

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Thursday 10 January 2013 at 2.00 pm

**To be held at the Town Hall, Pinstone
Street, Sheffield, S1 2HH**

The Press and Public are Welcome to Attend

Membership

Councillors Chris Weldon (Chair), Penny Baker (Deputy Chair), David Barker, Nikki Bond, Simon Clement-Jones, Shelia Constance, Richard Crowther, Jayne Dunn, Denise Fox, Martin Lawton, Shaffaq Mohammed, Peter Rippon and Chris Rosling-Josephs

Substitute Members

In accordance with the Constitution, Substitute Members may be provided for the above Committee Members as and when required.

PUBLIC ACCESS TO THE MEETING

The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee exercises an overview and scrutiny function in respect of the planning, development and monitoring of performance and delivery of services which aim to make Sheffield a safer, stronger and more sustainable city for all of its residents.

A copy of the agenda and reports is available on the Council's website at www.sheffield.gov.uk. You can also see the reports to be discussed at the meeting if you call at the First Point Reception, Town Hall, Pinstone Street entrance. The Reception is open between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Thursday and between 9.00 am and 4.45 pm. on Friday, or you can ring on telephone no. 2734552. You may not be allowed to see some reports because they contain confidential information. These items are usually marked * on the agenda.

Members of the public have the right to ask questions or submit petitions to Scrutiny Committee meetings. Please see the website or contact Democratic Services for further information.

Scrutiny Committee meetings are normally open to the public but sometimes the Committee may have to discuss an item in private. If this happens, you will be asked to leave. Any private items are normally left until last. If you would like to attend the meeting please report to the First Point Reception desk where you will be directed to the meeting room.

If you require any further information about this Scrutiny Committee, please contact David Molloy, Scrutiny Policy Officer on 0114 2735065 or email david.molloy@sheffield.gov.uk.

FACILITIES

There are public toilets available, with wheelchair access, on the ground floor of the Town Hall. Induction loop facilities are available in meeting rooms.

Access for people with mobility difficulties can be obtained through the ramp on the side to the main Town Hall entrance.

**SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY AND POLICY
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE AGENDA
10 JANUARY 2013**

Order of Business

- 1. Welcome and Housekeeping Arrangements**
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
- 3. Exclusion of Public and Press**
To identify items where resolutions may be moved to exclude the press and public
- 4. Declarations of Interest**
Members to declare any interests they have in the business to be considered at the meeting
- 5. Minutes of Previous Meeting**
To approve the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8th November, 2012
- 6. Public Questions and Petitions**
To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public
- 7. Allocations Policy Review - Welfare Reform Consultation Results**
Report of the Executive Director, Communities
- 8. The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2013/14 - Update**
Report of the Executive Director, Communities
- 9. Housing Strategy 2013 to 2023**
Report of the Executive Director, Communities
- 10. Date of Next Meeting**
To note that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on Thursday, 14th March, 2013, at 2.00 pm, in the Town Hall

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ADVICE TO MEMBERS ON DECLARING INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

New standards arrangements were introduced by the Localism Act 2011. The new regime made changes to the way that members' interests are registered and declared.

If you are present at a meeting of the Council, of its executive or any committee of the executive, or of any committee, sub-committee, joint committee, or joint sub-committee of the authority, and you have a **Disclosable Pecuniary Interest** (DPI) relating to any business that will be considered at the meeting, you must not:

- participate in any discussion of the business at the meeting, or if you become aware of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the meeting, participate further in any discussion of the business, or
- participate in any vote or further vote taken on the matter at the meeting.

These prohibitions apply to any form of participation, including speaking as a member of the public.

You **must**:

- leave the room (in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct)
- make a verbal declaration of the existence and nature of any DPI at any meeting at which you are present at which an item of business which affects or relates to the subject matter of that interest is under consideration, at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.
- declare it to the meeting and notify the Council's Monitoring Officer within 28 days, if the DPI is not already registered.

If you have any of the following pecuniary interests, they are your **disclosable pecuniary interests** under the new national rules. You have a pecuniary interest if you, or your spouse or civil partner, have a pecuniary interest.

- Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain, which you, or your spouse or civil partner, undertakes.
- Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from your council or authority) made or provided within the relevant period* in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

*The relevant period is the 12 months ending on the day when you tell the Monitoring Officer about your disclosable pecuniary interests.

- Any contract which is made between you, or your spouse or your civil partner (or a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest) and your council or authority -
 - under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and
 - which has not been fully discharged.
- Any beneficial interest in land which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, have and which is within the area of your council or authority.
- Any licence (alone or jointly with others) which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, holds to occupy land in the area of your council or authority for a month or longer.
- Any tenancy where (to your knowledge) -
 - the landlord is your council or authority; and
 - the tenant is a body in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest.
- Any beneficial interest which you, or your spouse or your civil partner has in securities of a body where -
 - (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of your council or authority; and
 - (b) either
 - the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or
 - if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you, or your spouse or your civil partner, has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

Under the Council's Code of Conduct, members must act in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership), including the principle of honesty, which says that 'holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest'.

If you attend a meeting at which any item of business is to be considered and you are aware that you have a **personal interest** in the matter which does not amount to a DPI, you must make verbal declaration of the existence and nature of that interest at or before the consideration of the item of business or as soon as the interest becomes apparent. You should leave the room if your continued presence is incompatible with the 7 Principles of Public Life.

You have a personal interest where –

- a decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing (including interests in land and easements over land) of you or a member of your family or a person or an organisation with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the Council Tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the Authority's administrative area, or
- it relates to or is likely to affect any of the interests that are defined as DPs but are in respect of a member of your family (other than a partner) or a person with whom you have a close association.

Guidance on declarations of interest, incorporating regulations published by the Government in relation to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, has been circulated to you previously, and has been published on the Council's website as a downloadable document at [-http://councillors.sheffield.gov.uk/councillors/register-of-councillors-interests](http://councillors.sheffield.gov.uk/councillors/register-of-councillors-interests)

You should identify any potential interest you may have relating to business to be considered at the meeting. This will help you and anyone that you ask for advice to fully consider all the circumstances before deciding what action you should take.

In certain circumstances the Council may grant a **dispensation** to permit a Member to take part in the business of the Authority even if the member has a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest relating to that business.

To obtain a dispensation, you must write to the Monitoring Officer at least 48 hours before the meeting in question, explaining why a dispensation is sought and desirable, and specifying the period of time for which it is sought. The Monitoring Officer may consult with the Independent Person or the Council's Standards Committee in relation to a request for dispensation.

Further advice can be obtained from Lynne Bird, Director of Legal Services on 0114 2734018 or email lynne.bird@sheffield.gov.uk

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Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 8 November 2012

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Weldon (Chair), David Barker, Nikki Bond, Simon Clement-Jones, Shelia Constance, Richard Crowther, Jayne Dunn, Denise Fox, Martin Lawton, Peter Rippon, Chris Rosling-Josephs and Diana Stimely (Substitute Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Penny Baker and Shaffaq Mohammed, and Councillor Diana Stimely attended as a substitute Member.

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Members declared the following personal interests in Item 7 on the agenda – Lettings Policy Review:-

- Councillor Martin Lawton – Member of the Local Management Board of Acis Group Limited;
- Councillor Peter Rippon – Member of Shiregreen Community Homes;
- Councillor Richard Crowther – Member of the Sheffield Homes North West Area Board;
- Councillor Denise Fox – Member of the Sheffield Homes South East Area Board; and
- Councillor Jayne Dunn – Member of the Sheffield Homes North West Area Board.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee held 11th September 2012, were approved as a correct record.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 Mick Watts questioned what assurances Members could give to ensure that the projected underspend in the Housing Revenue Account was fully allocated.

Richard Palmer stated that now the Council had a self-financing Housing Revenue Account, resulting in the Council holding all risks, there was a need to maintain a substantial reserve to mitigate any such risks or problems that may arise and therefore, a large proportion of the underspend might need to be placed in reserves. A reserves strategy was under development, to establish the size of the reserve required. A particular risk was the potential impact of welfare benefits reform on the ability of tenants to pay their rent. Initially, any unallocated underspend at year end would be carried over into reserves at the year end and would not be lost to the Housing Revenue Account. The Cabinet would be making a decision on this issue at its meeting to be held in February 2013. Councillor Harry Harpham, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, attending as an observer, confirmed that the Council needed to be aware of the risks involved in terms of the transfer of the Housing Revenue Account, stressing the need for robust plans in terms of any uncertainties, hence the need for considerable reserves. He stated that it was the aim of the Council to have a high quality housing service therefore, reserves would not be maintained at a higher level than needed and any surplus would be reinvested into housing services.

6. DRAFT LETTINGS POLICY REVIEW

6.1 Sharon Schonborn, Allocations Policy Review Manager, Communities, gave a presentation on the draft Lettings Policy Review, reporting on why the review had been undertaken, the work undertaken so far as part of the review, the draft Allocations Policy, the Housing Register and how the Council would be deciding between the various housing needs. She referred to all the various aspects in terms of the proposed procedures relating to looking for a property and offers of accommodation and concluded by reporting on the next steps, including the deadlines in terms of the adoption of the Policy, and subsequent implementation. In terms of the next steps, it was reported that consultation on the Policy would be held during November and December 2012, there would be an analysis of the consultation and the final Policy document produced in January 2013, which would be submitted to the Cabinet for approval on 20th March 2013.

6.2 Members of the Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- Those people suffering financial hardship in terms of reduced benefit payments following a requirement to downsize would not be deemed to have critical needs. Only those in serious danger and therefore, requiring to move immediately, would be included in the critical band and granted priority. Any tenants suffering financial hardship would have the opportunity of applying for discretionary housing payments in the short-term.
- There were safeguards in place to ensure that applicants were not able to bid for properties that they were not entitled to. The new IT system would ensure that applicants were only able to access details of those properties in accordance with their individual eligibility. In those situations where applicants were assisted by Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TARAs) or other similar organisations, such organisations would be able to receive a

print-out of all available properties, but the application would have to be made by the tenant, who would only be able to apply for properties they were eligible for.

- In terms of equality of opportunity implications, officers had looked at any barriers facing applicants, and how such barriers could be overcome. Action Plans had been devised in terms of barriers and what could be put in place to help applicants overcome these barriers. Targetted consultation was being carried out with those groups adversely affected by the tightened bedroom eligibility criteria, such as those with overnight access to children who don't live with them all of the time and people with health issues, and requiring an additional bedroom.
- There were a number of safety nets in place to deal with those situations where people were experiencing delays in being rehoused and were either not receiving any benefit or were in receipt of a reduced amount of benefit. In some cases, tenants would be able to apply for discretionary housing payments in the short-term. All cases would be handled very sensitively and there was a considerable amount of flexibility in the Policy to ensure tenants were assisted.
- It was not likely that people who put their name on the Council waiting list when they got married sometime ago, would still be on the list as regular rolling reviews of the waiting list were undertaken and under the new Policy, applicants would have to register on the waiting list annually.
- If people intentionally made themselves homeless by failing to pay their rent, they would not get priority for Council housing. A review of an applicant's five-year address history would be considered as part of any applications.

6.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, the information reported as part of the presentation and the responses to the questions now raised;
- (b) expresses its thanks and appreciation to all the Officers and Members, including those Members of the former Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee, for all the excellent work undertaken in connection with the Lettings Policy Review; and
- (c) requests that a report on the draft Lettings Policy be submitted to its meeting to be held on 10th January 2013.

7. HOMELESSNESS PERFORMANCE UPDATE

- 7.1 The Executive Director, Communities, submitted a report containing details of key performance issues regarding homelessness in the City.
- 7.2 Jan Sutton, Housing Solutions Manager, introduced the report and referred to bed and breakfast and temporary accommodation use, homelessness preventions,

projected increases in the number of homeless over the next few years and details of the key challenges facing the Council in respect of homelessness.

7.3 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- An Officer Working Group had been established specifically to work with private landlords, with the aim of discussing levels of rent and negotiating, where possible, reduction in rents, particularly for larger families where there was no suitable Council accommodation available.
- Officers would look at the criteria with regard to the possibility of obtaining Government funding to undertake refurbishment works required to bring vacant properties back to such a condition so as to be able to house homeless people.
- It is unlikely that the target of zero households in bed and breakfast accommodation will be achieved unless the Supported Accommodation Pathway can be implemented. The Pathway has not been implemented because the required funding of £300,000 for the necessary ICT was not approved. Alternative funding was being considered through the Capital Programme.
- A certain proportion of beds were held at St Ann's Hostel for Housing Solutions customers, which meant that they would not have to go into bed and breakfast. Assistance and support was provided in order to make sure homeless or vulnerable people gained the necessary ability and skills to enable them to live on their own in a Council tenancy.
- Partners were still taking a role in ensuring that they took their fair share of presentations in terms of homeless and/or vulnerable people who required accommodation.
- There was a very strict protocol in respect of the standard of accommodation offered by bed and breakfast providers. There were only four bed and breakfast providers that the Council used on a regular basis and all these properties were checked regularly in terms of standards of cleanliness.

7.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the responses provided to the questions raised; and
- (b) requests that (i) a further report on homelessness performance be submitted to a meeting of the Committee in six month's time and (ii) the report be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee, (A) with a request that Members look at the possibility of implementing cross-cutting measures to deal with the problems of homelessness in the City and (B) highlighting the fact that the Homelessness Service was operating under pressure and requesting that such pressures could be alleviated where

possible.

8. POLICY UPDATE

- 8.1 The Committee received and noted a report of the Scrutiny Policy Officer providing an update on policy changes introduced by the Government during September and October 2012.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 10th January 2013, at 2.00 pm in the Town Hall.

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Report to The Safer and Stronger Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee

Report of: Head of Housing Commissioning

Subject: Allocations Policy Review

Author of Report: Sharon Schonborn
Allocations Policy Review Manager
0114 203 7613

Summary:

The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee requested that the Allocations Policy Review Project Team return to present the findings of the third and final phase of consultation in relation to the draft Allocations Policy. This is in order for the Scrutiny Committee to be able to consider the findings and comment.

The key points noted within the report are as follows:

- Sheffield City Council has produced a draft Allocations Policy. This was developed following public consultation and in partnership with The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee.
- Within the new draft Allocations Policy bedroom eligibility has been restricted. This is as a result of increased demand for social housing coupled with national welfare reform.
- This means that some Housing Register applicants will be allocated properties with fewer bedrooms than they would currently be entitled to.
- The under occupiers' penalty (or bedroom tax) will come into effect in April 2013. It will affect working age tenants of social housing. They will no longer receive Housing Benefit for bedrooms they are deemed not to require.
- Around 65% of existing tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit.
- If the bedroom eligibility were to remain unchanged, we would risk setting new tenants up to fail.
- 65% of questionnaire respondents from the main consultation period (September 2011 – February 2012) thought that we should allocate the minimum number of bedrooms to meet housing need.
- It is estimated that around 5000 current council tenants will be affected.
- There are significant implications for the Council in terms of rent loss if people cannot afford to pay any shortfall in rent brought about by welfare reform.
- The following groups of people will be particularly affected by both the restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty:

- People with overnight contact with children who don't live with them all of the time.
- People with disabilities.
- People with intermittent periods of ill health, including mental health issues.
- People who are cared for by a resident carer, such as their partner.
- There could be implications for the adaptations budget, social services adult and children's services coming from restricting bedroom eligibility.
- Consultation has been undertaken with Registered Private Providers of Social Housing (RPs also formerly known as Housing Associations) and with the aforementioned groups adversely affected by changes.
- The results of the consultation are contained within separate documents appended to this report.
- During the consultation period DCLG produced regulations relating to the Armed Forces, which came into force on the 30th November.
- The section on members of the armed forces in the draft policy (at 4.13) is no longer compliant and consideration needs to be given on how to apply the required additional preference.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	X
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

1. Consider the consultation analysis reports and provide views and comments.
2. Consider the requirement to award members of the Armed Forces additional preference and how that should be applied in Sheffield.

Background Papers:

- Questionnaire Consultation Analysis Report – Impact of restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty.
- Consultation Report – Impact of restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty.

Category of Report: OPEN

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee
Report of the Head of Housing Commissioning
Allocations Policy Review – Welfare Reform Consultation Results
10th January 2013

SECTION A: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee requested that the Allocations Policy Review Project Team return to present the findings of the third and final phase of consultation in relation to the draft Allocations Policy.

2. Summary of Issues

2.1 Sheffield City Council has produced a draft Allocations Policy.

2.2 Within the new draft Allocations Policy bedroom eligibility has been restricted.

2.3 This means that some Housing Register applicants will be allocated properties with fewer bedrooms than they would currently be entitled to.

2.4 The under occupiers' penalty (or bedroom tax) will come into effect in April 2013. It will affect working age tenants of social housing. They will no longer receive Housing Benefit for bedrooms they are deemed not to require.

2.5 Around 65% of existing tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit. If the bedroom eligibility were to remain unchanged, we would risk setting new tenants up to fail.

2.6 It is estimated that around 5000 current council tenants will be affected.

2.7 There are significant implications for us in terms of rent loss if people cannot afford to pay any shortfall in rent brought about by welfare reform.

2.8 The following groups of people will be particularly affected by both the restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty:

- a. People with overnight contact with children who don't live with them all of the time.
- b. People with disabilities.
- c. People with intermittent periods of ill health, including mental health issues.
- d. People who are cared for by a resident carer, such as their partner.

2.9 There could be implications for the adaptations budget, social services adult and children's services coming from restricting bedroom eligibility.

2.10 Consultation has been undertaken with Registered Private Providers of Social Housing (RPs also formerly known as Housing Associations) and with the aforementioned groups adversely affected by changes.

- 2.11 The results of the consultation are contained within separate documents appended to this report.
- 2.12 During the consultation period DCLG produced regulations relating to the Armed Forces, which came into force on the 30th November.
- 2.13 The section on members of the armed forces in the draft policy (at 4.13) is no longer compliant and consideration needs to be given on how to apply the required additional preference.

3. Introduction

- 3.1 Over the past year the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee have worked in partnership with the Allocations Policy Review Project Board and Team to produce a Draft Allocations Policy.
- 3.2 Producing the draft Allocations Policy involved three phases of consultation:
- i) A comprehensive pre-consultation scoping exercise.
 - ii) An extensive six month period of open public consultation.
 - iii) A shorter, targeted period of consultation.
- 3.3 The third and final phase of consultation was when a draft Allocations Policy was produced and the draft went out for consultation during November and December 2012.
- 3.4 It was agreed that this phase of consultation should be much shorter and targeted to the following groups:
- RPs - Registered Private Providers of Social Housing (also known as Housing Associations)
 - People with overnight contact with children who don't live with them all the time
 - People with a health issue which means they consider they need an extra bedroom perhaps to sleep separately from a partner or so someone can stay overnight to support them in times of ill health.
 - Interested groups from the open public phase of consultation who requested involvement in the next phase.

4. Context

- 4.1 Sheffield City Council works in partnership with RPs within the Sheffield boundary. RPs play a significant role in the provision of social housing for the people of Sheffield and it has been important to us that we listen to them, and have their input, when considering changes to our Allocations Policy.
- 4.2 Sheffield City Council's current Allocations Policy is ten years old and in that time the demand for council housing in Sheffield has risen considerably, making social housing a scarce resource which is in high demand. As a result of this Sheffield City Council has a more generous bedroom allocation.

- 4.3 It is important that the best use is made of this scarce and valuable resource and that it is allocated fairly. One way to accomplish this is to reduce under occupancy. Under occupancy is where a property is not occupied to its fullest capacity.
- 4.4 Bedroom eligibility has also been restricted as a result of national welfare reform. The under occupiers' penalty (or bedroom tax) will come into effect in April 2013. It will affect working age tenants of social housing¹. They will no longer receive Housing Benefit for bedrooms they are deemed not to require.
- 4.5 Around 65% of existing tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit. We can also expect that this would be the case for a significant proportion of new social tenants (partly because around 30% of the Housing Register is made up of existing tenants).
- 4.6 If the bedroom eligibility were to remain unchanged, we would risk setting new tenants up to fail. This is because they would experience a shortfall between their rent levels and the Housing Benefit they receive, and if they are unable to make up the difference themselves, it will result in increased rent arrears.
- 4.7 The way council housing is funded has changed which means we need to be more business minded to secure the future of council housing, not increasing the funding gap.

5. Background

- 5.1 Sheffield City Council has produced a draft Allocations Policy. This was developed following public consultation and in partnership with The Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.2 The draft Allocations Policy sets out a more restrictive bedroom eligibility than the previous Policy. This means that some Housing Register applicants will be allocated properties with less bedrooms than they would currently be entitled to.
- 5.3 The draft Allocations Policy bases its bedroom eligibility on the Housing Benefit calculation of how many bedrooms are required. This means that, for example:
- A single person will only be eligible for an allocation of a one bedroom property
 - A couple will only be eligible for an allocation of a one bedroom property
 - A single person with overnight contact with a child or children will only be eligible for an allocation of a one bedroom property
 - A couple or single parent with two children aged under 10 will only be eligible for a two bedroom property

¹ Working age is likely to be 60 initially, but may rise to 66 in the future.

- A couple or single parent with two children of the same sex aged under 16 will only be eligible for a two bedroom property.
- 5.4 65% of questionnaire respondents from the main consultation period (September 2011 – February 2012) thought the Council should allocate the minimum number of bedrooms to meet housing need.
- 5.5 The change to bedroom eligibility in the Allocations Policy concerns Housing Register applicants. However, the under occupiers' penalty also affects existing social tenants who are under occupying and in receipt of Housing Benefit. It is estimated that around 5000 council tenants will be affected.
- 5.6 We anticipate that the following groups of people will be particularly affected by both the restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty:
- People with overnight contact with children who don't live with them all of the time.
 - People with disabilities.
 - People with intermittent periods of ill health, including mental health issues.
 - People who are cared for by a resident carer, such as their partner.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 There is a statutory requirement under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 for local housing authorities to have an allocation scheme and allocate only in accordance with that scheme. Before adopting a new scheme there is a duty to consult with RPs on the draft scheme for a reasonable period.
- 6.2 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the regulations made under that Act will introduce significant changes to the whole benefits system, including the amount allowed for housing costs within Universal Credit, with effect from April 2013. The repercussions of these changes are that there will be issues of affordability of any offers of accommodation to a person on benefits, if the let is for more than the bedroom allocation they are deemed to need. Currently the whole rent for a social rented property is eligible for housing benefit but under the new regulations the amount paid will be reduced if the claimant is deemed to be under occupying. This will be the case for all new and existing claimants of working age. 67% of council tenants are currently receiving full or partial housing benefit.

Armed Forces

- 6.3 During the consultation period DCLG produced the Housing Act 1996 (Additional Preference for Armed Forces) (England) Regulations 2012. The regulations were made on 29th November and came into force on the 30th November.
- 6.4 The effect is to amend section 166A(3) of the Housing Act 1996 (as inserted by the Localism Act). This is the subsection that sets out the

reasonable preference categories and gives local authorities discretion to give additional preference to people within those categories.

- 6.5 That discretion remains but the amendment means that we now must give additional preference to a person with urgent housing needs who falls within one or more of the reasonable preference categories and
- (i) is serving in the regular forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service,
 - (ii) formerly served in the regular forces,
 - (iii) has recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled, to reside in accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of that person's spouse or civil partner who has served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable (wholly or partly) to that service, or
 - (iv) is serving or has served in the reserve forces and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable (wholly or partly) to the person's service.
- 6.6 The limited mention of members of the armed forces in the draft policy (at 4.13) is no longer compliant with this amendment because our own preference for honourable discharge isn't recognised in the regulations, and we also need to consider how to give the required additional preference to the other groups.

SECTION B: MAIN BODY OF REPORT, MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION ETC.

7. Overall Approach

- 7.1 Direct consultation has been undertaken with RPs on the draft Allocations Policy. This was through a face-to-face briefing, by emailing a copy of the draft out to all RPs and asking for feedback. By sending out a follow up email advising of the up and coming closing date for comments.
- 7.2 The Allocations Policy Review team carried out a scoping exercise in September-November 2012 to identify groups that will be particularly affected and to find out what the impacts are likely to be. The team contacted services and groups working with people with health issues and with people who have overnight contact with children some of the time.
- 7.3 Following this scoping exercise a consultation questionnaire was:
- Mailed out to 2,300 Housing Register applicants.
 - Mailed out to people who answered the previous consultation questionnaire and said that they are disabled, or a household member is and would like to be involved in further consultation.
- 7.4 The consultation questionnaire was advertised on:
- Sheffield City Council Website.

- Sheffield Homes Website.
- Property Shop Website.
- Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Homes Intranet.
- Facebook.
- Twitter.
- Community Assembly Blogs.
- Emails to applicants, external organisations and TARA groups.

8. Matters for Consideration

8.1 The feedback of consultation comments from RPs.

8.2 The Questionnaire Consultation Analysis Report.

8.3 The Consultation Report.

8.4 The impacts of restricting bedroom allocation to:

- People with overnight contact with children that don't live with them all of the time.
- People with may want an extra bedroom for health issues.

8.5 The additional preference we are now required to give Armed Forces.

9. Key Findings of the Consultation

9.1 Most people understand the reasons for restricting bedroom eligibility, subject to there being flexibility where needed.

9.2 Some of the biggest impacts of these changes will be experienced by the following:

- People who have 50/50 shared access to children
- People who have several children living with them part of the time
- People with resident carers, intermittent and/or informal care or support arrangements
- Adults or children who would be severely affected by having to share a bedroom.

9.3 The under occupiers' penalty will have negative effects for people who can't afford to pay for an additional bedroom and can't afford to move either.

9.4 The under occupiers' penalty will have negative effects for some people who cannot find a smaller property in their area of support or familiarity.

9.5 56% of respondents to the questionnaire who confirmed they are in receipt of Housing Benefit said they can't afford to stay if their Housing Benefit reduces.

9.6 As a result of the tightened bedroom eligibility criteria there could be increase demand in people wanting to be re-housed as their family grow or as children reach a certain age.

10. Human Resources

10.1 No implications.

11. Equal Opportunities

11.1 The Equalities Impact Assessment identified two main groups as being adversely affected by changes to bedroom eligibility criteria and recommended the targeted consultation carried out. This was in order to gain insight into the issues for these groups, to look at the impacts and to identify and build in mitigations that might reduce the adverse impacts. These groups were:

- People with overnight contact with children who don't live with them all the time.
- People with a health issue which means they consider they need an extra bedroom perhaps to sleep separately from a partner or so someone can stay overnight to support them in times of ill health.

12 Financial Implications

12.1 There are significant implications in terms of rent loss if people cannot afford to pay any shortfall in rent brought about by welfare reform.

12.2 There could be implications for the adaptations budget associated with moving people on from properties that have been specially adapted for them.

12.3 There could be implications for adult social services if people that receive support locally have to move away from that support so it can no longer be provided by friends and family.

12.4 There could be implications for social services children's service and increased demand for their service if reduced bedroom eligibility criteria means families do not receive the current levels of support they have been used to.

SECTION C WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD?

13 What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

13.1 Access to council housing is critically important for the people of Sheffield and planned consultation with residents including council tenants ensures local people have the opportunity to comment and contribute to changes that could be made.

13.2 Social housing is in great demand in Sheffield and therefore it is important that we ensure access, that council properties are let fairly and fulfil our legal obligations.

13.3 Responding to customer concerns about transparency and ease of process and meeting individual needs by giving people choice and control where possible over where they live.

- 13.4 Modern efficient organisation and effective resource management ensuring that the policy and accompanying procedures make the most efficient use of available stock.
- 13.5 Ensuring that the flexibilities available to the Council are fully utilised through allocations to support and sustain community development and contribute to neighbourhood regeneration, social inclusion and cohesion.

SECTION D RECOMMENDATION

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 The Committee is asked to:
 - a. Consider the consultation analysis reports and provide views and comments.
 - b. Consider the requirement to award members of the Armed Forces additional preference and how that should be applied in Sheffield.

**Allocations Policy Review
Consultation Report - Impacts of restricted bedroom eligibility and the
under occupiers' penalty
January 2013**

1. Introduction

What has changed?

Sheffield City Council has produced a draft Allocations Policy. It was developed following public consultation. The draft Allocations Policy sets out a more restrictive bedroom eligibility than the previous Policy. This means that some Housing Register applicants will be allocated properties with less bedrooms than they would be currently entitled to.

This is because Council housing in Sheffield is a more scarce resource than it was which means that we have think about how to allocate it most fairly. One way to do this is by reducing under occupancy. Under occupancy is where a property is not occupied to its fullest capacity. Bedroom eligibility has also been restricted as a result of national welfare reform. The under occupiers' penalty (or bedroom tax) will come into effect in April 2013. It will affect working age tenants of social housing¹. They will no longer receive Housing Benefit for bedrooms they are deemed not to require.

The draft Allocations Policy bases its bedroom eligibility on the Housing Benefit calculation of how many bedrooms are required. This means that, for example:

- A single person will only be eligible for an allocation of a one bedroom property
- A couple will only be eligible for an allocation of a one bedroom property
- A single person with overnight contact with a child or children will only be eligible for an allocation of a one bedroom property
- A couple or single parent with two children aged under 10 will only be eligible for a two bedroom property
- A couple or single parent with two children of the same sex aged under 16 will only be eligible for a two bedroom property.

Around 65% of existing tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit. We can also expect that this would be the case for a significant proportion of new social tenants (partly because around 30% of the Housing Register is made up of existing tenants). If the bedroom eligibility were to remain unchanged, we would risk setting new tenants up to fail. This is because they would experience a shortfall between their rent levels and the Housing Benefit they receive, and if they are unable to make up the difference themselves, it will

¹ Working age is likely to be 60 initially, but may rise to 66 in the future.

result in increased rent arrears. 65% of questionnaire respondents from the main consultation period (September 2011 – February 2012) thought that we should allocate the minimum number of bedrooms to meet housing need.

Who will be affected?

The change to bedroom eligibility in the Allocations Policy concerns Housing Register applicants. However, the under occupiers' penalty also affects existing social tenants who are under occupying and in receipt of Housing Benefit. It is estimated that around 5000 Council tenants will be affected.

We anticipate that the following groups of people will be particularly affected by both the restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty:

- People with overnight contact with children who don't live with them all of the time
- People with disabilities
- People with intermittent periods of ill health, including mental health issues
- People who are cared for by a resident carer, such as their partner.

Has any work taken place to assess the impact of the changes on these groups?

The Allocations Policy Review team carried out a scoping exercise in September-November 2012 to identify groups that will be particularly affected and to find out what the impacts are likely to be. This report considers the results of the scoping exercise, targeted consultation with affected groups and the services working with them, and other consultation responses received in November-December 2012. A questionnaire was produced for people who have overnight contact with children who don't live with them all of the time and people with health issues, and this is reported on separately. The responses detailed in this report are from:

- A Disability group
- A Learning Disabilities group
- Housing Equalities Group
- A carers' organisation
- SCC Adult Social Care, including Assessment and Care Management
- SCC Housing and Health
- SCC Equipment and Adaptations
- SCC Joint Learning Disabilities Service
- Sheffield Homes Area staff
- Tenant representatives
- Sheffield Health and Social Care, including Mental Health services
- Sheffield Law Centre
- An advice service
- Consultation responses from individuals.

2. Findings

Overnight contact with children

Tenant representatives, an MP and the Housing Equalities Group said that restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty are unfair on separated parents, and that it will be particularly difficult for people who have

50/50 shared access and for those who have several children. An advice centre suggested that there may be wider social impacts where children are not able to benefit from contact with both parents. Sheffield Homes area staff said that they expect lots of challenges where there is shared care or more than one child.

Services working with various vulnerable groups, including people with mental health issues and those who are in addiction recovery, pointed out that restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty will mean that it is more difficult to have children to stay, which is often an important factor in recovery.

An individual respondent who has overnight contact with children reported the need to share overnight childcare as the other parent works shifts. Another lives in a shared private rented property and had hoped to resolve this unsuitable situation by re-housing in the social sector. Tenant representatives also pointed out that this makes it difficult for grandparents who look after their grandchildren part of the time.

Children sharing a bedroom

Both individuals and services mentioned situations where siblings cannot share a bedroom, or where it would severely disrupt the sleep of one or both children to share. The types of situations mentioned include children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and/or Asperger Syndrome who can't sleep with others in the same room. It was also noted that children cannot share when one child has a through floor lift and is hoisted. Some families have two disabled children requiring lifts and hoists, and they cannot share, because there isn't space.

Sharing a bedroom with a partner

Tenant representatives said that sometimes there are medical reasons for people not to sleep in the same room and that this makes things very difficult for them. Various services said that disabled people may require a spare room for their partner to sleep in during periods of ill health. They said that sometimes a partner sleeps separately due to the noise made by medical equipment. Some couples are both wheelchair users, and it is generally not possible to accommodate two wheelchairs in the same bedroom.

A spare room for visitors

Tenant representatives said that tenants won't be able to have visitors to stay. Mental Health services said that having family members to stay is often an important factor in mental health recovery. Adult Social Care reported that some service users have family who live abroad and visit for a few weeks several times a year, providing support at those times.

Care and support

People with non-resident carers that provide overnight care will not be affected by the under occupiers' penalty if they have an additional bedroom for this. However, people who need care intermittently, temporarily and/or

who receive care through informal networks of support will be affected. This is one of the most significant areas of concern.

Tenant representatives said that resident carers need a spare room as well as non-resident carers. A carers' organisation also noted that where there is a resident carer, it is important to retain spare bedrooms so that further family members can provide support to the carer and cared-for.

A carers' organisation added that it is very common for informal/unpaid family carers who are not resident to stay overnight. Adult Social Care said that there are cases where family members provide overnight care and support only at weekends or for part of the year.

Mental Health services said that people with mental health issues often have a friend or relative to stay during periods of relapse, which may happen infrequently. They said that the changes will impact disproportionately heavily on BME groups who tend to rely much more on family and neighbourhood support.

There was also concern from services about people who need care while recovering from illness rather than being long-term disabled.

Equipment and adaptations

The need for room for storage or use of medical equipment has been raised on several occasions. Adult Social Care pointed out that many people with a long-term disability use a room for equipment, which could be a hazard if it has to remain in the hallway or living room. Some people on home dialysis need an additional bedroom to dialyse hygienically.

The Housing Equalities Group said that where adaptations have been made which make a spare room unusable, the tenant should not be penalised. Services mentioned concerns about what will happen to people who are under occupying but where adaptations have been made to their property.

Space

Tenant representatives said that smaller properties lack space for storage. Mental health services said that having less space will lead to feelings of confinement for some people with severe agoraphobia or social anxiety who rarely or never leave their home, and people who have been mistreated or tortured in prison, who have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. An advocate for people with autism said their client group may require an additional room so that they can cut themselves off from the world, which is essential to their mental wellbeing.

Impacts on individuals

'The choice of moving home or moving into poverty will be a very difficult one,' (Adult Social Care).

Many people discussed their anxiety about the under occupiers' penalty. Adult Social Care said to expect people's general wellbeing to be affected.

Several groups mentioned the financial difficulties and upheaval of moving, noting that some people can't afford to move.

Tenant representatives and a range of services said that where the only source of income is from benefits, the shortfall between their rent levels and the Housing Benefit they receive will be significant. Adult Social Care said that around one third of service users, those with the lowest disposable incomes, are not currently charged for their support and that if their housing costs increase, they will be worse off. A range of services working with vulnerable client groups, such as long-term disabled people and people with mental health issues, said that it would be very unlikely that under occupying tenants from these groups would be able to pay the shortfall themselves. The wider context of cuts to other benefits was also mentioned.

They said this means that if people do make up this shortfall themselves, they are likely to sacrifice some basics such as food, heating or social care services. An individual with a health condition said that they had cut back in every way possible but would still not be able to make up the difference. One service said that in a household with disabled children who cannot share, they may pay for the 'extra' bedroom, but the impacts elsewhere in their lives will be severe. For instance, they may then not be able to afford a car, and bearing in mind the children's disabilities, this may mean that they are no longer able to go out.

Tenant representatives said that where people can, they will do without something else to keep the extra room and not have to move. Adult Social Care said that where people are unable to make up the difference and have to move, they may lose out on family contact and care. Tenant representatives emphasised the importance of being able to have care from family.

Impacts on services

Adult Social Care expects to collect lower levels of contribution from people who have a personal budget. This is because if they are under occupying, their rent will increase, leaving them with less disposable income; which in turn means that they may contribute less (or not at all) to the cost of their support. The contributions are re-invested in Adult Social Care so this will be affected.

Adult Social Care also expects increased levels of anxiety and/or people not coping, which will have impacts on their service. Several services pointed out that if people cannot afford to stay where they are and have to move away from networks of care and support, the cost of their overall support from the state will increase.

A carers' organisation said if unpaid family carers are not able to stay overnight, many people would be unable to remain in their home: 'It seems you are penalising the very people you ought to be supporting.'

Mental health services said that it will drive more individuals into hospital or respite care who would otherwise be able to manage crisis episodes in their

own homes with support. Other services said that this will lead to increased hospital admissions and longer periods spent in hospital.

Tenancy sustainability

Tenant representatives said that some people have lived in a property all their lives and shouldn't have to move out. They said that the restricted bedroom eligibility within the Allocations Policy and the under occupiers' penalty put an end to council tenancies being for life.

Tenant representatives and the Housing Equalities Group said that this prevents people from planning ahead to when their household needs more room, and means that people will need to move more often. Tenant representatives added that not being able to re-register for two years after moving will make life additionally difficult for families who are no longer eligible for a larger property until their children reach a certain age. They also said that applicants should be able to move into a property that will continue to suit their needs, rather than having to move again soon afterwards.

The Housing Equalities Group said that it doesn't take account of other changes in household size, such as former household members moving back into the home.

Tenant representatives said tenancy sustainability and community cohesion will be affected by those who have had to move to a smaller property due to the shortfall between their rent levels and the Housing Benefit they receive, but that that property is not in the area where they have always lived.

Availability of smaller properties

A number of people had concerns about the availability of smaller properties in the face of high demand. Most do not want to move from the area they live in. Several noted that age restrictions limit choice even further.

How can we mitigate the adverse impacts of restricted bedroom eligibility and the under occupiers' penalty?

The draft Allocations Policy extends the existing priority for under occupiers to any downsizing, in order to help them to move more quickly should they need to. The bedroom eligibility allows for flexibility in exceptional circumstances, for instance where people have health and/or social care needs for an additional bedroom.

Suggestions

Some think that the bedroom eligibility within the Allocations Policy should retain an element of discretion or flexibility for certain groups, subject to the provision of affordability advice.

Several groups said that the Allocations Policy should accommodate circumstances that justify having a spare room, such as disability or access to children. A service that works to rehouse disabled families said that there needs to be wording in Policy about siblings who can't share. The Joint Learning Disabilities Service said that some people with a learning disability

and/or autism need an extra room. Mental health services noted that having an extra bedroom might be a sufficiently important factor in some people's recovery that they would choose to take a property with an extra bedroom, if they could afford it, even if it meant doing without something else.

Tenant representatives said that some people will be prepared to pay, and that people who can afford it should have the choice. They said that there should be the flexibility to allow people to have a spare room. Tenant representatives, the Housing Equalities Group and an MP said that people who are not in receipt of Housing Benefit should still be able to be allocated a larger property. A tenant group suggested that families with older children and children of different sexes should be prioritised over families with younger children or those with same sex children, but that all should be allowed to bid on larger properties.

An MP suggested that it would be fairer if people who have overnight contact with children could access maisonettes and flats, as now. They said that the restricted bedroom eligibility is unfair where someone wants to transfer from a two bed property to a property in another area, but would no longer be able to have two bedrooms. This is because they wouldn't be using a resource that they hadn't already been using. They asked whether the more restrictive bedroom eligibility could be reviewed in future.

A tenant group said that bedroom eligibility in the Allocations Policy should not be based on the Housing Benefit calculation of how many bedrooms are required, as this may change after a relatively short period, subject to the results of the next general election.

A Learning Disabilities group said that while the Allocations Policy should offer smaller properties to prevent people from being affected financially by the under occupiers' penalty, people should put their objections forward and also start gathering evidence about the impacts of benefits cuts. Similarly, a service working to rehouse disabled families suggested recording the impacts for the small numbers of families where siblings cannot share. Tenant representatives said that the Council needs to do more to oppose the under occupiers' penalty.

Tenant representatives said that perhaps downsizing should be one of the highest priorities. They also noted that people would be more willing to downsize from larger properties if they could still keep one spare room. They said that there is a need for help and support for people who are downsizing, including assistance with removals and disposal of furniture, and preferably, help with removal costs.

Tenant representatives also asked whether the Council can remodel properties to change their bedroom size.

Communication

Several groups expressed concerns about the communication of changes to Housing Benefit, and noted that a lot of people don't know about it. Some had received conflicting information from different sources.

Services raised the lack of certain guidance about where exceptions will be made, for instance, where siblings cannot share, where there is a need for room for storage of medical equipment, or where adaptations have been made to a property which is under occupied. Until they are clear about this, they do not want to raise anxiety with vulnerable service users.

A Learning Disabilities group said that people might be worried or surprised, and asked how people will be informed. They said that people need to be informed about the changes now. They added that some of the information being given out is very complex, and discussed the need for accessible, understandable information.

Sheffield Law Centre noted the need for very clear communication of the changes and the importance of distinguishing between the Allocations Policy and the under occupiers' penalty, as some people think that the Council is going to force people to leave their existing homes.

Tenant representatives said that proactive work is needed to identify those that are likely to accrue arrears and risk eviction. They asked for a further meeting to discuss welfare reform.

3. Conclusion

Most people understand the reasons for restricting bedroom eligibility, subject to there being flexibility where needed. The under occupiers' penalty presents more problems. Some of the biggest impacts of these changes will be experienced by people who have 50/50 shared access to children, or several children living with them part of the time; people with resident carers, intermittent and/or informal care or support arrangements; and both adults or children who would be severely affected by having to share a bedroom. Additionally, the under occupiers' penalty will have negative effects for people who can't afford to pay for an additional bedroom and can't afford to move either; and some people who cannot find a smaller property in their area of support or familiarity.

Introduction

The consultation questionnaire was designed to obtain an overview of the general public's views on how welfare reform and the Allocations Policy's stricter bedroom eligibility criteria would specifically affect:

- People with overnight contact with children who live with them some of the time.
- People who may want an extra bedroom for health reasons.

The questionnaire consisted of **32** questions and was split into **9 sections**. The 9 sections were:

- **Section 1: Welfare reform**
- **Section 2: Where you live now**
- **Section 3: Occupation of your home**
- **Section 4: Overnight contact with children**
- **Section 5: An extra room for your health needs**
- **Section 6: Looking for a property**
- **Section 7: The effects of welfare reform**
- **Section 8: About you**
- **Section 9: Closing comments**

The questionnaire was available online and could be accessed via:

- **Sheffield City Council Website**
- **Sheffield Homes Website**
- **Property Shop Website**
- **Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Homes Intranet**
- **Facebook**
- **Twitter**
- **Community Assembly Blogs**
- **Emails to applicants, external organisations and TARA groups**

The questionnaire was also available in paper format. This was available via:

- **Mail out to 2,300 Housing Register applicants.**
- **Mail out to people who answered the previous consultation questionnaire and said that they are disabled, or a household member is and who said they would be happy to be consulted further.**
- **On request by emailing or calling.**

It was advertised in the Property Shop paper. The questionnaire was also available on request in large print, Braille and translation.

This report looks at each question individually in the same structure as the questionnaire. Some questions analysed make reference to other areas within the questionnaire where there is a particular correlation or link. From the **144** responses we received, **not all** respondents answered all **32 questions**. This has been reflected in the breakdown of answers given within this report.

Summary

The key findings are:

- **144** responses were received, so this is a small sample.
- **71%** of respondents are male.
- **54%** of respondents are in receipt of Housing Benefit.
- **51%** of respondents are council tenants.
- **40%** of respondents said they are under occupying.
- **54%** of under occupying respondents are council tenants.
- **56%** of respondents on Housing Benefit said they can't afford to stay if their Housing Benefit reduces.
- **Council tenants** were the most likely to have someone who cares for them living with them some of the time.

Questionnaire Respondent Profile

We received **144** questionnaire responses - **73 (51%)** online and **71 (49%)** paper copies.

The respondents' profile is as follows:-

Gender	Number (%)
Male	71%
Female	29%

The number of **men (56)** who answered the questionnaire is significantly higher than the number of **women (23)**, which is not unexpected. This is because more men on the Housing Register are flagged as having overnight contact with children who don't live with them all of the time. **81% (2870)** of the **3536** questionnaire mail out, in respect of overnight contact with children that do not live with parents all of the time, was to men.

Age	Number (%)
16-24	8%
25-44	42%
45-65	45%
66-79	4%
80+	1%

Ethnicity	Number (%)
White British (English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish)	87%
Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) Groups	13%

Sexuality	Number (%)
Heterosexual	72%
Bi-sexual/Gay/Lesbian/Other	1%
Prefer not to say	5%
Not answered	22%

Tenure	Number (%)
--------	------------

Council Tenant	50%
Private Rented Tenant	14%
Living With Family Or Friends	12%
Housing Association Tenant	11%
Home Owner	10%
Supported Accommodation	1%
Homeless	1%
Other	1%

55% of respondents stated that **they or someone in their household had a disability.**

Section 1: Welfare reform

As part of the government's **welfare reforms**, they are introducing the **under occupiers' penalty** (or bedroom tax), which will come into effect in April 2013. It will affect **working age** tenants of social housing. Social housing includes council and housing association housing. Claimants with **more bedrooms than they need** will have their **Housing Benefit reduced**.

We wanted to find out how welfare reform will affect two groups of people in particular:

- Those who have **overnight contact with children** who don't live with them all of the time.
- Those with a **health issue** which means they consider they need an extra bedroom, perhaps to sleep separately from a partner or so someone can stay overnight to support them in times of ill health.

In order to find out how welfare reform would affect these two groups we asked the following questions:

Q1 Which of the two groups described above do you fit into?

91 (63%) respondents stated they have overnight **contact with children** who don't live with them all of the time, with **53 (37%)** stating they have **health issues** where they consider they need an **extra bedroom**.

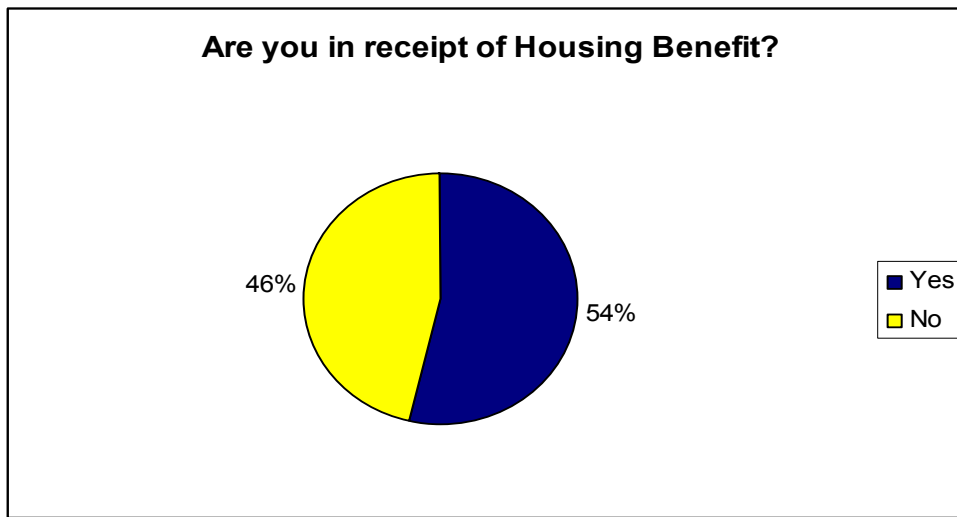
Issue	Number (%)
Overnight contact with children	63%
Health	37%

Section 2: Where you live now

We wanted to find out where people live now and whether **welfare reforms would impact** them.

Q2 Are you in receipt of Housing Benefit?

The table below shows how many of the respondents are in receipt of **Housing Benefit**.

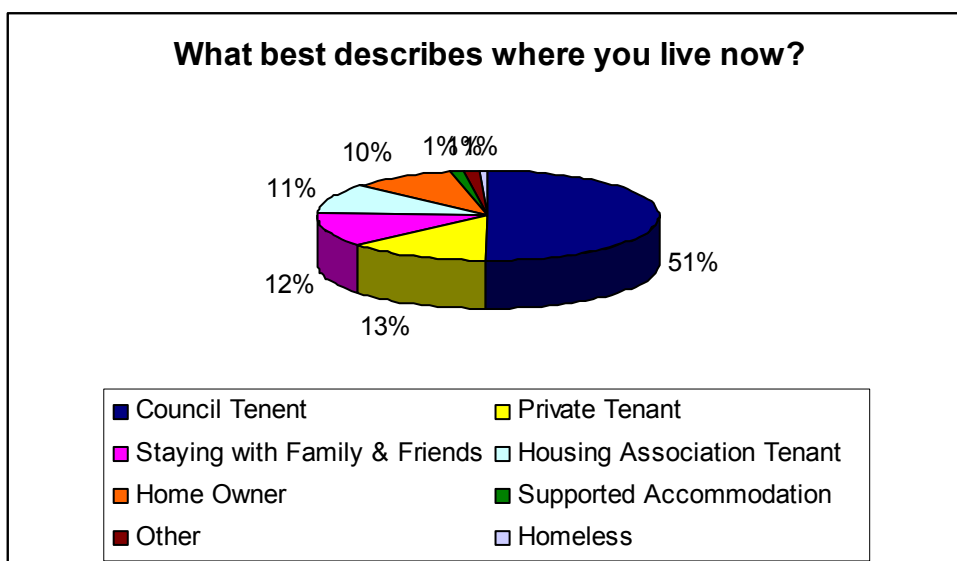


Of the **74** who said they are in receipt of Housing Benefit, **50** of these are on the housing register. The following table shows the tenure of the **50** respondents on the **Housing Register** and in receipt of **Housing Benefit**.

Tenure	Number on Housing Register and in receipt of Housing Benefit	Questionnaire Total
Council Tenants	30	71
Housing Association	7	15
Home owner	6	14
Living With Family/ Friends	5	17
Private Rented	1	19
Other	1	2
	50	138

Q3 What best describes where you live now?

51% of respondents are **council tenants**.



Q4 How many bedrooms does your property have?

The majority of respondents are currently housed in two bedroom properties.

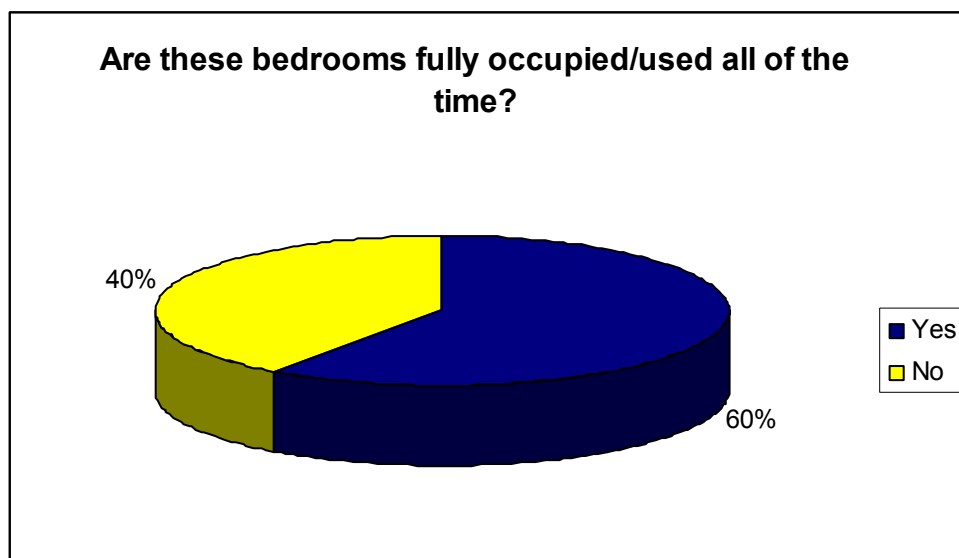


Section 3: Occupation of your home

This section seeks to ascertain how fully **occupied** the respondent's current home is and whether welfare reform will affect their Housing Benefit entitlement.

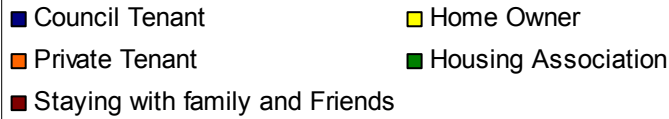
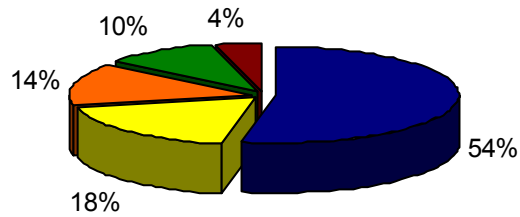
Q5 Are these bedrooms fully occupied/used all of the time?

40% of respondents said they have bedrooms that are not fully occupied all of the time.



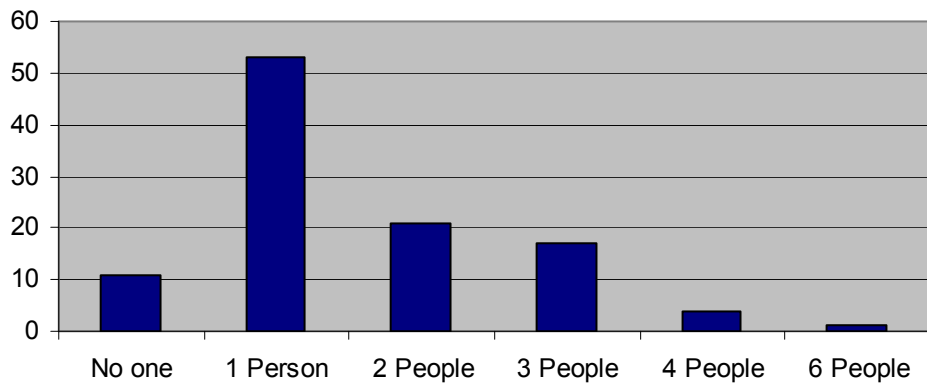
54% of under occupied properties are **council tenancies**.

Tenure of under occupied properties



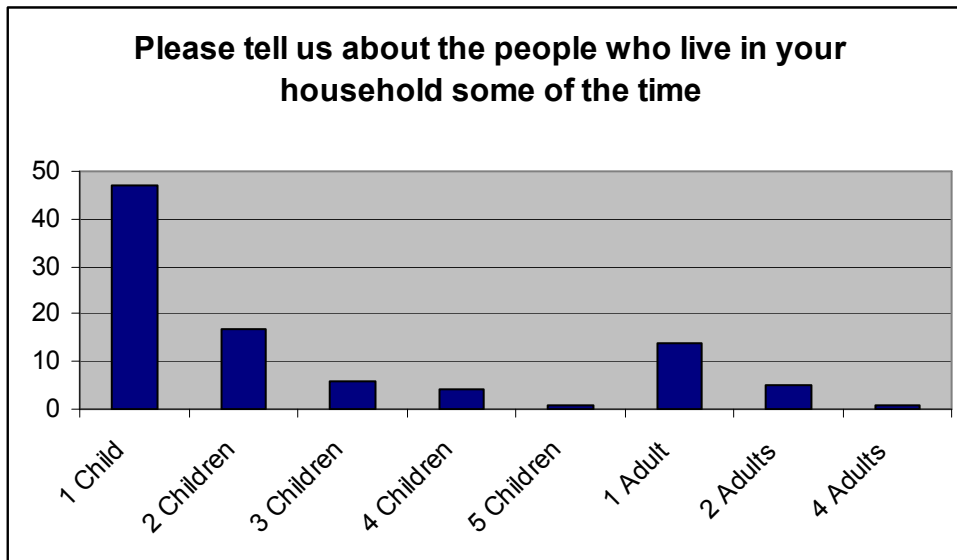
Q6 How many people live with you all of the time?

How many people live in your household all of the time?



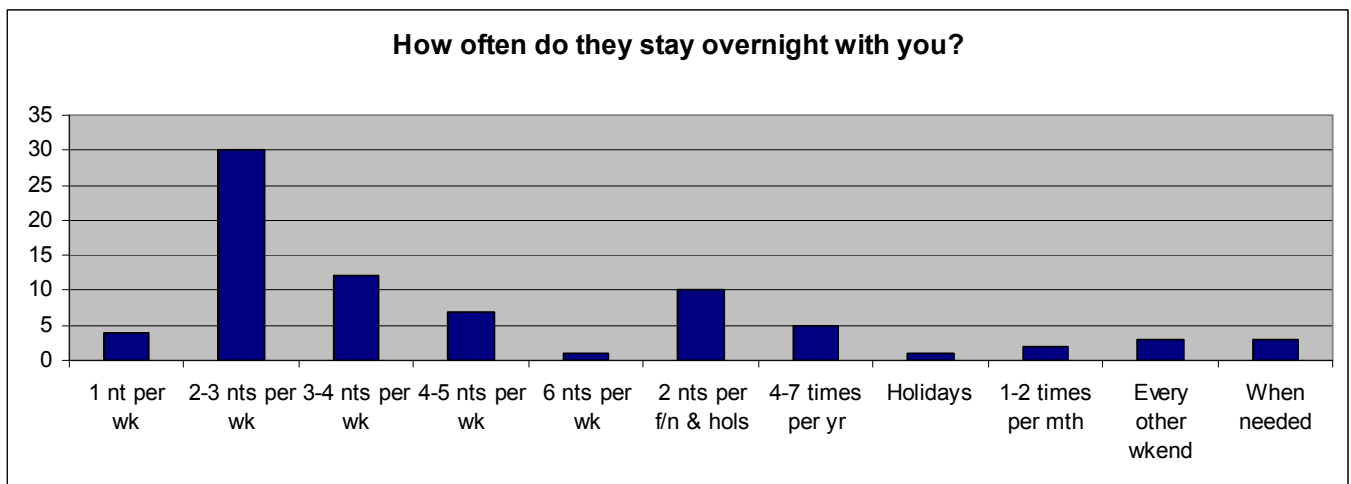
Q7 Please tell us about the people who live in your household some of the time?

The majority of respondents who have people that live in their household some of the time, have overnight contact with at least one child.



Q8 How often do they stay overnight with you?

The majority of respondents who have people that live in their household some of the time had someone staying with them at least two or three nights per week.



Q9 If you are a working age (16-64) social tenant in receipt of Housing Benefit, you may no longer receive Housing Benefit for bedrooms that are only used some of the time. Can you afford to stay in your current home if your Housing Benefit reduces?

74 (52%) respondents stated they are in receipt of Housing Benefit. Of these, **32 (43%)** respondents said that **not all of the bedrooms in their house are occupied all of the time**. Of these, **18 (56%)** said they could not afford to stay if their **Housing Benefit reduced**.

Comments made by the 18 respondents that perceive they would have to move include:

'This is a 3 bedroom house and I have one child with me on a permanent basis and two children of different genders aged 10 and 12 that stay 40% of the time. I feel that all three bedrooms are occupied and not spare rooms and I think this whole ruling should be reconsidered.'

'Their Mother takes care of them and their school needs most of the week therefore it is essential for her to have a break and it is my only chance to to spend sometime with them.'

'His mum has health issues and needs a break a couple of times per week.'

'Paternal grandparents care for my son because my health prevents me being a full time carer. My son would be extremely disstressed if he could not stay overnight.'

'I have a court order to have my daughter stay with me so I need a bedroom for her.'

'I am not happy to be forced into downsizing as I live in maisonette that has been adapted to suit my health/mobility issues.'

'My home is adapted to my needs as a wheelchair user. I have my community and my friends and support around me here. If I have to move, I may not find a property as suitable, plus the fact that I will be cut off from that support network if I am forced to move. I am also not able enough to pack and cart my belongings to a new property. I also could not take the stress of a move.'

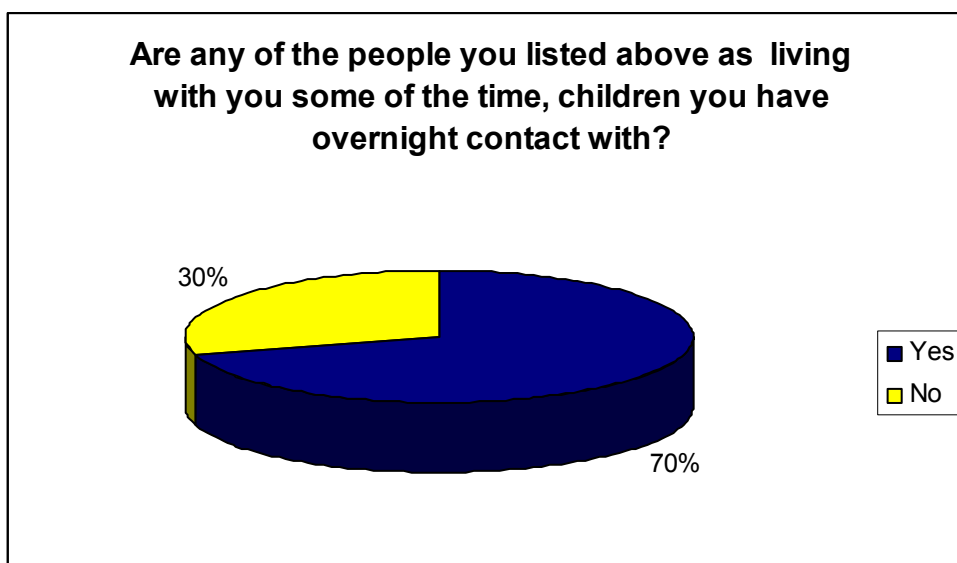
'It's depressing me because I will not move from Mosborough. I've been here nearly 30 years and I have so much help from friends and neighbours and I would lose this.'

Section 4: Overnight contact with children

This section gives an idea of how many people have **overnight contact with children** that don't live with them all of the time and how **losing bedrooms** might **impact on the family**.

Q10 Are any of the people you listed above as, living with you some of the time, children you have overnight contact with?

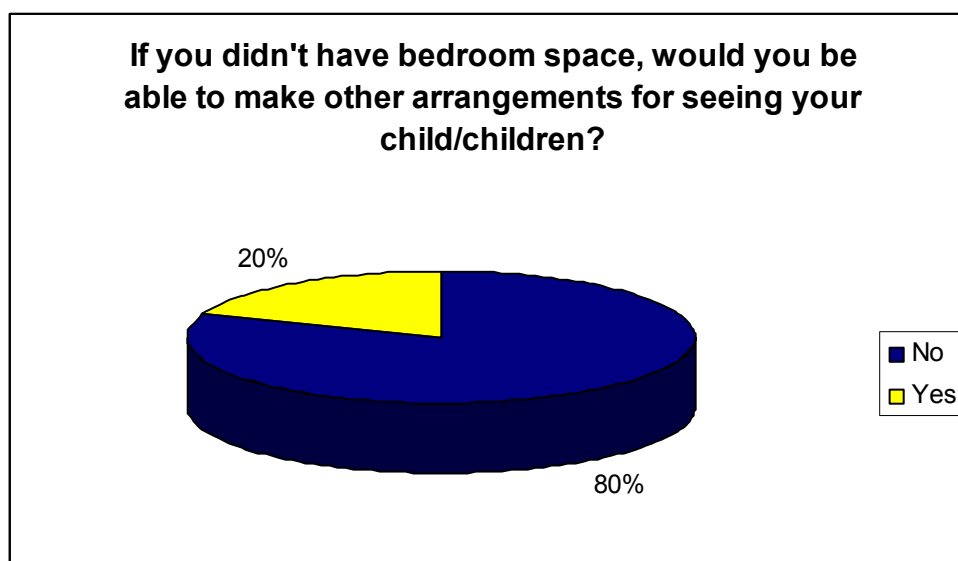
70% of respondents that have people living with them some of the time confirmed these were children they have overnight contact with.



The **25-44 age groups** were far more likely to answer **yes** to this question.

Q11 If you didn't have bedroom space, would you be able to make other arrangements for seeing your child/children?

80% of respondents who have overnight contact with children said if they didn't have this bedroom space they wouldn't be able to make other arrangements for seeing their children.



If you said yes, please tell us what these arrangements would be.

'They could come to the house but have to back home at night.'

'I would only see them for one day a fortnight as there would not be anywhere to sleep.'

'Sofa bed or floor!'

'I would only be able to see them during the day and not have them stay overnight.'

'I could see her at her own home or at my mother's.'

'I would see my children but just one day a week, they would not be able to stay overnight.'

Q12 How will these changes affect your children's other parent (i.e., the children's mum or dad not having a break because you can't have them for the night?)

'My stepdaughter's mum would have no freedom, this is her opportunity to socialise when our child comes to stay.'

'It will cause a lot of stress.'

'I will not see my son and grandson.'

'The children will suffer.'

'It would make it even more difficult for my son to find work and then keep a job.'

'My daughter's father would be more impatient and short tempered with my daughter.'

'They will not be able to come so I won't see them.'

'Their Mother takes care of them and their school needs most of the week therefore it is essential for her to have a break and it is my only chance to spend sometime with them.'

'His mum has health issues and needs a break a couple of times per week.'

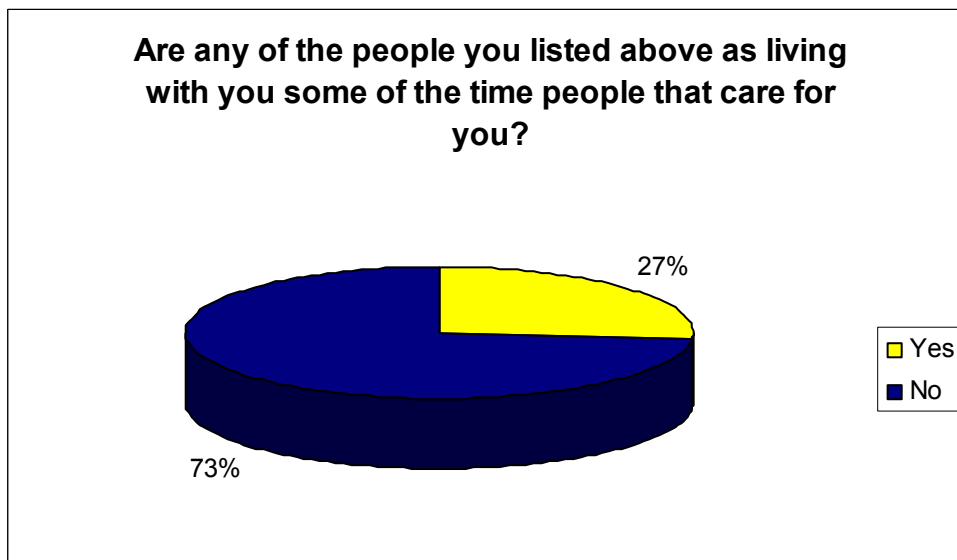
'Child's mother needs break as son got ADHD'.

Section 5: An extra bedroom for your health needs

This section seeks to help us understand the **possible impacts** of welfare reform on people with **health needs** who currently have a spare bedroom they utilise to help manage their health.

Q13a) Are any of the people you listed above as living with you some of the time, people that care for you?

27% of respondents that said they have people living with them some of the time said these are people that care for them.



The **45-65** age group were the most likely to have **someone who cares for them living with them some of the time**.

Age Group	Yes (number)	Yes (%)
16-24	1	1
25-44	7	10
45-65	10	14
66-79	1	1
80+	0	0

Council tenants were the most likely to have someone who cares for them living with them some of the time.

Tenure	Yes (number)	Yes (%)
Council Tenants	8	11
Private Rented Tenants	2	3
Home Owners	3	4
Living With Family Or Friends	2	3
Housing Association Tenants	3	4

Q13b) Can you tell us how often they stay overnight to care for you and why?

Some people said that they have overnight care **most nights**, or **two to three nights a week**, or **most weeks**. Most said that it varies, depending on their health needs, and is provided on an ad hoc basis. Reasons varied from physical help due to a long-term health condition or recovery from an operation, to support for people with severe mental health issues, some of whom said that they are likely to become dangerous and/or suicidal without care. Some people have family that care for them but live outside Sheffield and need to be able to stay overnight.

Q14 If you do not need an extra bedroom for a carer, can you tell us what else you use the extra room for?

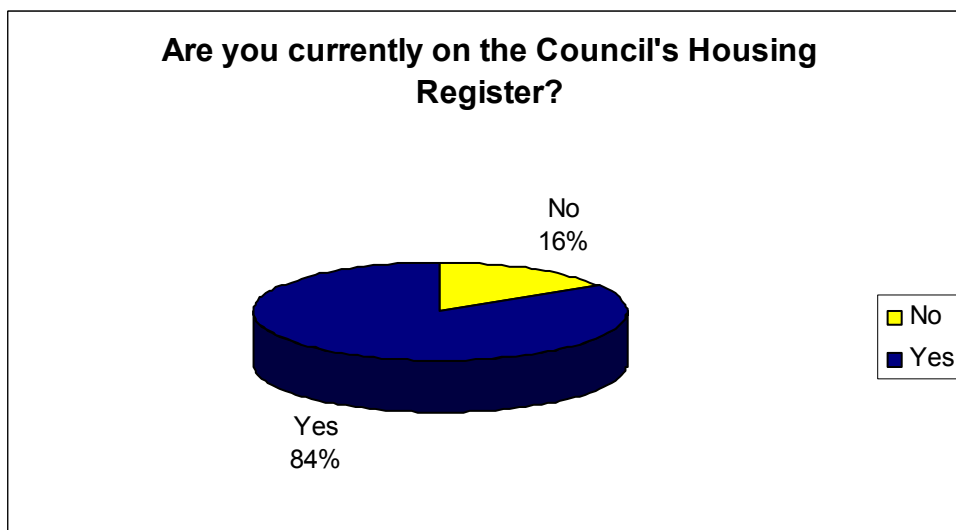
Several people are cared for by a partner who lives with them and uses the room. Reasons for this include that the partner who is cared for has to have a special type of bed and there is no room for another bed in that bedroom.

Section 6: Looking for a property

This section gives an overview of how many of the respondents are **looking for a property**, and if so, what type of property they want and whether they can afford an extra bedroom than they will receive benefit for.

Q15 Are you currently on the Council's Housing Register?

84% of respondents stated that they are on the Council's Housing Register.



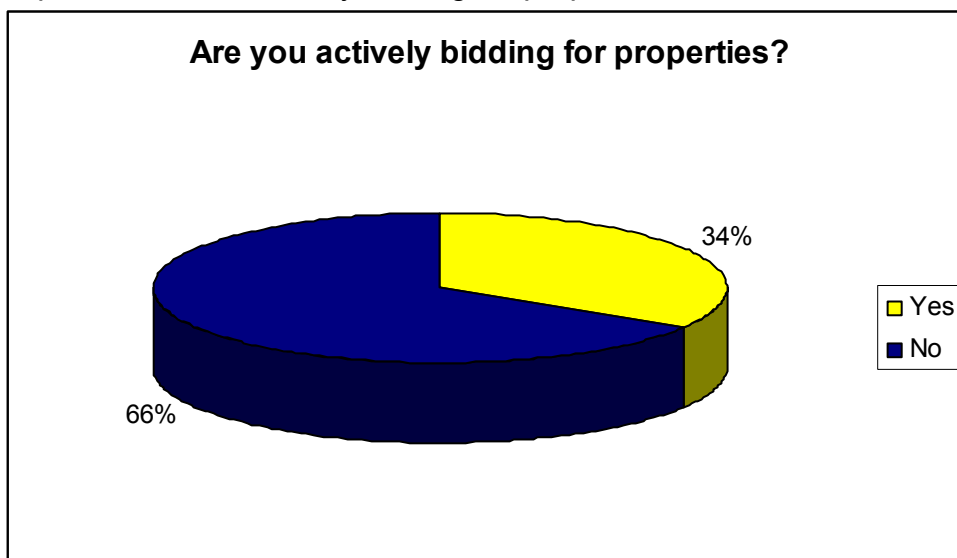
The following table shows a breakdown, by housing tenure, of the **99** respondents who **are** on the Housing Register and disclosed their tenure:

Tenure	Number
Council Tenants	49
Housing Association	11
Home owner	10
Living With Family/ Friends	13
Private Rented	12
Other	2
Supported Accommodation	1
Homeless	1
	99

49% of **Council tenants** who responded said they are on the **Housing Register**. This is higher than any of the other tenure types.

Q16 Are you actively bidding for properties?

Only **34%** of respondents are currently bidding for properties.



The **25-44** age group is most likely to be bidding for properties.

Age	Number	%
16-24	4	11%
25-44	20	56%
45-65	11	30%
66-79	1	3%
Total	36	100%

Q17 How many bedrooms are you bidding for?

The majority are bidding for two bedroom properties.

Number of bedrooms	Number of respondents bidding
1	4
2	31
3	9
4	2
1-2	7
2-3	2
Total Number Bidding	55 (38%)

Q18 Could you make up the shortfall in rent if you are bidding for more bedrooms than you will receive Housing Benefit for?

39% said they wouldn't be able to make up any shortfall in Housing Benefit.

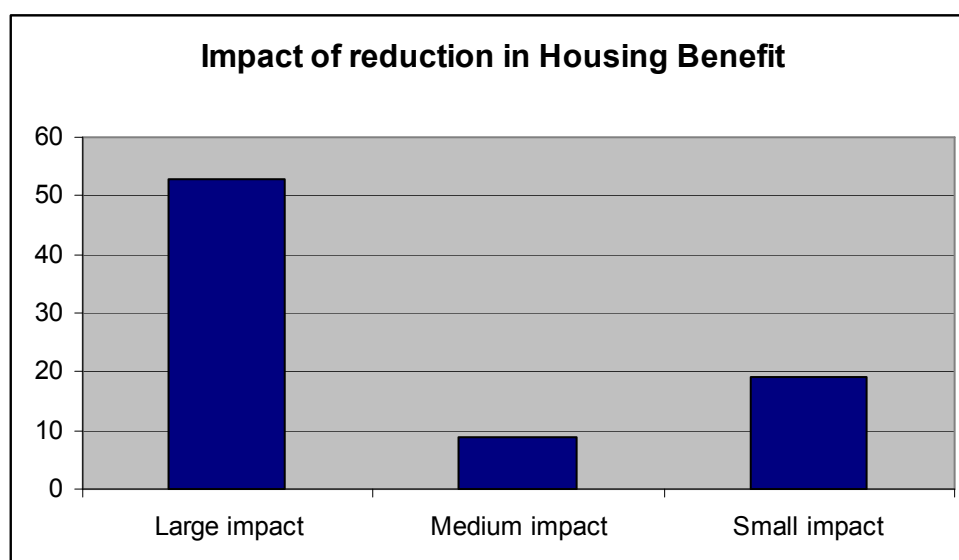
Yes	45 (61%)
No	29 (39%)

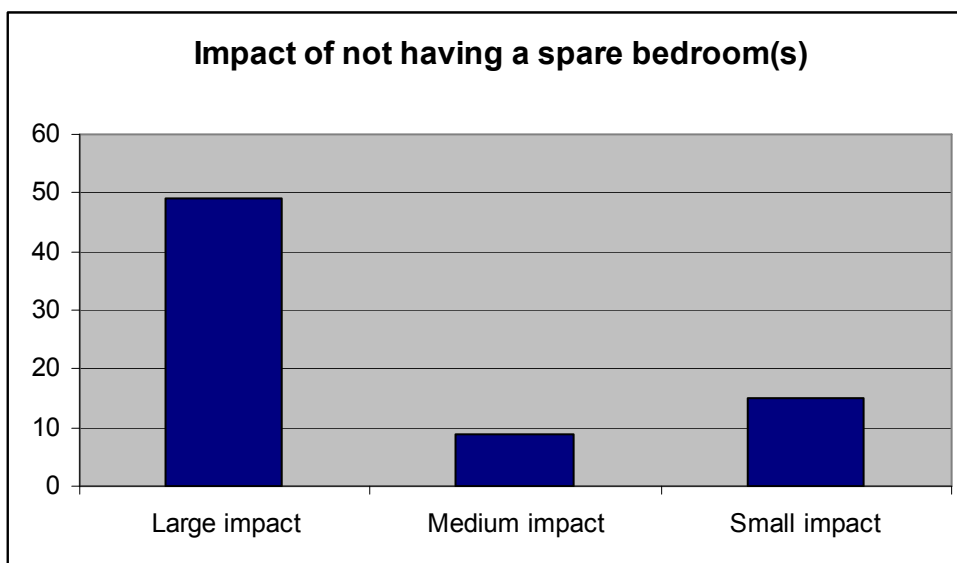
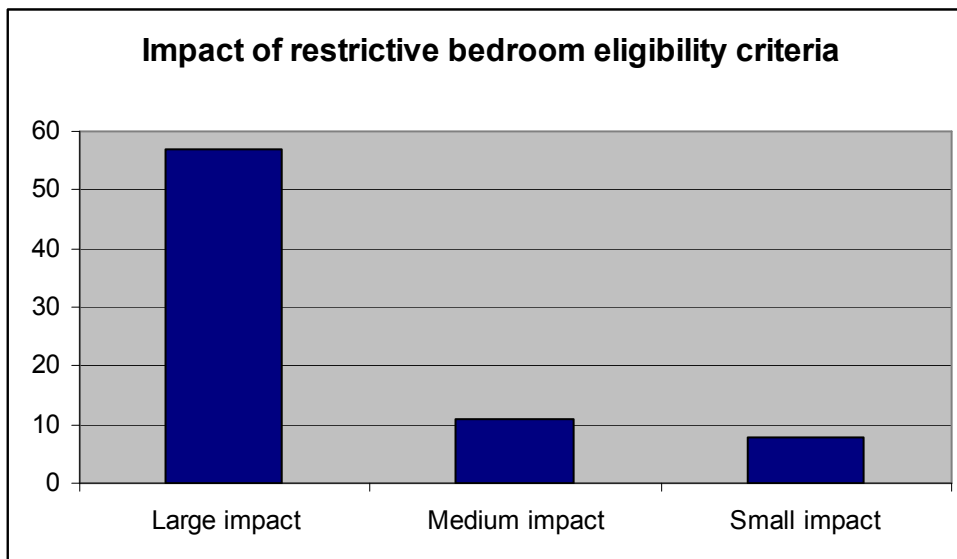
Section 7: The effects of welfare reform

The section asks respondents to identify how **large the various impacts will be on them** in terms of reduction in Housing Benefit, the more restrictive bedroom eligibility criteria set out in the draft Allocations Policy and not having a spare bedroom.

Q19a How will the reduction in Housing Benefit, the more restrictive bedroom eligibility set out in the draft Allocations Policy and/or not having a spare bedroom(s) affect you?

The majority of respondents reported that the impacts would be high for them in each of the three areas.





Q19b Why is this?

77 respondents told us more about the impacts that this will have. 38 responses were about having **contact with children**. Many mentioned the need for a spare room so that their child or children can live with them part of the time. 18 people said their children couldn't stay, or it would be very difficult for them to stay, if there was no spare room. Several mentioned the detrimental effects of this for either their children or themselves:

'no bedroom .. no kids // harms the kids that want to live with dad rather than mum.'

'[it] will restrict the time we have together'

'...my depression will worsen and my daughter means so much to me.'

'...a teenage girl shouldn't have to share a floor with her teenage brothers.'

Travelling time and the need for children to stay overnight because their other parent lives elsewhere was also mentioned.

16 respondents talked about financial impacts and said that they would not be able to afford to pay for an additional bedroom, or would struggle to afford other things,

'I wouldn't be able to afford bus fare to collect my daughter or provide for when she stays with me...My daughter cannot sleep in a room with me now as she is too old.'

15 responses were about health issues and care. Most of these mentioned the intermittent need for care. Some people live at a distance from family who care for them, who need to stay overnight.

'I have a 32 year old son who stays to keep an eye on me when needed. How can I expect a 32 year old to share a bedroom with his mother? And how could I ask a man of 6'4 to sleep on a couch?'

The importance of regular contact with family to combat isolation was noted. One respondent said that older carers may have health issues themselves, making it difficult to stay overnight without a spare room.

Some respondents mentioned the need for extra space for medical equipment, or said that their home had been adapted to meet their needs. The difficulties of moving home and moving away from support networks were raised. Several respondents said that they need a separate bedroom from their partner for health reasons. Some also care for their partner.

'My husband and I can't always sleep in the same bedroom because he has a heart condition (triple bi-pass) and I have diabetes which makes my legs swell and I can't stay still in bed. The bedroom is not big enough for us to have twin beds and store all the equipment we need'.

'My husband has health issues and does not sleep well. He is constantly in and out of bed during the night...This disturbs my sleep so I sleep in the other bedroom. I need my rest as I have to take care of my husband and my elderly mother during the day.'

Four respondents said that they like to have an additional room so that family can visit, including adult children and grandchildren. Other effects included not being able to plan ahead for a growing household and lack of space for children to play, and storage of possessions.

Q20 Do you have any ideas or suggestions that could help? For example in our new draft Allocations Policy, we are extending the down sizing priority to help people who are under occupying to move to a smaller property, to avoid running up rent arrears.

'Architects need to build bigger rooms so people can have separate beds and get all equipment they need in the bedroom if they want people to stay in one bedroom together. My brother has had to sleep on the settee for ten years because his wife has the bedroom and all her equipment takes the rest of the room up.'

'I think you should let people that are over working age have a larger property if they can afford it.'

'Stop age banding or at least review it, e.g., upstairs flats for over 60s aren't being taken because they can't walk upstairs.'

'Build more houses.'

'Ensure that all new build properties for older people are two reasonable sized bedrooms i.e., at least 10ft square and that ground floor properties are allowed pets!'

'It makes sense that people with large property with unoccupied rooms downsize and allow larger families to occupy properties with more rooms to accommodate people who require the extra space.'

'Offer more furnished/part furnished options especially to the elderly. Moving home can be overwhelming and they would appreciate some help. I would think the elderly are the bulk of the under occupiers. Offer to carpet and paint the property. Keep age banded properties if you want to encourage the elderly to move from a house to a flat. Couples with health issues should be allowed a bedroom each.'

'I also object to the decision by the government to exempt OAPs from this legislation. If it's one or two people in a three bed, it's under-occupied whether they are under pension age or over. In fact, OAPs are more likely to be rattling round an oversized home. I feel the exemption should apply to people who have disabilities to.'

'Pay for carpet, painting and the cost of a move.'

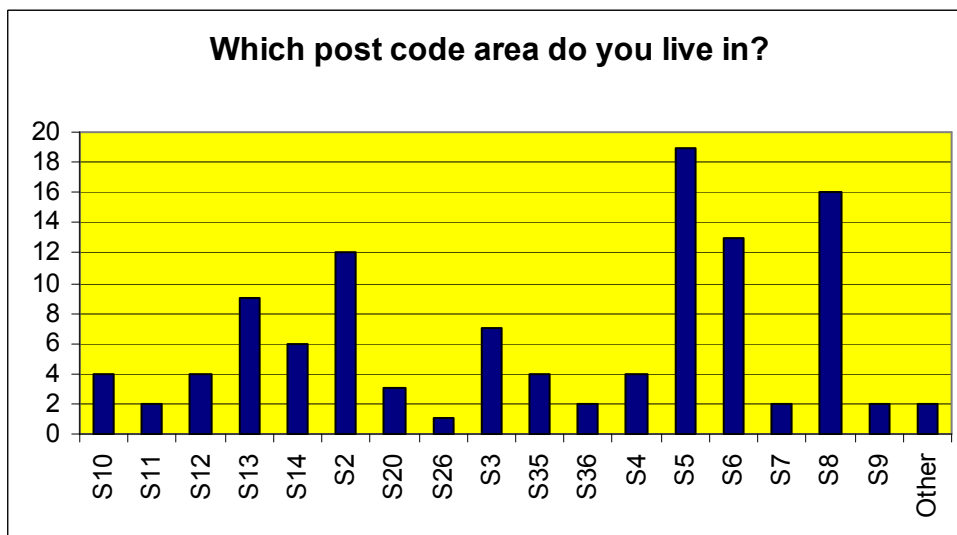
'Put more emphasis on exchanging.'

'Target the people that have no reason to live in a large expensive property.'

Section 8: About you

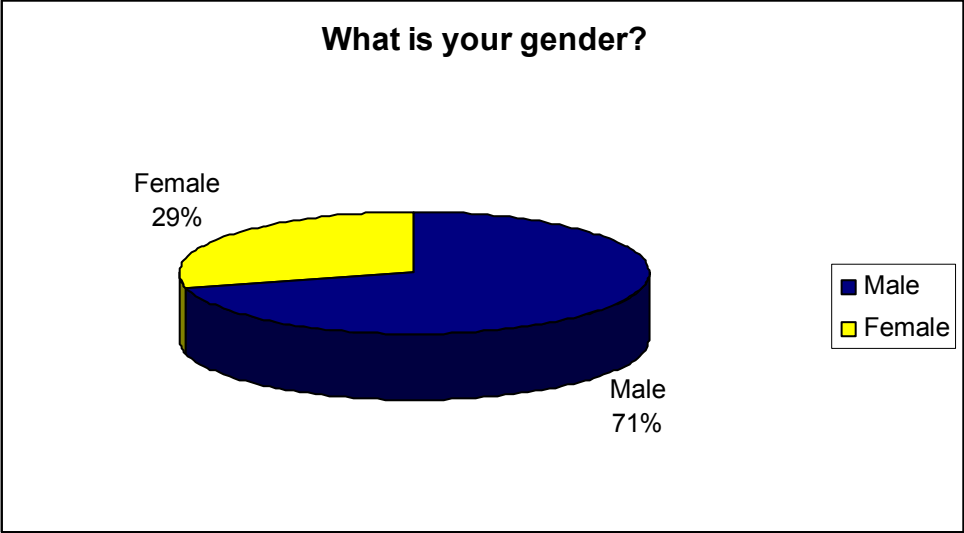
The following section provides **demographic** and **equalities information** about respondents.

Q21 Which post code area do you live in?

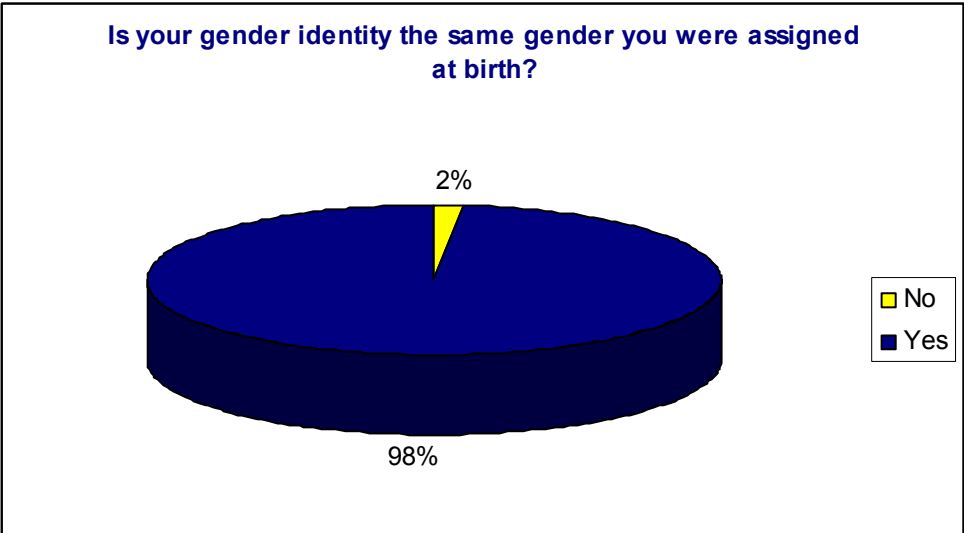


Q22 What is your gender?

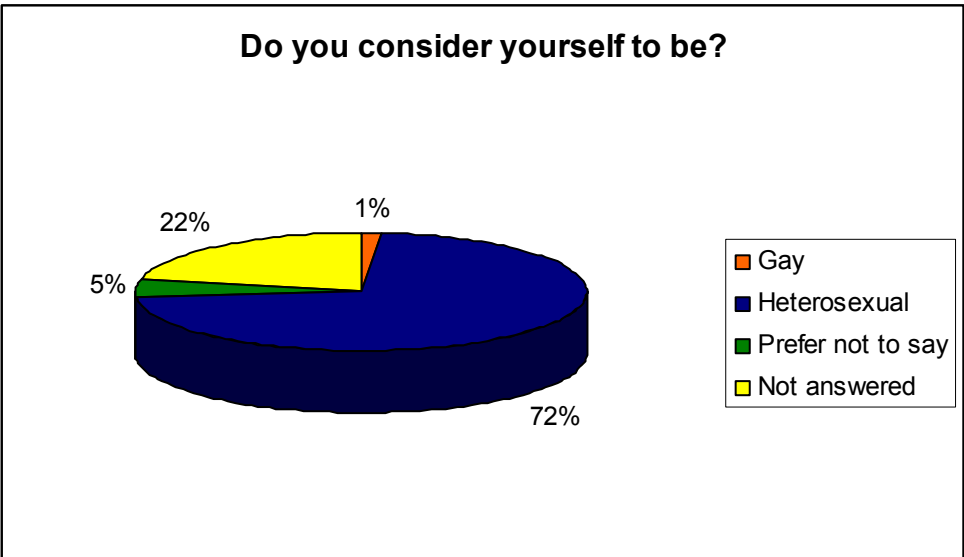
A much higher proportion of men answered the questionnaire than women. **81** out of **114** respondents are **male (71%)**. This compares to **33** out of **114** who are **female (29%)**.



Q23 Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?



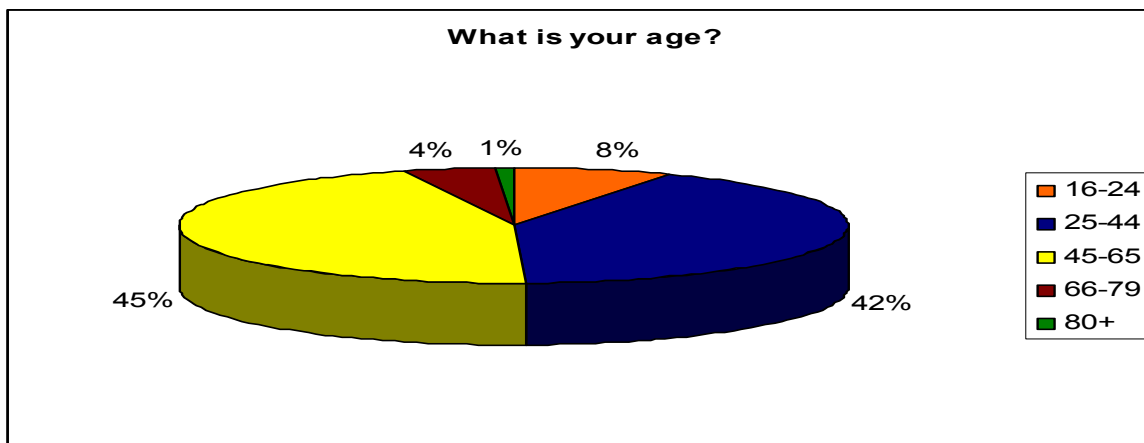
Q24 What is your sexuality?



People who are **lesbian, gay and bi-sexual (LGB)** are estimated to make up between **5%-7%** of the UK population.¹

Q25 What is your age?

The impacts of the welfare reforms being explored in this questionnaire affect those of working age; the majority of responses were from people of working age, as shown below:



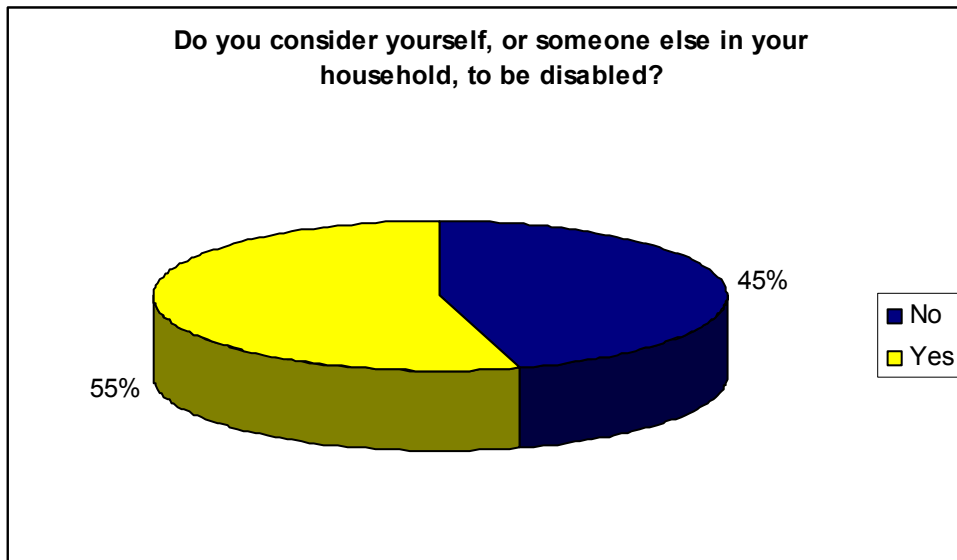
Q26 Do you provide regular and substantial care to anyone?

Who?	Yes (number)	Yes (%)
Child/ren	36	67
Relative (e.g. disabled child, partner, parent etc)	12	22
Both	6	11
Total	54	100

Q27a) Do you consider yourself, or someone else in your household, to be disabled?

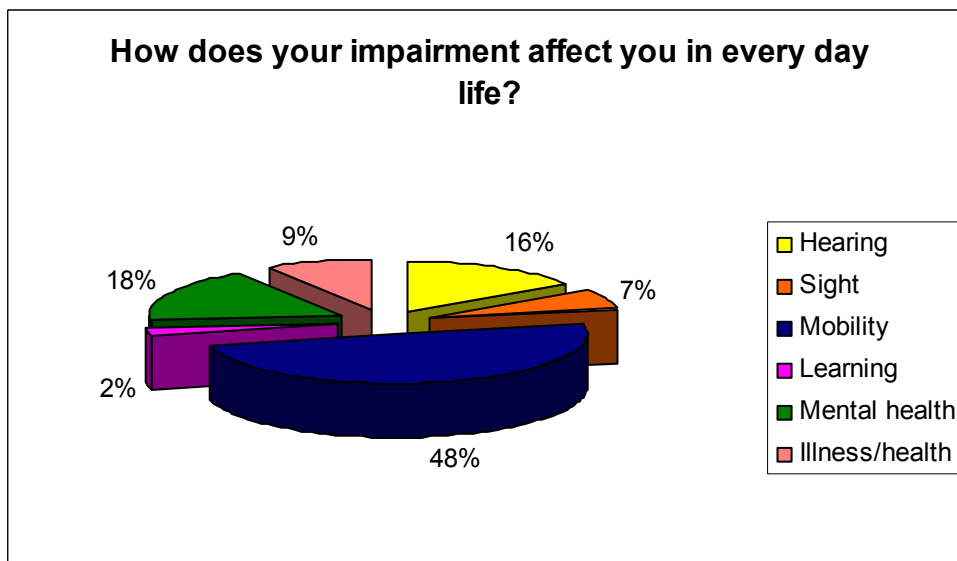
55% of respondents consider themselves or someone in their household to be disabled.

¹ Sheffield First Partnership



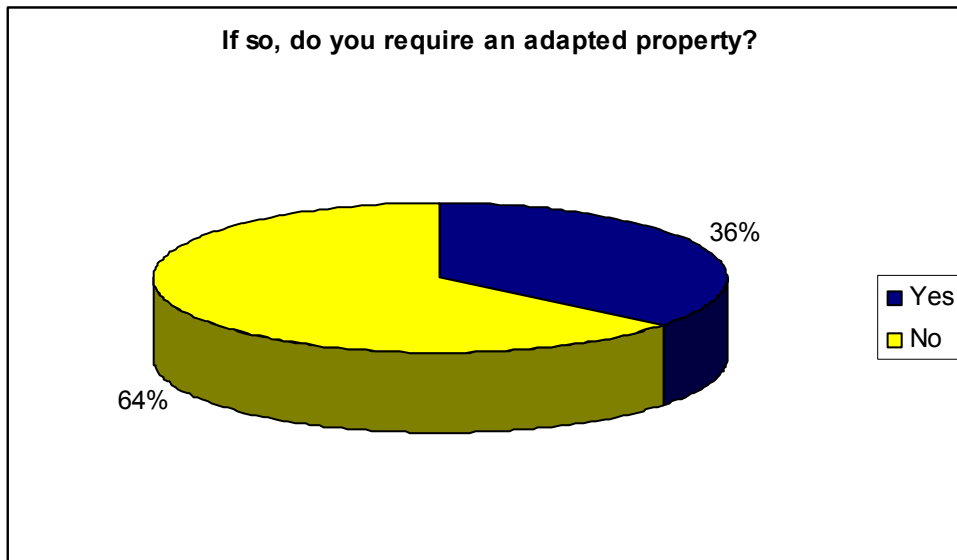
Q27b) If so, how does your impairment affect you in everyday life?

Responses were mainly split between those with physical disabilities and those with mental health issues:



Q27c) If so, do you require an adapted property?

Out of the **60** respondents that stated they or someone in their household had a disability, **19 (36%)** answered **yes** to requiring an adapted property, with **34 (64%)** answering **no**. (**7** did not answer this question).

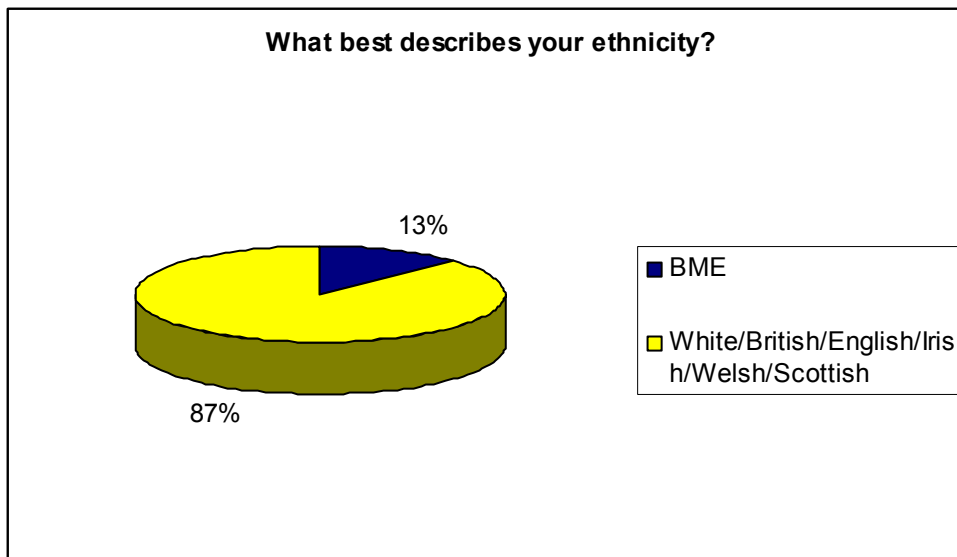


Q28 What is your language preference?

Of those that answered this question, **5** stated a language preference other than English. These included:

- Irish
- Kurdish
- Slovakian
- Somali
- Writing (deaf respondent).

Q29 What best describes your ethnicity?



The **BME** population in Sheffield is approximately **17% (2009)**.²

² Sheffield First Partnership – State Of Sheffield Report 2012

Section 9: Closing Comments

This section gave respondents the opportunity of adding anything and helped us identify whether there were responses from any organisations that might express the opinions of any particular groups.

Q30 If you would be happy for us to contact you about your answers please leave your contact details below.

44 (31%) of the 144 respondents left further details for us to contact them.

Q31a) Are you representing an organisation when completing this questionnaire?

Organisation Representation	%	Total
Yes	2%	2
No	98%	108
	100%	110

Q31b) If so which organisation?

Organisation	Total
Manor Children's Centre	1

Q32 Do you have any other observations, comments, ideas or solutions you can add?

The final question provided respondents the opportunity to add any additional thoughts and comments. This provided a varied response and emphasised some thoughts and feelings that had been previously been touched on. Below is a selection of these:-

'I think this reform will cause some hardship and a good deal of stress to a lot of people but in the long run it is fair - people who cannot afford to pay rent should have ADEQUATE housing provided but not the luxury of spare rooms. Why should others subsidise them beyond their needs? They have to realise that if they want more they must make more effort to earn it!'

'It's not fair that benefit is being reduced for men with access to their children.'

'To emphasise, I need the extra bedroom for my sons weekly overnight stay and rest for grandparents.'

'I would be glad to downsize if I could get a bungalow or a ranch style flat in the areas I require.'

'I don't agree with any of this, I have a daughter with access, this is hindering my life and my daughter's right to spend time with me, I feel punished for having a child! This isn't on!'

'If we cannot afford to live in large houses in our preferred areas then it's right, in times of need, to relocate to where I can afford. This is life! Some, who have special needs or

who have adapted their homes may need special care - but they are few and not the norm.'

'Forcing older people from the home they have occupied for many years is unfair. Build the houses needed to place younger people in the homes they deserve. Tenants of social housing landlords have no control over the mass demolition of houses in good serviceable condition. The government should fix the problem they have created by building to replace what they destroyed.'

'The government's changes are going to punish the most vulnerable in society. Non resident parents will lose contact with kids, disabled people will be forced into less suitable properties. It's unfair and discriminatory.'

Disabled people are been driven into poverty. The whole system is in tatters!'

'Allocations should be based on need and staff need to investigate fully any situation so people can not abuse the policy.'

'Not fair system for single parents whose children do not live with them.'

'I don't want to change my property as this house has been adapted inside and out for my needs and I need my daughter to be with me to help care for me.'



Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee 10th January 2013

Report of: Executive Director, Communities

Subject: The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan update 2013/14 with a focus on welfare reform as a key risk

Author of Report: Liam Duggan

Summary:

This report provides a summary of the key changes influencing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan update for 2013/14 and focuses on welfare reform as a key risk to the business plan.

Resources and forecast efficiencies arising from the decision to bring council housing delivery in-house from 2013 together with an anticipated reduction in capital financing costs, primarily as a result of access to more attractive interest rates means that the forecast long term financial position of the plan has improved and new investment can be planned.

Cabinet will consider investment proposals for making use of this additional spending power on 16th January 2013. The Cabinet report will be available online from 8th January 2013 and the Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity to discuss and comment on these proposals at its meeting on 10th January.

In the HRA Business Plan 2012-17, welfare reform is identified as the single biggest policy risk to the business plan. It is also consistently high on the agenda of tenants when consulted on council housing priorities.

The business plan set aside resources in order to support tenants through the changes and minimise the impact on the HRA.

Since the business plan was published in January 2012, further detail has emerged about welfare reform and its implementation. This detail has helped the Council revise its estimate of the likely impact of welfare reform on the HRA and council tenants. The current assessment is that welfare reform will have a greater impact than previously thought.

As part of the update report, Cabinet will consider directing additional resources to supporting tenants through welfare reform when it meets on 16th January 2013. Whilst these proposals are yet to be considered by Cabinet they are being provided early to the Scrutiny Committee in this report in order to provide for discussion and feedback.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	x
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	x
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

The Scrutiny Committee is asked to discuss and feed back their views with regard to the proposals for additional support to tenants through welfare reform which are due to be considered by Cabinet on 16th January and are set out in this report.

The Scrutiny Committee is also asked to provide feedback and comment on the wider HRA Business Plan update report for 2013/14 which will be considered by Cabinet on the 16th January and will be in the public domain from the 8th January.

Background Papers:

Report to Cabinet, *Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2012-17*, 25th January 2012

<http://meetings.sheffield.gov.uk/council-meetings/cabinet/agendas-2012/agenda-25th-january-2012>

Category of Report: **OPEN/CLOSED** (please specify)

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan update 2013/14 with a focus on welfare reform as a key risk

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the key changes influencing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan update for 2013/14 and focuses on welfare reform as a key risk to the business plan.
- 1.2 Resources and forecast efficiencies arising from the decision to bring council housing delivery in-house from 2013 together with an anticipated reduction in capital financing costs, primarily as a result of access to more attractive interest rates means that the forecast long term financial position of the plan has improved and new investment can be planned.
- 1.3 Cabinet will consider investment proposals for making use of this additional spending power on 16th January 2013. The Cabinet report will be available online from 8th January 2013 and the Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity to discuss and comment on these proposals at its meeting on 10th January.
- 1.4 In the HRA Business Plan 2012-17, welfare reform is identified as the single biggest policy risk to the business plan. It is also consistently high on the agenda of tenants when consulted on council housing priorities.
- 1.5 The business plan set aside resources in order to support tenants through the changes and minimise the impact on the HRA.
- 1.6 Since the business plan was published in January 2012, further detail has emerged about welfare reform and its implementation. This detail has helped the Council revise its estimate of the likely impact of welfare reform on the HRA and council tenants. The current assessment is that welfare reform will have a greater impact than previously thought.
- 1.7 Cabinet will consider directing additional resources to supporting tenants through welfare reform when it meets on 16th January 2013. Whilst these proposals are yet to be considered by Cabinet they are being provided early to the Scrutiny Committee in this report in order to provide for discussion and feedback.

2. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

- 2.1 Council housing is an important aspect of the Council's housing strategy. The Council owns approximately 41,200 homes that are home to over 48,000 Sheffield people as tenants.
- 2.2 Council housing makes a contribution to tackling poverty and financial inclusion in the city through the delivery of investment and services to some of the city's poorest residents.
- 2.3 Welfare reform will mean reduced household incomes for some tenants in receipt of benefits and tax credits. This is likely to result in more people getting into financial difficulties, increased reliance on illegal money lenders and legal high interest money lenders, more people being at risk of eviction, higher volumes of sanctions, higher rates of arrears and higher levels of homelessness.
- 2.4 Each of the changes proposed by government through the welfare reform

will have specific impacts on certain individuals and families. However, there will also be a cumulative impact of these changes as a significant number of individuals and families will be impacted by more than one of the changes.

3. Background

- 3.1 From April 2012, all Local Authorities with retained stock in England moved from a national subsidy system of council housing funding to a new system of local 'self-financing'.
- 3.2 The introduction of self-financing has been positive for Sheffield as it has meant more resources for council housing than under the old subsidy system.
- 3.3 However, self-financing has brought with it a transfer of risk and responsibility from government to the local authority. This also includes new risks for the HRA including interest rates and cost inflation.
- 3.4 In January 2012 Cabinet approved the Council's first business plan for council housing under the new self-financing arrangements.
- 3.5 The key themes in the 2012-17 Business Plan were efficiencies where possible and investment which reduced costs or optimised income over the long term.
- 3.6 All planned activity in the business plan was considered affordable over the 30 years but financial challenges remained. These were:-
 - High volumes of backlog repairs were delayed until the later years of the plan
 - The plan was unable to make provision to pay off debt in full over 30 years
 - A number of items could not be funded so were not built into the 30 year plan e.g. refurbishment of communal areas
- 3.7 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduces government's proposals for reforming welfare to improve work incentives, simplify the benefits system and tackle administrative complexity.
- 3.8 In the HRA Business Plan 2012-17, welfare reform was identified as a key risk to the business plan. Estimates were made and factored into the business plan about what the changes in welfare reform would mean for Council tenants and for the HRA.
- 3.9 Because of its high risk, financial provision was made in the business plan for mitigating the effects of welfare reform. Provision was made to fund additional staff for the Income Management Unit Team, a specialist debt worker based at the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Smart Move scheme (previously grant funded).

4. HRA Business Plan 13/14 Update

- 4.1 The first business plan for the HRA under the new self financing arrangements was approved in January 2012. In this first year of 'self financing' it has not been necessary to undertake a wholesale review of the policy choices set out in the original business plan.
- 4.2 However, since the business plan was published, a small number of key

factors have had a significant impact on the plan. These factors have been the focus of the review in 2012 and the focus of the Council's conversation with tenants.

- 4.3 The significant factors which have changed since the original business plan was published can be split into factors that improve and factors that have a negative impact on the financial outlook of the plan.
- 4.4 Key factors **improving** the financial outlook of the plan:
- The Council's separation of HRA debt from General Fund debt as part of the transition to 'self financing' gave the HRA greater opportunity to take advantage of cheaper borrowing than originally forecast.
 - The decision to bring the delivery of Council Housing in house from April 2013 has been accompanied by efficiency savings. This will also result in the Sheffield Homes reserve being absorbed into the HRA.
- 4.5 Key factors **negatively** impacting the financial outlook of the plan:
- The Government has changed the Right to Buy policy. This sees the maximum price discount to tenants increase, the ring fence of any additional receipts to new affordable housing and requires that if they are to be retained locally these receipts must be matched by new resources at a ratio of 30 (receipts):70 (new resources).
 - The Council's developing understanding of the likely impact of welfare reform is resulting in higher than originally forecast arrears.
- 4.6 All original planning assumptions and targets in the original business plan have been reviewed and where necessary updated for 2013/14.
- 4.7 The net impact of all the changes is that the forecast long term financial position of the plan has improved and new investment can be planned.
- 4.8 A report to Cabinet proposing what new investment activity is prioritised in the business plan will be tabled on 16th January 2013 with the report available online from **8th January 2013**. The Scrutiny Committee will have the opportunity to comment on this at its meeting on the 10th January.
- 4.9 The report to Cabinet will also include proposals to provide additional support to tenants through welfare reform. Whilst these proposals are yet to be considered by Cabinet they are being provided early to the Scrutiny Committee in this report in order to provide for discussion and feedback. These are set out in section 7.

5. Welfare Reform and the HRA

- 5.1 The key risk to income and the single biggest policy risk to the business plan overall continues to be welfare reform.
- 5.2 The Welfare Reform Act introduces many changes that will affect working age council tenants who claim benefits. Last year approximately £77m rent was paid in housing benefit. Of this approximately £44m (57%) of that benefit was paid to working age tenants.
- 5.3 The most significant risks in relation to welfare reform arise from the introduction of Universal Credit, which will be paid direct to tenants of working age, and the linking of household size to Housing Benefit eligibility. Universal Credit will start from October 2013 for new claimants and will be phased in by 2017. Housing benefit eligibility linked to household size

comes into operation in April 2013.

- 5.4 Initial attempts to quantify the risk associated with welfare reform and establish mitigating actions were made in the original business plan. These estimates have now been reviewed, updated and uplifted based on the Council's developing understanding of the Government's proposals.
- 5.5 The proposed elements of welfare reform that pose a risk to the HRA have been identified and further analysis has provided the Council with an estimated impact on arrears each elements is likely to have. These are summarised in the table below.

ELEMENT	WHEN IMPLEMENTED	ESTIMATED IMPACT ON ARREARS
Child benefit rates frozen for 3 years	from April 2011	LOW
An increase in non-dependent deductions	from April 2011	LOW
Restricting the amount of housing benefit for under occupiers	from April 2013	HIGH
Council Tax Reform	from April 2013	HIGH
Benefits cap (£350 p/w for single people and £500 p/w for families)	from April 2013	LOW
Universal Credit paid direct to the tenant (not the rent account)	from Oct 2013	HIGH

- 5.6 The major assumptions that affect the calculation are:
- The Government's timetable for implementation will not be delayed and they will not dilute their original proposals.
 - Current employment opportunities mean most tenants affected will remain on benefits and continue to struggle on a lower benefit income.
 - Large numbers of tenants affected could choose to spend Universal Credits on other outgoings rather than their rent.
 - The number of weeks non-payment before the Council can secure direct rent payments – based on the assumption of 8 weeks (however this could be 4, 8 or 12 weeks but do not know at this time).
 - The percentage of rent arrears caused for every £1 lost in household income through loss of other benefits has been estimated at 15% or 1/7th
- 5.7 Gross rent arrears at the end of 2011/12 were £9.6m. Forecasts arising from the most recent calculation are that arrears levels will rise by an amount significantly more than budgeted in the original business plan for the period to 2017/18.
- 5.8 There is also a risk that when the new Universal Credit regulations are announced some charges could cease to be eligible for housing support.
- 5.9 Welfare Reform will also affect other HRA costs such as transaction costs, payment card costs, eviction costs and housing management costs.

6. Existing support to tenants

6.2 Support is already provided to council tenants to help them to pay their rent through a range of actions including:

- The promotion of a rent payment culture including promotion of cost effective payment methods, in particular Direct Debit, through regular campaigns, advertising and prize draws.
- An in-house debt prevention team supporting tenants with money management, budgeting, financial education, benefits and debt advice.
- Promotion of Home Swapper and the Smart Move schemes
- Working in partnership with the Citizen Advice Bureau Debt Support Unit, the Credit Union and other partners to ensure the Council's support to tenants is joined up.
- An independent debt advice worker to provide early intervention debt advice to tenants
- Working in partnership with a number of employment support agencies to help unemployed tenants who are looking to get back into work.

6.3 The 2012-17 HRA Business Plan sets out how additional resources would be directed to the support of tenants to pay their rent from 2012/13 in light of the welfare reform proposals. These included;

- Additional staff for the Income Management Unit Team (preventative & arrears work)
- The continuation of the Smart Move scheme (previously grant funded).
- An established medium term budget to fund a specialist debt worker based at the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

6.4 Other work in 2012 to provide support to tenants through welfare reform has included;

- A comprehensive communication strategy (including letters, home visits, local radio etc) to ensure that tenants and active bidders on the rehousing list understand the welfare reform changes and how they could be affected. This has included working with other housing providers in Sheffield and South Yorkshire on joint communications and sharing best practice.
- Briefing Tenants and Residents Associations on all aspects of welfare reform changes so they can support tenants in their areas.
- Consideration of the Welfare Reform underoccupation rules as part of the Allocations Policy Review including specific proposals to extend priority rehousing to tenants under occupying 2 bed dwellings.
- Reviewing the rent arrears policy and procedures in order to ensure the implications of welfare reform are taken into account when dealing with tenants who fall into arrears.
- Supporting tenants affected by the welfare reform to apply for Discretionary Housing Payments.
- Working closely with other council departments to ensure a joined up approach to welfare reform and consideration of the wider implications

for the city, including involvement in the local assistance and council tax support schemes.

- Working with the voluntary sector to support tenants affected by the welfare reform changes including investigating the possibility of budgeting accounts for tenants with the Sheffield Credit Union.

7. Additional support for tenants in 2013/14

7.1 A key priority for the 2012-17 HRA Business Plan was to begin work on mitigating the potential impact of the Government's welfare reforms and to start work on this early.

7.2 Since the original business plan was published, further detail has emerged on the Government's welfare reform proposals and the Council now has a better understanding of the potential impacts on tenants and the HRA.

7.3 It is proposed that from 2013/14 additional resource is allocated to the support of tenants through welfare reform. This is because

- Latest assessments suggest the impacts of welfare reform are likely to be more severe than initially forecast.
- Providing support to tenants is a continuing high priority emerging from tenant consultation.
- The costs associated with specific proposals for supporting tenants through welfare reform are becoming clear.

7.4 Each of the mitigations as set out in the update report to Cabinet (to be tabled 16th January 2013) are presented below, together with a brief overview of what each would involve.

7.5 a) Visiting affected tenants (*fast-tracked - already underway*)

Social landlords are stressing the importance of face to face contact with tenants when explaining the Government's welfare reform changes to tenants. They say that tenants report they had not understood the changes until they were explained in person. Therefore additional staff have been recruited so that every tenant affected by the benefits cap and the under occupancy rules can be visited at home by April 2013 when the changes come into force. Initially this was targeted at tenants who will see a reduction in benefits paid from April 2013 and those tenants who are claiming housing benefit and who are under occupying their properties. The intention is to visit all those affected to support and advise customers what their options are and help them make informed decisions.

7.6 b) Training on welfare benefits for staff

The welfare reform changes are large scale and complex. It is proposed that the staff of the Income Management Unit is provided with training on the reforms to enable them to better signpost tenants to claim appropriate benefits.

7.7 c) Support for under-occupying customers who wish to move

In addition to the downsizing support offered through the Smart Move scheme, it is likely that more practical support with moving home (van, utilities, carpets etc) would be beneficial to tenants concerned about the implications of the under-occupancy rules on housing benefit. The cost of

providing this additional support will be factored into the business plan.

7.8 d) Payment methods

The Council will look to increase the use of alternative payment methods such as direct debits and jam jar accounts to mitigate the risk associated with direct payments to rent accounts ending under the Universal Credit. A jam jar account is a type of account that helps customers manage their money. The cost associated with administering these schemes would need to be funded and these costs will be factored into the business plan.

7.9 e) Hardship Fund

The Council will consider the benefits and viability of establishing a limited (HRA) fund that could be accessed by council tenants who are at severe risk of eviction. This would complement the Social Fund which transfers to the City Council from the Department for Work and Pensions in April 2013.

7.10 f) Increased funding to the CAB Debt Support Unit for another specialist debt worker

This would allow a further 150 tenants to be supported each year to help tenants manage and reduce debts, reduce the number of legal actions taken and improve the sustainability of tenancies.

8. Next steps

- 8.1 The HRA Business Plan 2012-17 update for 2013/14 will be reported to Cabinet on 16th January 2013.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to discuss and feed back their views with regard to the proposals for additional support to tenants through welfare reform which are due to be considered by Cabinet on 16th January and are set out in this report.
- 9.2 The Scrutiny Committee is also asked to provide feedback and comment on the wider HRA Business Plan update report for 2013/14 which will be considered by Cabinet on the 16th January and in the public domain from the 8th January.

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Report to Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee 10th January 2013

Report of: Derek Martin

Subject: Housing Strategy 2013-23

Author of Report: Georgina Parkin, Manager Housing Strategy and Policy

Summary:

The new ten year housing strategy will set out Sheffield City Council's (SCC) approach to housing in all tenures and in all areas of the city. Its action plan will be refreshed every three years to make it responsive to the local and national housing landscape but will be guided by the overarching themes and priorities of the strategy. This report is being presented at the request of the Scrutiny Committee to help scrutinise SCC's future strategic approach to housing in Sheffield.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	✓
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

Consider the 10 year Housing Strategy and its first three year action plan and provide comment on their content prior to cabinet approval.

Background Papers:

Housing Strategy 2013-23
 Housing Strategy Action Plan 2013-16
 Housing Strategy Performance Indicators
 Housing Strategy 2013-23 EIA
 Strategic Housing Review Report
 Housing Strategy Consultation Findings

**Report of the Director of Derek Martin –
Housing Strategy 2013-23**

1. Introduction/Context

- 1.1 It is widely recognised that Sheffield faces a number of significant challenges where housing plays a pivotal role. Some of these challenges are already being addressed by the Council and its partners, whilst others challenges are expected to develop as national policy is implemented.

The strategy sets out Sheffield City Council's (SCC) approach to housing in all tenures and in all areas of the city, and will be supported by a series of action plans. These will be guided by the overarching themes and priorities of the strategy but refreshed every three years to make the plans responsive to the local and national housing landscape.

There is no statutory duty to produce a housing strategy but the new housing strategy will help our partners, funders and residents understand our housing ambitions for new and existing homes in the city and for the housing services provided for Sheffield's residents. In addition, it will enable them to consider and develop their own opportunities to deliver this shared vision. The report is being presented at the request of the Committee for their comment.

2. Main body of report, matters for consideration, etc

2.1 Consultation

Extensive consultation has been carried out on the priority issues for the new Housing Strategy. The consultation highlighted a wide range of issues and concerns; some of these were strategic and policy focussed, some were about how the Council delivers its services, and some were about access to housing and how the city's residents are affected by the area and house in which they live.

The consultation ran between March 2010 and May 2012. Equality and accessibility considerations were taken into account throughout the consultation and some groups that were under represented in the consultation feedback were given additional opportunity to get involved.

2.2 Housing Priorities

The feedback from this consultation has fed directly into the identified priorities in the draft Housing Strategy, as set out in Sections 2.3 and 2.4 below. The 10 most important issues highlighted from the consultation are shown below:

- a. Provide more affordable homes to rent and buy
- b. Improve the quality of Sheffield's neighbourhoods.
- c. Increase support to help people remain independent in their own home, including provision for older people.
- d. Give people a greater say in decisions on housing and provide opportunities to empower our communities to help them thrive.
- e. Help young people to obtain and run a home
- f. Promote cohesive communities, including reducing anti-social behaviour and improving our response to it.
- g. Improve the condition of the private rented sector and the standard of service provided to tenants living in the sector.
- h. Reduce the carbon footprint of the city's housing stock.
- i. Make best use of our existing stock, including reducing the number of empty homes in the city and the impact that these have on our communities.
- j. Improve the quality and range of homes in the city.

The 10 housing priorities above span a range of housing issues and particularly mention helping the younger and the older members of our communities. The priorities also include wider neighbourhood concerns such as anti-social behaviour and the quality of our homes and neighbourhoods.

2.3 Strategic Housing Review

- 2.3.1 The feedback gathered from Sheffield's communities and key stakeholders has allowed the Council to gain a better understanding of the housing issues that residents view as being most important to them. In order to establish how the Council and its partners could work towards progressing these priorities and take account of national and local changes, a Strategic Review of housing in Sheffield was undertaken.

The review highlighted that the current housing landscape will be significantly impacted by:

- Changes to the age and mix of Sheffield's population
- The government's financial and (relatively untested) policy changes, which will need to be fully implemented before their impact is known and properly understood
- The overall economic climate and its effect on slowing housing growth and access to finance
- The impact of government policies, such as the Localism Act, changes to the Planning Act
- Welfare benefit reform, which is going to have a significant impact on housing choices, creating some complex problems for predicting population growth and migration, household formation, and true demand for housing and housing services
- Councils working with reducing finances, making it increasingly important for resources to be effectively targeted and intelligence led.

- 2.3.2 The Strategic Housing Review considered the changes to funding for housing activity. Since the last strategy was developed many sources of funding which were used to support housing activity across the city and across tenures are no longer available.

The Council still has the challenge of finding solutions for legacy schemes where funding has been withdrawn early, and in funding activities to improve the quality of homes within the private sector. However, there is now government commitment to address the need for greater housing supply, and 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 into use.

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

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

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. Therefore in the new housing strategy the issues have been grouped under the themes of '**Great Places**' and '**Sustainable Communities**'. These chapters of the Housing Strategy have been summarised in the sections below.

2.4 Content of the Strategy

2.4.1 Great Places

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. The physical intervention priorities to help us achieve this are described in the strategy, and set out under the following headings:

- Enabling housing development and increasing housing supply
- Improving the mix and range of homes
- Making best use of existing stock

2.4.2 Sustainable Communities

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. Our approach to supporting independent living is set out in the housing strategy and describes how we will ensure that our resources help deliver the following outcomes:

- Improving health and wellbeing

- Helping young people to live independently
- Helping vulnerable and older people to live independently

2.4.3 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report or the Housing Strategy. Any legal implications arising from individual projects or activities set out in the Action Plan will be considered when they are reported for approval in accordance with the Leader's Scheme of delegation.

2.4.4 Financial Implications

There are a number of changes in the sources of funding which underpin the targets set out in the Housing Strategy Action Plan. However, this report does not commit the Council to any spending plans. Instead it will be used to inform the allocation of resources in the forthcoming Business Planning process for 2013-14 and beyond.

2.4.5 Equality Implications

The Housing Strategy outlines our belief that 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. It also acknowledges 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. The Housing Strategy therefore sets out our broad approach to meet this ambition whilst reflecting the current policy and investment landscape in which we are operating, and the levels of investment and resources available.

2.4.6 Environmental Implications

Our intention to make the best use of existing stock in the city is described in section 2.9 of the Housing Strategy and includes our priorities for reducing the city's carbon footprint and for reducing the risk of cold related illnesses as a result of fuel poverty. Individual projects arising from this housing strategy will assess their individual environmental implications as part of future approval processes.

3. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

- 3.1 Work to develop the new Housing Strategy has established clear priorities for the Council and for Sheffield residents. Based on these priorities the Housing Strategy sets out how the Council and our partners can best use investment and resources over the long term to bring maximum benefit to Sheffield's residents.

The new Housing Strategy will ensure that housing investment will support the Council's strategic outcomes, in particular the Great Place to Live and Safe and Secure Communities outcomes.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 That the Committee provide views and comment on the housing priorities identified in the Housing Strategy.

4.2 That the Committee provide views and comment on the actions identified in the Housing Strategy Action Plan

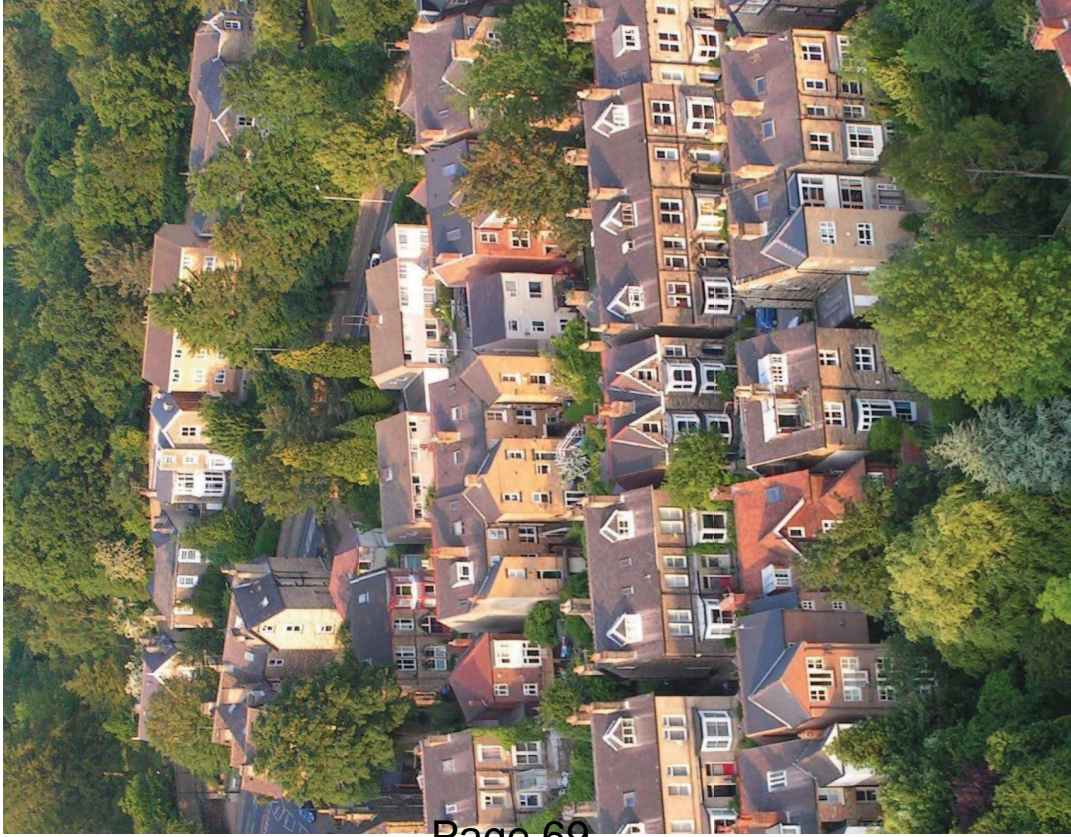
Sheffield City Council

Draft Housing Strategy, 2013—2023



**Our vision is 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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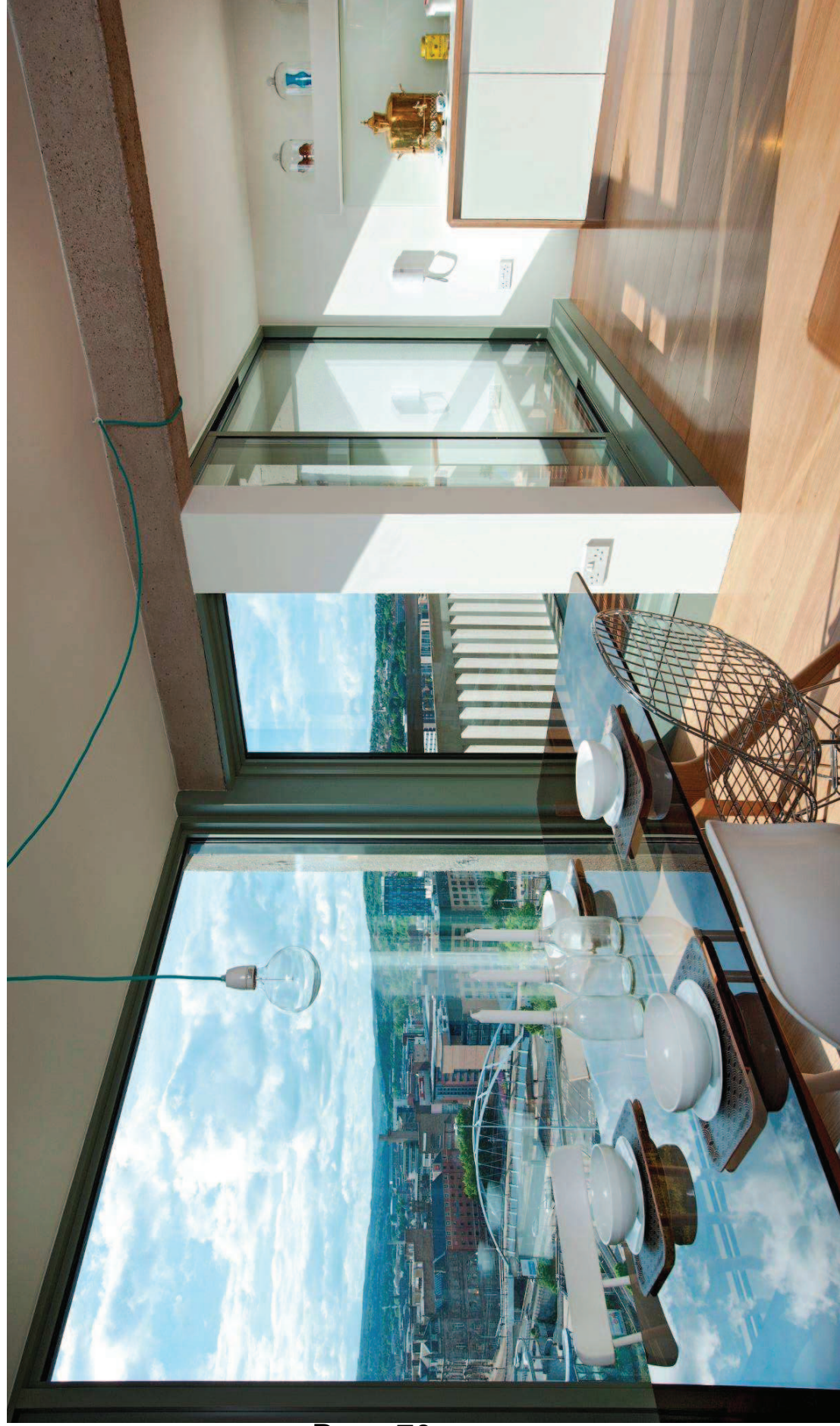
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chapter 1: The context



Chapter 1: The context



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 reflect the policy and investment landscape that we are operating within and will be set out in a series of three year action plans.

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

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

Sheffield Housing Strategy 2013—2023

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 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. Providing a range of homes and services that meet the different and changing needs of our communities will therefore be a key challenge for this Housing Strategy.

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 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.

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 regions' leaders are aiming to help drive the UK's economy forward by supporting key sectors, delivering strong growth and creating jobs.

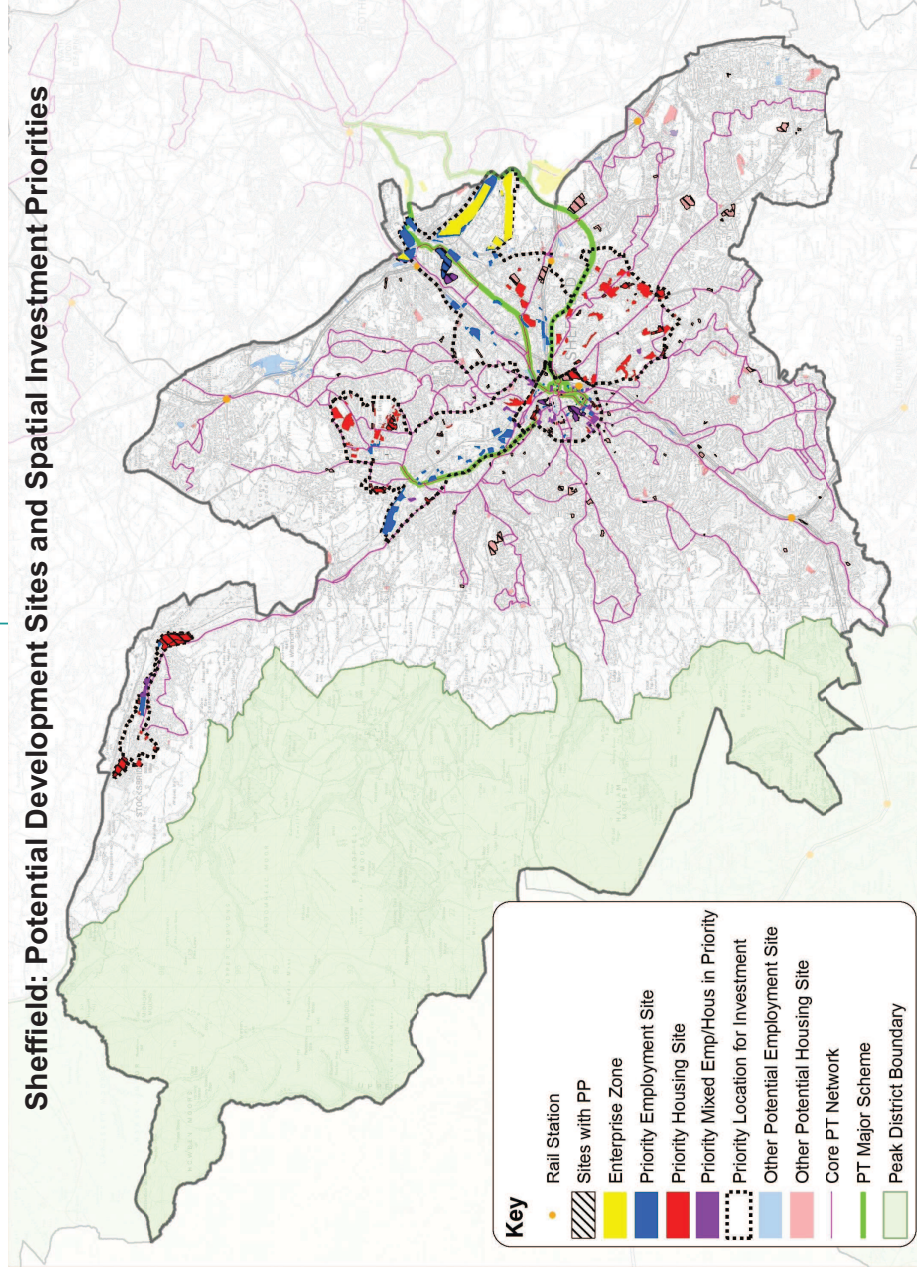
Work is underway to develop the Sheffield City Region Investment Fund to identify places that have the potential to drive sub regional and local economies and to ensure the economy is boosted in the right places and in the right way. Housing will play a key role in enabling economic regeneration and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

Sheffield: Potential Development Sites and Spatial Investment Priorities



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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

As part of the process to develop Sheffield's new housing strategy, a period of extensive consultation was undertaken with over 500 residents and a number of stakeholders and partners. The purpose of this consultation was to identify the housing issues facing Sheffield's residents and to establish the key housing priorities for the future. The following five priorities were selected as being the most important:

- Provide more affordable homes to rent and buy
- Improve the quality of Sheffield's neighbourhoods
- Increase support to help people remain independent in their own home
- Give people a greater say in decisions on housing
- Help young people to obtain and run a home

Analysis of the wider consultation findings

highlighted other issues which are also a priority for our residents, partners and stakeholders. These were:

- Improving the quality of the Private Rented Sector
- Empty homes
- Anti-social behaviour
- Energy efficiency and fuel poverty
- Improving the range and quality of homes

These priorities are reflected throughout this strategy and will inform our future activity as detailed in the strategy's action plans.

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:

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

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:

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

Chapter 2 Great Places

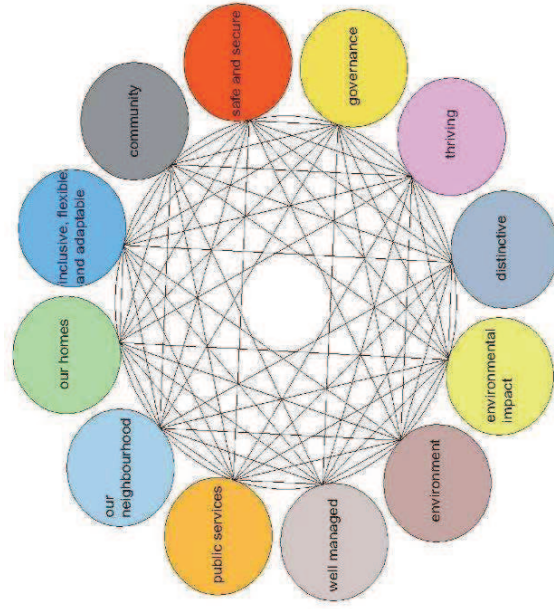


Chapter 2 Great Places

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.

Outcomes of the Great Places to Live Framework



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 ensure 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 into 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 own land to achieve enhanced standards which better meet our strategic aims. Over time 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 a long-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 polices 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 scale 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 increase 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 homeownership 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 forward 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 HIRA 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. 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. In order to help to 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 describes 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 engagement methods for these groups are effective.



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.

[Sheffield Housing Strategy 2013—2023](#)

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.

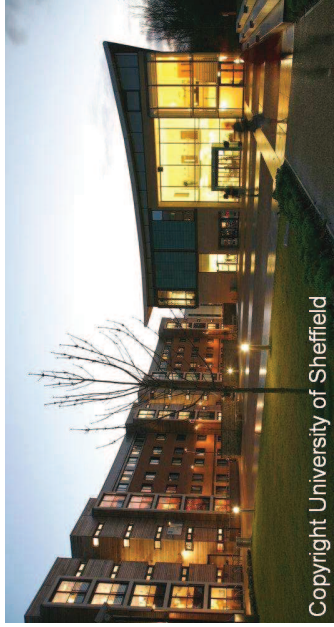
Helping people to keep themselves warm enough to stay healthy and feel comfortable without overstretching their budget on fuel costs is another priority for this strategy. Fuel poverty is the result of different risk factors interacting in the household, such as heating needs, the price of the heating 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

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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 than in previous years 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 universities to raise the quality of housing and the standards of management in all

student homes in the city. This will include 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 (HMOs) 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 fees 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 the 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 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.

Therefore 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.

3.5.5 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.

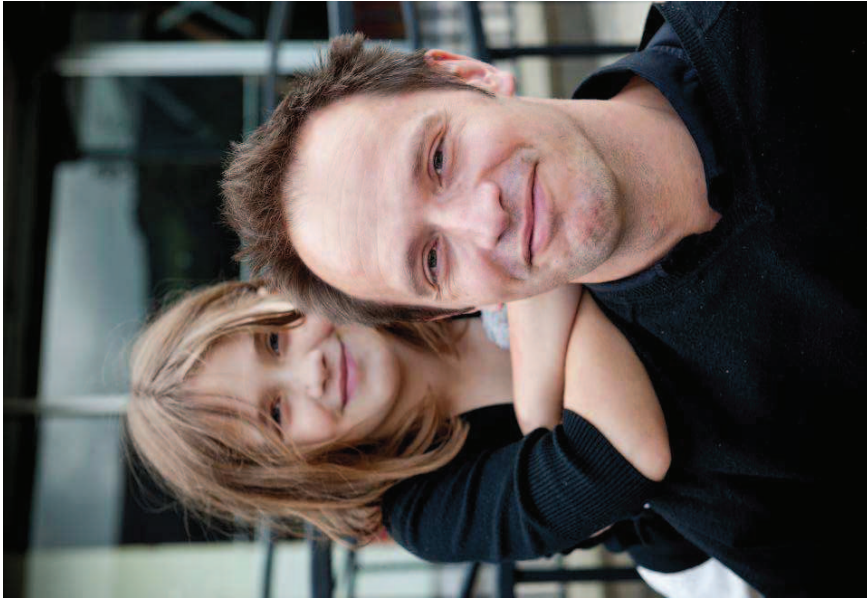
We will:

- 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
- 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 home owners 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

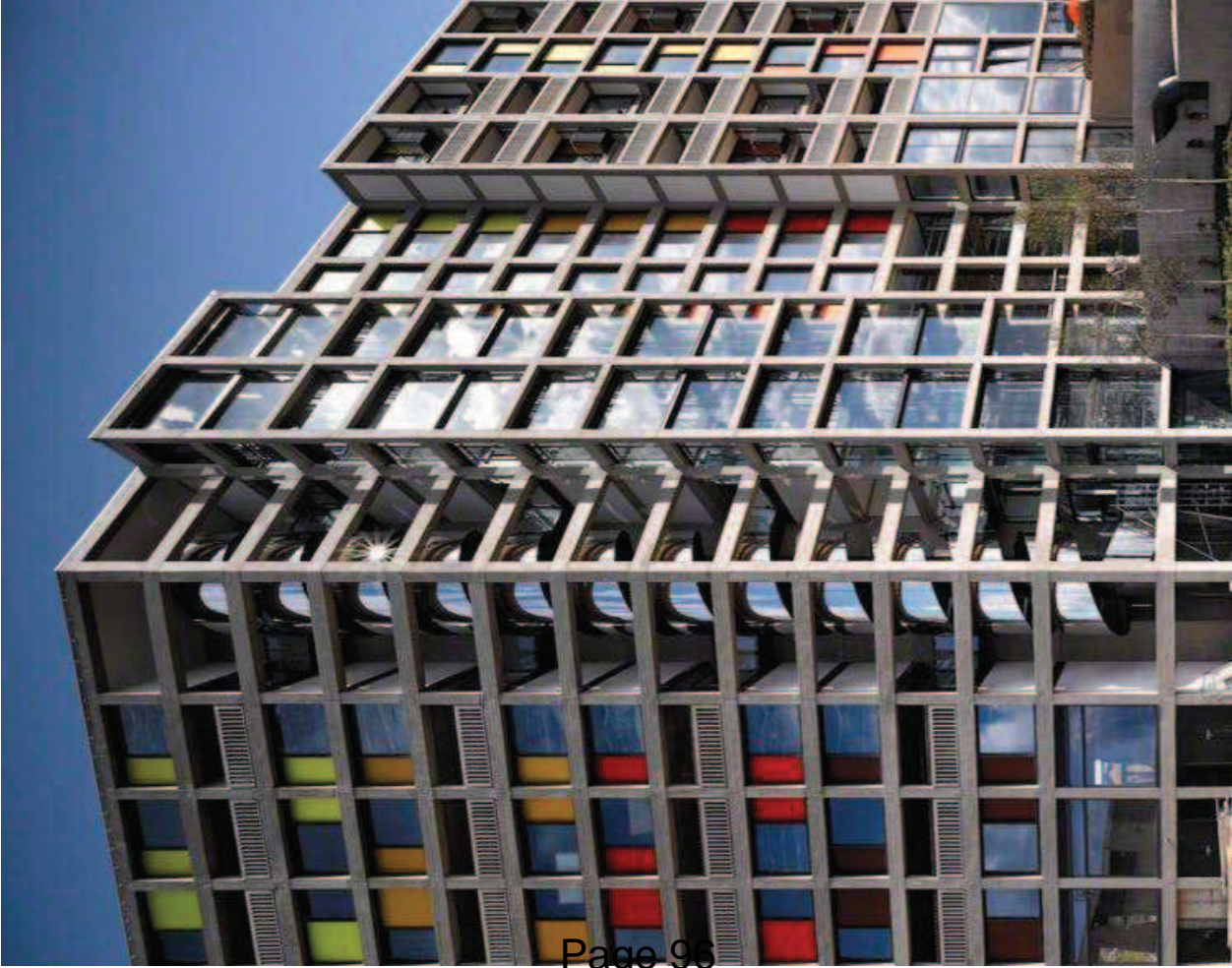
and as a result are likely to suffer ill health or loss of independence and increasingly impact on the public purse as the cost of their care grows.

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.

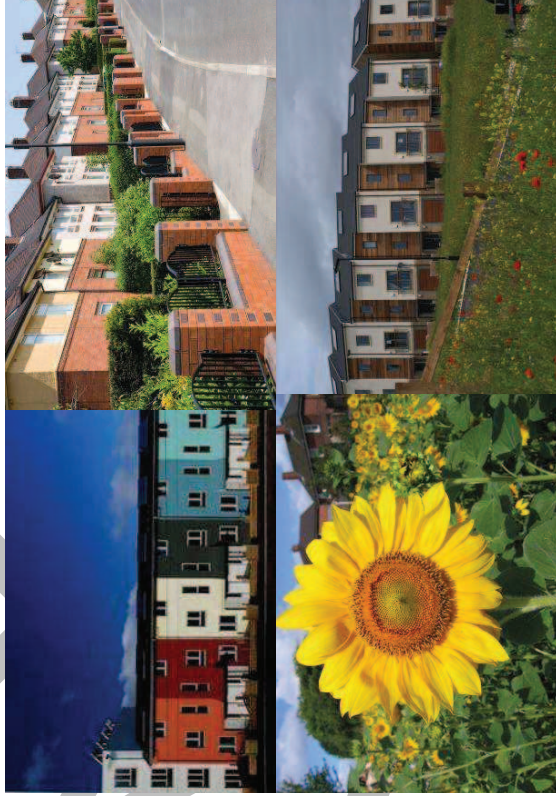
Performance on progress made against the delivery of the Housing Strategy Action Plan will be regularly reviewed by the Great Place to Live Board and the Housing Investment Board.

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 update of the Action Plan and Performance Indicators will be published on the Council's website in April each year.



If you would like this document in another language or format, please contact the Housing Strategy and Policy team: Telephone - 0114 2735148, Email - housingstrategy@sheffield.gov.uk, write to - PO Box 1918, Sheffield. S1 2XX.

Sheffield City Council
Draft Action Plan, 2013 – 2016



Housing Strategy Action Plan 2013-16

Introduction

This is the first of three action plans that will be developed over the life of the Housing Strategy and covers the period 2013-16. The Housing Strategy Action Plan 2013 to 2016 describes what we will do over the next three years to help us achieve the housing ambitions contained within the 10 year Housing Strategy. The plan contains actions that are priority programmes and initiatives for the council and our partners, and reflects the current national and local policy situation and financial challenges that Sheffield is facing.

To align with the Housing Strategy the action plan has been split into two sections **Great Places** and **Sustainable Communities**.

Great Places describes how we will make desirable neighbourhoods that offer a range of affordable and quality homes that meet people's needs, while **Sustainable Communities** focuses on creating welcoming, inclusive and safe communities, as well as supporting our most vulnerable residents to live independently.

Policy Context

This section describes the national policy context that we are now working in and the impact this will have on Sheffield and our residents.

1. National Policy

The Government's approach to national policy is currently being driven by the economic uncertainties and continuing financial pressures facing the country. Reducing the national deficit through cuts to public spending and supporting economic growth are therefore key priorities for the Government going forward. The role that local authorities and the housing market needs to play in delivering these priorities has been continually stressed by the Government and a number of new policies have been implemented to reflect this, including:

1.1 The Localism Act 2011

This act aims to shift the power and decision making away from central Government back into the hands of individuals, communities and local authorities. The act has brought about a number of major changes that affect housing including: changes to how council housing is allocated; the abolition of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subsidy and its replacement with HRA self-financing, which allows local authorities to control their own rental income; and amending homelessness legislation to allow local authorities to discharge their duty by offering accommodation in the private rented sector.

1.2 Welfare Reform Act 2012

This act legislates for the biggest reform to the welfare system for over 60 years. Its stated aim is to make the benefits system fairer and simpler, while encouraging people back into work. Central to the plan is the creation of the Universal Credit, a process which will begin in 2013. This will see existing out-of-work and in-work benefits, such as Working Tax Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Income-related Employment Support Allowance

and Housing Benefit being merged into one benefit, which will be paid directly to the claimant in one lump sum.

Alongside this, the Government has been focusing on reducing the Housing Benefits bill and a number of changes to Housing Benefits started coming into effect in April 2011, including:

- Capping the levels of Local Housing Allowance paid to private rented tenants.
- Increasing the age of the shared accommodation restriction, that applies to single private rented tenants, from 25 to 35 years.
- Reducing Housing Benefit for working age social tenants who are under occupying their property.

1.3 'Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England' 2011

This strategy outlined the Government's intended direction of travel for housing, its role in the wider economy and its contribution to social mobility. The strategy introduced a number of new initiatives particularly focused on increasing house building and getting the housing market moving, these included:

- The Get Britain Building fund - £650m has been made available to unlock housing sites with planning permission.
- The Growing Places Fund – £700m to support specific growth sites where the need for more infrastructure is a key barrier to new development.
- Custom Build - £30m to support self build projects.
- NewBuy Guarantee - This scheme brings together lenders, builders and the Government to offer 95% mortgages to people wanting to buy a new build property up to the value of £500,000.

- Increasing the Right to Buy discount – The discount level for people wanting to buy their council home has increased and the maximum discount level is now £75,000.

1.4 National Planning and Policy Framework 2012

This framework aims to make the planning process simpler and more accessible, while protecting the environment and promoting sustainable growth. The new system gives local authorities control over their housing plans and provides a framework for councils and local people to produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which meet the needs of the local community.

2. Sheffield City Region

As one of England's core cities, Sheffield has led on the agreement of a City Deal for Sheffield City Region (SCR), working alongside private sector partners in the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the other seven councils in SCR. The city deal is a significant first step towards greater decentralisation of powers and resources away from Whitehall, giving local areas the tools they need to drive growth and create jobs. SCR's deal devolves greater control over skills, transport and finance to the city region.

Relationships between the councils and the private sector in SCR are strong and focused on an ambitious vision for a successful, economically important city region. To formalise this relationship and unlock future opportunities for devolved powers, SCR intends to establish a 'combined authority' for the city region, creating a robust, accountable structure which will make shared decisions and deliver better economic and transport outcomes for the city region.

3. Sheffield Context

3.1 Population

Sheffield has a population of 552,700 and is the fourth largest city in England. The city's population is growing at an unprecedented rate and so too are the number of households. By 2031, it is estimated that Sheffield's population will be around 628,000 and around 46,000 new households will have formed. The majority of this growth will be driven by young adults, mostly through an increase in the student population and economic migration. At present Sheffield has a student population of around 60,000, some 9,000 of which are from overseas.

Sheffield's population is also ageing and people are living for longer. In the next 10 years we expect the number of people aged 75 and over to increase by over 20%. There will also be an increase in the numbers of other vulnerable groups, such as people with learning difficulties and people with dementia. This will require the council and other providers to adapt their services to meet future household needs.

Sheffield is becoming more diverse, both ethnically and culturally, with 19% of the population now from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background. The Pakistani community remains Sheffield's largest single BME group, but the recent economic migration from Europe and increasing number of refugees has further diversified the city's population. Currently, more than 128 languages are spoken in Sheffield's schools, and 23% of mothers giving birth to babies in the city were born outside the UK.

3.2 Housing Market

Sheffield has over 230,000 homes. Private properties make up three-quarters of Sheffield's housing stock and the largest proportion of these are owner occupied (58%). The remaining

properties are social rented through the council or other Registered Providers. Sheffield City Council currently owns around 41,300 properties.

The city'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. Since the start of the housing market downturn in 2008, Sheffield's average house price has fallen to around £116,000. However, the city's housing market is polarised and house prices vary. The housing market in the south west of the city is extremely popular with an average house price of around £200,000. In contrast, the housing market in the east of the city has some of the cheapest properties available, at approximately £60,000.

The changes in the housing market have in part been driven by the lack of available mortgage finance and the 20% deposit currently needed to buy a home. This large deposit of around £23,000 in Sheffield is now the biggest barrier to home ownership for first time buyers and home owners with little equity in their home.

The restrictions on mortgage finance have meant that more people are now accessing the private rented market. Almost 16% of Sheffield's households now rent privately and in the future this sector is expected to grow to a similar level as social housing. This growing demand is driving up private rent levels and the average rent for the city now exceeds £600 a month.

Sheffield's housing market is also characterised by contrasting levels of quality. Over recent years we have made considerable progress to improve the condition of social housing in the city and 90% of council homes now meet the Decent Homes Standard. However, there is still work to do in the private sector and a

quarter of private rented properties have a Category 1 Hazards. This is a hazard that poses a considerable risk to the health and safety of the household. We have a statutory duty to tackle Category 1 Hazards and it is a priority to ensure that the city's private sector homes are safe and comfortable to live in.

3.3 Local Policy Context

The Council's Corporate Plan 'Standing up for Sheffield' sets out the council's strategic direction and priorities for the next three years, and this document has acted as a reference point for the development of the Housing Strategy Action Plan. The Corporate Plan focuses on eight strategic outcomes and this action plan addresses the 'A Great Place to Live' outcome, which aims for Sheffield to be a city that has successful places and sustainable communities with access to high quality housing, local services, shops, and jobs, as well as having excellent parks, streets and other physical infrastructure.

The Sheffield Local Plan sets out the overall vision, spatial and planning policies for development in Sheffield from 2004 to 2026. This sets a target to deliver an additional 29,750 new homes by 2026 (1,425 per year), plus a further 4,800 homes to replace those lost through demolition or conversion. Although housing delivery since 2004 is marginally ahead of target, completions since 2010/11 are significantly below the annual target of 1,425 new homes per year, and at least 20,325 (1,450/ year) homes are still needed. We do have enough land to meet the Local Plan housing target, but much of it is concentrated in just a few areas of the city and there are limits on what the market will deliver in a specific area in any one year. Constraints on mortgage lending and the wider economic conditions are, however, affecting the demand for new homes and these are currently the biggest factors holding back the delivery of new homes. We therefore plan to review the Sheffield Local Plan to reassess how much new housing is needed in the city and to enable a 5-year supply of

ready to develop sites to be maintained.

The national policy direction and current economic situation described above is having an impact on people living in Sheffield and the city faces a number of challenges where housing plays a key role. The Localism Act will give more powers to the Council and we will need to establish the best ways to use these to meet the needs of Sheffield's residents, while the planning changes will give local communities the opportunity to influence what gets developed in their local area.

The welfare reforms, introduced by Government in 2011, will undoubtedly have a considerable impact on the city. Broadly speaking, Sheffield will see around £180 million less benefits money coming into the city's economy every year. The full impact of the reforms is not yet known, but the Housing Benefit changes will have impact on the affordability of housing in the city. For instance, around 600 single private renters under the age of 35 will see their Housing Benefit reduce by £35 a week. Another 23,000 working age social tenants will move to Universal Credit and have their housing support paid directly to them for the first time. This is likely to create budgeting issues for residents and a risk of arrears for social housing providers, such as the Council. There is also a risk of more people becoming homeless and we have already started to see an increase, with 23% more homeless acceptances from 2010/11 to 2011/12.

The government has also given local authorities a greater duty for improving public health, and the city's new Health and Wellbeing Board will guide the approach taken by the Council and its partners for delivering this responsibility. Our guiding principles and goals are set out in Sheffield's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy; these will help to transform the way healthcare is delivered in the future. This transformation will include greater integration between social care and health provision, and

developing new ways of working through programmes such as Right First Time.

3.4 Financial Environment

The Government's commitment to reducing the deficit has meant that there is greatly reduced public funding to invest into our homes and neighbourhoods. We have therefore had to ensure that we consider the best way to use our existing resources and the different ways we can draw investment into the city.

The scale of changes to the housing investment landscape has been substantial over recent months and years. The Housing Market Renewal and Decent Homes programmes have ended, and the Housing Capital Investment Programme which funds a number of strategic housing projects has reduced from £111 million in 2010/11 to £54 million in 2012/13.

The Government's public expenditure austerity programme has also led to a reduction in the funding available to support vulnerable people living in Sheffield. Since 2011 we have seen a reduction of £4.5m in funding for housing related support services and there is likely to be a further reduction of approximately £780,000 in 2013/14.

Alongside these reductions in funding, the introduction of HRA self-financing presents opportunities and challenges for the Council. It has freed us up to move to long term business planning for housing, but requires a significant cultural change as we have taken on greater risk and responsibility.

It is no longer necessary that we have a local investment agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Nevertheless, we intend to retain a plan for housing investment in the city, which is based on new ways of working and is less reliant on external grant. The local investment plan reflects the current

funding environment and the new funding opportunities, such as the Affordable Homes Programme 2011-15 and the New Homes Bonus. The new Affordable Homes Programme replaces the previous National Affordable Housing Programme and requires registered providers to deliver new homes with significantly less grant than previously. The Affordable Homes Programme has granted £9.3 million to Registered Providers for the provision of new affordable rent homes in the city.

The shining light in the current financial environment is the New Homes Bonus, and this will be a potential new funding source for local authorities at least in the short term. Through the New Homes Bonus the Government will match the additional council tax income for six years, for each new home developed or for every empty property brought back into use. This funding is expected to provide £3.2 million over the 2012/13 financial year and will be used to support housing and economic growth in the city.

4. Policy and Strategy Sources

The national and local policy context and financial environment described above, as well as other policies and strategies, have all influenced and shaped the development of this plan and the priority actions contained within it. These supporting documents are listed below.

National

- Welfare Reform Act, March 2012
- National Planning Framework, March 2012
- Health and Social Care Act, March 2012
- Energy Act, October 2011
- 'Laying the Foundations' A Housing Strategy for England, November 2011

- Localism Act, November 2011
 - Local Decisions 'A fairer future for social housing', November 2010
 - The Spending Review, October 2010
- Local**
- Sheffield's Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy, 2012-13
 - Economic Growth Strategy, October 2012
 - Strategic Housing Review, May 2012
- State of Sheffield 2012
 - Sheffield Supported Housing Strategy, 2012-16
 - Interim Housing Equalities Action Plan, 2011-13
 - Sheffield City Strategy, 2010-2020
 - 'Standing up for Sheffield' Corporate Plan, 2011-14
 - Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, February 2010
 - Local Plan (Sheffield Development Framework)

Housing Strategy Action Plan

This action plan ends in March 2016. Progress on actions contained within this plan will be reported March and September each year.

Great Places

Ref	What we will do	How we will do it	Timescale	Council Lead	Key Partners
GP1	Enable housing development	Review Local Investment Plan and integrate into the emerging Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Sheffield	September 2013	Mark Whitworth / Dave Caulfield Planning	
GP2		Define the housing priorities for Sheffield which can contribute to economic growth and which should form an element of the Sheffield City Region Investment Fund priorities.	September 2013	Mark Whitworth / Dave Caulfield Planning	
GP3		Undertake enforcement work to ensure site clearances and essential maintenance of buildings to enable 343 potential new homes to be built on 8 sites and enable a potential 200 new homes through environmental improvements to 2 other sites.	March 2015	Graham Withers Development / Management / Maria Duffy Development Services	
GP4		Prepare and deliver to market, 12 hectares of Council owned housing sites, ready for	March 2016	Nalin Seneviratne Resources	

GP5		development, by the end of 2016 Develop the briefs to define the new housing which is required on the Council owned sites at the former Bannendale and King Egberts school sites in the south west of the city.	September 2013	Nalin Senevinatre / Fiona Champion	
GP6		Undertake a Housing Market Assessment to establish the housing needs of our residents and the types of housing that is needed in the city.	September 2013	Georgina Parkin Housing Strategy and Policy	
GP7		Increase our understanding of the private rented market and its capacity to accommodate homeless and vulnerable households.	September 2013	Georgina Parkin Housing Strategy and Policy	
GP8		Explore the appetite and ability of local people to take up custom build opportunities as part of community led construction.	September 2013	Georgina Parkin Housing Strategy and Policy	
GP9		Strengthening Attercliffe's role as a growth zone for housing, by undertaking measure to create a distinct centre which is fit to serve an emerging residential neighbourhood and the surrounding Lower Don Valley.	March 2015	Neil Jones/Steve Birch Regeneration	Local Traders
GP10		Commence review of the Local Plan	September 2014	Dave Caulfield Planning	
GP11	Increase the supply of housing	Work with land owner partners to develop sites including initial phases of Attercliffe Waterside, delivering approximately 120 mixed ownership homes over the next 3 years.	March 2016	Neil Jones/Steve Birch	Private land owners
GP12		Deliver 305 new high quality two, three and four bed homes through the Sheffield Housing Company in the neighbourhoods of Parson Cross, Shirecliffe and Norfolk Park. (mixed tenure of which 25 are affordable rent)	September 2015	Simon Holmesmith Sheffield Housing Company	Keepmoat Homes Limited and Great Places Housing Group
GP13		Develop the housing plans for Phase 2 of the Sheffield Housing Company and deliver approximately 200 of the planned 500 new homes on 8 sites.	March 2016	Simon Holmesmith Sheffield Housing Company	Keepmoat Homes Limited and Great Places Housing Group
GP14		Commence work on site on 500 new homes in the	March	Neil Jones	

		city centre by December 2015	2016	Enterprise and Regeneration	
GP15		Complete phase 1 of Park Hill, this includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 195 flats for sale • 56 flats for rent • 12 flats for shared ownership 	March 2015	Christine Rose Regeneration	Urban Splash and Great Places Housing Group
GP16		Complete the acquisition, rehousing and demolition for the Scowerdons, Weakland and Newstead (SWaN) regeneration schemes and work with Home Group to ensure enough new homes are built to meet the commitments of the resident charter. The Charter allows previous residents who wish to return to the estates a new home of their tenure of choice.	September 2015	Christine Rose Regeneration	HCA and HOME Group
GP17	Improve the mix and range of homes	Through the national Affordable Homes Programme, deliver 449 affordable rent homes (up to 80% of market rent) using the £9.3m Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) grant	March 2015	Christine Rose Regeneration	HCA, Arches, Chevin Great Places, HOME Group, Guinness Northern Counties, People for Places, Sanctuary and SYHA
GP18		Develop a new mental health supported accommodation scheme (Part of the Affordable Homes Programme)	March 2015	Ann Ellis Housing Independence	Guinness Northern Counties
GP19		Deliver new domestic abuse provision (Part of the Affordable Homes Programme)	March 2015	Ann Ellis Housing Independence	Sanctuary Housing Association
GP20		In Phase 1 of the Sheffield Housing Company deliver a total of 25 homes for affordable rent in Parson Cross and Norfolk Park (Part of the Affordable Homes Programme)	September 2015	Simon Holmesmith Sheffield Housing Company	Keepmoat Homes Limited and Great Places Housing Group
GP21		Explore the opportunities to enable the Council to use it's resources to support access to affordable mortgage finance or develop affordable equity stake models, to support specific council regeneration schemes	March 2016	Christine Rose Regeneration	HCA, Registered Providers

GP22		Develop a model with Sheffield City Region partners and start implementation to deliver on a phased basis, high quality, well managed, private rented accommodation.	March 2016	Christine Rose Regeneration	HCA, Registered Providers
GP23	Improve the quality of existing stock	Develop a register of privately rented homes and landlords where there are high concentrations of poor quality properties to target education and enforcement measures.	September 2014	Richard Palmer Private Rented Standards	
GP24		Assess the potential carbon and fuel poverty reduction impacts and economic benefits of the various Green Deal delivery models, and prepare a Business Case for the recommended approach for a follow-on delivery project.	March 2014	Robert Almond Sustainable Development	
GP25		Increase support provision to single people with complex needs	September 2013	Ann Ellis Housing Independence	
GP26		Remodel the provision of young people's supported accommodation	March 2015	Ann Ellis Housing Independence	South Yorkshire Housing Association
GP27	Make best use of existing stock	Develop a long term Asset Management Strategy to maintain and improve the quality of council homes	March 2014	Simon Holmesmith Investment Client Team	
GP28		Bring 90 long term empty properties back into use through the empty property leasing scheme. This will provide loans to owners to improve their properties on the provision that they lease their property to the council for a minimum of 5 years.	March 2015	Christine Rose Regeneration	
GP29		Award approximately 1080 re-housing priorities to people wishing to downsize	March 2013 - March 2016	Jasper South Council Housing	
GP30		Develop a pro-active matching service to assist social tenants in being able to mutual exchange their properties regardless of landlord	September 2015	Jasper South Council Housing	

GP31	Undertake a comprehensive review of all council age designating properties, including consultation with those affected.	September 2014	Jasper South Council Housing
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Sustainable Communities

Ref	What we will do	Action – What we will do	Timescale	Council Lead	Key Partners
SC1	Support young people to access housing and live independently	Identify lenders who will work with us to develop the Local Authority Mortgage Support scheme, which will allow First Time Buyers to secure a mortgage with only a 5% deposit.	March 2014	Christine Rose Regeneration	
SC2		Develop a Student Accommodation Strategy that outlines our approach to housing provision and services for existing and future students living in Sheffield	September 2013	Georgina Parkin Housing Strategy and Policy	The University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University
SC3		Work with the Universities to develop and launch a quality assurance scheme to improve the regulation of student housing	September 2013	Richard Palmer Private Housing Standards	University of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam University.
SC4		Develop a Shared Accommodation Strategy to enable the Council to offer homeless single people aged less than 35 access into private rented accommodation.	March 2014	Zoe Young Housing Solutions	
SC5		Implement the recommendations of the Successful Tenancies Project including development of more support options for tenants at risk of failing to keep their tenancies in areas of high turnover	September 2014	Jasper South Council Housing	
SC6		Develop and launch an on-line information system to support tenants and landlords on tenancy rights and obligations.	September 2014	Richard Palmer Private Housing Standards	
SC7	Provide more choice and options to help vulnerable and older people live independently in	Develop a three year Housing Equalities and Inclusion Action Plan to address the housing needs of different groups living in the city.	September 2013	Georgina Parkin Housing Strategy and Policy Team	Housing Equalities Group

SC8	their homes	Develop proposals to revise the governance and tenant engagement structure.	September 2013	Future of Council Housing	“Opportunity to have my say” project group
SC9		Work with partners to introduce and embed the distinct ways of working being adopted for the Building Successful Families programme to help families with multiple and complex needs to access and sustain appropriate housing.	March 2015	Sam Martin CYPF	Health Trusts, Jobcentre Plus, Police, Probation Service, Registered Providers, Third Sector, Youth Offending Service,
SC10		Conclude work to explore the potential for offering Credit Union budgeting accounts to tenants most at risk of financial difficulties following the introduction of Universal Credit and implement if viable.	September 2013	Maxine Stavrianakos Council Housing	Sheffield Credit Union
SC11		Implement the new Allocations Policy and review after 12 months to ensure it is fairly allocating homes to households most in need.	March 2014 (Implement by) March 2015 (review by)	Jasper South Council Housing Angela Rowland Communities Commissioning	RHPs, Advice and Support Agencies
SC12		Work with our partners to define and implement our approach for supporting carers to meet their housing needs.	September 2013	Jasper South Council Housing Angela Rowland Communities Commissioning	Registered Providers, Third Sector, Housing Equalities Group
SC13		Explore with our partners how we can better meet the housing needs of people with autism and develop viable actions that will help these needs to be met.	September 2013	Director of Commissioning, Communities	Autism Strategy Implementation Group, Housing Equalities Group
SC14		Introduce a system to ensure that the most vulnerable people and locations experiencing ASB in the city receive coordinated multi-agency support.	March 2013	Paul McCurry Community Safety Team	Housing, Children and Families and, South Yorkshire Police

SC15		Review and develop our response to anti-social behaviour to make it as consistent as possible regardless of housing tenure.	September 2013	Paul McCurry Community Safety Team	
SC16		Remodel and re-procure all housing related support services by sector to ensure best value and align with other strategic commissioning priorities.	March 2016	Ann Ellis Housing Independence	
SC17		Develop a strategic citywide approach for providing affordable warmth support and information and support to households most at risk from fuel poverty and cold-related illness.	September 2013	Chris Shaw Health Improvement	Public Health Unit, Sustainable Homes and Affordable Warmth, Third Sector
SC18		Develop a partnership to reduce the number of people who are suffering health problems which are being affected by housing conditions.	September 2013	Chris Shaw Health Improvement	Public Health Unit, Wider Public Sector Partners (e.g. GPs, Ambulance and Fire Service) & Third Sector
SC19		Develop a referrals protocol for GPs so that vulnerable patients in poor quality rented housing are brought to our attention and homes can be inspected.	March 2014	Richard Palmer Private Housing Standards	GPs
SC20		Implement improvements identified through the Right to Control pilot for the DFG programme to provide improved value for money and help customers to adapt properties that meet their needs more effectively	Sept 2014	Linda Eshelby Private Sector Housing	Office of Disability Issues, Bamsley Council, Right to Control Project Team
SC21		Develop a ten year market development plan for Older Peoples Residential and Nursing Care to enable people to live safe and well in the local community. This also includes supported living options.	September 2013	Julia Thompson Communities Commissioning Service	SCC, NHS Sheffield, Vol. Sec, Ind. Sector
SC22		Develop a model of virtual extra care to support the new housing development in Stocksbridge. This is based on a hub and spoke model of flexible care and support that will be designed with the influence of older people living in the Stocksbridge	September 2015	Angela Rowland Communities Commissioning	SCC, NHS Sheffield, Vol. Sec, Ind. Sector

SC23	community. Review the Right First Time pilot project, which integrates housing providers and support services to provide early intervention and support to local people identified as most at risk of preventable hospital admissions in the Lowedges, Batemoor and Jordanthorpe area, and implement this approach citywide if shown to be viable. Ensure the housing contribution is integral to all of the Right First Time work programmes.	September 2014	Lorraine Jubb Communities Commissioning Dean Butterworth Council Housing	Registered Providers, Housing Solutions team, GP Practices
SC24	Explore the potential for developing support for owner occupiers who need to move to more manageable housing, similar to that which is already being offered to council and some other social housing tenants, funded by fees from the service users.	September 2014	Eddie Sherwood Director of Care and Support	Local NHS organisations
SC25	Work with partners to develop and implement new ways of working to prevent people from becoming homeless	March 2015	Richard Palmer Communities Commissioning	
SC26	Develop and implement the Supported Accommodation Pathway	March 2016	Zoe Young Housing Solutions	Debt Support Unit, other advice, organisations Credit Union, tenancy support providers, Shelter homeless prevention, landlords - private and social, supported accommodation providers, service users
SC27		March 2016	Zoe Young Housing Solutions	Supported accommodation providers,

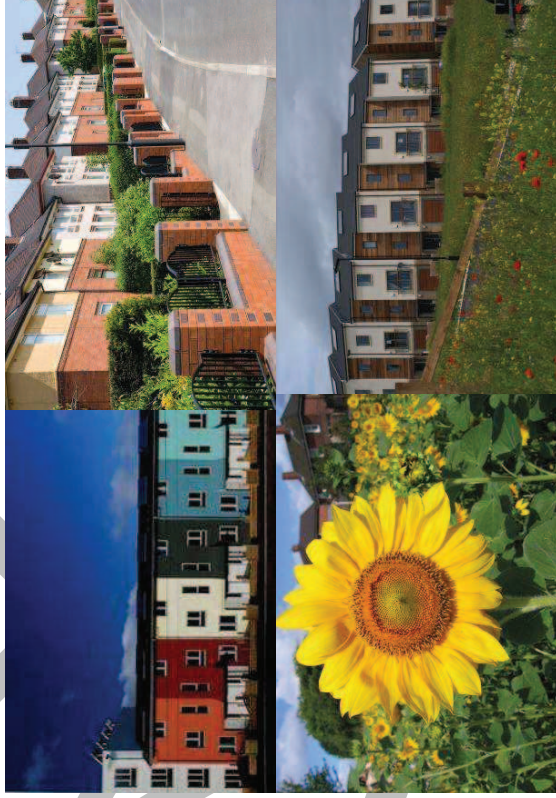
					South Yorkshire Probation Trust, Referring organisations, service users
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* Housing Solutions actions have a caveat until December, because a report is going to EMT to agree the targets in order to reflect the welfare reform changes.

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Sheffield City Council

Housing Strategy Performance Indicators



Housing Strategy Performance Indicators

Objective 1: Enable housing development

Ref	Measure Description	Baseline	2013/14 Target	Quarterly Performance	Comments
1.1	Hectares of land for market (tbc)				

Objective 2: Increase the supply of housing

Ref	Measure Description	Baseline	2013/14 Target	Quarterly Performance	Comments
2.1	Net housing completions per year	447 (2011/12)	1,000		Target based on a 50% increase on the 2011/12 figure in 2012/13 and a further 50% increase in 2013/14. Another 50% increase in 2014/15 would take the target to 1,500 per year i.e. the level we would need to maintain to 2025/26 in order to meet the SDF target.

Objective 3: Improve the mix and range of homes

Ref	Measure Description	Baseline	2013/14 Target	Quarterly Performance	Comments
3.1	Number of new homes in the council tax bands F,G and H	52 (2011/12)	100		This would equate to about 15% of estimated net completions by 2014/15. The figures assume that the proportion of Band F, G and H completions remains at about 10% of total net completions between 2011/12 and 2013/14 but this is probably realistic given the types of site in the

						pipeline and the lead in times for bringing other sites forward (mainly Council-owned sites in the west of the city).
3.2	Number of affordable homes built in the city	268 (2011/12)	300			
3.3	Net homes built as part of purpose built supported accommodation	0 (2013/14)	88 tbc			No new supported accommodation is due to be completed on site in 2013/14; the target figure for this measure will therefore be set for 2014/15.
3.4	% of all dwellings with full planning permission which are houses or bungalows (rather than flats or apartments)	33% (2011/12)	40%			A 7% increase roughly equates to 480 houses obtaining full planning permission in that year.

Outcome 4: Improve the quality of existing stock

Ref	Measure Description	Baseline	2013/14 Target	Quarterly Performance	Comments
4.1	Number of category 1 hazards addressed in privately rented homes	200 (2011/12)	200		
4.2	Number of other (non Category 1 Hazards) disrepair interventions addressed in privately rented homes	Not available	400		
4.3	Number of private rented properties registered	0	250		
4.4	Number of HMOs licensed	1696 (2011/12)	1781		The annual number of licensed HMOs may vary due to changing household patterns e.g. a reduction in the number of university students. Therefore attainment of this target could depend on these changing patterns.

4.5	Average energy efficiency (Standard Assessment Procedure) rating of council owned properties	SAP rating 72.67 (2012/13)	SAP rating 75 (2015/16) tbc		
4.6	Number of council owned properties that score below a SAP rating of 70	12961 (2012/13)	10000 (2015/16) tbc		
4.7	Overall per capita domestic emissions of CO2 within the influence of the local authority	5.7 tonnes (2010)	5 tonnes (2013) tbc		The per capita CO2 figure includes (but is not restricted to) household emissions, however household energy comprises about 40% of this figure.

Outcome 5: Make best use of existing stock

Prog	Measure Description	Baseline	2013/14 Target	Quarterly Performance	Comments
5.1	Number of long term empty homes(over 6 months) in all tenures by 5%	2719 (Oct 12)	2583		
5.2	Percentage of people who feel their homes is suitable for their needs	79% (2007)	tbc		New baseline to be identified from data published in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 and a target to be identified based on this in July 2013.
5.3	Number of council tenants under-occupying	4,581 (2012/13)	4,444 (tbc)		Target figure based on a 3% reduction.

5.4	Level of overcrowded households	2.8% (2007)	tbc		New baseline to be identified from data published in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 and a target to be identified based on this in July 2013.
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Outcome 6: Help young people to live independently

Ref	Measure Description	Baseline	2013/14 Target	Quarterly Performance	Comments
6.1	Percentage of homeless acceptances aged 16-24	44%	tbc		To be identified through Service Business Planning in March 2013.
6.2	Percentage of people aged 16-24 who feel their homes is suitable for their needs	80% (2007)	tbc		New baseline to be identified from data published in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 and a target to be identified based on this in July 2013.
6.3	Number of students living in Sheffield Standard quality assured accommodation	0	tbc		

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Outcome 7: Help older and vulnerable people to live independently

Ref	Measure Description	Baseline	2013/14 Target	Quarterly Performance	Comments
7.1	Interventions which reduce care home admissions (tbc)	tbc	tbc		
7.2	Percentage of people who feel the care and support they receive meets their needs	82% (2007)	tbc		New baseline to be identified from data published in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 and a target to be identified based on this in July 2013.

7.3	Percentage of people aged over 60 who feel their home is suitable for their needs	92% (2007)	tbc	New baseline to be identified from data published in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 and a target to be identified based on this in July 2013.
7.4	Number of council tenants with a credit union account	Not available	tbc	No baseline figure currently available however Sheffield Credit Union will start recording council tenant customers for future measurement.
7.5	Rent arrears of current council tenants as proportion of rent roll	2.3% (2011/12)	2.4%	
7.6	Percentage of all tenants leaving a council tenancy within 2 years	31% (2011/12)	27%	
7.7	Homelessness acceptances per 1000 households	6.0 (2011/12)	tbc	Target to be identified through Service Business Planning in March 2013 and published in April 2013
7.8	Number of people prevented from becoming homeless	tbc	tbc	Target to be identified through Service Business Planning in March 2013 and published in April 2013
7.9	Permanent council supported admissions to residential and nursing care homes	398 (2011/12)	tbc	Target to be identified through Service Business Planning in March 2013 and published in April 2013
7.10	% of people who use services paid for (at least in part) by SCC who feel safe	65.1% (2011/12)	tbc	Target to be identified through Service Business Planning in March 2013 and published in April 2013