



Housing Strategy

2015-2025

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Foreword

Welcome to Doncaster's 10-year Housing Strategy. A clear strategy for responding to current and future housing needs is an essential requirement for borough growth and improvement. The availability and quality of housing has a direct impact on health, educational attainment, economic prosperity and community safety and cohesion – all of which are critical to Doncaster's success and to the wellbeing of our residents and visitors.

Our strategy has been developed after extensive consultation with residents, elected members and external partners. It focuses primarily on our own local priorities, but also takes into account wider plans for the Sheffield City Region, in which Doncaster is a key player in economic growth and prosperity.

The strategy sets out the current context within which we are currently operating and sets out the strategic themes to which we will work to over the next decade.

There are huge challenges ahead; these include enabling the provision of sufficient quality housing to meet an increasing need, tackling poor quality homes and empty homes, improving neighbourhoods, and providing housing-related support for our more vulnerable residents – all of which must be delivered with reduced resources.

It is with this in mind that we are now putting an even greater emphasis on partnership working, both between inter-related departments within the council, and between the council and its strategic partners who share the same goals and are also looking to streamline their working practices and 'deliver more for less'.

We would like to thank all those that have contributed to this strategy, including staff within Doncaster Council, our external partners, local councillors, and those residents that took the time to tell us what they thought about Doncaster's housing priorities.

Regards,



Ros Jones
Mayor of Doncaster



Jane Nightingale
Cabinet Portfolio
Holder for Housing



Jo Miller
Chief Executive
Doncaster Council



Susan Jordan
Chief Executive
St. Leger Homes



Housing Strategy 2015-2025: Overview

Current Context / Key Facts	Key Resident Issues	Objective 1 Meet Housing Need: Amount & Choice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast growing and changing economy • Current/forthcoming major projects: Finningley & Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme, Rossington iPort, Airport Business Park, DN7 Unity (power station/jobs/homes) HS2 National Rail Academy. • 70,000 additional jobs targeted across the Sheffield City Region by 2024, 12,000 in Doncaster. • Restrictions on developable land due to Green belt and Flood Zones • Self-contained housing market • Population growth forecasted • Ageing Population • 920 additional homes needed per year • 255 affordable homes needed per year (over and above the Council and housing association build programmes) • Affordable homes required across the whole borough • Current surplus of G/T pitches • 9,000+ planning permissions granted • Increasing economic activity and employment rates; Decreasing youth unemployment • Increasing house building rate. • Decreasing level of empty homes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of homes for children moving out of the family home • Availability of social housing • Choice of size and type of home • Availability of Traveller pitches • Advice/support for private tenants • Neighbourhood safety • Environmental/public realm improvements • Cost of living/maintaining a home • Anti-social behaviour • Support to continue living in own home • Isolation in old age • Specialist support/accommodation • Advice on changing tenure • Risk of homelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with developers to increase the number of homes being built, and maximise affordable housing provision on private developments. • Deliver 190 affordable homes from the Council House & Housing Association Build programmes • Allocate sufficient land in the Local Plan to support the delivery of enough of the right size and type of homes (including G/T pitches) in the areas where they are needed • Support gypsy/traveller community in the formalisation of unauthorised pitches (policy dependent) • Deliver/facilitate delivery of more housing options for older people • Deliver/facilitate delivery of more single-person and shared accommodation units • Make best use of existing stock: bring empty homes back into use, review current council asset usage policies • New delivery mechanisms: identify new & innovative means of attracting investment for affordable homes

Objective 2 Raise Standards	Objective 3 Support Independent Living	Housing Strategy Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council stock maintenance & repair • High design & sustainability standards on new council homes • Energy improvement work: all tenures • Environmental and public realm improvements • Asset review: identify the best future use for surplus sites/assets • Tackling empty homes: purchase scheme and home owner grants/loans • Tackling anti-social behaviour: preventative/diversionary activities • Reducing the cost of living: partnership work to secure funding, promotion of grant schemes • Supporting & improving the private rented sector: hazard inspections, discharging duty under the Homeless Act; SLHD private lettings agent service • Shared housing: maintain & improve standards • Working with private rented sector landlords: regular and frequent 2-way communication • Enforcement & Accreditation: selective licensing, landlord accreditation, and/or co-regulation. schemes for landlords. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise Children & Young People in care or leaving care • Housing Aids and Adaptations for disabled residents; inclusion in new build designs. • Adult Social Care: focus on own home solutions, with a comprehensive choice of options tailored to complexity of required support. • Multi-agency partnership approach to homelessness prevention and response • Advice & assistance to access social & private rented housing • Consideration of specific housing needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households • More options for intermediary accommodation following hospital discharge • Supporting released prisoners to integrate back into communities • Housing and support for people with mental health problems 	<p>Residents will be able to access suitable, quality accommodation to meet their needs.</p> <p>Viable, quality options will exist within the social rented, private rented or home ownership sectors; and homes in the rented sectors will be managed by high quality housing providers.</p> <p>Residents will be able to live in safe, healthy and supported communities within vibrant and well-managed neighbourhoods.</p>

Developing the Housing Strategy

The Borough Strategy sets out the Vision for Doncaster and underpins all strategies for Doncaster. The Corporate Plan identifies key Priorities which will lead to the achievement of the vision.

In this Housing Strategy, the current political, social, and economic Context within which we are operating has been considered at a national, regional, sub-regional and local level; and consistencies with our other associated strategies has been ensured (e.g. Economic growth, Adult Social Care, Public Health).

The Housing Strategy has been developed following analysis of feedback received from extensive consultation with local residents and other stakeholders.

This has been considered alongside analysis of evidence data on the housing market area, current area profile, and future population changes and housing need.

This evidence base has been used to shape our Housing Vision for Doncaster, and identify 3 Key Housing Objectives upon which the strategy will be structured.

The strategy then takes each objective in turn to identify the key elements associated with that objective and identify the short-term priorities for each objective.

An overview of how we intend to deliver the strategy is set out in the final section, which in turn links to the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, the Local Plan, and to individual Directorate and Service Plans.



Relationships to other strategies and plans

Everything we do is underpinned by our Borough Strategy. This, alongside evidence from the Housing Needs Assessment and our Economic Growth plans, help define our housing strategy and Local Plan.

The Housing strategy sets out what we intend to do, the Local Plan helps identify how we will help facilitate this.



Our vision for Doncaster

The Borough Strategy is a key long-term document for improving quality of life in Doncaster for residents, visitors and people considering moving, working or investing here. It covers the whole of Doncaster, from Askern to Tickhill, Thorne to Mexborough, and all of the 302,400 people who live here, young and old alike.

Our Borough Strategy Vision is

- A strong local economy.
- Progressive, healthy, safe and vibrant communities.
- All residents are able to achieve their full potential in employment, education, care and life chances.
- Pride in Doncaster will have increased.

Priority	How the housing Strategy contributes to this priority
We will support a strong economy where business can locate, grow and employ local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create the conditions for a vibrant, growing and thriving borough, where people and business want to locate – meeting the housing needs of an existing and growing workforce.
We will help people to live safe, healthy, active and independent lives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting people to live independently – provision of suitably designed or adapted properties in neighbourhoods with appropriate support & amenities.
We will make Doncaster a better place to live, with cleaner, more sustainable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number and quality of homes, which meet the housing needs of Doncaster's residents. • Keep household energy costs low, deliver effective regulation and enforcement, enhance and protect the quality of Doncaster built and natural environment, whilst minimising waste and the risk of flooding.
We will support all families to thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate housing and housing related support for children, young people, adults and families.
We will deliver modern value for money services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partners to commission value for money, integrated services for residents – delivering services and function using council resources as well as capacity in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.
We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate strong and effective partnership, both locally and beyond. • Ensure that Health and Safety is central to all the Council's services.

Current context

Doncaster is the country's largest metropolitan borough council, and has many significant assets, including:

- Excellent transport connectivity combining road, rail, air, canal and ports;
- Competitively priced, available land for business investment and housing.
- Renowned tourist destinations, e.g. the Racecourse, Yorkshire Wildlife Park, Mansion House, Conisbrough Castle, Cusworth Hall; and considerable green space.

A transition from a heavy industry-dominated economy to one with a more balanced mix of business sectors has allowed us to become a major contributor to economic growth in the Sheffield City Region (SCR); and subsequently increase our status as a base for economic activity and strategic link point for regional, national and international trade. Our economy is the second largest in the SCR, and has recovered faster than many of our SCR neighbours including the core city (Sheffield); with many key measures having returned to pre-recessions levels.

Doncaster's Gross Value Added economic output has increased by £188million (4.45%) since 2008 whilst the SCR as a whole has decreased by almost £700 million (-2.47%). The employment rate is now close to pre-recession levels and matches the Yorkshire & Humber average; and Job Seekers Allowance claimants are at their lowest number for six years.

A number of landmark projects are either underway or in the pipeline, including:

- Finningley & Rossington Regeneration Route Scheme – unlocking £1.7billion of private investment.
- £400m iPort – a multi-modal logistics site.
- Airport Business Park – the UK's newest Enterprise Zone.
- DN7 project – a new power station, jobs and homes.
- HS2 National Rail Academy - to provide the next generation of highly skilled rail engineers.

These will contribute to the SCR's ambition to create 70,000 additional jobs over the next decade (30,000 of which are highly skilled), to build new homes and rebalance the economy – all in support of the North of England becoming an economic 'powerhouse'. To help deliver this ambition, Doncaster and its SCR partners are pushing Devolution powers from the Government, to provide greater autonomy over skills, employment, business support, transport and housing interventions.

With such significant forthcoming economic growth, Doncaster must work now to deliver a housing offer for a growing existing population and to match an increasing number of employment opportunities across multiple industry sectors across all salary levels. Our economy is changing – it is moving away from a dominance of low-skilled service industry jobs to a more balanced mix.

Our strategic plans will look wider than our own borders; incorporating SCR priorities in particular. They will focus on supporting our economy to become less reliant on the public sector in order to improve resilience to any further reduction in public sector funding.

Recent Government policy changes that need to be considered include Welfare Reform, the spare-room subsidy (the so called 'bedroom tax'); the Help to Buy scheme, further discounts to the Right to Buy scheme; as well as any similar future policy changes that come into effect.

We must also be aware of other housing-related changes introduced under the Localism Act (2012) such as: Social housing tenure reform, Social housing allocations reform, Reform of Homelessness Legislation, Reform of council housing (Housing Revenue Account) financing, and the National Homeswap scheme.

Despite our economic recovery, salaries are not keeping pace with the cost of living, and access to finance is becoming more restricted than during pre-recession years. These factors all result in significant changes to how easy it is for households to obtain and maintain a home; and increased pressure for local authorities trying to meet the housing needs of their residents.



Evidence base

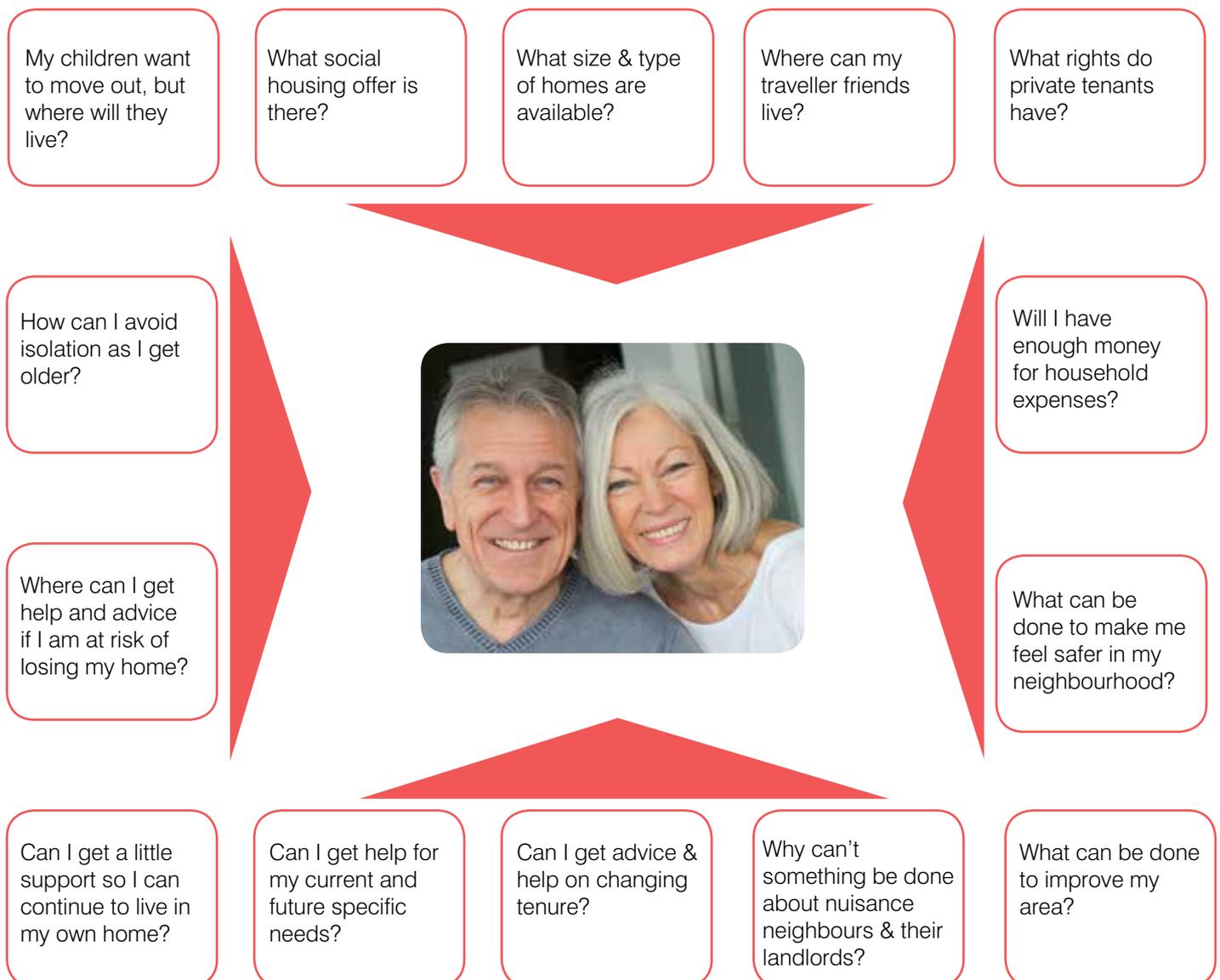
Everything we deliver must be driven by robust evidence. We have undertaken extensive consultation with residents, elected councillors, partner organisations and other key stakeholders to find out what issues are important to them.

The following section is an overview of the evidence found in the Housing Needs Assessment, which contains details of feedback received during consultation, and in-depth analysis of the Housing Market Area, the current borough profile, Population and Household Projections, Housing Need calculations, and analysis of the housing needs of specific groups of our community.



Person centred approach to strategy development

The illustration below shows key issues that are important to Doncaster residents.



Key facts about Doncaster

Housing Market Area	Area Profile
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 220 sq miles mixture of urban & rural • 41% of land is green belt • 42% of land is Flood Zone 2 or 3 • Part of the Sheffield City Region • Self-contained housing market • Marginal net outward migration • 39th most deprived in England; 3rd in Yorks & Humber; most deprived in S. Yorks & SCR • 75%+ of workers work within the borough 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing Population, up 5.4% in 10yrs • Increasing elderly Population • 65% of households have 1 or 2 people. • Most households under-occupy their homes • Not ethnically diverse (4.7% BME); ethnic diversity reduces with distance from urban centre. • Large G&T population. • Affordability is a major issue for many household types with a range of incomes, for a range of property types and locations. • Affordability issues for rental & purchase for households at or below average salary. • Average Income to Property value ratio is 5.8. • Unemployment around 10%; a 10,000+ increase (260%) over 10yrs. • Wage Rates over 10% lower than UK average Gross incomes have increased across the last 10yrs but have not kept pace with inflation. • Gap between employment rate & economic activity rate has started to close, but significant gap with regional/ national/ averages remains. • Rental market represents a more accessible market, but affordability issues still apparent for many households. • 1-person households relying on housing benefit will largely have to live in shared accommodation. • Youth Unemployment falling faster than the overall rate, but is significantly higher than regional & national avg. • JSA claimant rate significantly reduced over the past year, but remains higher than regional & national averages. • Demand for the private rented sector is expected to increase. • Poor standard of property and neighbourhoods in various parts the borough. • Land availability in is plentiful, with 9,000+ permissions granted. • House-building rate and net increase has been slow for many. • Large number of empty homes (over 3,500); of which around 22% are long-term empty (1yr+). • Low house prices; no increased in 10yrs • Large number of recent demolitions have cancelled out a proportion of completions. • House prices are similar to prices a decade ago, but land was often acquired at peak prices; this makes many proposed developments not financially viable.

Population and Household Projections	Housing Requirements for Specific Household Groups	Housing Need
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued population growth is predicted. • Number of households expected to increase. • Official projections suggest approx. 39% will be non-working age (made up of 18% under 15yrs, 21% 65+yrs). • Large majority of existing households intending to move within 5yrs intend to move within Doncaster. • Demand drivers are varied: a wish for a better neighbourhood, larger garden or larger/ better property are the most common motivations. • More single-person, 1&2-bed, or shared units required as a result of the spare room subsidy. • Location preferences are evenly split across the 4 management areas. • Net outward internal migration will continue to reduce & be superseded by a net inward international migration; providing a small overall annual population increase. • Growing ageing population • Increasing need to downsize for manageability and/or due to Welfare Reform • Single/shared accommodation demand may be met by HMO stock, but standards need improving. • Low demand in some areas. Increasing affordability gap between the most & least deprived areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a fifth of the population has a disability or limiting long term illness (LLTI). • 61% of those aged 65+yrs have a disability or LLTI, & 30% for those 50-64yrs. • Doncaster disability/LLTI stats are roughly in line with the sub-region and region. • Incidence of disability/LLTIs is spatially uneven across Doncaster electoral wards. • Incidence ranges from 17.5% (Finningley) to 26.3% (Conisbrough & Denaby) • Over 37,000 (12%) are aged 55-64yrs, and so will become part of the 65yrs+ age-group within the strategy period. • Elderly population has been increasing for many years. • Almost ¼ of the borough's population are 60+yrs old; about 1/6 are 65+yrs. • Most properties in low value bands, so shortage exists for mid & high net worth households. • A proportion of the older population wish to downsize (mainly due to inability to maintain/repair their home); but most want support to continue living in their own home for longer. • Large G&T population. Unmet pitch need is low, but monitored regularly. • Distribution of the older population is not uniform; ward variation ranges from +8% & -6% from the average. • The 3 wards that make up the urban centre (Central, Balby and Wheatley) have only 11-14%. • Torne Valley has ¼ of its population aged 65yrs+; Bessacarr & Cantley, Sprotbrough, & Askern Spa wards each have over a fifth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectively Assessed Housing Need (OAN) is 920 per year over 17yrs • Affordable Housing Need (AHN) is 255 per year over 10yrs • AHN by size: 2-bed (46%) 3-bed (26%) 1-bed (25%) • AHN across all areas. Highest in more deprived • AH requirement for permissions is around 43%. • Surplus of G/T pitches over the next 5yrs. <p style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;"><i>NB. References to wards refer to 2014 electoral ward areas</i></p>

What will success look like?

Following consideration of the evidence base described in the previous section, we have identified the following housing vision for Doncaster:

Residents will be able to access suitable, quality accommodation to meet their needs.

Viable, quality options will exist within the social rented, private rented or home ownership sectors; and homes in the rented sectors will be managed by high quality housing providers.

Residents will be able to live in safe, healthy and supported communities within vibrant and well-managed neighbourhoods.

Further details on performance indicators and key milestones can be found in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan



How will we achieve this vision?

In order to achieve this vision, we have set ourselves the following three Key Objectives:

**Objective 1
Meet Housing Need**

**Objective 2
Raise Standards**

**Objective 3
Support Independent Living**

The following section will consider these objectives in more detail, and identify the short-term priorities associated with each.

Objective 1- Meet Housing Need

Accountable Officers: Director of Regeneration and Environment (Doncaster Council) and Director of Housing Services (St Leger Homes)

How Many Homes?

An estimated 920 homes per year are required to meet the borough's needs. This reflects forecasted expansion of our existing population as well as predicted in-migration of additional households attracted by our future economic growth opportunities.

Property Size

We will increase the amount of single-person & shared units in response to reducing household sizes and the impact of welfare reform – adjusting our plans according to any changes in Government policy that affect this need.

Our Council House Build programme will seek to address the shortage of affordable homes for larger families, and will include units that can be readily split or merged to form smaller or larger properties when required.

Ageing Population

Our population is getting older. The Council and St Leger Homes of Doncaster will build more homes that are suitable for older people including 200-300 units on 4 Extra Care schemes; and more if increased need is confirmed.

We will provide housing adaptations to help people to live independently in their homes for longer and will include accessibility design features in newly built homes where financially viable, to keep future adaptation costs to a minimum.

Affordable Homes

The Council and St Leger Homes of Doncaster will continue its significant investment in the development of new council homes which, combined with joint ventures with a select group of Housing Associations, will deliver around 190 affordable homes per year.

A further 255 affordable homes will need to be delivered from private developments and through the re-use of existing private sector stock. This will help meet backlog need and newly arising need, and mitigate the loss of stock resulting from the Right To Buy scheme.

Making Best use of Existing Stock

Programmes to significantly reduce the number of empty homes will continue in the form of: grants/loans to owners of empty properties; a property purchase scheme; and a lettings agency service delivered by St Leger Homes of Doncaster.

All surplus council assets/land will be considered for housing suitability and the review of current asset use (e.g. age-designation policies) will ensure residents get the most value for our assets.

New Delivery Mechanisms

Identification of new & innovative means of attracting investment will continue. Joint ventures with investors/ developers will be explored and continued partnership work will continue with the Homes & Communities Agency / Sheffield City Region LEP. We will implement a housing delivery programme that provides a range of options for delivery of affordable housing across the borough.

Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Need

Additional pitch development on existing council sites will be completed in 2015; with more being added according to need, demand, available resources and planning regulations.

Owners of some unauthorised pitches will be supported to obtain relevant approval to formalise their plots; and appropriate land capacity will be allocated to meet the unmet pitch requirement.

Current proposals (to be finalised in the Local Plan) include sites in Armthorpe, Bentley, Dunscroft, Thorne, and Toll Bar.

Delivering Development

The local planning authority will continue its enabling role in support of developers to deliver enough of the right size, type and price of homes in the areas where they are needed.

The Local Plan (scheduled for implementation in 2017) will encourage and support an ambitious and sustainable growth and regeneration strategy that protects the borough's natural and built heritage including the green belt in the west and other countryside in the east. Housing development will be focussed in the main urban area; our 6 principal towns and our 2 potential growth towns (see glossary for details).

We will work with developers to understand viability issues and work collaboratively to increase the number of homes being built and maximise affordable housing delivery on private developments.

Objective 2 - Raise Standards

Accountable Officers: Director of Regeneration and Environment (Doncaster Council) and Director of Property Services (St Leger Homes)

As housing has an integral effect on people's lives in such a variety of ways, it is essential that we do everything we can to ensure the borough's housing stock and housing services meet the needs and aspirations of our residents. A series of legacy programmes from the last strategy combined with the delivery of statutory duties and new programmes will raise the standard of properties, property management, and neighbourhoods.

- St Leger Homes Decency Programme for council stock.
- Maintenance and repair of council stock.
- Council house new builds – high design & sustainability standards.
- Regeneration programmes, subject to available resources.
- Energy efficiency improvement works – all tenures
- Environmental and public realm improvements to ensure neighbourhoods are safe, attractive and support the communities that live and work there

Our limited and reducing resources will be focussed on areas of most need, to ensure that the gap between different areas is significantly reduced. These areas tend to be areas of poor housing and environment, poor educational attainment and skill levels, low employment, high disability rates, and high crime rates.

Asset Review

The council has an ongoing review programme covering all council-owned land whereby the best future use for each site is determined e.g. housing or economic development, or public open space. This will include our shopping parades which we will look to regenerate in order to attract the businesses that our communities want and need.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Working corporately and with external partners. We will develop and deliver preventative and diversionary activities and initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). Where crime/ASB persists, we will take strong, fast, and coordinated enforcement against the perpetrators of such activity.

We will continue our zero tolerance to drug & alcohol-related criminality in all tenures; and work with private landlords to ensure they know their responsibilities and support them to adhere to them

Evidence Gathering

We will make decisions based on robust evidence, updated as regularly as is appropriate.

We will share knowledge, expertise and resources used across council departments & its partners to maximise value for money.

Reduce the Cost of Living

In line with the Mayor's anti-poverty agenda, we will work to reduce fuel poverty such that everyone can afford to heat their home.

In 2011, 14,516 households (11.4% of Doncaster households) were living in fuel poverty, a large proportion of which were privately renting and/or living in pre-1919 terraced properties.

We will work with partners to secure funding to reduce the risk of cold-related illness and excess winter deaths; and identify ways of helping people out of fuel poverty by increasing the thermal efficiency of their homes and helping to lower fuel costs.

We will offer advice on energy efficiency, and promote appropriate grants schemes, focusing on those residents most at risk of ill health as a result of cold homes. Where resources are available, we'll consider funding energy efficiency measures in the most disadvantaged areas in the borough.

Tackling Empty Homes

A team of dedicated officers focussed on tackling problematic empty homes and preventing homes becoming empty will continue to help make best use of housing stock in Doncaster.

Grants/loans are available for empty home owners to bring their properties back into use at the required standard; and secured funding is being used for purchasing privately owned empty properties to add to council stock.

A professional property management service via St Leger Homes of Doncaster gives owners the confidence of a professional and value for money lettings service if they want to let their property. The additional council tax levy on properties empty for more than 2 years will continue, and concerted efforts will be made to keep unused council houses to a minimum.

Supporting & Improving the Private Rented Sector (PRS)

As home ownership becomes harder to achieve, and with a shortage of social housing, the PRS is increasingly becoming the tenure of choice. Environmental Health officers provide support to the sector to ensure homes are well-managed and free from hazards via delivery of our statutory duty to complete appropriate inspections.

St Leger Homes will strengthen links with PRS landlords to utilise this capacity in the discharging of our duties under the Homeless Act; and will continue our focus on supporting private landlords to bring their properties up to the required standard through the provision of grants/loans and a high quality PRS Lettings Agent service.

Working with PRS Landlords

We are improving our communication links with PRS landlords and putting mechanisms in place to keep all parties abreast of the issues being faced by each other; obtaining PRS landlord contributions/opinions on new schemes being designed to improve this sector is an essential part of their development.

Housing Conditions

- Property conditions vary across the borough.
- 21% of housing (all tenures) does not meet Decent Homes standard.
- Large proportion of households living in fuel poverty.
- The proposed housing study will provide an updated understanding of the quality of housing stock across the borough, and will allow a better informed targeting of remedial activity.
- Existing data shows the borough areas in need of the most improvement fall within areas such as the urban centre.

Shared Housing

We will increase the amount of single-person accommodation, according to the increasing need; and our partnership work with appropriate organisations will continue to provide advice and viable options to mitigate the effect of Welfare Reform.

Appropriate action will be taken to maintain and improve standards in shared units in the form of effective licensing and enforcement – potentially via an additional licensing scheme.

We will support households wanting to come together to share a whole house under one tenancy.

Enforcement & Accreditation

Enforcement action will continue to be used where a partnership approach has failed.

Selective Licensing, landlord accreditation, and/or co-regulation schemes for private sector landlords are being considered for use in targeted areas; the choice of which will be determined by evidence data and following consultation with relevant stakeholders.



Objective 3 - Support Independent Living

Accountable Officers: Director of Regeneration & Environment, Director of Adults, Health and Well Being (Doncaster Council); Director of Housing Services (St Leger Homes)

Children & Young People

The transfer of children's services to the Children's Trust means close working between the Trust, the Council and other key partners is essential to ensure children and young people achieve their full potential.

It is a borough priority to meet the housing needs of children and young people in care and leaving care; so they will continue to receive priority status on the council housing waiting list. Furnished tenancies & semi-independent living schemes to eligible households are in place, as is the provision of independent living floating support and our 16+ Employability Plan. Help for young parents exists in the form of supported lodgings or referral to a foster care placement with support; and we have joint frontline staff working protocols in place to ensure all 16/17yr olds in housing need receive the support they need.

The Supporting People programme will continue to be tightly monitored, reviewed and contracts re-commissioned as required.

Housing Aids and Adaptations

Multi-agency support for independent living will continue. The Council provides or funds appropriate aids and adaptations; and appropriate social/affordable rented accommodation is provided through St Leger Homes of Doncaster (dependent on personal circumstances). Accessibility design features are included into our new properties where appropriate, to reduce the need for costly future adaptations.

Adult Social Care

We will deliver, with our partners, wide-ranging solutions required to address accommodation and support needs associated with disabilities or limiting long-term illnesses (LLTIs); or conditions such as dementia, drug & alcohol dependency and a range of mental health issues. Our priority and focus will be, wherever appropriate, on **Own home solutions** – whereby people receive support to continue living independently in their own home for as long as they wish. This support will come in the provision of a repairs service, equipment aids/adaptations, help to live at home in the form of care or support, and advice on downsizing.

Some people will need more than this – so the Council and its partners will provide or commission a suite of adult social care housing options including, where appropriate:

- **Adapted Housing** with floating/visiting support.
- **Supported Living:** A package of home care or personalised budget in conjunction with housing provision in small groups or individual apartments.

- **Purpose-built housing with flexible site/scheme support:** this could be Supported housing in the form of predominantly self-contained accommodation with access to a scheme manager.
- **Specialist Housing including Extra Care:** Extra Care is a housing based model of care where self-contained homes, designed for independence, provide people with the care and support needed in an environment that promotes independence and a positive alternative to residential care.
- **Retirement Villages:** Housing developments offering a range of accommodation options, services and facilities for people of retirement age.
- **Lifetime Homes:** Ordinary homes designed to incorporate certain design criteria that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Our council house build programme will include such features, and we'll encourage the same in private sector developments.
- **Enablement Housing:** Self-contained accommodation providing short-term tailored therapy, care and support that promotes re-ablement, faster recovery.
- **Key Ring:** Community supported living networks.
- **Shared Lives** (formerly known as Adult Placement): Shared Lives Carers providing care or support to an individual placed with them in their own home.

These solutions will be targeted and prioritised into areas of most need – informed by evidence collected from multiple sources and sectors.

Homelessness Response and Prevention

St Leger Homes of Doncaster deliver a high quality Housing Options service to support people in financial difficulty or at risk of homelessness. This includes the discharging of our statutory duty under the Homeless Act, as well as a focus on homelessness prevention.

Partnership work will continue and develop with local agencies to provide employment, education and training opportunities; provision of mortgage debt advice and a local No Second Night Out scheme for homeless households.

We will provide (or signpost to) services that include advice on tackling financial hardship, Tenancy Support, support in acquiring a PRS tenancy, advice on Welfare Reform, Rent in Advance, Bond Guarantee, and the provision of information sessions on homelessness prevention for young people and those of school leaving age.

We will continue our commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant through the waiver of a local connection requirement when assessing eligibility for council housing. This waiver will apply to the AFC that have left service within 5 years; and those applicants assessed as being in housing need during that period will be given platinum band priority status.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) households

We recognise the varied specific house design needs of some BME households; for example, associated with multi-generational households; and so we will endeavour to incorporate solutions to these needs in our own designs and likewise in the designs of private developers. By doing so, and by tackling racially-based anti-social behaviour/harassment, we will help the integration of these communities and increase ethnic and cultural diversity throughout the whole borough.

Gypsy & Travellers

Sufficient land will be allocated in the Local Plan (2017-32) to meet the unmet pitch requirement and thus help reduce unauthorised encampments; we will work with the community to keep abreast of any changes to pitch requirements throughout the strategy period.

Owners of appropriate unauthorised sites are assisted in the process to formalise them, or supported to identify alternative supported sites. An improvement programme will ensure council-owned sites are of appropriate standard. Council officers will also take appropriate action to ensure that private sites meet the required standards.

Hospital Discharge / Access to Health Services

Patients often cease to require hospital care, but are not yet well enough to take care of themselves in their own home.

This means the patient remains in hospital, occupying resources that would be better directed to those patients that actually need hospital care. We will work in partnership to determine the need for and in the provision of suitable intermediary transitional housing with appropriate support. We will consider proximity and capacity of local GP surgeries when assessing future development proposals.

Access to Social & Private Rented Sectors

St Leger Homes of Doncaster provide and effectively manage over 20,000 council homes of various sizes & types. Access to council homes is determined by eligibility criteria and placement on the Housing Waiting list is prioritised according to complexity of housing need.

We will provide advice on the full range of options to those looking for their own accommodation (Doncaster HomeChoice); and will give a level of priority to for under-occupying council tenants wishing to move to a smaller property. We also support tenants in the National Homeswap scheme.

Released Prisoners

Many released prisoners have no home to return to and so stay within Doncaster. Having a stable home dramatically reduces re-offending rates.

This group will be supported to re-integrate into society in an appropriately supported and managed way through partnerships with other external partners, the voluntary sector, and with commissioned services.

Mental Health

There are a large number of people with varied mental health problems across the borough. Many of these live in the rented sectors and need support to obtain and maintain their tenancies.

We will work together with other agencies to provide support to those that need it, in order to help residents overcome or manage their mental health issues and live independently in their own home, within their existing neighbourhood.



Delivery

Community Engagement, Funding and Partnerships

With reducing finances, we must now work together with our partners more than ever before to get the most from our collective resources. We will focus and prioritise delivery of services to those people or areas in most need.

Recent Housing Revenue Account Reform has given Doncaster greater control over our housing budget and how we spend it. We have projected the money available over the next 30 years, mainly through rental income, and set out our investment priorities in the Housing Revenue Account business plan. These priorities include:

- Maintaining and Improving the energy efficiency of housing stock
- New local authority housing
- Remodelling housing stock to meet changing need
- Environmental improvement works

The Council will fund many of the large-scale projects from the rental income we will receive in the future; but will always look to take advantage of any external funding that becomes available within the strategy period, such that our own resources can be utilised elsewhere to support other work streams, in particular, to support the provision of statutory functions.

Projects that focus on the private sector, i.e. home owners and private rented accommodation, are generally financed through the Council's General Fund. This funding stream is under severe pressure and so it is for this sort of work that the Council will need to work with our partners in order for them to take place and become a success.

We will bid for external sources of finance that are controlled by the Homes and Communities Agency and the Sheffield City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (e.g. Sheffield City Region Infrastructure Fund) and a dedicated team will identify and pursue every appropriate potential funding opportunity to help us to deliver our commitments. Some Government funding streams are not directly accessible by the Council, but can be accessed by residents, community groups, landlords or businesses.

The Team Doncaster partnership in their strategic and enabling role will provide support, where possible, to enable this funding to be accessed.

We have a good track record in providing effective community engagement and empowerment opportunities to tenants and residents; and we will continue to do this to ensure the continuation of open and transparent needs identification, decision making, and delivery process.

All major developments and policy changes will include significant consultation with the public and relevant

stakeholders prior to any decision being made; and all such decisions made by Full Council, Cabinet, Cabinet Portfolio Holders or officers will continue to be transparent and open.

Our Commissioning and Procurement Strategy puts a focus on supporting local businesses, community and voluntary groups in the choice of provider for the goods and services we need, and ensures a consistent and transparent approach that gives a fair chance to all appropriate providers.

In order to communicate and engage more effectively, we will work to better understand our communities – specifically: who lives in them, and the best way to engage them. This will help us to deliver services that meet people's needs and aspirations. We will do this by:

- Developing innovative ways to engage with people to ensure that all people are given the opportunity to put forward their views.
- Determining how people wish to be communicated with; and ensure our communication material is good quality, easily understood, and accessible.
- Providing quality, timely feedback on consultations, clearly indicating what actions will be taken and when they will happen.
- Engaging with children & young people – our future householders.

We support people to become part of the housing decision making process by not only consulting widely with residents and stakeholders, but more importantly, acting on the information collected during these discussions.

We support, where possible, local community groups wishing to make improvements to their area, and encourage residents, businesses and visitors to take personal responsibility and take pride in their local community.

We will continue to develop our partnership work with outside organisations and look to strengthen our successful partnerships with the voluntary and community sectors. We will utilise these sectors to aid in the consultation of appropriate policy/service matters, and involve them in the on-going assessment of our services.

We will build on our existing community engagement mechanisms to increase confidence in our commitment to improving disadvantaged areas. Communities across the borough all have different wishes and requirements, and so we recognise that different areas require different levels of investment.

Short-term housing priorities (2015-17)

The following list provides an insight into the key programmes/pieces of work that the Council and its partners will undertake in order to achieve the Housing Strategy's key objectives.

Further detail on each can be found in the Housing Strategy Delivery Plan, and within individual Service Plans.

Meeting Housing Need

- Council House Build Programme
- Registered Provider Build Programme
- Empty Homes Purchase & Repair Programme
- Empty Homes Grants/Loans Programme
- Development & implementation of a housing delivery model
- Expansion of council-owned gypsy and traveller sites
- Homelessness Prevention and Response

Raising Standards

- Council House Decency Programme
- SLHD Environmental Improvement Programme
- Empty Homes Purchase & Repair Programme
- Empty Homes Grants/Loans Programme

- Stock Condition / Housing Study
- Empty Homes data validation / update
- Selective Licensing of Private Rented Sector landlords
- Council G&T site improvement
- Enforcement Strategy

Supporting Independent Living

- Help for looked after children and care leavers
- Extra Care Schemes
- Adult Social Care schemes: to include Supported housing, Supported living, Shared Lives; Retirement villages, Sheltered Housing, Enablement Housing, and Lifetime Homes.
- Housing aids and adaptations programme; Accessible Housing Register.
- Homelessness Prevention and Response; Gold Standard Housing Options Service.
- Tenancy Support initiative.



Glossary of terms

Affordable housing

Aimed at assisting households who are in housing need and unable to afford open market housing. It can either be social rented housing (from the Council or a housing association) or intermediate housing (low cost home ownership).

Affordable rented housing

is let by local authorities or private registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing.

Affordable Rent

is subject to rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

AHN, Affordable Homes Need

Amount of social/affordable housing needed in Doncaster.

Borough Strategy

a key long-term plan for improving quality of life in Doncaster.

Decency Programme/Decent Homes Standard

Housing standard designed to measure the condition of public sector stock.

Doncaster's Main urban area

This includes Doncaster Town Centre, Balby, Hexthorpe, Wheatley, Intake, Bessacarr, Cantley, Edenthorpe, Kirk Sandall, Bentley, Scawthorpe, Scawsby, and Richmond Hill.

Doncaster's Principal towns

Include the following settlements: Adwick-le-Street (including Woodlands), Askern, Conisbrough, Mexborough, and Thorne.

Doncaster's Potential Growth towns

Include the following settlements: Hatfield, Stainforth, Duncroft, Dunsville and Rossington.

Doncaster's Renewal towns

Include the following settlements: Carcroft, Skellow, Denaby, Edlington, and Moorends.

GTAN, Gypsy/Traveller Accommodation Need:

Unmet pitch requirement over 5 years.

Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)

Joins up the delivery of housing and regeneration under one roof, bringing together the functions of English Partnerships, the investment functions of the Housing Corporation, the Academy for Sustainable Communities, and key housing and regeneration programmes previously delivered by Communities and Local Government, including the Thames Gateway, Housing Market Renewal, Decent Homes. See www.homesandcommunities.co.uk

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Dwellings containing multiple households.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

(See Sheffield City Region).

Localism

Localism Act 2011 covers four main areas - new freedoms and flexibilities for local government, new rights and powers for communities and individuals, reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective and reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally.

National Homewap scheme

Allows households wishing to swap their social home to access details of other tenants who may be a suitable match.

No Second Night Out scheme

an initiative whereby rough sleepers are offered support and a roof over their head to prevent them continuing to sleep rough.

OAN, Objectively Assessed Need

Overall housing requirement in Doncaster, per year over the Local Plan period.

Reform of Social housing tenure

ability to offer fixed-term social housing tenancies as well as 'tenancies for life'.

Reform of Social housing allocations

Ability to set policies/criteria for who should qualify for social housing thus reducing false expectations & large waiting lists.

Reform of Homelessness Legislation

Ability to discharge our duty to house eligible households using the private rented sector.

Reform of council housing (Housing Revenue Account) financing

Retaining social housing rent (rather than sending it to Central Government and awaiting a single sum in return), giving us a more predictable and stable basis on which to make plans.

Section 106 planning gain

Through negotiation, a planning condition can be imposed whereby a proportion of new homes must be made available for affordable housing.

Self-contained housing market a market in which 70% or more of house moves are within Doncaster.

Sheffield City Region (Local Enterprise Partnership)

Collaboration between businesses and the local authorities of the Sheffield City Region (Barnsley, Bassetlaw, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire Dales, Doncaster, North East Derbyshire, Rotherham and Sheffield). Its objective is to help determine local economic priorities and lead economic growth and jobs creation within the area. See www.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk

Sheffield City Region Infrastructure Fund (SCRIF)

Recyclable fund which enables the City Region to make strategic infrastructure investments to create jobs and economic growth, and utilises the new funding flexibilities available to local areas.

Social rented housing

is owned by local authorities and private registered providers for which guideline target rents are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with the Homes and Communities Agency.

Housing Needs Assessment

Report that sets out key facts about housing in Doncaster such as housing needs survey results, market values, housing needs in different areas etc.

Welfare Reform

Major changes to welfare benefits provision, including Universal Credit which combines numerous benefits, including housing benefit / local housing allowance, into a single





Doncaster Council
Policy, Performance and Research Team
Regeneration & Environment

Telephone: 01302 736075.

Email: general.enquiries@doncaster.gov.uk

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