

In Sheffield we are working towards creating a city that is a 'Great Place to Live'. By this we mean a city with desirable neighbourhoods that offer a range of affordable and quality homes that meet people's needs, along with a strong sense of local identity and attractive well-used and popular public spaces and facilities. These neighbourhoods will also be accessible and well connected, with an overall effect of enabling all our communities to enjoy a high quality of life.

Our approach involves working closely with others on health and wellbeing, safety and issues of poverty, and defining outcomes around homes and neighbourhood facilities, community and development infrastructure, sustainable transport, and place management. Our intention is that all investment in the city achieves greater shared outcomes, so we will measure neighbourhood changes and use them to guide housing investment decisions over the life of this strategy.

## 2.2 Regeneration

A balanced and well functioning housing

market across all neighbourhoods in the city is vital in achieving a Great Place to Live. But as well as containing a good range of homes, great places should also help to bring people together and offer increased social and economic opportunities. It is important therefore to ensure that our approach to regeneration links physical changes to improved social and economic outcomes. This requires us to ensure that representative groups, public agencies and individuals operating within our neighbourhoods are well connected to city-wide initiatives and services designed to help people take up opportunities for training, enterprise and employment.

We know we are going to have to do things differently in the future and target our resources more effectively to bring about change. This will mean consolidating investment and available resources and identifying how other organisations and businesses can deliver alongside the Council.

Future regeneration activity will be part of focussed investment which is targeted in response to the Great Place to Live indicators. This will include measures for housing along with other measures relating





to local shopping centres, education and environment. It is therefore important to recognise that whilst some of this activity is expected to be housing-led, other activities and improvements are expected to be delivered by the appropriate part of the Council, by partner organisations and by helping local traders and businesses to work together to help themselves. In these circumstances, the main role for the Council will be to coordinate the delivery and broker the engagement of all relevant parties.

Improving the quality and distinctiveness of the public realm and local facilities,

such as libraries, shops and health services should improve the day to day lives of local residents. It will also have a positive impact on surrounding land and property values and help the viability of new housing development in these areas. In coming years, we will use our resources to improve the physical quality of our neighbourhoods with the further aim of improving perceptions and attracting future investment.

### **2.3 New development**

The Sheffield Local Plan Core Strategy provides the overall vision, objectives and

spatial policies for the development of Sheffield up to 2026. Our vision for housing development in the future is based on the renewal of the existing urban areas rather than spreading out into the countryside which will continue to be protected as Green Belt. We will maximise the use of previously developed land in the urban areas, make efficient use of infrastructure and effectively link housing areas to employment opportunities and local services through sustainable modes of transport.

Our aim is to ensure that Sheffield continues to improve its residential offer, and that housing in the city is helping to create the optimum conditions for economic growth. New developments will need to be in keeping with the character of the area, preserving the best and the unique, while contributing an appropriate supply of good quality homes for the whole market.

Looking forward we want our communities to feel pride in their homes and built environment. We will welcome input from communities and individuals who want to work with us to develop innovative policies on planning and building in the Local Plan

Review and we will help local communities to produce Neighbourhood Plans for their area which are consistent with the Local Plan. The city-wide need for more homes will mean there will be some hard choices about where new housing should be built in the future but we will ensure our land supply and design policies help us achieve sustainable communities and the right balance between high quality design and timely housing delivery.

## 2.4 Increasing housing supply

Sheffield's population is growing. Therefore it is our intention to take steps to increase levels of house building so that the housing target in the Local Plan can be met. Our emphasis will be to accelerate housing supply by making development more economically viable, increasing the demand for new homes by enabling more people to buy on the open market and reviewing the supply of land capable of delivering new housing development.

Sheffield has enough land to meet the Local Plan housing target. However, our most recent Strategic Land Availability Assessment suggests that not all the identified sites will be capable of being

developed by 2026. This is mainly due to a combination of the current housing market conditions and the fact that so many of the sites are concentrated in just a few areas of the city.

To provide developers with more choice of sites, the Local Plan proposes reallocating a large amount of land for housing that was previously designated for industry and business. We recognise that development of brownfield land is more expensive and takes longer than on greenfield sites, so we will prioritise investment which is aimed at unlocking existing sites. We will also explore the benefits of releasing land and assets that the Council and other public bodies own to help give more flexibility to deliver housing growth.

In the medium term, the Council will review the Sheffield Local Plan and work with other local authorities in the Sheffield City Region to reassess how much new housing is needed and to identify where the most sustainable locations would be to build new housing within the Sheffield and Rotherham housing market area.

The Government has created financial incentives to encourage local authorities

to facilitate housing growth. It is therefore currently in the Council's interest to prioritise projects that have a significant impact on increasing housing delivery and on our ability to bring empty homes back in to use. Our approach has been to ring fence this income and we intend to use this funding to promote housing and economic regeneration that leads to the additional benefit of improving future receipts from Government.

## 2.5 Providing a range of homes

Over the life of this strategy we will ensure that the range of homes delivered by others in the future is helping us to achieve mixed and balanced housing markets, and that new homes are contributing to the city's changing housing needs.

In our role as planning authority we continue to set clear expectations and standards for new development. Through our design policies for space standards, lifetime homes and wheelchair access we will guide the design of new homes and ensure that more homes are meeting the changing needs of Sheffield's community.

As a landowner we have the opportunity to influence housing developments on our





Artist impressions of Sheffield Housing Company homes



own land to achieve enhanced standards which better meet our strategic aims. Overtime our ageing population will create increased demand for adaptations to homes and the future cost to the Council will be significant. As part of the measures to create a sustainable solution to growing demand for adapted homes we will use the value in our land to provide homes with enhanced space standards, and provide more homes which can be easily adapted in the future.

To exert more control over the pace of delivery and the quality and type of new housing development we have created along-term regeneration vehicle in partnership with Keepmoat Great Places. Over the next 20 years, the Sheffield Housing Company will develop approximately 2,300 new homes on about 60 hectares of brownfield sites on Council owned land. Through this approach the Council along with our partners will be able to provide a suitable mix of type and tenure, including an element of affordable homes that are of a high design quality and are environmentally sustainable. This partnership approach enables a long-term solution to the regeneration of some of our neighbourhoods and

provides local employment opportunities, apprenticeships, and the use of local businesses and social enterprises.

We will continue to identify opportunities to change the range of homes in neighbourhoods and create a mix in the type of homes, tenures and values; to attract and retain a skilled workforce in the future; and to enable people to move through the housing market without having to leave the communities where they have established ties.

Although a significant amount of the new housing delivered in the city will be for market sale, renting allows people to access suitable homes without the need for a mortgage. Part of our ambition to increase the supply of homes in Sheffield includes the provision of quality new homes for market and intermediate rent. Over the life of this strategy we will take a neighbourhood based approach to new provision in this sector, and work with our housing delivery partners to explore the potential to provide more of these tenures in areas with high levels of social housing or in areas with overheated house prices. An early priority for us will be to explore new delivery models including Rent Before

You Buy, and using Council owned land to allow developers to build now and pay the land receipt later. We will also explore the appetite and ability of local people to take up custom build opportunities as part of community led construction.

## 2.6 Balancing Housing Markets

There's been a great deal of investment in the city centre as part of our plans to boost the city's economy, and the city centre housing market has benefitted from this vibrancy and growth. More recently however, the market for apartments has contracted and it is unlikely that we will see a continuation of development in the city centre on the same scale as before. This pause in development gives us the opportunity to revisit the type and size of homes we want to see developed in the city centre.

We aspire for the city centre to be a vibrant and welcoming place for people to use all year round. Therefore in coming years we intend to encourage some small scale developments of family housing as part of a range of new city centre homes to provide the right environment for mixed communities to thrive and grow.



In the future we expect that developers will want to provide more purpose built accommodation in and around the city centre for the large student community living in Sheffield. To help guide these new developments we will work with the universities to assess the future demand for new purpose-built student accommodation and through our planning policies and master plans, we will identify the best

locations for new accommodation. Our intention is to support new purpose built accommodation for students as part of our approach to create mixed and sustainable housing markets. We will therefore encourage new student flats that are designed to be flexible to ensure that this accommodation can meet the needs of other communities should demand patterns change in the future.

Sheffield has clear ambitions to grow its economy and develop a highly skilled workforce. As the city's economy improves it will be important to provide the right mix of homes to attract and retain the city's workforce. Sheffield has a good supply and choice of housing. However increasing the prosperity of the city's workforce will increase demand for high quality homes in the city. Therefore we will continue to identify opportunities to develop more homes at the upper end of the housing market, particularly as Sheffield's economy and housing market improves. We will also continue to support people on low and middle incomes and an early priority for this strategy will be to work with partners to increase the supply and range of affordable homes for people living in the city.

## 2.7 Affordable Housing

Previously steep rises in house prices put home-ownership beyond the reach of many and prompted others to borrow beyond their means. However, the biggest barrier to home ownership is now the level of deposit required to secure a mortgage, and first time buyers and home owners with little equity in their home are being

affected the most. We intend to help people access affordable and appropriate mortgage finance and our approach to this issue is described later in this document.

In the near future we expect that the level of subsidy available from the Government or from developers is unlikely to be sufficient to meet the full need for affordable homes. However we think it is important for us to strive to increase the provision of affordable housing in the city and we have a number of partners and tools to help us achieve this.

Improving access to housing will require different approaches in different areas therefore we intend to take a neighbourhood focussed approach to the delivery of affordable housing.

The Council's Affordable Housing Policy requires developers to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. The level of affordable housing contribution is negotiated through Section 106 of the policy and is determined in Sheffield subject to financial viability. We will continue to work with developers to revisit and if necessary renegotiate Section 106 contributions towards affordable

housing and other community benefits to ensure that developer contributions are not creating financial barriers to housing delivery.

In the past, Section 106 contributions have been used predominantly to deliver affordable homes as part of new development. In the future however, we will take a flexible and cost effective approach to providing new affordable homes in the city which will include the pooling of some Section 106 developer contributions where permitted under national planning regulations.

In areas of Sheffield where land and property prices are high we will explore the potential to use pooled receipts and work with our Registered Provider partners to purchase and improve homes that are available for sale on the open housing market, which can then be used to provide a supply of good quality Affordable Rent accommodation.

In parts of the city where new development will happen and where the level of social stock is already quite high our approach will be to provide an appropriate balance of homes for Affordable Rent, and for

market rent and sale. We recognise that people may still need support to access home ownership in these areas, therefore we will explore the potential to develop an equity stake model of home ownership which enables the applicant to purchase with a deposit level closer to 10%.

We will continue to support the delivery of Affordable Rent homes on sites across the city and we will work with Registered Providers to deliver the maximum number of affordable homes through the Affordable Homes Programme in Sheffield. In the future we intend to work closely with Registered Providers and the Government to ensure that Sheffield is ready to take the development of additional affordable homes as further funding is made available.

## 2.8 New Supported Housing

We believe investment to deliver homes in the city should promote mixed communities and move Sheffield closer to the point where everyone living in the city will be able to live in a home which is suitable for them at different stages of their life. Sometimes this will simply be about providing the right type of buildings and



sometimes this will require us to enable housing development that has support services attached.

In the next few years we will conclude the delivery of a supported accommodation scheme for people suffering poor mental health, and self contained accommodation where women and children can live if they need safe emergency accommodation as a result of domestic abuse. We will also work with our partners to refurbish supported accommodation for young people.

## 2.9 Making best use of existing stock

At current rates of delivery of new homes, the city's existing housing stock is increasing by less than 1% each year. This means we need to ensure that the city's existing homes are contributing effectively to meet our communities' housing needs. A priority for us will be to reduce the number of homes in the city which have been empty for more than 6 months. We will target empty properties that will help to deliver our priorities, such as increasing the supply of affordable homes and contributing to the delivery of regeneration plans in certain parts of the city.

We will also continue to reduce the number of empty homes which are owned by the Council and other registered providers operating in the city, and work with our partners to keep the time for which a social home is vacant between lettings to a minimum.

### 2.9.1 Council and other social housing providers

We will ensure that the significant improvements made to decency standards in the social housing sector are maintained through a long term, sustainable investment strategy. The introduction of self-financing HRA for local authorities and the move towards longer term business planning will allow the Council to make more cost effective investment choices over the next thirty years.

The investment decisions set out in the first of our long term business plans will be informed by the following business principles:

- creating sustainable homes and communities
- making the best use of Council homes
- minimising running costs



The priorities for our housing stock over the first five year plan include reducing the maintenance backlog and achieving efficiencies where possible to allow greater investment in the future. We will also explore the potential to use HRA resources to help us increase the number of Council owned social homes in the city. Longer term, our priorities will be increasing the Council's capacity to repay debt over the life of the thirty year business plan and addressing currently unaffordable activity such as the refurbishment of communal areas and environmental improvements.

Larger family social accommodation is in short supply and as a local authority we cannot meet the demand. There are several thousand tenants in social housing

in the city currently living in properties that are larger than they need. This makes it more difficult for people in housing need to access suitable homes and there will increasingly be a financial burden for the under-occupiers.

We will continue to routinely review the levels of occupation of Council homes as part of our Allocations Policy and help to relocate people who wish to move to a smaller home. We will also work with other landlords with stock in the city to promote mutual exchanges and increase the opportunities for people to resolve their own housing need.

The Allocations Policy will also respond to the predicted increase in demand for property adaptations by holding substantially adapted properties open for longer. This will enable a better match between these properties and the needs of applicants wishing to move home, as well as achieving savings in future adaptation investment.

### 2.9.2 Private renting

The private rented sector is growing and we expect that by the end of the life of this

strategy the city will have a similar number of private rented homes as there are social rented homes. Therefore it is essential that we make plans to meet this growth.

The expectations we have for existing and future private landlords are high and our ambition is that the Council will become one of the most innovative local authorities for managing this sector.

We are fortunate that we have groups of professional and responsible landlords in Sheffield who are keen to work with us on joint ventures. They will become ambassadors for the standard of landlord we expect in Sheffield, and they will help us to develop a campaign to promote awareness of this sector and the high standards tenants should expect if they rent a private home.

A growing number of people are becoming landlords and we will continue to provide high quality advice and information to help educate them in their obligations and our expectations of them.

We will advise and assist landlords who have failed to meet the required standards but are committed to improvement to meet

them. We will also seek to cease activity by 'rogue' landlords that continually fail to meet their legal obligations and endanger their tenants. In areas of the city with high concentrations of poor rented housing we will develop a register of landlords and privately rented homes to help us target our legal powers of enforcement on those bad landlords and bad housing conditions that have the most detrimental impact on tenants.

Meeting the needs of Sheffield's large community of economic migrants provides another challenge, and we will work with partner agencies to make sure that housing standards are maintained and that landlords and tenants understand their obligations.

We know there will be an increasing number of vulnerable households being rehoused into the private rented sector and we are committed to ensuring their homes are safe and affordable. We will work with our health partners to help ensure that poor conditions which pose a risk to the health and wellbeing of private tenants are addressed.

### 2.9.3 Carbon emissions

In future years we want to reduce carbon emissions in the city and recognise that a fundamental shift in emission levels will require different thinking. The Council has an ambition for Sheffield to be the UK's first decentralised energy city. This will require Sheffield to produce as much energy as it uses. However, for this to be achievable we will need to reduce the amount of energy that we use.

Currently 30% of Sheffield's carbon emissions come from domestic use. Over the life of this strategy, we intend to improve the thermal efficiency of homes in the city to help people reduce the amount of fuel they use to heat their home. A priority for us will be to explore and set out the Council's engagement with the new energy and carbon saving programmes either within Sheffield's boundary or as part of a wider regional approach with other local authorities and partner organisations.

And, as part of our plans to increase the amount of energy generated locally we will explore the potential to extend our award winning district heating scheme to more homes and businesses in the city.



# We will:

- Create a city that is a Great Place to Live with desirable neighbourhoods
- Undertake work to make housing development more economically viable
- Enable more people to buy homes on the open market
- Improve the range and quality of homes available to meet the changing needs of our residents
- Explore new funding delivery models to increase housing supply
- Work with partners to deliver more affordable housing
- Improve the range and options of supported accommodation available in the city
- Reduce the number of homes that are empty for longer than 6 months
- Develop a sustainable approach to maintaining council stock
- Help social tenants move to more suitable accommodation that meets their needs
- Improve the condition and safety of private rented stock
- Reduce carbon emissions from domestic use







## Chapter 3:

# Sustainable Communities

# Chapter 3: Sustainable Communities



## 3.1 Equal life chances

We believe everybody in Sheffield should live in welcoming, inclusive, and safe communities and have a good standard of housing that enables them to stay safe and warm. We know however, that some communities within Sheffield's diverse population will need extra support to achieve this and to actively participate in the life of the city.

As our population of older and vulnerable people continues to grow due to residents living longer, sometimes with complex health conditions, demand for this support will increase. Our population is also likely to become increasingly ethnically and culturally diverse as our existing BME population grows and migrants from the EU, refugees and foreign students continue to make Sheffield their home. Major changes to the benefit system are also likely to have a detrimental impact on some of our least well off residents. Going forward we will need to ensure that Sheffield's housing and support services are able to meet the diverse demands of our residents and that residents are able to access the services that they require now and in the future. This will mean working

closely with our partners to develop and commission flexible services which make the most impact from limited resources.

### 3.1.1 Understanding housing needs

To ensure that we target our limited resources effectively we will need to be as well informed as possible about the needs of our diverse population. We will therefore work with residents and our partners to undertake comprehensive assessments of the housing needs of Sheffield's communities and use these to inform future housing policies, schemes and services. We will look at the particular barriers and challenges that can hinder some groups in accessing appropriate housing and support, and we will work with our partners to develop a Housing Equalities and Inclusion Action Plan to address these.

### 3.1.2 Supporting households

As a landlord we provide housing services to a large number of people. In the future we will move towards providing these services as part of a comprehensive response with our partners to meet the complex and particular needs of households that make frequent and extensive use of public services. This



will involve working with our partners to intervene at an earlier stage to provide housing, health and social care support to address the broad range of problems that can sometimes lead to families getting into difficulties.

Over the lifetime of this strategy it is expected that major changes made to the benefits system will continue to have a big impact on some residents, particularly on tenants in the rented sectors. We will therefore explore the most effective solutions for helping tenants avoid getting into rent arrears and other financial difficulties. This will include working in partnership with private landlords, social housing providers and the voluntary sector to provide advice and support to tenants.

Evidence shows that children's life chances are enhanced by living with foster carers, rather than in children's homes. Therefore we will give priority to Council approved foster carers to help them move to a social rented home which is appropriate for their needs. We will also help foster carers to extend their properties or move to larger properties where necessary, so that they can continue to provide a stable home for some of the city's most vulnerable children.

Being forced to move home frequently can prevent people from feeling part of their local community and often has a detrimental effect on the educational attainment of children. To help provide the secure and stable homes that families and individuals need to thrive we will provide lifetime tenancies for Council tenants and encourage Sheffield's other social housing providers to offer similar tenancies.

### 3.1.3 Allocating social housing

We think it is important that social housing is available to support people who are vulnerable and who may not be able to resolve their own housing need through the open market. However, we also believe that social housing should support people to live in mixed and balanced communities.

Social housing is a scarce resource and we have far more people wanting it than we can provide for. Our Allocations Policy will help us meet our legal and statutory duties and describe the criteria by which we will prioritise the allocation of council homes. It will ensure that the majority of our homes are advertised as being available for people who have an urgent need to find a new home. However, we recognise that

some people won't be eligible for a home on this basis, though they may still wish to move home because of their changing circumstances or housing aspirations. The Allocations Policy therefore will ensure that we continue to allocate some of our homes to people who have registered with us but who don't have an urgent housing need.

Over the coming years we will continue to monitor the impacts of our Allocations Policy and undertake regular policy reviews in response to changes in the housing market and Sheffield's population.

## 3.2 Community Engagement

We want to make sure that Sheffield's residents are able to have their say on housing matters and to give them more control over the decisions that affect them.

In the short term we intend to build on our existing council tenant consultation and governance framework by giving tenant representatives their say on decision making. We will also look to build on the successful approaches used within our wider strategic approach to community involvement to develop other ways for engaging and involving customers in the

development and delivery of housing services.

We will also review the effectiveness of our existing forums for involving the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in developing housing and support services, and ensure our other engagement methods for these groups are working.

### 3.3 Health and Wellbeing

Housing can have a major impact on people's health, and improving the quality and range of the city's housing stock will help us to reduce the detrimental impact that poor housing has on the wellbeing of local people. Providing improved access to good quality housing and support services will therefore be a priority for us and we will work closely with our partners to achieve this goal.

#### 3.3.1 Preventing ill health

Our approach to ensuring that housing supports better health and wellbeing outcomes will focus on tackling the main reasons why people become ill or suffer health inequalities in the first place. We will also support people to help themselves

and provide the information people need to make informed choices. Having raised standards in Sheffield's social housing sector, our priority will be to tackle poor quality in the private sector, especially the private rented sector where the highest levels of Category 1 Housing Hazards occur. We will work with our partners in Health to help people with long term health conditions and explore the feasibility of undertaking a jointly funded 'invest to save' project to increase the number of interventions dealing with Category 1 Housing Hazards. We will also work with them to identify sustainable models for funding adaptations that will allow residents in both private and social sector housing to continue living comfortably and safely in their own homes for as long as possible.

Helping people to keep themselves warm enough to stay healthy and feel comfortable without overstressing their budget on fuel costs is another priority for this strategy. Fuel poverty is the result of different risk factors interacting in the household, such as heating needs, the price of the heating fuel used, income levels, and the energy efficiency of a property. We will therefore work with partners to identify ways of helping people

out of fuel poverty and reduce the risk of cold related illnesses and excess seasonal deaths.

Alongside the importance of having good quality decent homes that are comfortable and warm, it is important that people feel safe and secure in their home and neighbourhood. Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a corporate priority and we intend to work with our partners to improve the way in which we respond to problems in our communities.

We want to ensure that repeat vulnerable victims of ASB receive a joined-up and consistent approach to their problem, regardless of where they live in the city. We will identify the areas and individuals that are most at risk of experiencing ASB and develop more coordinated tactical plans for tenants and homeowners to reduce ASB from occurring in the future. An early priority will be to work with partners in mental health and drug and alcohol misuse services to improve sustained support to victims and offenders.

### 3.4 Helping young people to live Independently

Securing independent housing away from the family home is an important step for any young person. However, the current housing market and policy changes have impacted on young people's ability to get a home of their own and we know they are finding it harder than others to access and afford suitable housing. We therefore want to support young people so they can secure the resources they need to move into appropriate accommodation in a planned way.

#### 3.4.1 Accessing home ownership

Home ownership is still unaffordable for many young people, and the large deposit now needed to secure a mortgage is a significant challenge for first time buyers. Restricted mortgage access is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, with little prospect in the short term of mortgage finance becoming more readily available to those without large deposits or those with lower incomes. Many young people are now living at home for longer, until they have saved enough for



a deposit, or rely on financial help from their parents. The impact of this is an increase in unmet demand and potentially more overcrowding. We are therefore taking steps to develop the right type of mortgage deposit support for Sheffield. Our approach will support new housing delivery in our regeneration areas and help those that may be in a position to obtain a mortgage but are unable to save the required deposit.

#### 3.4.2 Living in the private rented sector

The housing market has changed and although home ownership is the long term housing goal for many, more people now

live in private rented homes and young people are living in the private rented sector for longer.

Young people, particularly students, have told us they like living in shared private rented accommodation as it enables them to live in areas they would not otherwise be able to afford, and allows them to share the cost of the rent and bills. The demand for this type of accommodation is also likely to continue growing, particularly from young people receiving housing benefit.

We will therefore explore the potential to increase the number of good private landlords who manage safe shared accommodation to enable us to re-house people who are only eligible for housing



benefit at a shared accommodation rate.

We will also work with both of the city's universities to raise the quality of housing and the standards of management in all student homes in the city. This will involve defining our strategic approach to accommodation for students, including our expectations for new and existing purpose built student accommodation, shared accommodation and houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) in the city.

We also plan to explore how our teams working in this sector can provide more help with supporting and sustaining tenancies, and managing anti-social behaviour.

### 3.4.3 Sustaining tenancies

As well as helping young people to access the right kinds of housing, we also want to support the most vulnerable young people to sustain independent living. As a landlord we know that young people are more likely to fail their tenancy in the first two years or become homeless because they do not always have the appropriate resources and life skills to manage and maintain their home. We will therefore develop our understanding of the main reasons why young tenants are failing to sustain their council tenancies and develop specific solutions to address these. This will include working with our partners to offer advice about managing money and running a home.

### 3.5 Helping vulnerable and older people to live independently

Providing suitable housing and age friendly neighbourhoods is essential for creating a city where people maintain the highest possible level of activity, independence and quality of life throughout their lives.

Our Planning policies will help to ensure that new housing developments are built

where a range of local services and community facilities are available within a reasonable walking distance, and ensure that people have opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation close to their homes. We will supplement these with a range of support to help people maintain or move into independent living.

### 3.5.1 Preventing loss of independence

Our emphasis will be on early intervention to prevent loss of independence, minimise escalating needs and reduce the long term cost to public health, social care and support services. This will include providing housing services and support as close to home as possible, and working with our partners to provide wider and more innovative opportunities for support at an earlier stage.

We will work with our partners to understand the greatest risks threatening residents' capacity to continue living safely and comfortably in their own homes. We will look to integrate services and create an effective structure for providing the right support for sustaining independent living. As part of this approach we will explore the potential to provide practical support, such



as help to make trips outside of the home or with maintaining gardens and homes.

We recognise that carers in Sheffield make an enormous contribution to independent living by providing care and support to many of the city's most vulnerable residents. We will explore how we can better meet the housing needs of all carers, and ensure that carers who need council housing and provide high levels of care and support to their families and friends are given appropriate priority through our Allocations Policy.

### 3.5.2 Helping people to help themselves

Our approach will focus on helping people to help themselves. This will include exploring ways to make it easier for residents to find appropriate homes that better meet their needs. We will work with estate and letting agents in the private sector to promote the importance of identifying, recording and promoting wheelchair accessible homes.

To help make it easier for people to move to more manageable properties we will also

explore the potential for developing similar support for owner occupiers to that which is already being offered to Council and some other social housing tenants, funded by a fee from the service users.

### 3.5.3 Providing flexible support

We understand that many of our most vulnerable residents require higher levels of support to live comfortably and with the level of independence they desire. To help people access and leave services in a more planned way we will develop



a supported accommodation pathway, which will also allow resources to be used more effectively and reduce the reliance on temporary accommodation. We will also remodel services for some vulnerable groups to help meet their needs better and support more people into independence.

Although current Extra Care Housing provides a high standard of design, security and privacy it is also expensive to deliver and potentially unaffordable for some people. We will therefore develop a range of options that will provide a sustainable choice of accommodation solutions for vulnerable people. In order to deliver this we will map existing accommodation and services across the city, and work with our partners to ensure that public accommodation and services will complement those being developed and delivered by the private sector. We will use this information to inform future housing development and the development of long-term care and support commissioning plans.

To help people live with a greater degree of independence we will explore options for developing more tailored services for older and vulnerable people, including extending

the role of floating support and home care. This will include exploring the potential for expanding services delivered as part of purpose-built supported accommodation to provide support services to people living in the wider community.

### 3.5.4 Help people with learning disabilities

Good progress has been made to support people with learning disabilities to access choice based lettings, private sector housing and in developing a range of specialist supported schemes, however more work is needed. We will therefore update our accommodation strategy for people with learning disabilities. This strategy will include the following three outcomes: increasing the number of people who have their own home; increasing the quality of housing and support for people with learning disabilities; and ensuring that housing and support is affordable.

In the short term, another key priority will be to ensure that all people with learning disabilities who have previously been placed outside of Sheffield can be supported in affordable housing within the city by the middle of 2014.

### 3.5.5 Adaptations and home improvements

As our population grows demand for adaptations and assistive technology is expected to increase, and we will need to identify a long term sustainable solution to fund this. We will therefore look at different options for funding the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme, including the potential for pooling health, social care and housing budgets to provide more adaptations in the future. The Sheffield House Condition Survey indicates at least £170 million of investment is required to deal with non decency in the private sector. We believe that we can't and shouldn't fund all this work. However, we need to develop a sustainable way of helping the most vulnerable homeowners in the city. Our approach will be to provide comprehensive re-housing advice that covers renting a home as well as advice on sale and

repurchase. We will also explore the potential to develop practical support for owner occupiers who wish to move to a more suitable home.

We will also provide small loans to financially vulnerable home owners who are unable to access a loan from a conventional high street lender to enable them to make improvements to their existing home, which will allow them to remain independent for longer.

### 3.5.6 Preventing homelessness

In Sheffield we work hard to reduce the number of people who become homeless. However, we know that the current economic climate is making it harder for people to keep up with housing costs. Due to the problems people are facing in sustaining their homes, in the future we expect to see an increase in demand for services to help homeless people.

We will continue to provide advice and assistance to help prevent homelessness, and where this is not possible we shall assist customers into accessible, affordable housing. We want to be able to offer people who find themselves

homeless or at risk of losing their home a better choice of accommodation, and we want to reduce the number of homeless households living in temporary accommodation. We shall therefore work with landlords of private rented homes to provide a greater supply of good quality, safe and well managed homes for people who are homeless.

We will also develop flexible tailored tenancy support to reduce the risk factors that lead to tenancy failure, and to respond to the changing needs of the tenant throughout their tenancy.

We will also work with our partners to provide a range of supported accommodation options for homeless young people who are unable to return home. This will provide a safe environment where they can gain the necessary life skills to sustain and enjoy their own home in the future. The development of an effective Supported Accommodation Pathway will also help vulnerable people of all ages to access and leave supported accommodation in a more planned way, and help to reduce homelessness.

# We will:

- **Assess the housing needs of households living across Sheffield**
- **Address the barriers that hinder some groups and communities from accessing suitable housing**
- **Provide early targeted support for households and families facing multiple problems**
- **Ensure that social housing is allocated fairly and provides homes to households most in need**
- **Give people a greater say in developing and delivering housing services**
- **Reduce the impact that poor housing has on health and wellbeing**
- **Support young people to access housing and live independently**
- **Provide more choice and options to help vulnerable and older people live independently in their homes**
- **Ensure all people with learning disabilities previously placed outside of Sheffield are supported in affordable housing within the city**
- **Reduce homelessness through early intervention**







## Chapter 4:

# Delivery

# Chapter 4: delivery



## Chapter 4: Delivering the strategy

In this Housing Strategy we have described our ambitions for housing in the city over the next 10 years, including the issues we expect to tackle first and the issues we expect to address over the long term. We have also set out our expectations for others working with us to deliver our goals, and where appropriate we have made steps to describe our policy approach to housing delivery and to investment in housing and housing services across the city.

Alongside this strategy we will produce a series of 3-year action plans which will take us closer to achieving our long term goals for housing in the city. These action plans will reflect the current policy and investment landscape in which we are operating and respond to the levels of investment and resources available.

We will build upon a strong history of partnership working, and the direct contribution of our partners will maximise the resources available to enable the delivery of this strategy and action plan.

The extent of our ambition for housing will require changes at a national and local level. This might be in relation to devolved power and local governance arrangements or the levers required to exert influence on the aspects of this housing strategy which are outside of our control, for example the constraints on mortgage lending and wider economic conditions.

We recognise that the longer term housing needs and economic aspirations of the Council can only be effectively met through a new Local Plan. Our aim will be to increase the supply and choice of sites so that a 5-year supply of ready to develop sites can be maintained throughout the period covered by the new Local Plan. However, to help with housing delivery in Sheffield, future housing requirements and the distribution of housing growth needs to be addressed at a City Region level and new governance arrangements will be required to enable this to happen.

We are also aware that the scale of the challenge facing us relating to the quality of existing private sector homes in the city is beyond the resources that we currently have available to us. We retain an ambition to improve the quality of the stock in



the city and will continue to find ways of helping the most vulnerable homeowners to improve their homes. We are also keen to explore with Government the potential to develop a City Deal for Housing, which will allow us to target sufficient resources towards those people who are living in poor housing conditions and as a result are likely to suffer ill health or loss of independence and increasingly impact on the public purse as the cost of their care grows.

Therefore alongside the activity that we are directly responsible for and the work done with or by other organisations, we intend to continue to talk to Government and others about how to reduce the barriers to delivery and create the right powers and environment which will help us achieve our long term goals.

The Housing Strategy Action Plan will inform the future shape of the annual Capital Investment Programme as well as housing activity contained within the Council's annual budget setting process.

Performance on progress made against the delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan will be regularly reviewed by the



Great Place to Live Board and the Housing Investment Board.

We will also review the performance indicators which were established to sit alongside this housing strategy and action



plan to help us to measure both the impact of our influence and the impact of our direct activity. A progress up date of the Action Plan and Performance Indicators will be published on the Council's website in April each year.









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