



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2027



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Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2027



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Welcome



Cllr Neil Emmott
Leader of the Council

Housing is a vital element to all our lives and as such is a core component of our Borough.

It is recognised that there are a wide range of needs throughout the Borough and that current demand far outstrips supply.

Good quality, affordable, safe and secure accommodation is a critical element to the health and well-being of all.

The Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2027 seeks to lay the foundations of a new 10 year plan for growth and development throughout the Borough.



Cllr Daniel Meredith
Portfolio Holder for
Regeneration & Housing

Since Rochdale Borough Council declared a housing emergency in 2022 we have been focussed on delivering tailored housing options to our residents.

Our Strategic Housing Services utilise a prevention-first approach to housing and homelessness and to ensuring that standards are driven up within the Borough.

We are looking to accelerate growth and delivery of all affordable tenures to ensure a pipeline of housing into the future.

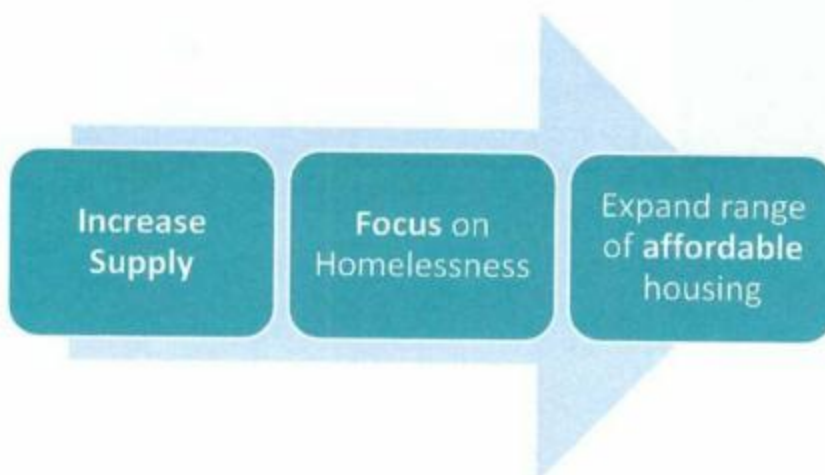




Current Housing Context:

The context of housing within the Borough, city-region and country is changing. This Interim Housing Strategy will set out the direction of travel for the next 3 years, for both Strategic Housing (Property) and Strategic Housing (People) services.

The Interim Strategy will be developed into a 10 year replacement strategy that is anticipated will seek to set out a development plan for affordable housing within the Borough. Immediate commitments will include:



Why an Interim Strategy?

The Council needs to outline its immediate position as a Local Housing Authority, but it also needs to develop a longer-term strategic ambition and delivery plan. Currently there are a range of factors external to the Council's control, including financial and legislative matters, which will impact on our direction. The Council therefore has decided to take an agile approach to the formulation of its Housing Strategy accordingly. Issues which are yet to be determined include:





Vision & Mission:

Our '*Connected Services Model*'

We will create a **sustainable home** for **everyone** in Rochdale.

Through supportive and connected services we will **help people to improve their lives**.

We will build the right homes and **enable fair access for everyone**.

To support our vision we have set out 3 principles for Strategic Housing Services to deliver to, alongside our corporate values



We **build trust** in our service by delivering a consistent experience for everyone



We achieve **through taking shared responsibility** and challenging each other to continuously have a positive impact on people's lives.



We **work in solidarity** with colleagues and people, recognising and responding to the changing needs of our Borough and services.

**Succeed
at Rochdale**

Pioneering

We are Pioneering
in our approach



Proud

We are Proud of the
difference we make



Passionate

We are Passionate
about the diversity
of the borough





What does Housing in the Borough of Rochdale Look Like?

It seems an odd question to ask. However, without understanding our local housing market how can we properly determine the best course of action for delivering what is required?

The information below is a very quick snapshot of headline issues within the Borough and highlights a number of key themes.



90,223
Households



223,773
Population



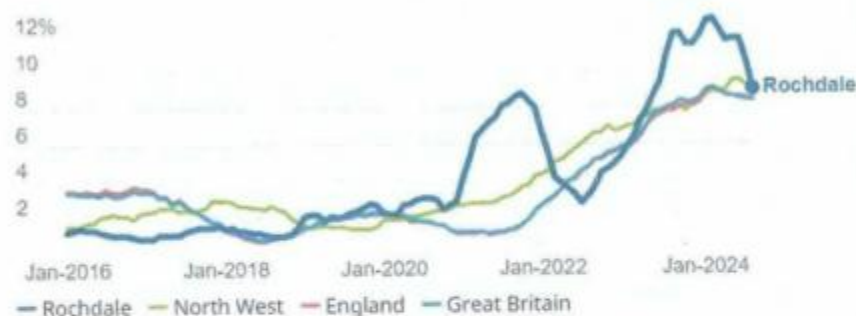
46% unemployed
or not econ active



Disabled
19%

Annual change in rents in Rochdale

Private rental price annual inflation, Rochdale, January 2016 to September 2024



Source: Price Index of Private Rents from the Office for National Statistics

The demographics of the Borough place increased pressures on the housing market and services to provide basic accommodation. The predominant age of housing in the Borough is pre-1970 and typically may be found to be of reduced quality compared to other areas within the country. Traditionally terraced properties has been less expensive than semi-detached properties and has formerly been the main entry-level method of accessing accommodation for owner-occupiers. Increasingly the attractions of low-cost properties for landlords and investors has added significant pressure to the housing market, which in turn has led to greater competition for access to housing – across all tenures.

Private Housing

£204k
Average
purchase



Average earnings are £27k annually making home buying difficult. **Home ownership is an option** which needs to be extended to a wider amount of people, with new and existing Affordable Housing products being used to achieve this.

£722
Monthly
rent
average



9% annual **increase to rents** across the Borough of Rochdale which makes **affordability** an increasingly difficult issue. **Access to private rented sector** accommodation is also a factor, as limited stock is available for increasing demand.

£1193
rent 4+
bed



Affordability for **larger families** is an identified problem, particularly for those reliant on benefits.

Currently a household requiring 4 bedrooms who is reliant on benefit have to find a monthly shortfall of £245.60 on average; which means many are **overcrowded** in smaller accommodations creating health and social difficulties.

Proportion of Non-Decent Homes (2020-21):



■ Owner-Occupier ■ Private Rented ■ Social Rented

Properties in the Private Rented Sector are far more likely to be of **poor quality** than any other tenure.

Data shows however, that housing standards across the Borough need to be raised and a **cross-tenure approach** applied.

Social Housing

Social housing can include homes which are run by either a Local Authority or Registered Providers of Social Housing (also known as Housing Associations or 'RPs'). Since 2012 Rochdale Borough Council has been a non-stock holding authority. Social housing is therefore either let via the Council's Housing Solutions portal, or direct by individual RPs.

Across the UK the provision of social housing is insufficient to meet demand and this is an issue which continues to grow and which requires tackling via a number of routes.

A snapshot of the current position includes:



9000 Housing Register applications
Of households wanting social housing



3000 Housing Register applications are households in legally defined housing need, including homeless individuals and families

The Council receives approximately 100 new Housing Register applications per week.

The Housing Register reflects the position of over 20,000 people within the Borough.



Each week only 10-15 properties become available to let through the Housing Register.





Delivering the Housing Strategy:

There are a range of individual plans and strategies that will support, and be supported by, this Housing Strategy including:

RBC Corporate Plan 2028



People,



Place &



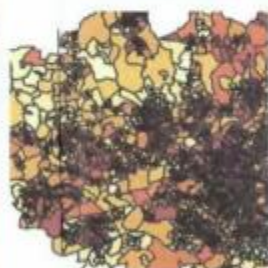
Planet

The Interim Housing Strategy has been created in line with our corporate priorities; focussing on supply, opportunities, sustainability, climate, technology and health as key aspects of housing delivery.

GMCA Roadmap 2024

"GMCA is developing a roadmap that points to how we can re-build, rewire and restore the housing system in Greater Manchester and blaze the trail for others to follow. It focusses on three key pillars":

Supply, Standards and Support.



Places for Everyone (Pfe)

PfE has now been formally adopted as the joint development plan across the GM city-region. Key planning issues such as supply and distribution of new housing are contained within it; as well as direction on co-related issues such as infrastructure, employment and sustainability.



Interim Housing Strategy

3-Point Plan:

The Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2027 focusses on three core strategic objectives to deliver towards our vision.

1



Prevention:

The most effective way of dealing with a problem is to prevent it at first instance or tackle it when it is relatively small.

The first section of the Interim Housing Strategy sets out how we will seek to achieve this in broad terms, outlining key areas of engagement and related work streams.

2



Enforcement:

The issue of standards within housing, whether social housing, private rented sector or alternate tenures remains a significant challenge. Issues such as damp & mould and over-crowding are not always preventable and the Council will take enforcement action where required to address these issues.

The second section of this strategy outlines the approach the Council will take with regard to housing enforcement issues.

3



Delivery:

With ever rising demand for housing of all types, the Council needs to focus on how it can implement acceleration of housing growth and delivery and meet the needs of its residents, including where the market is either unwilling or unable to do so.

1



Prevention



What do we mean by prevention? Put simply, the focussing of customer engagement and delivery programmes to try and either deal with issues before they arise, or at a point where they can be resolved more easily. Key challenges to this include access to housing, housing quality and standards as well as zero-carbon and eco-intelligent necessities.

Rochdale Housing Solutions: Customer Hub

The *Connected Services Model* approach which has been adopted by Rochdale Strategic Housing (see page 5 above) includes the creation of a new customer hub at 2 Smith Street Rochdale which delivers face-to-face services to residents of the Borough. To support the prevention led agenda and our connected service model a 'Pioneer Team' has been created which will focus on how to improve customer engagement, to try and resolve issues 'first time', with each customer having to deal with as few Officers as possible, whilst gaining the full support, expertise and specialisms of the whole of Strategic Housing through that gateway.



The hub will expand its delivery and focus to include specialism programmes delivered by Strategic Housing, core internal partners such as Adult Social Care and Children's Services, as well as third-sector partners to deliver an integrated package of prevention services. The methodology of service delivery at a strategic level is centred on specialist collaboration, co-operation and co-production. It does not replace our existing hub-and-spoke model of directly accessible service provision in all townships of the Borough. The aim is to develop this method of service delivery and extend provision even wider.



Key Strategic Areas of Prevention:

Rochdale Borough Council (RBC) have a broad range of programmes and initiatives to meet and complement the local authority's statutory duties all of which are focussed on prevention.

Key strategic objectives identified within this interim Strategy provide a core framework for how Strategic Housing Services will attempt to deliver its prevention agenda.

Homelessness Prevention

The key drivers for homelessness in Rochdale are varied and complex, including from significant population growth; affordable housing supply not keeping pace with unprecedented demand, low housing void rates and lack of turnover in social housing sector; higher rents in the Private Rented Sector, and significant changes to the benefits system through the government's welfare reform act continue to impact upon financially challenged households.

Rochdale Borough Council recognises the need to prevent homelessness wherever possible, making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring and this remains a golden thread through Strategic Housing Services and wider Council services .

Rochdale Borough Council's aim is underpinned by three core principles and delivery methods:

Principle 1: Working With People; being truly person centered, reducing and responding to inequalities and trauma

- Supporting through Rochdale's connected services we will **help people to improve their lives**
- Embedding and encouraging the **MEAM approach** across all services

Principle 2: Building Participation; building inclusive participation so that people can participate in decisions that affect their lives and where lived experience is highly valued

- **Empowering residents** to own their situation and provide the tools to help themselves
- Providing **co-production** opportunities in a range of service areas

Principle 3: Embedding Prevention; to link in with wider reform of public services to deliver genuinely preventative and person centered support

- **Multidisciplinary working** across all services to respond holistically
- A **true prevention approach** to help people before crisis
- An **outcome focused** way of working across services and organisations

>> Homelessness Prevention Strategy: New strategy to be developed to focus on programmes, approaches and methods to preventing and relieving homelessness.

>> Bed & Breakfast Elimination Programme: It remains a stark reality that Rochdale Borough Council, like almost all local Authorities throughout England, has to use emergency bed & breakfast accommodation provision for homeless families and individuals.

1

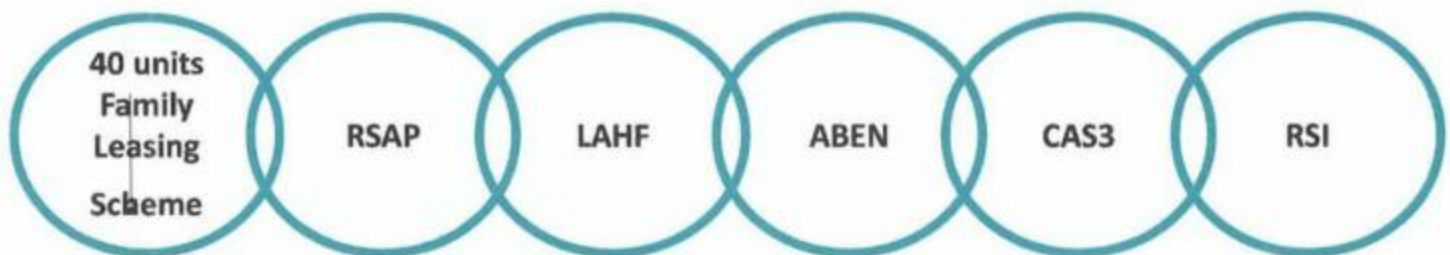


B&B Elimination

Rochdale Borough Council have a commitment to eliminate the use of Bed and Breakfast, through a five point priority plan to drive a more equitable and cost neutral Temporary Accommodation Model.

1. Make a commitment to end the use of B&B (beyond 6 weeks, or completely)
2. Agree the action plan for delivery
3. Reduce placements into B&B and all temporary accommodation
4. Ending the routine use of B&B for families with children
5. Develop alternative forms of TA and settled accommodation options

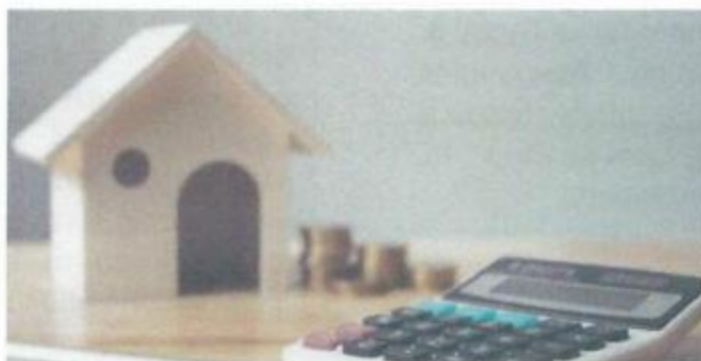
Delivery to date, predominately for single homelessness, has been achieved through a multi-programme approach which included (*see glossary at page XXX for further detail):



Homelessness and Prevention Response Service ('HPRS')

The HPRS has been developed and will be extended to deliver towards Strategic Housing Services' obligations to the homeless. It will deliver a comprehensive outcome targeted service focussing on prevention of recurrent homelessness of single and childless couples with moderate support needs. Key skills and opportunities, including improving health-related outcomes and overall tenancy sustainment will be blended into this approach.

A responsive and wrap-around support service will be provided not just to prevent homelessness but also issues ranging from mental health, employment, family relationships and access to support services.



1



Private Rented Sector:

Areas of strategic prevention will include:

- >> **Landlord Forum** – updating and expanding the current offer to landlords.
- >> **Targeted engagement programmes** – To ensure that our customers are able to find housing within the private rented sector in an accessible and affordable manner.
- >> **Bespoke educational support** - With the introduction of far-reaching new legislation such as the Renter's Rights Act 2024 landlords will have new duties which we will seek to support and guide them through for the benefit of both tenant and landlord, for property improvement
- >> **New 'Additional Licensing' scheme** for Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to engage early with providers to ensure compliance with standards and occupation levels.
- >> **A refreshed 'New Developments Group'**: A cross-service panel focussing on delivery of private sector accommodations and schemes, to assist private developers to bring forwards the right type and quality of accommodation within the Borough.
- >> **Utilisation of the co-produced Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GMCA)** to identify appropriate housing provision for related communities to alleviate unlawful encampments.

Welfare Programmes & Cross-sector Initiatives:

- >> **Discretionary Crisis Fund** – continuation of our bespoke homelessness and domestic abuse funds to enable access to white goods and fuel vouchers for the most vulnerable when re-locating.
- >> **GM Tripartite Agreement** – Working with GMCA, GM Housing Providers and GM Health & Social Care Partnership to deliver a combined 'Health & Housing' commitment, which is based within our specific programmes (see Eco-Matters section below).
- >> **Young People Pathways** – Particularly engaging with Children's Services and Adult Social Care to develop holistic pathways and programmes to ensure that vulnerable groups, including Care Leavers and Care Experienced individuals have access to bespoke support and move-on housing programmes.
- >> **Hospital Discharge Programmes:** Looking to identify from homeless individuals to home owners what support they may require in terms of accessing suitable housing
- >> **System-wide Housing Interfaces:** Working within collaborative mechanisms such as the Rough Sleeper Partnership Board, Safer Communities Partnership Board, Local Care Organisation SMT and GM Strategic Housing Group to inform and deliver joined-up prevention services.



Flood Resilience & Eco-Programmes:

Creating and maintaining safe, warm, affordable and healthy homes includes having to consider the influence of the environment and our impact on it. Strategic Housing Services works with a number of partner agencies to prevent and deal with ecological disasters, as well as providing for more resilient recovery from them. Every household, whether privately owned or social housing, is impacted by financial and environmental costs. Our strategic objectives include dealing with these realities through a blend of physical, structural, educational and engagement approaches.

Strategic Energy Programmes: Eco4 HUG2 BEIS



These programmes will deliver 'retrofit' physical works to properties across a range of tenures to make them more energy efficient, flood resilient and safe & comfortable to live in. Through partnership working at local, GN, regional and national level both from within Government and privately financed initiatives Strategic Housing Services is looking to develop a more integrated approach to eco-resilience across the housing stock within the Borough.

The Warm Homes Rochdale Programme, delivered in partnership with Groundworks GM, is currently secured through funding from RBC Public Health and RBC Strategic Housing and builds on the Tripartite Agreement principles of ensuring improved health outcomes are co-achieved within housing initiatives.

Flooding & FCRIP:

Flood resilience is more than stemming the tide after the event. Our programmes include a co-produced national flagship EA resilience programme 'Resilient Roch' which includes:

- Developing a holistic approach to flood and climate resilience
- Delivering a step change in community participation
- Increasing people's capacity to respond to flooding
- Enhance surface water management
- Develop better financial resilience for homes and business
- Roll-out purpose designed publicly accessible Flood Hubs for community engagement, education and showcasing



2



Enforcement



Enforcement within housing includes actions taken in relation to social housing (managed by independent housing associations), the private rented sector and owner-occupied properties. As the Local Housing Authority (LHA) Strategic Housing Services has certain statutory responsibilities for ensuring protection of housing standards throughout the Borough.

The Government are currently putting into place a new *Renters' Rights Bill* which once enacted will:

- ❖ **Strengthen LA enforcement:** By expanding civil penalties, introduce new investigatory powers and bringing in a new reporting requirement.
- ❖ **Apply the Decent Homes Standard** to the private rented sector: to give renters safer, better value homes and remove the blight of poor-quality homes in local communities.
- ❖ **Apply 'Awaab's Law'** to the PRS sector: Setting clear legal expectations about timeframes within which landlords in the private rented sector must take action to make homes safe where they contain serious hazards.
- ❖ **Create a private sector database:** to help landlords understand their legal obligations and demonstrate compliance.
- ❖ **Introduce a new PRS Landlord Ombudsman:** to provide impartial and binding resolution for tenants' complaints about their landlord.
- ❖ **Abolish section 21 evictions:** By moving towards a simpler tenancy structure and providing more security for tenants.

As an LHA Strategic Housing Services is working to develop a set of measured, resilient and practical solutions so as to enable compliance with the above statutory setting.

2



Key Strategic Objectives of Enforcement:

Civil Penalties Pathfinder & Enforcement

New legislation and pilot-programmes have allowed the Council to develop a new strategy with regard to the issuing of financial civil penalties to landlords who are not compliant with housing standards. Financial penalties will be ring-fenced for housing standards work to create a two-track approach to improving standards.

HMO New Additional Licensing Scheme

HMOs (Houses of Multiple Occupation) often present housing standards issues. RBC will be delivering in 2025 a new licensing scheme which will cover far more HMOs and require landlords to apply to the Council which will allow targeting of non-compliant landlords and increased investigatory powers.

Increased 'Works in Default'

The Housing Act 2004 allows the LHA to undertake works on privately owned properties and charge the cost back to the owner. The option is one of last resort but increasingly is required to safeguard vulnerable tenants. Strategic Housing Services is reviewing its current use to ensure more effective delivery in future.

Supported Housing Team

RBC established a Pilot Team to review housing standards and support standards in unregulated privately owned supported accommodation across the Borough. Recently the Government introduced new legislation placing new duties on the LHA.

In early 2025 we will establish a permanent team to take a joint strategic and operational approach.

Illegal Eviction & Harassment

The Homelessness and Housing Standards teams will co-produce initiatives to deal with this issue along with key partner agencies within the Borough.

In 2025 a new GMCA Pilot Tenancy Relations Scheme will operate which will be embedded within the wider Housing team to focus on this critical issue.

RSHP Joint Protocols

Particularly within the social housing sector the role of our partner Registered Providers of Social Housing is critical to ensuring good quality and safe provision of affordable housing.

Through our Rochdale Strategic Housing Partnership (RSHP) we will deliver joint protocols on standards across housing.

2

Empty Properties:

The Council has a range of enforcement powers, which include but are not limited to those highlighted below. Strategic Housing Services has an established Empty Property Team which focusses on the bringing back into use of residential, commercial and industrial properties. A primary strategic objective is to make housing available for homeless families and ties in with our development priorities.

A key strategic objective is to continue the development of an active and successful Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) programme which is used as the last resort when property owners fail to use their properties. Once legal ownership has been taken then the Council uses these properties/land either by refurbishment or development as much needed residential housing. In 2025 the team will be releasing a new Empty Property Strategy to further develop both enforcement and resolution initiatives.



Unauthorised Encampments:

Strategic Housing (Property) is co-responsible with the Council's Environmental Management team for enforcing against unauthorised encampments within the Borough. In 2024 the Council secured a High Court Injunction, following many years of legal application and a previous interim injunction. RBC is one of very few Local Authorities which was able to evidence and defend a need for this type of legal injunction.

The purpose of the injunction is to prohibit certain named defendants [for 5 years] from unlawful encamping anywhere in the Borough and is backed by a power of arrest. The Council maintains an action team which is supported by Greater Manchester Police force, to ensure swift removal of unlawful encampments. The injunction is enforceable against unnamed defendants across hundreds of identified 'hot spots' across the Borough [for 1 year]. The Council is committed to its strategic objective of enforcing against unauthorised encampments and will be seeking in 2025 an extension of the Injunction accordingly.



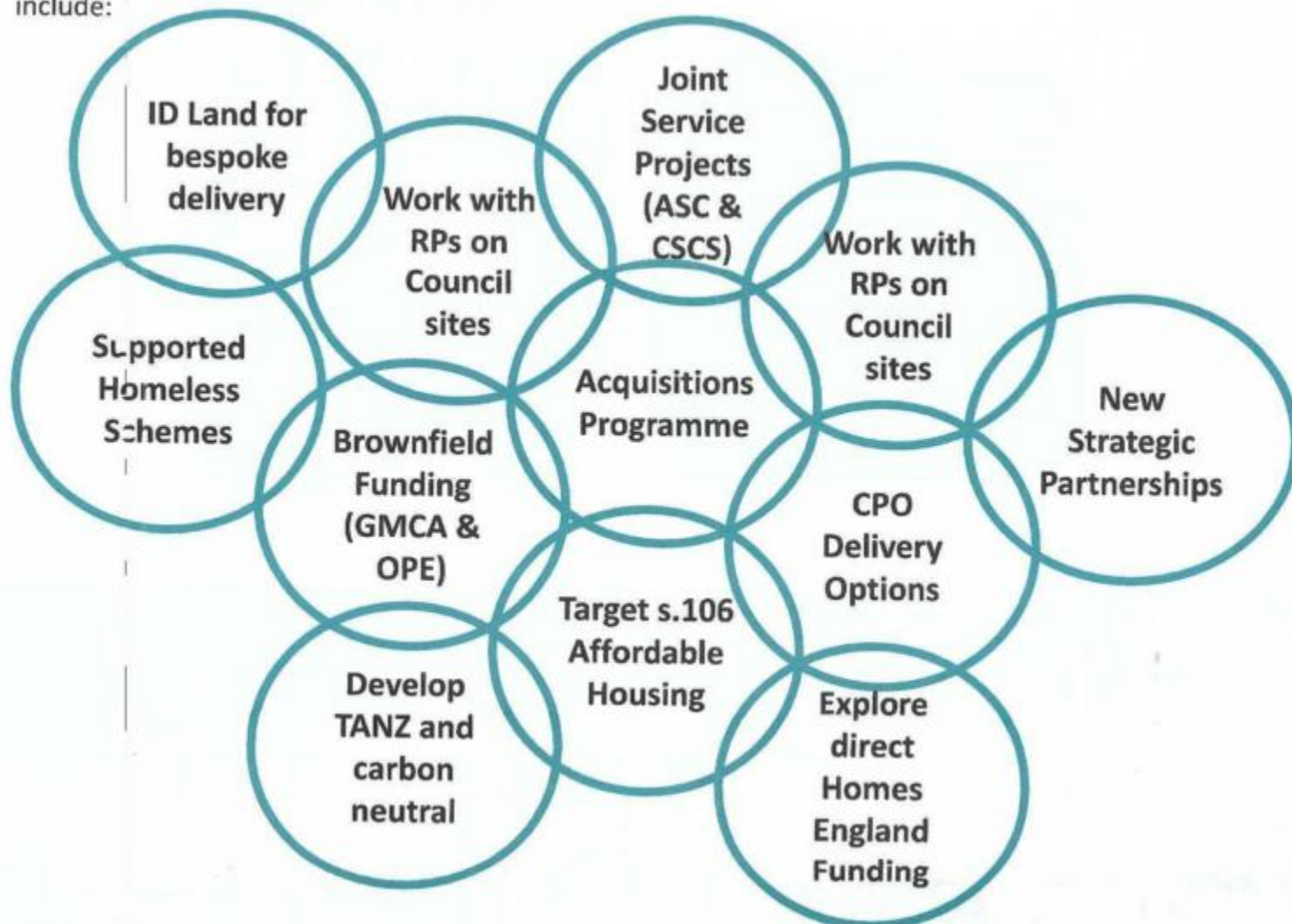
3



Delivery



There is an acute assessed need for housing of all types and tenures across the Borough. The Council needs to work both within the existing private and social markets as well as creating new interventions where the market is failing to deliver. Elements of these strategic commitments and special projects include:



3

**Delivery: *Development Objectives*****Strategic Partnerships**

Following a lengthy period of analysis RBC is committed to forming Strategic Partnerships with RPs for multi-site development.

Targeted Cohorts

Certain groups in housing need, such as larger families and those requiring adapted accommodations, are not always able to access such accommodation through social or private housing. As such the Council will look at how best to target such developments.

Co-Produced Development

It has been identified that there is significant need for alternative housing options for Adult Social Care and Children's Services customer. Strategic Housing will seek to develop programmes that work across multiple-services.

New Affordable Housing Options

Access to affordable housing products, including home ownership and new schemes such as First Homes is to be expanded. Strategic Housing is working with developers to bring forward a range of affordable housing to unlock the market within the Borough.



3

**Delivery: Community Objectives****TANZ & Carbon Neutral**

Embedding these two approaches within our regeneration and development work to achieve holistic contributions towards reducing the Climate Emergency

Multi-Agency Programmes

Every person needs a home. Every individual uses their home to engage with work, skills, employment, social and personal opportunities. Strategic Housing takes a collaborative approach to this with our Work and Skills, Social Care and Community Safety colleagues.

Fuel Poverty & Climate Challenges

Strategic Housing Services deliver a number of programmes in collaboration with internal and external colleagues. Co-produced initiatives such as EnergyWorks Rochdale (Groundworks GM) will be used to ensure a holistic approach to housing.

New Rochdale Refugee Asylum Support Service

The Council has legal duties to address immediate needs of certain groups of people. The new RRASS team within Strategic Housing seeks to deliver integrated solutions to access, provision and community cohesion.





Delivery: Capital Projects

Strategic Housing Services will continue to develop bespoke housing delivery through internal capital and government funding schemes where possible. The focus will remain on upgrading current provision of accommodations as well as increasing supply in the interim period before the replacement strategy development plan.

Grant Bid Funded Projects – Homeless Provision

RBC has been successful in recent years in securing grant bid funding from central government and will continue to adopt this approach to maximise delivery.

During the 2025/27 period a minimum of 53 additional units of bespoke housing units will be brought forward through secured funding, with an aspiration to double this target subject to capital ability. Each scheme is carefully considered and remains subject to stringent planning permissions.

Upgrading TA Sites

From 2025 it is intended that a TA refurbishment programme is secured. It is anticipated this will be in conjunction with a wider re-modelling of existing facilities across the Borough. This should allow improvements in standards, speed move on and aims to become cost-neutral/reduce subsidy loss through a more sustainable model.

RSHP Disposals Programme

In partnership with our RP partners there is a commitment to allowing the Council first refusal on properties RPs wish to sell. Through that programme the Council can undertake a targeted approach to individual unit provision around the Borough.

Empty Homes Acquisition Programme

Strategic Housing Services continues where necessary to acquire empty homes through our Empty Homes delivery as well as CPO programme.

The model of lease-scheme delivery with our partners continues to expand the opportunity to provide a flexible approach to supply. It ensures that properties remain available in perpetuity within the affordable rent market and are accessible to residents to prevent homelessness and who are/would be on the social housing register.

New Partnership Delivery

In 2025 Strategic Housing Services will be seeking to test the market with regard to potentially securing delivery partners for:

❖ Housing Portfolio Management:

Operation and maintenance of long-term lease properties on a rolling basis.

❖ Small Sites Delivery Partner:

To work with a Registered Provider ('RP') developer who has the ability and access to capital to deliver new build housing on council owned small sites.



Housing Strategy: The Next Steps

This Interim Housing Strategy provides a direction of travel which will be further extended and strengthened by a 10 year replacement strategy. To achieve this we will be undertaking core activities so as to co-produce a fully integrated and deliverable housing vision into the future.





Our Partners:

Rochdale Council Strategic Housing works with a broad array of partner organisation and values the skills, energy and passion of each. The partnership working which is delivered will continue to be one of our greatest assets in tackling the housing crisis.





Glossary

Unfortunately the use of jargon and technical terms occurs in every field, including housing. We have tried to keep the language in this document simple and straightforward but a few terms are clarified below. If there is anything you did not understand and want more information then please email strategichousing@Rochdale.gov.uk or speak with one of our Housing Officers at 2 Smith Street, Rochdale, OL16 1TU.

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Document Control:

Interim Housing Strategy 2025-2027

Summary



Publication Date	
Related Legislation /Applicable Section of Legislation	Housing Act 1988; Housing Act 1996; Housing Act 2004; Social Housing (Regulation Act) 2023; Domestic Abuse Act 2021; Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 [...]
Related Policies, Strategies, Guideline Documents	Available online: Housing policies and strategies
Replaces	Housing Strategy 2017-2022
Joint Policy (Yes/No)	No
Name of Partner(s) if joint	No
Policy Owner (Name/Position)	Stuart Morris, Head of Strategic Housing (Property) Hannah Courtney-Adamson; Head of Strategic Housing (People)
Policy Author (Name/Position)	Stuart Morris, Head of Strategic Housing (Property) & Emma Shanks, HPO Policy & Welfare

Review of Strategy

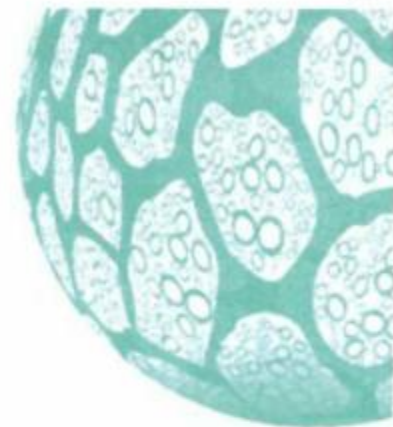
Last Review Date
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Next Review Date

Document Approvals

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version Number
Cabinet	New Policy		



ROCHDALE
BOROUGH COUNCIL



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