

# Doncaster Housing Strategy Update 2020 -2025

Homes that enhance the wellbeing of  
our residents and our place



**Doncaster  
Council**

# Foreword

Welcome to Doncaster's revised Housing Strategy 2020 to 2025.

Our homes have a powerful influence on our health and wellbeing. This has become even more apparent during 2020, when many of us spent much more time in our own homes than we normally would expect to and many of our residents were still dealing with the aftermath of the devastating floods in November 2019.

Access to good housing for everyone is one of the most effective ways of improving health and wellbeing. We need homes that meet our needs, now and as we get older. I want the people of Doncaster to have homes that are safe, secure and warm.

The Mayor's Restart, Recovery and Renewal Plan, our initial focus following Covid-19, is driving the delivery of more affordable homes and working to prevent as many people as possible from becoming homeless.

In the longer term, we need homes to become more energy efficient: we can tailor the homes we build now to the standards of tomorrow, and help people with older homes update insulation and heating methods. A major Housing Retrofit Programme will support the people of Doncaster to do this, but we will all need to play our part.

Councils working alone cannot meet the challenges we face from climate change and an ageing population. By working with our residents, community organisations and other partners, we can help the people of Doncaster to protect their independence and wellbeing.



Cllr Glyn Jones, Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Equalities

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Glossary

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The COM-B Model of Behaviour Change

## 1. Introduction

In 2015, the Council set out its 10 year vision and priorities for homes across the borough. In the last 5 years, much has been achieved, and much has changed, not least in this unprecedented year of 2020. A mid-term review of the 2015-2025 Strategy was essential, to ensure we're still working towards the right priorities and using our resources to the best effect for the well-being of all our residents over the coming 5 years.

In 2021, the Doncaster Borough Strategy will also be updated. It will build upon the successes of the Doncaster Growing Together Plan to deliver a transformation in the well-being of Doncaster people and places over the next 10 years.

This mid-term review of the 2015-2025 Housing Strategy is driven by the powerful influence our homes have on our health and wellbeing, and providing access to good housing for everyone is one of the most effective ways we can improve people's wellbeing. A healthy home which is secure, in good repair, warm, comfortable, and free from hazards, which could harm our health, is one of the foundations for life. By contrast, poor quality housing causes a range of physical and mental health problems, as well as being expensive to heat and causing high carbon emissions.

In 2020, many of us spent much more time in our own homes than we normally would expect to. The quality, size, condition and security of our home has had a direct impact on our experience of this period.

Evidence is emerging that COVID-19 is having an unequal impact on households and much of this is due to the home they live in. Recent research<sup>1</sup> (Place Alliance, 2020) has found that access to private open space, in the form of a garden or terrace, was the most critical factor in terms of people's comfort in their homes during the full lockdown period. Having enough space for occupants was also extremely important. Proximity to a park or green space was most important in terms of satisfaction with neighbourhoods, closely followed by being close to shops and amenities, and quiet streets to walk and cycle.

The learning from COVID-19 so far, makes it clear that in order to build Doncaster residents' resilience to future challenges, we need to ensure that our homes and communities support us, enable us to thrive and do not increase inequalities between us.

Along with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been other significant changes that have shifted the basis of the objectives in the Housing Strategy 2015-2025. These include:

- recovery from the 2008 recession and the investment in economic regeneration which is underway
- preparation for the end of the transition period following the UK's exit from the EU and the potential economic impacts arising from that
- extensive flooding experienced within the borough in 2019
- a growing awareness of the scale and urgency of the climate change emergency, and understanding of the impact of housing on carbon emissions, and the imperative to reduce those emissions

We also now have more information on the housing needs of our residents, having completed a Housing Needs Study in 2019.

In this review, we have refreshed the vision for homes in Doncaster, updated our key aims and outlined the key

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<sup>1</sup>Place Alliance (2020) Home Comforts During the COVID-19 Lockdown [http://placealliance.org.uk/research/research-home-comforts/?mc\\_cid=e39ab41b70&mc\\_eid=b33912de9e](http://placealliance.org.uk/research/research-home-comforts/?mc_cid=e39ab41b70&mc_eid=b33912de9e)

actions that we will take over the next five years.

These include:

- I. the delivery of new homes in all tenures to meet housing need, including accelerated investment in the Council House Build Programme to deliver more new affordable homes, more quickly
- II. the development of a borough-wide housing retrofit programme to ensure the condition of existing homes is improved and we start to reduce carbon emissions
- III. increased preventative work on homelessness and rough sleeping, and the expansion of our Housing First programme
- IV. a comprehensive response to new legislation on Building and Fire Safety
- V. improving our understanding and involvement in raising the standards of homes and tenancy management in private rented housing
- VI. supporting our town centres as shopping and working habits change, with new homes to raise footfall and improve liveability

New housing plays a key role in the large economic regeneration schemes underway and planned for the Borough. This includes Unity, Doncaster Sheffield Airport and, the Waterfront and City Gateway schemes in Doncaster town centre. Other housing schemes will regenerate our Main Towns, across the borough. These new homes allow people to live near their work, reduce commuting and provide investment and job opportunities for local, regional and national companies.



Doncaster has set a target of reducing carbon emissions by 85% by 2030 and becoming carbon neutral by 2040. This is ten years ahead of the 2050 carbon neutrality target set by the UK Government. A new Council Environment and Sustainability Strategy is currently being developed and as part of this an emissions analysis tool, SCATTER, was used to model the impact of different options to help achieve the carbon reduction targets. For Doncaster, housing improvements, particularly retrofitting housing stock to improve energy efficiency, were shown to be the intervention that would have the most impact. It will be a huge challenge to reduce

the carbon emissions for 110,000 homes across the borough, and the Council, landlords and all residents will all have a part to play in rising to this challenge.



## 2. Progress on the delivery of the 2015-2025 Housing Strategy

Significant progress has been made against each of the objectives.

### 2.1 More new homes to meet need and demand

The Local Plan annual target of delivering 920 new homes has been consistently exceeded, with an average of approximately 1,200 new homes being completed each year. During 2020, the number of new homes built will reduce due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown, but we hope to see a recovery in delivery rates during 2021.

From April 2015 to March 2020, 925 new affordable homes were built across the borough. This includes:

- an investment of £53.9m by the Council to provide 407 new Council houses;
- 196 new Housing Association homes; and,
- 322 new affordable homes secured via contributions from private housing schemes



However, the number of people on the council housing waiting list and number of bids for each available property illustrates the continuing need for more affordable homes.

Since 2015, 136 Extra Care Housing apartments have been built in partnership with Housing 21, at Casson Court in Thorne and Swallowdale in Edlington. These provide independent, accessible accommodation, for rent or part ownership, with an on-site care team. 75 bungalows have been provided across the

borough for older people or people living with physical disabilities.

However, we have more to do and are continually developing our understanding of the housing needs, now and in the future, of specific groups of people within our community. These include older people and people with physical or learning disabilities. We also know that too many children who are cared for by the Council are placed in accommodation outside Doncaster.

Working together, the Council and St Leger Homes have bought 33 properties to add to the council housing portfolio. In the majority of cases, these acquisitions have been targeted at empty properties or more recently at helping to meet specific housing requirements, as identified in the 2019 Housing Needs Study.

### 2.2 Reducing empty homes

Grants from the Council have helped to bring back into use 50 empty properties for renting via St Leger Lettings. In addition, an Empty Homes loan product is being developed to provide assistance for owners of an empty property to help bring it back into use. A Matching Service has recently been developed and launched, to assist with matching empty homeowners considering selling their property, with people who are looking to buy.

Improved re-let times for the Council's housing has led to fewer empty homes. However, despite this progress more work needs to be done to tackle the much higher level of empty homes that are privately owned, which make up more than 90% of all empty properties.

## 2.3 Improved housing conditions

Progress has also been made to raise the standards of homes within the Borough:

- Two Selective Licensing Schemes have been introduced for private rented homes in Hexthorpe and Edlington
- Council housing decency standards for over 20,000 homes have been maintained by St Leger Homes at 100%, and following on from the tragic Grenfell Tower fire, all nine Council high rise blocks have had improved fire safety measures installed
- The design standards for the Council House Build Programme have been increased to exceed current Building Regulations
- From 2015 to 2020, 13,555 Council homes benefitted from investment to make them more thermally efficient. This included over 7,000 new A\*\* rated combi condensing boilers being fitted. Other improvements included external wall insulation and Solar PV units.
- In privately owned homes, 1,051 properties have had loft, wall and floor insulation, 200 properties have been fitted with gas central heating for the first time, 150 of the borough's most vulnerable households have had inadequate heating systems replaced and 50 residential Park Homes have been connected to the mains gas supply to reduce heating costs



The Council's Regulations and Enforcement Service undertakes reactive enforcement interventions in homes in the private rented sector, of which there are now more than 20,000 across the borough. Over one year in 2019-20, the team received 376 complaints and carried out 148 full inspections of properties. These found 100 Category 1 Hazards, which are an immediate threat to health and safety. Examples include electrical hazards, fire safety issues, missing stair handrails and broken windows.

## 2.4 Reducing homelessness

There have been a number of positive steps since 2015, towards our target to prevent more people from becoming homeless and to help them find a new, permanent home more quickly when they do. We responded quickly to the introduction of the new 2018 Homelessness Reduction Act, producing our own new **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy** in 2019. The Imogen Blood Review 2019, an expert, independent review of our working practices shaped this new Strategy.

There were 2,595 approaches for assistance from individuals or households with homelessness during 2019/20:

- 851 were provided with advice and support to resolve their housing issue
- 250 were prevented from becoming homeless
- 268 were supported into a new permanent home
- 325 were placed in to temporary accommodation for a period of time whilst waiting for a permanent home

Working with key partners, we introduced the award-winning Complex Lives Alliance in 2018. This brings together the expertise of a number of agencies, to support our most vulnerable people who have complex issues

such as homelessness, rough sleeping, addiction and offending behaviour, and who as a consequence have multiple health and support needs. This close partnership working has helped us to secure funding from Government by co-ordinating multi agency bids, for example for a Rapid Rehousing Pathway and supplying preventative support to those at risk of rough sleeping.

During the initial lockdown period in spring 2020, people who were rough sleeping or presenting as homeless were accommodated in emergency accommodation as part of the 'Everyone In' initiative. This was to help protect them from the risks associated with Covid-19. A successful bid for Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) funding will enable us to continue to support people who are homeless until March 2021

In 2020, we also started a review of our hostel provision, a recommendation of the Imogen Blood Review, with a goal of reducing the scale of communal living for people needing emergency accommodation, and instead providing more small scale, dispersed housing in community settings across the borough.



### 3. The 2020 Context – Strategic drivers for change

Since the approval of the '[Housing Strategy 2015-2025](#)', there have been significant changes affecting the basis on which it was developed.

#### 3.1 The National strategic context

The UK Government has set an ambition to increase the **levels of house building** to an average of 300,000 new homes per year.

The housing market is inextricably linked to the health of the wider economy. Currently, the UK is facing an extended period of **economic uncertainty** due to the end of the transition period following our exit from the European Union and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government sees the housing industry as a means of supporting the recovery of the national economy, but the success of this approach will be affected by households' ability to access new homes to buy or rent, and on their ability to maintain their current tenancies or mortgages.

**Welfare Reforms** limiting financial support for rent costs and levels of benefit support for households have impacted on the affordability of housing for many people. **New homelessness prevention legislation** has come into force, but limits on Council budgets and increases in housing costs coupled with Welfare Reforms have affected the impact of these changes, and it is still possible for a private rented tenant to lose their home for no fault of their own, as Section 21 notices have not been repealed.

The vital importance of **building safety and fire safety** were brought into the sharpest possible focus by the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, and the subsequent on-going enquiry. In Doncaster, the Council and St Leger Homes immediately embarked upon a range of measures to improve and enhance safety in homes at greater risk from any incident of fire. Preparations for the emerging new legislation through the Fire Safety Bill and Build are underway. St Leger Homes are already carrying out and completing additional fire safety assessments and investment, rather than waiting for legislation to be enacted, and have established a Tenants Fire Safety Group to improve the communication with and the involvement of tenants in protecting fire safety.

In November 2020, the Government finally published **the Social Housing White Paper**, the inspiration for which was some of the issues emerging from the Grenfell Fire enquiry. The White Paper, called "**The Charter for Social Housing Residents**", has the following seven themes:

- I. **To be safe in your home** – bringing together key aspects of building safety
- II. **To know how your landlord is performing** – involving new tenant satisfaction measures, better access to information on how a landlord is performing and spending their resources and compliance with consumer standards
- III. **To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly** – creating new links between the Regulator for Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman and removing the democratic filter currently in place before complaints are referred to the Ombudsman
- IV. **To be treated with respect** – backed by a strong consumer regulator for tenants and including new risk based inspections of landlords every 4 years, measures to enable local authorities to be held to account for ALMO performance, a new code of practice on consumer standards
- V. **To have your voice heard by your landlord** – improving tenant engagement and empowerment
- VI. **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in** – including a proposed review to see whether the Decent Homes standard should be updated.

VII. **To be supported to take your first step to ownership** - expansion of shared ownership options, and more voluntary Right to Buy pilot schemes for housing associations

The Council and St Leger Homes will respond proactively and quickly to act on any new responsibilities and requirements that we are not already meeting which result from the legislation to follow.

The Government has legally binding targets under the **Climate Change Act 2008** to reach 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050. Meeting this target will require a wide range of far-reaching actions across all sectors of the UK economy that are responsible for emissions. Housing is one such area as it is currently responsible for around 14% of UK carbon emissions.

The Government's **Clean Growth Strategy**<sup>2</sup>, published in October 2017, includes several targets to improve energy efficiency in homes. The Government is:

- Currently consulting on changes requiring all private rented sector homes to meet to EPC band C between 2025 and 2028
- Due to publish a new **Heat and Buildings Strategy** in late 2020, to reduce emissions from buildings
- Due to implement changes to **Part L of the Building Regulations** seeking to prepare new homes to be ready for low carbon heating systems, with a Fabric plus technology approach. These changes aim to secure a 31% reduction in carbon emissions compared with current standards
- Considering consultation responses on a **2025 Future Homes Standard**, based on low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency

In late November 2020, the Government announced a **10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution**. This included proposals for Greener Buildings, including seeking to implement the Future Homes Standard on the shortest possible timeline, consulting in the near future on increased energy standards for non-domestic buildings and aiming for 600,000 heat pump installations per year by 2028. It also announced the extension of the Green Homes Grant scheme to March 2022, Homes Upgrade Grants for homeowners living "off-gas" and further funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. It also signalled its intention to strengthen energy efficiency requirements for private rented homes, and to extend the Energy Company Obligations scheme to 2026, so that energy suppliers will continue to provide funds for upgrading cold homes.

**New buildings standards** are being introduced via the Buildings Safety Programme, with the Building Safety Bill expected to be implemented in the near future and consultation on going on improving Fire Safety. Improved safety measures are based on the recommendations set out with the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety following the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017.

The Government's recent **Planning White Paper**<sup>3</sup> makes a series of recommendations that could change the delivery of new homes in the borough, and would overall reduce the scope for local decision-making and prioritisation, if they were enacted following the consultation process. It proposes:

- A change to the national standard methodology for calculating housing need, which would change the numbers of new homes deemed necessary compared with our current needs assessment

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<sup>2</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/700496/clean-growth-strategy-correction-april-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/700496/clean-growth-strategy-correction-april-2018.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Planning for the Future, White Paper August 2020, MHCLG

- The prioritisation of a new affordable home ownership product, First Homes, for a quarter of all developer contributions via s106 affordable housing agreements. This would reduce Council's local decision making autonomy on how best to meet local housing need
- To exempt housing sites, for up to 50 homes, from the requirement to deliver new affordable homes, as a time limited measure to stimulate the economy and encourage more small and medium sized developers to build. The consequence would be that fewer new affordable homes would be provided
- The expansion of the Permission in Principle for housing development, to cover sites for up to 150 new homes. This could result in the Council having fewer opportunities to influence the nature of the housing developments that come forward.

### 3.2 The Regional strategic context

The Sheffield City Region (SCR) is a partnership of Local Authorities, businesses, communities and other partners to support economic growth across South Yorkshire and the wider city region. Priorities focus on transport, business growth, housing and infrastructure and, skills and employment across the region.

Local authorities in SCR share some common challenges as well as a common desire to address issues such as Future Homes standards, flood risk and tackling poor design and property condition. A **SCR Housing Review** completed during 2020 identified a series of propositions to address key housing issues.

1. **Densifying Urban Areas with more homes:** which in Doncaster could support existing urban centres threatened by economic change and digitisation, by re-using space in urban areas like town centres as places to live
2. **A new regional Housing Investment Fund:** using the public sector's borrowing ability and supported by the devolved funding which has been agreed for the city region, to enable more homes to be built at scale and speed
3. **Private Rented Housing Sector:** proposals to improve the quality and affordability of homes in this sector
4. **Housing Design and the Right to Beauty:** increasing expertise and capacity to deliver well designed homes and attractive places, and updating the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide.
5. **Spatial Planning:** ensuring that each local authority's planning for their area, comes together into a cohesive and effective region-wide approach
6. **Net Zero and Renewal:** working together to assess and improve the condition of current housing stock, and develop a long term, comprehensive housing retrofit programme, in line with the complementary SCR Energy Strategy

SCR have agreed to bring forward investment to help kick start work on nine critical flood protection schemes across South Yorkshire. This includes working across the whole River Don catchment area to address the root causes of flooding. Housing and regeneration investment decisions by the SCR moving forward will deliver on these key objectives, and the Council will work proactively to secure new resources to invest in the borough

The SCR **Renewal Action Plan** (RAP) was launched in autumn 2020 in response to the very significant economic challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The RAP includes a commitment to accelerate investment in infrastructure, including building retrofit, to stimulate business and employment opportunities in the green economy, also benefitting residents at a time when many households' budgets are under greater pressure.

The updated SCR **Strategic Economic Plan** (SEP) is also currently being finalised, setting out the longer term economic aspirations for the city region. Key to the delivery of the RAP and the SEP is the Devolution Deal

agreed with the Government in 2020, which brings certainty over long-term resources available to invest in the area, some of which will help to tackle key housing issues.

In August 2020, the SCR **Brownfield Sites Fund** was announced, using £40m of Government funding over 5 years to help unlock complex and costly sites for housing development. We have submitted seven new affordable housing schemes in the Council House Build Programme for funding. We will pursue further resources to help deliver new homes in our principal towns across the borough, helping to revitalise our town centres, and as part of regeneration schemes in Doncaster town centre.

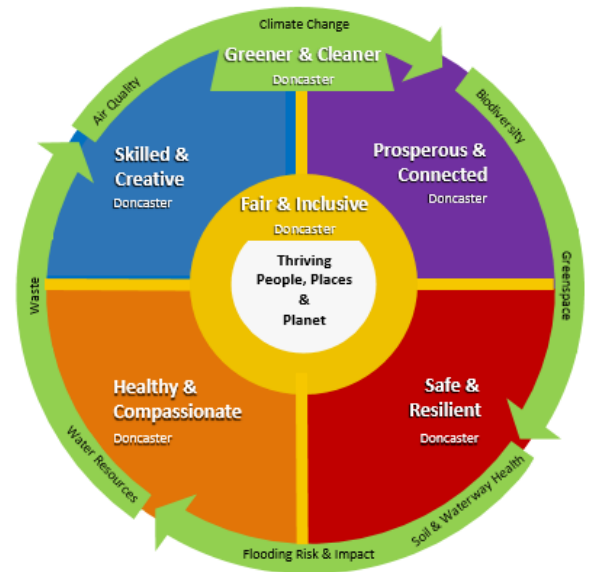
### 3.3 The Local Strategic Context

A revised **Doncaster Borough Strategy** will be launched in 2021. It will build upon the successes of the Doncaster Growing Together Plan to deliver a transformation in the well-being of Doncaster people and places over the next 10 years. The Strategy will focus on the local quality of life issues residents have identified through ‘Doncaster Talks’ and global shared challenges like the climate change and biodiversity crisis.

Six emerging **well-being goals** include creating a greener and cleaner borough, improving the safety and resilience of places to challenges like flooding and developing a more compassionate Doncaster. Alongside these will be creating quality jobs, improving education and skills, tackling inequalities and supporting culture and creativity.

Delivering the Borough Strategy will require closer working with communities, shared responsibilities and a more regenerative approach to development.

The Housing Strategy will have a significant impact on the following Borough Strategy well-being goals:



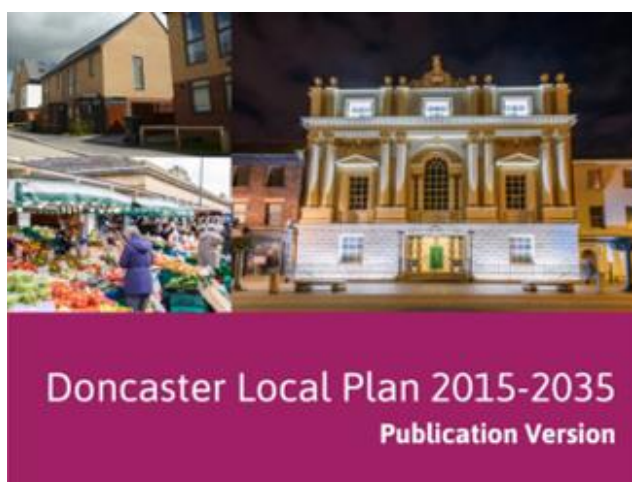
- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Greener &amp; Cleaner</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase energy efficiency of new and existing homes</li> <li>• Improve household's resilience to future flooding events</li> </ul>                      |
| <b>Prosperous &amp; Connected</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering new homes</li> <li>• Helping to revitalise town centres</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Safe &amp; Resilient</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving standards and safety</li> <li>• Preventing homelessness</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Healthy &amp; Compassionate</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tackling poor property conditions</li> <li>• Improving health</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Skilled &amp; Creative</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon reduction and housing retrofit programme that boosts the local economy</li> <li>• Unlock people's capacity to future proof their homes</li> </ul> |
| <b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing health inequalities</li> <li>• Reducing fuel poverty</li> <li>• Housing that meets changing needs</li> </ul>                                    |

The Housing Strategy is just one of a number of key strategies that will support the delivery of the Borough Strategy and achievement of our wellbeing goals. Each is consistent and complementary to the Borough Strategy and to each other.

Doncaster's new **Local Plan** contains the planning policies and proposals that will replace the 'Local Development Frameworks Core Strategy' (2012) and the 'Unitary Development Plan' (2007). It is currently being examined by an independent inspector, to see whether it meets the 'soundness and legal test' set out in Planning legislation, and should be adopted in 2021.

The new Local Plan will shape how Doncaster develops over the coming years: how the area will look and feel; and the policies and proposals needed to guide development to the right places whilst protecting and improving the environment and people's quality of life. It will be used to decide planning applications and guide investment into the Borough. It will aim to ensure that the new homes, businesses, jobs, shops and infrastructure needed over the next 15 years can be delivered. There are a range of requirements and guidance for new housing schemes, including on:

- Flood risk mitigation
- Provision of open spaces
- Good design and housing standards
- Restrictions on the numbers of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)



Ambitious targets for new homes are included the Local Plan, which acknowledges housing growth as a crucial part of growing Doncaster's economy. Housing delivery levels have exceeded targets for the last four years.

More people living in the borough creates more footfall and potential spend for local business and the town centre. This helps sustain, and attract new, local businesses, which in turn add to the economy. Housing development is at **the heart of all the key regeneration schemes** in Doncaster and housing growth is proposed across the borough.

Doncaster's **population** has continued to grow, however within the coming decade the make up of the Borough's population will change significantly. According to the ONS Population Projection data, from 2028 for the first time there will be more older people than younger people living in the borough. The data also indicates that this gap will grow to a 17% difference of younger to older people by 2041, with a 30% increase in the number of over 65s. Over the same period there is projected to be a 7% decrease of the 0-19 year population. This very welcome trend in more people living for longer will necessitate a change in the housing offer, bringing more options and choice to the borough.

The **2019 Housing Needs Survey** provides an evidence base for planning and housing policies, including the Local Plan. The research provided an up to date analysis of the social, economic, housing and demographic situation across the borough. See section 6.2 later for more details on this survey, and the **new 5 Year Housing Delivery Plan** Cabinet Report which sets out the Council's approach to meeting this need.

Since the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in 2018, Doncaster continues to experience a wide



range of reasons for homelessness. The **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024** sets out the activity that will prevent homelessness and rough sleeping, and how progress will be measured. This includes:

- Delivering a “whole system” wide plan for homelessness prevention, working very closely with partner agencies in the housing, health, care and voluntary and community sectors
- Maximising opportunities for people who have experienced homelessness to live independently through a range of suitable housing options
- Providing effective and joined up care and support services for those most in need of support to secure and maintain a tenancy

The Mayor’s **Restart, Recovery, Renewal Plan**, agreed in July 2020, looks to build upon the borough’s achievements and to opportunities beyond the immediate COVID-19 crisis. It details work to ‘build back better’ for the longer term, towards a greener, cleaner, more resilient, prosperous and inclusive borough. The Plan provides a focus on Housing actions for the first 12 months of this Strategy, to:

- Deliver our council house build programme, and
- Working closely with the Private Rented Sector, prevent as many people as possible from becoming homeless.

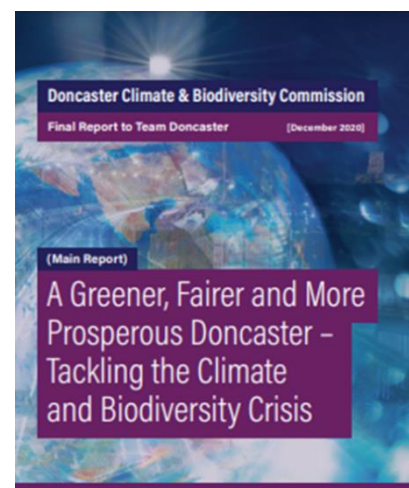
**St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD)** - SLHD manages over 20,000 homes on behalf of Doncaster Council. It provides award-winning services in respect of buildings, extensive tenancy support, homelessness and safeguarding. Decent property standards have been maintained and extensive housing safety improvements implemented. SLHD is a key partner in the Council’s move towards a Localities model of service delivery, working closely with other local agencies and partners, to better support our residents. Looking forward over the next five years SLHD have identified six priorities:

1. Maximising Safety - Building safety, staff and resident safety and compliance
2. Making best use of the existing affordable homes they manage
3. Supporting existing and prospective tenants’ wellbeing, including those with specific vulnerabilities, and working hard to make a positive difference to reduce poverty, domestic violence and improve safeguarding. At the same time, seeking to provide more opportunities for tenants through the World of Work scheme, promoting ambition and economic prosperity.
4. Ensuring the best Value for Money, delivering benefits for our tenants and the Council
5. Listening to and acting on the needs and concerns of our customers
6. Ensuring neighbourhoods are safe and pleasant places to live and in which people feel proud to live

Doncaster’s integrated **Locality approach** will also support our work with residents to enable and support people to plan, act and invest in their homes. This approach combines asset based community development; integrated strengths based delivery and locality commissioning in a ‘whole system’ way of working. Community networks, trusted information sources and local VCFS organisations are key partners in designing solutions that work at a local level.

The **Doncaster Flood Recovery** report (September 2020) said that the borough is at the forefront of the climate emergency, and is particularly vulnerable to longer term flooding. An **Independent Review of Flood Insurance** also established that there were poor levels of coverage in Doncaster.

Doncaster's '**Local Commission on Climate and Biodiversity Crisis**' was established in 2019 in response to our declaration of a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. Its recommendations have informed a new **Environment and Sustainability Strategy**, which outlines how improving the energy efficiency of both new and older housing stock will help people to heat their homes more sustainably, and reduce fuel poverty.



### 3.4 Local engagement

**Doncaster Talks**, a large-scale public consultation in the summer of 2019, gathered the views of 3,610 local people and formed the basis for the development of our new Borough Strategy (Doncaster Talks public consultation). Residents indicated that they like their area due to it having good community spirit, easy access to green spaces, being well-connected, good local amenities and quiet. For improvements and future focus, the main responses included ensuring that the environment where people live is clean, quiet and safe, with community based factors such as more activities and a range of different amenities. This indicates that people are interested in the wider community context of where they live.



A Doncaster Talks **Environment Survey 2020** was performed to determine which aspects of improving the local environment remained a priority for residents, particularly in light of the uncertain times that 2020 have provided. There were 459 respondents:

- 63% of respondents indicated that the Council should focus on improving the energy efficiency of its existing Council houses and building new homes to high environmental standards and
- The same percentage indicated that the Council should say 'no' to building developments that are not of the highest environmental standards, even if this results in those developments not going ahead.

The findings of the Support Education and Engagement Project (SEE Project) which aimed to identify members of the community who need additional support and those that live in poor housing conditions have informed the strategy.



During the development of this updated strategy, engagement activities have included

- Consultation seminars with internal and external partners
- A session with elected members
- Consultation with Minorities Partnership Board and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Workers Group

## 4. Vision and Priority Aims to 2025

### 4.1 Vision

#### **Our vision is for homes that enhance the wellbeing of our residents and our place**

Our vision includes:

- Residents live in safe and healthy homes, in communities that are resilient and prosperous
- Agencies and residents share responsibility and work together to make our homes fit for the future
- Homes will change over time to meet everyone's changing needs, with adaptable design, greater digital connectivity, higher energy efficiency whilst remaining affordable
- New homes are at the heart of economic growth plans, helping to build back better

### 4.2 Priority Aims

**Short term priority: Response and recovery from Covid-19** - a rapid and effective response is needed to the pressures caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, as identified in the Mayor's Restart, Recovery and Renewal Plan. Many of our residents need immediate support to cope with loss of income, potential loss of their tenancy and home, ill health and isolation during lockdown periods. In the short term we will focus on housing measures which:

- Offer better solutions to homelessness, with a better connected network of housing providers working at a local level. This will address pressures on evictions and poor property conditions that are affecting health during lockdown
- Improve how the range of housing and support providers work together, to become a unified homelessness prevention and response system

However, we must also look to the longer term, to 2025 in this revised strategy but also with an eye on 2030 and beyond.

#### **Long term priority aims are to:**

- Enhance the safety and condition of homes, the main setting for our wellbeing throughout our lives
- Meet housing need and aspirations, support our local economy and help revitalise town centres and communities
- Make homes greener and more energy efficient to reduce carbon emissions and keep energy costs affordable
- Enable and support people to plan, act and invest in their homes, to protect their independence and wellbeing for the future

## 5. Meeting long term priority aims

### 5.1 Enhancing the safety and condition of homes, the main setting for our wellbeing throughout our lives

#### 5.1.1 Homes and Health

Housing is not simply a roof over our heads. Our home is the place we raise families, socialise, eat, sleep and take refuge from the world. Our homes should always promote health by being safe and comfortable, and providing security and stability. Our homes should meet our diverse needs whether that is accessible housing for people who are older or have a disability, affordable housing so that everyone can afford a home to live in or supportive housing for people who need extra support to be independent and thrive. Our homes should always be of decent quality, regardless of age or tenure, should also be affordable and efficient to run, and well connected to vibrant, active communities.

Improving housing in Doncaster provides a range of opportunities to improve residents' lives, public services and the local economy. According to the King's Fund (2018) every £1 spent on improving homes saves the NHS £70 over 10 years.

Whether a house is healthy or not depends on:

- Cost (Affordability)
- Conditions (Quality)
- Consistency (how stable your housing situation is), and
- Context (your neighbourhood and Environment)

If people are unable to access healthy housing, this will lead to inequalities in health. Health inequalities are due to the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. These conditions influence our opportunities for good health, how well protected we are from risks to health and how we think, feel and act. This shapes our mental health, physical health and wellbeing far more than the individual decisions we make. In Doncaster, where we live and the conditions of our lives will affect how long we live and how healthy those years are (PHOF, 2020).



The Covid-19 pandemic has not only shone a light on inequalities, but has also increased the economic, social and health differences between us.

*"We may all be in the same storm, but we are not all in the same boat"*

*(JRF, 2020)*

Many people have spent more time in their homes, increasing the impact of home quality, size and any lack of facilities, such as a garden or space for privacy to work or study. Many of the basic necessities that many of us have taken for granted during 2020, such as privacy, space and basic facilities, have not been available to others. Some residents are living in overcrowded, insecure or temporary accommodation; in housing with shared facilities; cold, damp or dangerous homes. Some residents may be worried that they can no longer afford their home.

Evidence is now emerging of the substantial impact of poor or unsuitable housing during COVID-19. The autumn

2020 report from the Northern Housing Consortium and Huddersfield University, “Lockdown, Rundown, Breakdown” examined the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown on people who live in poor condition homes in the north of England. The research found that:

- Existing poor property conditions had worsened during lockdown, and Covid will have resulted in a backlog of repair work
- Private rented sector tenants are under-reporting repair issues in their homes, out of fear of eviction and rent increases
- People are spending more time at home, increasing their energy use, and energy costs are causing increased anxiety to a wider range of households than before the pandemic
- Households are feeling financially insecure and some renters feel insecure in their tenancies

The lockdown has worsened existing anxieties and problems facing low-income households living in poor condition homes. It has brought into even clearer focus the need to tackle poor property condition in all tenures, improve energy efficiency to minimise fuel costs and encourage and educate all landlords to manage Private Rented Sector (PRS) tenancies with understanding and compassion, and use the Councils’ enforcement powers to protect tenants where this does not happen.

#### Case Study: COVID 19 information for shared housing

In April 2020, Public Health responded to local intelligence that people living in shared housing, including refugees and asylum seekers, could be finding it hard to keep themselves safe when using shared areas, such as kitchens. They worked in partnership to produce and share a simple, pictorial guidance poster that could be easily understood so that landlords and housing providers could support their tenants to keep safe and well.



Living in a **cold, damp** home has a significant impact on health and wellbeing. Estimated costs vary, but it is suggested cold homes cost the NHS about £1.4 billion per year (BRE, 2015).

There is a substantial body of evidence to show that cold homes are harmful to problems such as heart conditions; lung conditions and poor mental health can be made significantly worse. Children living in cold homes are more likely to develop symptoms of asthma, suffer from chest and breathing problems, experience mental health problems and do worse at school (PHE, 2014).

A number of factors lead to cold homes and fuel poverty, including property age, condition, size, low income and high-energy prices. The latest fuel poverty figure (2018) for Doncaster is 9.6%, meaning an estimated 12,728 households are living in fuel poverty (PHE, 2020). Fuel poverty unfairly affects poorer households, older people



and, people with disabilities and long-term health conditions. Gypsy and traveller communities also face inequalities in relation to access to affordable fuel.

Tackling fuel poverty and cold homes can save lives. In 2018 -19 there were 163 excess winter deaths in Doncaster; the previous year there were 349 (possibly, because 2018–19 was a mild winter). Most excess winter deaths are due to diseases of the heart, lungs and circulatory system especially in older people.

**Case Study: The Affordable Warmth Programme.**

The Affordable Warmth Programme has been working locally since 2015 to tackle fuel poverty, cold homes and the health issues that they cause. Funded by the Better Care Fund, the programme improves the health of Doncaster residents by reducing the number of people living in cold homes and fuel poverty. In 2019/20, it helped provide new boilers or central heating for 31 local households, whose residents had serious health problems and disabilities, and who were facing winter in a cold home. The programme delivers training for professionals and volunteers, awareness raising and advice for residents, and supports winter campaigns, as the weather gets colder. In 2019, a Winter Booklet aimed at older people and people with health needs was created with our Communications team, 5,000 were distributed throughout the borough. In 2020, the booklet also provides advice and information to keep people safe during COVID-19.



### 5.1.2 Poor property conditions

Homes in **poor condition** can be hazardous to health, particularly as a cause of accidents in the home. One of the major causes of injury, decline and death among older adults is falls in the home. Disabled and older, or frail, residents with poorly accessible homes are at greater risk of injury, and are more likely to suffer from stress and isolation. Year on year, there are in excess of 6,000 deaths in the UK as result of injuries sustained from an accident in the home. Old unsafe electrical systems, uneven steps, damp and condensation, and structural disrepair can all result in serious health and safety issues for residents.

**Empowering the workforce and the voluntary and community sector:** There are many opportunities to prevent homes being harmful to health, whether that is through the work of environmental health officers, care workers or health visitors, or through the wider work force and the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCFS). Anyone who visits someone in their home, and the resident themselves, should be empowered to spot and take action to improve their health and prevent harm.

### **Case Study: Healthy Homes Project**

The Healthy Homes Project is a partnership between Public Health, Strategic Housing and the Health Visitors at RDASH. Health Visitors have developed a Healthy Homes video to support the workforce to have “Healthy Homes Conversations”. The video will be shared with a range of partners including:

- Local housing organisations
- Social Care
- Healthcare
- Voluntary and Community Sector

**Security of tenure** can reduce the risk of homelessness and poor mental health. Having an affordable, secure home can reduce financial worries, allowing people to make better decisions about their and their family’s health and lives

For a home to be healthy, there should be enough room for everyone who lives there to thrive, be healthy and socialise, whilst having their own space and privacy. **Overcrowded** housing poses a significant health risk and is more common among people who are already experiencing other disadvantages. Overcrowding affects education, and health and wellbeing. It is associated with poor mental health, and infectious diseases and respiratory diseases.

**The Housing Needs Study for Doncaster in 2019**, found an estimated 3,734 households living in overcrowded conditions. Of households with people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity (BAME) backgrounds in Doncaster, 13.8% were assessed to be in some form of housing need, with overcrowding affecting 28.2% of those households.

Data collected in the ‘**Support, Education and Engagement Project**’ showed that in Doncaster, people born outside of the UK are more likely to be living in rented accommodation or a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) than those who were born in the UK. 71% of those living in HMOs in Wheatley and Hyde Park were born outside the UK but in Balby and Hexthorpe that figure drops to 25%. Of rented accommodation in Doncaster, 2.75% of properties occupied by people born outside of the UK were assessed to be overcrowded. This compares to 1.33% of rented accommodation in Doncaster occupied by people born in the UK.

### **5.1.3 Enforcing better standards**

The **Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018** came into force in March 2019. Its aim is to drive up standards of homes in both the public and private rented sectors, by giving a new power to tenants to seek redress from their landlord if their rented home presents a risk of harm to their health and safety. We will support any tenant who comes forward with concerns about the condition of their rented home, and will offer advice and guidance to landlords to ensure the homes they own are safe and fit for habitation.

We will explore all opportunities to expand our capacity to work proactively on engagement, education and enforcement with the Private Rented Sector. This will include training for landlords and options for an accreditation scheme. We will also offer more support to tenants to ensure they are aware of their rights and responsibilities, and that their views and experiences are heard and responded to. To update the information we have on property conditions in private sector housing, we aim to commission a new Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey. This will include an assessment of flood resilience and energy efficiency.

The Council's Enforcement Service works to protect residents from the potential impacts of poor condition housing. It uses the 'Housing, Health and Safety Rating System' and statutory powers to identify hazards to health, and take action to ensure they are dealt with. In recent years, the size of the private rented housing sector has expanded significantly in the borough, and there are now over 20,000 households who rent their home from a private landlord. Whilst many landlords offer good quality, well managed homes, some fail to meet the required standards for property condition and tenancy management. This affects the safety, health and security of the people who live in these homes.

#### **Case study – Emergency Prohibition**

Regulation & Enforcement helped a single mother and two young children living in dangerous conditions in Balby. A survey of the property discovered hazards:

- Excess Cold: Malfunctioning boiler, smashed windows
- Falling on stairs: No handrail to stairs, spacing of guarding to first floor hallway too wide, such that a toddler could fall through.
- Fire: Missing smoke alarms.
- Electrical Hazards: By pass of main circuit breakers to the property causing a fire risk

Despite negotiations with the landlord, most of the repairs were not carried out and an Improvement Notice was served. This requires works to be completed over a period of three months but a further inspection found that the bulk of the work had not been completed.

Under these circumstances, Regulation & Enforcement has the authority to carry out the work and bill the landlord. Trades from DMBC were deployed to complete the repairs but their electrical tests revealed a serious fault with the main circuit breaker to the property, which had been tampered with. The National Grid deemed the installation so dangerous that they had to terminate the supply immediately.

As this would have left the tenant without electricity for an unknown period, an Emergency Prohibition notice was served. Home Choice staff successfully rehoused the tenant.

The landlord was subsequently issued a civil penalty for the sum of £22,000, the biggest civil penalty that has been issued.

In areas where there are high concentrations of privately rented homes, **Selective Licensing** can be a useful tool to tackle poor standards, for the greater good of the area and the wider community. Five-year Selective Licensing schemes were introduced in Hexthorpe and Edlington to tackle a number of issues including:

- Anti-social behaviour
- Low demand for homes and a general decline in the area
- Supporting inexperienced landlords
- Engaging with those landlords whose management activities were unsatisfactory.

The Selective Licensing scheme in Hexthorpe ended on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Whilst in place the scheme identified serious hazards and defects, and led to improved housing conditions without formal enforcement action being taken. There was also a significant reduction in complains of Anti-Social Behaviour. It is hoped that the scheme

will be renewed; however, delays to the statutory consultation process, due to Covid-19, mean that it will run from 2021-2026.

### 5.1.4 Building Safety and Fire Safety

The vital importance of building safety and fire safety was brought into the sharpest possible focus by the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017. St Leger Homes immediately embarked upon a range of measures to improve and enhance safety in their high-rise homes, and other homes at greater risk from any incident of fire. This included:

- Removal of aluminium composite material (ACM) decorative capping from Silverwood House, and another form of cladding made from high-pressure laminate. This work was completed by December 2017
- A sprinkler retrofit programme was completed in all nine high rise blocks owned by Doncaster Council (incorporating 603 flats), along with a programme of wider fire safety improvement works focusing on fire doors, fire stopping and improving signage and ventilation.



#### High-rise homes

Some properties are at higher risk should a fire occur, depending for example on the type of construction, occupancy levels or use. Properties over 18 metres in height are usually classed as higher risk. Fire risk assessments of St Leger Homes properties that are at a higher risk continue annually, and are undertaken by external, independent, nationally recognised fire engineers. Any resultant recommendations are managed and followed up as part of an ongoing fire safety programme. All fire risk assessment actions are managed and monitored through a specialist database (Riskhub). This is supported via a wider programme of fire risk assessments across all accommodation covered under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) legislation, which now includes low-rise blocks of flats.



The Grenfell Inquiry has instigated a number of new national safety initiatives, and work is already ongoing here in Doncaster to prepare for the emerging new legislation expected through the Fire Safety Bill and Building Safety Bill. This will see new responsibilities placed on landlords and building owners, including the introduction of an **Accountable Person** for each local authority, new **Building Safety Managers** and more stringent requirements relating to improvement works within existing buildings. **A new Building Safety Regulator** will





including South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

oversee the implementation of the new legislation and building owners will need to obtain certification for their accommodation. In preparation for this, work is already underway to prepare **Building Safety Cases** wherever one is required. Greater emphasis will be placed on tenant and resident engagement, giving a greater voice in issues of safety. **A High-Rise Forum** has already been established to engage tenants and residents on building and fire safety issues. The Council and St Leger Homes continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders on all aspects of fire safety,

St Leger Homes continues to meet all other areas of safety compliance, covering gas, electricity, water, lifts and asbestos, through ongoing and regular inspection and cyclical maintenance programmes, as well as wider health and safety generally. In 2020, St Leger Homes achieved the British Safety Council five star award for the ninth consecutive year, alongside being one of the first organisations to achieve ISO45001 health and safety management accreditation.

The Social Housing White Paper and proposed “Charter for Social Housing Residents” places further emphasis on tenant engagement and on how information is shared. We will work with St Leger Homes to meet any new responsibilities and requirements resulting from subsequent legislation.

### 5.1.5 Accessible and inclusive design

Homes should be **accessible and inclusive** in their design and should meet our residents’ current and future housing needs. They should suit the requirements and support of inhabitants including those with disabilities or long-term conditions and older people allowing them to remain as independent for as long as possible. Homes should also be able to support discharge and re-ablement for those leaving hospital and care, enabling people to get back home and stay at home.

Adaptability and accessibility should be built into the design of new housing. For those who live in existing homes, people should be supported to adapt and improve their homes to ensure they meet their needs as they age. In some cases “rightsizing” by changing to a smaller or more suitable home or move into specialist housing, such as Extra Care housing will be the right option for maintaining independence, health and wellbeing.

A home itself should not be viewed in isolation. Homes should be part of **healthy, safe and vibrant communities** where people feel safe, are supported to socialise, travel by foot, cycle or public transport, and access the shops and community facilities they require. Healthy communities promote good health through physical activity, social interaction, good facilities, play and recreation. Access to quality outdoor green space is extremely important for physical and mental wellbeing and social inclusion and housing development can be used as part of spatial planning (planning and shaping our communities) to increase health, community cohesion and connectedness. **Health Impact Assessments** (HIAs) are carried out at the earliest possible stages by developers in order to maximise the health impact of a housing development.

Long term empty properties can be a blight on neighbourhoods, they can be unsightly with overgrown gardens or become a target for anti-social behaviour or criminal activity. We will continue efforts to reduce the number



empty properties, 90% of which are privately owned, to improve neighbourhoods and bring homes back in to use.

**KEY ACTIONS:**

- Maintain Council House decency standards at 100%
- Put in place all new Building Safety and Fire Safety measures required by new legislation
- Aim to complete a new Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey and use the results to target support and enforcement on tackling poor property conditions
- Explore options to expand capacity to work proactively with Private Rented Sector landlords and tenants on engagement, education and enforcement
- Implement the Social Housing White Paper and subsequent legislation
- Identify, understand and address health and social inequalities through housing
- Continue to evaluate the use of Health Impact Assessments for all housing developments
- Continue preventative approaches to tackling fuel poverty
- Increase skills and knowledge of the local workforce on healthy homes
- Take a partnership approach to reviewing and improving housing related services and housing solutions, utilising local expertise and knowledge across all sectors
- Use research and innovation to work with and understand our communities, to improve health and reduce health inequalities through the home
- Reduce the number of privately owned empty properties

## **5.2 Meeting housing need and aspirations, supporting our local economy and helping revitalise town centres and communities**

### **5.2.1 The 2019 Housing Needs Survey (HNS)**

An up to date understanding of housing need is fundamental to planning for the right kinds of new homes and making best use of the existing housing stock. The 2019 Survey found significant affordability issues for a large proportion of households, with most tenure options unaffordable to over a third of households. Most private market rent and purchase options are unaffordable in many areas. Other key findings were:

- 209 new affordable homes were needed each year
- Demand for homes in the Private Rented Sector is increasing in the borough, however supply is not keeping up
- A significant number of the settlement areas in the Borough have more affordable housing need than supply, and different sizes and types of homes are required in different areas
- Aspirations and expectations show a marked shift towards a need for smaller homes and a reduced emphasis of houses in favour of flats and bungalows. This is mostly related to the changing demographic of household numbers with increased numbers of single people and couples, rather than families, and an aging population.

The Housing Need Survey also provided information on the housing needs for older people, and those with physical and learning disabilities and other specific housing needs. The key findings were:

- For older people looking to move, the demand is largely for 1, 2 or 3 bedroom bungalows
- 8 out of 10 older people would like to stay in their existing home
- People over 65 who felt unable to move did so because of affordability issues and what they felt were unsuitable alternative options in their desired areas
- For people living with physical or learning disabilities, or long term health conditions, the main barriers to re-housing are lack of suitably adapted or ground floor properties in individuals' chosen locations. A mixture of 1 and 2 bedroomed, accessible or adapted properties are needed to meet these needs
- Adaptation of family homes is required to enable families with a disabled family member to remain in the same property
- It is difficult for families with children who have health needs or disabilities to find a suitable adapted home
- Home care provision can be difficult in rural areas and villages; finding support providers is an issue as well as housing
- There is a need for more support to enable independent living skills; particularly for people with mental health problems leaving hospital and young people leaving care with support needs or behavioural issues.
- Residents in 4% of all properties need them to be accessible for a wheelchair user. It is estimated that 665 more wheelchair accessible dwellings are needed

An updated Housing Needs Assessment will be completed by 2025, to ensure our evidence is up to date.

### 5.2.2 Accessible and flexible housing stock

Although the HNS identified gaps in the provision of some kinds of adapted or supported homes, the Council's guiding principle is that the general housing stock should be as accessible and flexible as possible, to allow the vast majority of people to continue to live in their existing homes and communities. To support this the Council needs to:

- plan and invest in aids, adaptations and new technologies which support independent living
- be clear about how wrap around support is provided to individuals and families including floating support, domiciliary care, more innovative models like Shared Lives, and also access to education, skills, employment opportunities
- make the best use of the existing specialist housing in the borough

The new **National Statement of Expectations (NSE) for Supported Housing** places further duties on local authorities to be transparent and accountable on delivery against local plans. The Council is required to have a clear strategic plan setting out the housing need for vulnerable groups. It sets suggested minimum standards for:

- Assessing local need and planning effectively
- Ensuring safe and good quality supported housing
- Ensuring supported housing provides value for money

Assessments of the specific housing needs of vulnerable groups have been undertaken and we are now planning how best to respond to this evidence.

**For those people and families living with learning or physical disabilities, autism and on-going mental**

**health conditions** the approach will be to:

- Step people down from institutional “care” that restricts their liberty and does not give the best outcomes. To do this we’ll maximise links to the NHS Transforming Care programme
- Consider “supported living” or other specialist housing with support for people when general needs housing, even with support, feels insufficient to meet their needs

A new in-depth assessment of the accommodation requirements of people with learning disabilities, autism or mental health issues over the next 10 years has been carried out on behalf of the South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Integrated Care System. For Doncaster, this has found:

- 225 additional homes will be needed over time, mainly using a supported living model, some of which can be created by using existing properties differently
- There are also people with learning disabilities with children who are housed by the Council and some may be better accommodated in a supported living scheme

For people with mental health issues who could potentially move from a residential care home to supported living:

- An additional 58 homes will be needed over time, mainly using a supported living model, some of which can be created by using existing properties differently
- Limited supported accommodation is available, and many people are placed in residential care, some out of area, or in specialised placements
- There is a need to increase the number of people provided with tenancy support in private rented accommodation and to work with private landlords to achieve this

**For older people** our approach will be to:

- Grow an attractive, accessible housing offer for later living, which will also help to free up larger homes for families
- Ensure new homes are of high quality design with resident wellbeing the primary concern
- Link new housing developments for older people with tailored care and support models, including Extra Care Housing for older people who would otherwise be at risk of losing their ability to live independently and having to move into a residential or nursing home

For **young people leaving care** a Supported Independent Living (SIL) scheme that prepares them for independent living, Cantley House, was completed in 2018. To expand the provision for this group, smaller, two bedroomed properties are now being purchased from the open market and refurbished before being registered as care homes with OFSTED.

Guidance on the Joint Housing Protocol for Care Leavers, updated in October 2020, aims to ensure that local accommodation meets needs and that the Council is meeting its Corporate Parenting Responsibilities. The existing Joint Protocol for Care Leavers in Doncaster will be reviewed to ensure it is reflective of the updated guidance. It will also be considered in the review of the 16/17 year old Homeless Protocol. Support mechanisms for **young homeless and young people with complex needs** will be developed as part of the Homelessness and Rough Sleepers project. This project will also review the housing needs of **single people** and **prisoners** on release.

**For Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People** communities, the latest need assessment (2018) showed that the borough has a surplus of pitches and yards, and therefore does not require any further sites or new

allocations. However, we will continue to work with these communities to ensure their accommodation requirements are met, including appropriate extensions to existing sites, and advice, guidance and support on, for example, energy efficiency improvements, home adaptations and fire safety.

Access to housing and to “housing wealth” is unequal and the issues with the UK’s housing market do not affect the population equally (The Equality Trust, 2016). The **Support, Education & Engagement (SEE) Project** in 2018/19 identified community members that required additional support and were likely to live in poor quality housing. Homelessness is more likely to affect those in society who are most at risk of experiencing other inequalities.

### 5.2.3 Reducing Homelessness

A Homelessness Review by the Imogen Blood social research consultancy<sup>4</sup> in 2019 informed the Council’s **Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024**. The review found that there is a wide range of reasons why people are becoming homeless, or are at risk of becoming homeless. Relationship breakdown is a major cause of homelessness. Although there has been significant success in preventing private sector housing evictions, there is more to do to prevent people facing the trauma of losing their home

The 2019 review found that those accessing the Housing Options Service in 2018-19 had a high level of additional support needs:

- 72% had additional support needs, compared to 50% nationally and regionally, with higher numbers of people with multiple, complex needs
- Mental health issues are the most frequently additional need
- Relationship breakdown had often triggered homelessness, and was linked to substance use and or mental health issues
- Increased numbers of women presenting as homeless, especially those at risk of or experiencing rough sleeping
- People released from the four prisons within the borough were also presenting for assistance

We will continue work with our partners to implement the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which has three objectives:

- Deliver a “whole system” wide plan for homelessness prevention
- Maximise opportunities for independence through a range of housing options
- Effective and joined up care and support services

Given the complex causes of homelessness and the additional support needs of those experiencing or at risk of it, a whole system approach is being taken to improving prevention, including the development of a housing led model of rapid rehousing with tailored support transition to independent living.

The overall rate of **repossessions and evictions** in Doncaster have been constant overall since 2017, with an average of around 1,600 per year up. The rates are slightly higher than our neighbouring local authorities in Barnsley and Rotherham, and significantly higher than the national average of 984 per year. More work is needed to understand why rates in the borough are higher, and to reduce these where possible, working more proactively with private landlords and through the regional Breathing Space project that supports homeowners

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<sup>4</sup> Doncaster Homelessness Review 2019, Imogen Blood & Associates (IBA)

who are struggling to pay their mortgage.

In March 2020, the Government introduced financial forbearance measures to help homeowners and renters during the COVID-19 pandemic. These are, however, time limited and there is real concern that when these measures are removed there will be a rapid increase in people losing their homes, some of whom will become homeless. The Council will work proactively with households affected, to keep them in their home wherever possible.

During the first Covid-19 Lockdown, people who were rough sleeping or presenting as homeless were accommodated in emergency accommodation as part of the **'Everyone In'** initiative. In total, 524 households had been accommodated by October 2020.

The Council has subsequently made a successful bid to the Government for **Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP)** funding. This will help us continue to provide support for rough sleepers during the Covid-19 response until March 2021, improving access to private rented housing and expanding the provision of Housing First supported tenancies. However, sustained levels of increased funding are needed to help sustain new tenancies and ensure everyone who needs a home can be supported.

#### 5.2.4 The local Housing Market in 2020

The housing market across Doncaster has recovered and grown significantly following the 2008 recession. Market confidence remains high and although there are potential short-term risks arising from Covid recovery and Brexit, recent site availability research indicates the appetite for housing development opportunities from house builders is still positive.

Over the past five years, the number of annual completions of new homes have consistently been above 1,000, often performing ahead of regional and national trends. A number of positive factors including has driven this, including:

- Doncaster increasingly offers attractive housing at affordable prices within commutable distance of larger cities
- The Borough is perceived as 'Open for Business' and a place where house builders are supported and welcomed by the Local Authority
- Housing affordability, with the local house price to earnings ratio of 4.74, compares favourably with 5.8 regionally and 7.7 nationally
- High levels of inward investment, from new and existing employers, are sustaining employment levels and confidence in the local economy
- Planned improvements in rail, road and air connectivity
- Planned investment in purpose built private rented new home developments



The 2020 pandemic has caused some families to re-evaluate their lifestyles and work/life balance, and has increased the demand for more spacious homes with gardens and access to attractive open space. Doncaster has many locations that meet these needs.



### 5.2.5 Meeting the need for new homes - The Council's Five Year Housing Delivery Plan 2020-25

The new **Five Year Housing Delivery Plan** is a key complementary report to this updated Housing Strategy. It builds on the success of previous housing delivery programmes and includes the following activity:

- The Council House Build Programme (CHBP)
- Housing Association Development Programme (HADP)
- Maximising delivery of affordable housing through S106 planning agreements and other contributions
- Engagement with private developers to maximise opportunities for mixed tenure delivery

The Council has invested £59m of its own resources to deliver more than 400 new affordable homes since 2015. In the next phase of the **Council House Build Programme**, a further £100m will be invested, and to better respond to the pressing need for affordable housing, the programme will be accelerated to deliver over 5 and not 10 years. Key principles for the new programme are to:

- Be an early adopter of higher energy efficiency standards, working towards those recently proposed for 2025
- Deliver mixed tenure developments wherever we can, bringing different kinds of homes and people to live together
- Ensure a suitable geographical balance of building across the borough to meet housing need
- Maximise the investment from our partner, Homes England, to ensure we deliver the most new homes we can with our combined resources
- Explore our options for partnerships, to increase the scope of the new build programme.



### **Case study: Council House Build Programme – Improving wellbeing**

There have been positive impacts on the wellbeing of residents who have moved into new council homes:

- A resident who moved into a two-bedroom house on Christabel Crescent, Conisbrough, said he could not believe his luck, “the house is twice the size of my old private rented place” and he also said, standing in the living room where big sliding glass doors lead out to the garden, “and it’s so much lighter and warmer too”.
- Another resident moving into a three-bedroom property on Bristol Grove, Wheatley, said, “We are over the moon to move into such a high quality development, with great amenities and are delighted with our new home”.
- A couple who moved into a two-bedroom bungalow in Scawsby stated it had made their lives’ so much easier. One of the couple is disabled and their old property had a very steep drive, but now everything was on one level. Also, “access to bathing facilities which was difficult in our old property is just wonderful now”.
- A family who moved with their disabled daughter into a four-bedroom house in Wheatley with the additional downstairs room built on said, “We can now live as a family again and all spend quality time together”.



**Partnership working with housing associations** - Partnerships with Housing Associations are essential to provision of new affordable housing at the level that meets the borough’s needs. Housing Associations are crucial to meeting the needs of residents with more specialist and bespoke accommodation needs. Developments by Housing Associations will continue to make a significant contribution to reducing the social housing waiting list over the next 5 years.

**Supporting choice and affordability in the private housing market** - The Council will continue to work with developers and investors to help shape the local housing offer. The majority of new homes built in recent years in Doncaster have been owner occupied dwellings delivered by house builders. The Council’s Local Plan guides house-builders to deliver where new homes are needed and appropriate, and prevents inappropriate development. The framework for developers set out in the Local Plan provides detail on current and future needs to create mixed and balanced communities, link new homes to jobs and help deliver better infrastructure.

**New homes and the economy** - Enabling new homes to be built creates job and business opportunities for local companies, bringing investment into the borough. The planned growth of the economy within Doncaster, and at wider regional and national levels, will stimulate significant housing demand alongside the ambitions to grow employment, tourism and other forms of inward investment. Quality of a place is a key driver to inclusive, economic growth. Improving Doncaster, as a place to live, work, visit and invest, requires us to invest in culture, housing, infrastructure, multi-modal connectivity and the environment.

Housing development is at the heart of all the key regenerations schemes in the borough such as Unity at Stainforth and Hatfield, Doncaster Sheffield Airport and in Doncaster town centre.

**Case study: The Unity regeneration scheme, Stainforth and Hatfield**

One of the largest mixed-use regeneration schemes in the UK, the privately led Unity scheme brings huge opportunities for commercial, industrial, manufacturing and logistics development, and already has outline planning permission for 3,100 new homes. It is expected that around 1,000 new homes will be completed by the end of the Local Plan period in 2035. These are likely to be located on the 'Unity Living' (to the north of Hatfield) and 'Unity Life' (Stainforth Marina), with works on the first houses as part of 'Unity Living' due to commence in 2021 with around 245 new homes built by April 2024. The Unity scheme is complementing the investment proposals being developed for Stainforth as part of its Towns Fund bid.

**New homes in re-imagined town centres**

Two areas in Doncaster were identified in 2019 as being in scope for a Town Deal: Doncaster town centre and Stainforth. Each area may be able to access funding of up to £25m. In Doncaster town centre, the initial Towns Fund funding is being used to review the Doncaster Urban Centre Masterplan, including plans for Doncaster Waterfront, the Minster Canalside and the City Gateway. Plans for investment in Stainforth are also under development.

The Covid 19 pandemic has accelerated the decline of retail businesses in town centres, increasing the urgency to find new uses for commercial premises. There are opportunities to support the future vibrancy of our town centres across the borough by bringing more people to live in them, close to transport hubs, community facilities, leisure activities and employment. If town centres are to attract more residents, the new homes built must have good design quality, attractive green space, feel safe and welcoming and play host to people of all ages. Over the coming five years the Council will explore the opportunities to bring new homes into town centres across the borough, including carrying out master planning activities.

**KEY ACTIONS:**

- Maximise the delivery of new homes through the new Five Year Housing Delivery Plan 2020-25, including an accelerated Council House Build Programme
- Complete a new Housing Needs Assessment by 2025
- Develop and implement a Specialised Housing Delivery Plan

- Review supported housing provision against the new National Statement of Expectations and identify any opportunities to improve local standards
- Implement the recommendations of the Accessible Housing Service Review (2019) to modernise services, including the Accessible Housing Register and, Aids and Adaptations
- Lobby central Government to deliver a housing led recovery to deliver more energy efficient, affordable houses and support local supply chains
- Adopt Doncaster's Local Plan, to provide certainty to housing developers on the land available for new housing
- Review the opportunities for residential development in our main town centres and complete town centre housing master planning
- Improve the prevention of homelessness by continuing to implement the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024

### 5.3 Making homes greener and more energy efficient to reduce carbon emissions and keep energy costs affordable

Carbon emissions from heating existing homes are the single largest contributing factor to the UK's carbon footprint and there is a growing focus on decarbonising home heating systems. This must be combined with better energy efficiency for all homes, to both make the maximum beneficial impact on climate change and to protect the affordability of fuel costs for households in the future. The Council has been delivering home energy efficiency improvements for a number of years, working with new technologies.

#### Case Study: Solar Photovoltaic (PV)

Solar PV tiles on homes is a good example of how Doncaster is making progress towards a zero carbon future. By 2018, 7,049 homes in the borough had solar PV. **Doncaster is ranked 8th highest out of 406 Councils for the number of homes with Solar PV.** Not only does this reduce resident energy bills, it increases the level of zero carbon electricity in the fuel mix and exports unused solar generated electricity into the local electricity network.



### 5.3.1 Planning for and investing in lower carbon homes

The Government is currently consulting on “**Improving the Energy Performance of private rented homes in England and Wales**”. The consultation proposes that all private rented sector (PRS) homes meet Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level C by 2025 for new tenancies and 2028 for existing tenancies. The Government estimates that this would save the average PRS household £220 a year on their fuel bill. The consultation also proposes:

- Requiring EPCs to be provided by landlords
- Strengthening councils’ powers to inspect properties and enforce compliance, and raising the fines which could be imposed on landlords to a maximum of £30,000
- Strengthening PRS tenants powers to request energy improvements to their rented homes

In late November 2020, the Government announced a **10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution**. This included proposals seeking to implement the Future Homes Standard on the shortest possible timeline, consulting in the near future on increased energy standards for non-domestic buildings and aiming for 600,000 heat pump installations per year by 2028. It also announced the extension of the **Green Homes Grant** scheme to March 2022, **Homes Upgrade Grants** for homeowners living “off-gas” and further funding for the **Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund**. It also signalled its intention to strengthen energy efficiency requirements for private rented homes, and to extend the Energy Company Obligations scheme to 2026, so that energy suppliers will continue to provide funds for upgrading cold homes.

The Government is also due to publish a new **Heat and Buildings Strategy in late 2020**, setting out the immediate actions it will take for reducing emissions from buildings, and has said it will consult on proposals to change the energy efficiency and ventilation requirements for existing homes in new Building Regulations.

The Government’s 2019 Manifesto pledged to invest £9.2bn on improving energy efficiency in domestic and public buildings. This included £3.8bn on a Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and £2bn on a new Green Homes Grant Scheme for fuel poor homes. As these funds are being released, the Council is bidding to bring greater investment into the borough, with the first successful bid for the **Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD)** round 1 now being delivered on privately owned homes across the borough. Bids are also being developed for LAD rounds 1B and 2.

St Leger Homes received a Gold Award in the SHIFT (Sustainable Homes Index for Tomorrow) accreditation scheme in 2020. This provides an independent assessment of how housing organisations are performing against challenging environmental targets. It looked at the 20,000 council homes managed by St Leger Homes, as well as their offices, and supply chain, and measured them against 21 environmental factors including carbon dioxide emissions, landfill waste generated, and water use.

The **Doncaster Climate Change Commission** report advocates a “**green transition**” that is fair and just. This transition should be based on fairness, shared responsibility, inclusion and changing behaviours. The Council’s new **Environment and Sustainability Strategy** describes how it will contribute to this green transition. A new **Sustainability Unit** will be established to lead the delivery of this new Strategy, and the Housing Strategy will support that work by:

- (i) **Natural Environment** – working to ensure that new homes are more flood resilient and existing homes have flood resilient repairs. We will continue to prioritise brownfield sites for development, and will reinvest in more and better biodiversity through the **Bio-diversity Net Gain** proposals in the Government’s draft **Environment Bill**



- (ii) **Built Environment** – the Five Year New Housing Delivery Plan will apply higher standards for insulation, low carbon heating and renewable energy for homes built by the Council, and encourage other developers to do the same in advance of legislation. A long term **Housing Retrofit Programme** will improve the energy efficiency of homes and increase the use of energy from renewable sources
- (iii) **Economy** – there is significant scope for the Housing Retrofit Programme to create new jobs, training and new opportunities for local businesses

(i) **The Natural Environment - Flood recovery and resilience**

The devastating **floods of November 2019** directly affected 897 homes in Doncaster and was the focus of national attention. One year on, some people have still not been able to return to their homes and others continue to suffer hardship or distress.

The Council has been working with South Yorkshire Community Foundation to help the flooded households most in need. From initial assistance with essential household goods and costs, there has since been a focus on support with housing restoration. Our Localities approach has proved invaluable, allowing staff from different organisations to collaborate and share information so that all residents received the help they needed.

The Council, Environment Agency and other partners, have completed large amounts of recovery and remedial works. Further flood alleviation schemes are planned and a ‘catchment area’ approach has been adopted. Both national and local planning policy require inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding to be avoided, by directing such uses to areas at lowest flood risk. Where this is not possible, for wider development needs and sustainability reasons, it must be demonstrated that any residual flood risk will be managed and mitigated, and that the development will not increase the flood risk elsewhere. The Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority are statutory consultees to planning applications.

Access to sufficient, and affordable, **building and contents insurance** is essential for Doncaster’s households. A review of flood insurance in 2020 found that

- The vast majority of owner-occupiers had buildings and contents insurance, but the majority of tenants were poorly protected
- A worrying proportion of insurance policies held by Doncaster residents did not cover floods
- There were signs of a lack of confidence in insurance as the best way to protect residents or businesses.

The Council will respond to the report’s recommendations, including working with all landlords to ensure tenants are notified of the buildings insurance that is in place, and ensuring tenants are given guidance on putting adequate insurance cover in place.

Following the 2019 floods, the government opened access for residents affected by the flooding to a **Property Flood Resilience Grant** of up to £5,000 to fund measures that would reduce damage if flooding re-occurs. Across Doncaster, 810 properties were identified as eligible for the grant, but only 210 households have applied. The Council will continue to encourage the other households to apply. A number of areas across the borough have been identified that could benefit from a **community flood resilience scheme**. The feasibility of the schemes are being assessed, but could improve the flood resilience of 139 properties.



**(ii) The Built Environment:**

The drive to decarbonise heat will require new and existing housing stock to have higher standards of insulation, to reduce heat consumption, and a level of onsite energy generation to meet much of that demand. With over 12% of Doncaster households unable to properly heat their homes, **fuel poverty** is a major issue in the borough. With ever-increasing energy prices, we need to act to make homes more energy efficient and protect households' budgets.

For the Council's housing stock, St Leger Homes is currently working towards ensuring that all their homes reach Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level C by 2030. In 2021, they will complete a **new Environmental Strategy**, refining their targets and considering how the very significant ambition of a zero carbon position can be achieved over time.

**A long-term Housing Retrofit programme**

The Doncaster Climate Change Commission report identifies the massive impact that homes have on carbon emissions in the borough. There are 136,460 dwellings in Doncaster, 80% of which, some 109,000 homes, will require some level of retrofit to become low carbon. The Council will develop a long term **Housing Retrofit Programme** setting out its approach to securing a deep retrofit on 80% of all homes in Doncaster over the next 15-20 years. The approach will include providing advice and guidance to homeowners and landlords, identifying and promoting opportunities for financial support where it is available, such as **Green Homes Grants** and **Green Mortgages**, to ensure nobody is left behind. High performing insulation will be a priority, followed by renewable energy and low carbon heating.

As the foundation of this Housing Retrofit Programme, we aim to complete a new Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey, to give the Council up to date evidence of existing property condition and energy performance.

**(iii) Economy**

Investment in housing energy efficiency can play a key role in supporting the economic recovery and creating jobs, training opportunities and work for local businesses across the borough. Government policy requires greener infrastructure, in terms of building standards and energy supply. We will ensure those standards are met, while using it to encourage increased investment in Doncaster, provide high value jobs, improve skills and support local supply chains.

**5.3.2 Sustainable Consumption and Behaviour change**

Everyone needs to contribute towards creating a net zero carbon emission world: individuals, families, businesses, community groups and public organisations. The Council will support the transition to greener homes. New skills and processes are needed to help homeowners, landlords, tenants and developers to take greener decisions and adopt greener habits.

**KEY ACTIONS:**

- Build highly energy efficient new homes through the Council House Build Programme
- Design and start to deliver a long term borough-wide Housing Retrofit programme
- Produce a new Environment Strategy to identify options and plan carbon reduction actions in council housing stock
- Assess and act on all options for new ways of funding and delivering carbon reduction in homes
- Maximise the uptake of Green Homes Grants by residents

- Support and enforce higher energy efficiency standards in private rented homes
- Develop information, advice and guidance to support people to make their homes more energy efficient
- Ensure housing retrofit schemes or recommended actions improve flood resilience where possible
- Promote the take up of adequate household insurance against flood damage

## **5.4 Enabling and supporting people to plan, act and invest in their homes, to protect their independence and wellbeing for the future**

### **5.4.1 Our shared responsibilities**

Rising to the challenges presented by climate change and demographic change are a shared responsibility, and cannot be met by councils working alone. There is huge potential in residents, community organisations, public agencies and businesses that needs to be unlocked and harnessed towards achieving progress on these long term challenges.

People make decisions about their homes based on a range of different factors, including their knowledge of local housing options and services, their past experiences and ideas of what a good home is, and their confidence to take action. Other factors are external, such as their available equity and savings, and the cost and availability of housing. People's individual circumstances are further complicated by countless other factors such as family pressures, attachment to their neighbourhood and caring responsibilities.

Simply making information available is not enough to enable people to plan and act to support their own independence and wellbeing for the future. An approach is needed that helps us understand the circumstances of people's lives and act in a way that best empowers them as individuals, taking into account the resources that are available.

St Leger Homes' **Support to Sustain** model is a risk based approach to provide tenants with a level of support appropriate to their needs. As at September 2020, over 9,000 tenancies had been assessed and appropriate support provided to those households who require it. The Tenancy Sustainability team has worked with over 2,700 households since 2018, who have been offered intensive support to manage their tenancy, finances and other aspects of their life. Currently over 96% of those who receive intensive support are still in their tenancy six months after support has ended.

#### **Case Study: Tenancy Sustainability and exploitation**

Ms S was a care leaver who had taken up her tenancy in July 2017 at the age of 18. She was on Universal Credit and wanted the opportunity to manage her own rent account; her Social Worker advised that up to now Ms S had been good at managing her money.

Shortly after moving into her property, her engagement with her social worker became sporadic and eventually stopped. Within a few months of her tenancy, she got friendly with a group of young people who began to call around to her flat and stay over. Before long, they were bringing more people around and things began to get out of control. Housing staff began to receive complaints from neighbours and Ms S had rent arrears of £400.

Staff had the distinct impression that Ms S was being exploited and was afraid of the young people she was letting into her home. A Tenancy Support Officer worked closely

with colleagues from Estates and Income Management and before long, it was clear that the young people who had virtually taken over her home had financially abused Ms S.

Ms S was helped to apply for a housing transfer and moved to an area closer to extended family. They supported her and she was able cut her ties with the people who were exploiting her. She was put on to a Managed Payment and a Third Party deduction to pay her rent arrears, as well as applying to charities to furnish her new home. The Tenancy Support Officer continued to support her and she is now on a childcare course with a view to becoming a nursery nurse.

#### **Case Study: Tenancy Sustainability and safeguarding**

The Tenancy Sustainability team (TS team) met Mr A by chance on 22nd December 2019. Aged 70, Mr A has learning difficulties; is unable to read and write, and has various medical conditions.

Mr A was living in a run-down caravan, with no kitchen or bathroom facilities. There was no electricity or hot water, and the only heating was a tiny gas fire. A standard extension cable came through the window from a neighbour's home to power the TV and a light. He had been living like this for at least 2 years. The TS Team had concerns for Mr A's safety over the Christmas period, not least of all as the gas fire he was using had never had a service and there was clutter all around.

The TS Team involved staff from Adult Safeguarding, Home Options, South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, and Environmental Health. As Christmas was just days away, Mr A was placed in temporary accommodation and everyone mobilised to get the flat ready with everything he would need for the next few weeks. Mr A was delighted that he did not have to go back to the caravan and that a Christmas dinner would be provided by the local homeless shelter.

Mr A stayed in the temporary accommodation for a few weeks and then moved into his own bungalow in Hexthorpe. The Tenancy Support Officer (TSO) worked with the Local Assistance team to get the new bungalow kitted out with basic essentials. The TSO also visited the doctors with Mr A to get help with his health and medication, and helped him set up utility accounts for the new property.

Mr A's living conditions and quality of life were improved beyond measure.

#### **5.4.2 Unlocking the capacity for everyone to contribute**

Appendix 1 provides details of COM-B, the evidence-based behaviour change framework. We want to enable people to make the best decisions for themselves and their families, empowering them to remain independent for as long as possible and to plan for life events and changes in health, and to respond to climate change



challenges, rather than reacting to them. We want to:

- Release the **capability** of many of our residents to act independently, by informing and guiding them, giving them the confidence to make changes to their homes,
- **Motivate** people to plan for their own continued wellbeing by helping them understand the need for changes to their homes, for example the end of new gas central heating installations, or how fitting a level access shower could help them stay independent as they become older
- Work hard to provide **opportunities** to help people take these steps, such as sourcing and providing funding where we can, or advising on the specification of works and products.



The Council will continue to assist people who, for whatever reason, cannot resolve issues themselves. We will modernise housing related services, such as the Accessible Housing Register and, Aids and Adaptations so that they consider the circumstances and challenges of people's lives, and adopt an evidenced based behaviour change approach. We will also provide information, guidance and sign posting to financial support to help people improve the energy efficiency of their own homes

Our Localities approach is a key method for the Council and our partners to get closer to our communities. We acknowledge the success of Doncaster's Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations and other partners in engaging with local communities on complex issues. Our VCFS organisations are not only trusted by our residents, they are also often well placed within local communities. Each organisation has a unique range of skills and specialisms that help them understand, empower and meet the needs of local residents. In order to benefit from their expertise and engagement we will seek out opportunities to link up with the VCF sector, working alongside them as trusted information sources.

#### **Case Studies: VCFS working with communities**

**Bentley Town End Tenants and Residents Association** was established following the November 2019 floods when the community came together to try to protect and recover their properties. The TARA have worked for the last year in partnership with The Hygiene Bank to ensure houses are provided with appropriate cleaning products following the damage caused by the floods. Covid-19 has halted some of the work to renovate the damaged properties so the TARA have been supporting the community through emergency food parcels, craft kits for children, and carer's packages. The group members are a point of contact and advice for those in the community who are unsure where to turn to, and assist with problems regarding homes, insurance, and flood action.

**Citizens Advice Doncaster Borough** works locally to provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. Some of the most common housing issues include private rented tenancies, property conditions, and managing and preventing housing debt.



**Doncaster Refurnish** aim to provide affordable furniture to local people and have a combination of social, environmental and economic objectives. Refurnish work in partnership with Doncaster Council and provide a free collection service for furniture and goods that are suitable for reuse or recycling. They also supply and retail new furniture, hardware, DIY components, electrical and household goods. Assisted relocations are also provided for vulnerable people and families.

**Live Inclusive** is a charity that supports and advocates for people with disabilities and long term conditions. They are currently using their expertise to tackle fuel poverty and cold homes, using strengths-based conversations to support people who have health conditions and are struggling with their fuel bills. Although the service is relatively new, they have already started to help community members. They aim to support over 300 households in Doncaster over the next two years, with potential savings for residents of £238 per year.

**KEY ACTIONS:**

- Take a whole systems approach involving the VCF sector and community members to understand how organisations work together locally on complex issues such as climate change and independent living
- Understand the capabilities, opportunities and motivations that influence all our behaviour, in order to improve the success of policies and interventions
- Develop evidence-based, public facing information, advice and guidance, reaching and supporting everyone, and unlocking their capacity to future proof their homes

## 6. Key Actions to 2025

Enhance the safety and condition of homes, the main setting for our wellbeing throughout our lives	Homes are safe, warm and secure	• Maintain Council House decency standards at 100%	January 2021	December 2025	Chief Executive, SLHD
		• Put in place all new Building Safety and Fire Safety measures required by new legislation	January 2021	March 2022	Chief Executive, SLHD Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC
		• Aim to complete a new Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey and use the results to target support and enforcement on tackling poor property conditions	April 2021	March 2022	Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC Assistant Director for Environment, DMBC
		• Explore options to expand capacity to work proactively with Private Rented Sector landlords and tenants on engagement, education and enforcement	April 2021	March 2022	Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC Assistant Director for Environment, DMBC
	Tenants will 'be heard'	• Implement the Social Housing White Paper and subsequent legislation	January 2021	December 2025	Chief Executive, SLHD Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC
	Homes support everyone who lives there to thrive, be healthy and socialise, whilst having their own space and privacy	• Identify, understand and address health and social inequalities through housing	January 2021	December 2025	Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC Public Health Housing Lead
		• Continue to evaluate the use of Health Impact Assessments for all housing developments	January 2021	December 2025	Public Health Housing Lead Head of Planning, DMBC Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC
		• Continue preventative approaches to tackling fuel poverty	January 2021	December 2025	Head of Sustainability, DMBC Public Health Housing Lead
		• Increase skills and knowledge of the local workforce on healthy homes	January 2021	December 2025	Public Health Housing Lead
	Homes are in healthy, safe and vibrant communities	• Take a partnership approach to improving housing related services and housing solutions, utilising local expertise and knowledge across all sectors	January 2021	December 2025	Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC Public Health Housing Lead Chief Executive, SLHD
		• Use research and innovation to work with our communities, to improve health and reduce health inequalities through the home	January 2021	December 2025	Head of Policy, Performance & Intelligence, DMBC Public Health Housing Lead
		• Reduce the number of privately owned empty properties	January 2021	December 2025	Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC
Meet housing need and aspirations, support our local economy and help revitalise town centres and communities	We have new affordable homes in Doncaster	• Maximise the delivery of new homes through the new Five Year Housing Delivery Plan 2020-25, including an accelerated Council House Build Programme	January 2021	December 2025	Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC
	Homes are more accessible and inclusive in their design, able to meet residents' current and future housing needs	• Complete a new Housing Needs Assessment by 2025	January 2025	December 2025	Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC
		• Develop and implement a Specialised Housing Delivery Plan	April 2021	March 2022	Head of Service - Strategic Commissioning, DMBC Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC
		• Review supported housing provision against the new National Statement of Expectations and identify any opportunities to improve local standards	January 2021	March 2022	Director of Public Health, DMBC
		• Implement the recommendations of the Accessible Housing Service Review (2019) to modernise services, including the Accessible Housing Register and Aids and Adaptations	January 2021	March 2022	Assistant Director of Economy & Environment, DMBC

# Doncaster Housing Strategy Update 2020 to 2025

Aims	Outcomes	Actions	Start Date	End Date	Responsibility
	New Homes will have higher energy efficiency standards and use more renewable energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby central Government to deliver a housing led recovery to deliver more energy efficient, affordable houses and support local supply chains</li> </ul>	January 2021	December 2025	Director of Economy & Environment, DMBC Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC
	New residential opportunities are developed in our town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt Doncaster's Local Plan, to provide certainty to housing developers on the land available for new housing</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2021	Assistant Director for Development, DMBC Head of Planning, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the opportunities for residential development in our main town centres and complete town centre housing master planning</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2023	Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC
	As many people as possible are prevented from becoming homeless, and those who are vulnerable are supported to break the cycle of homelessness and rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the prevention of homelessness by continuing to implement the Homelessness &amp; Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2022	Head of Service - Strategic Commissioning, DMBC
Make homes greener and more energy efficient to reduce carbon emissions and keep energy costs affordable	More homes are more energy efficient and fewer households find energy costs unaffordable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build highly energy efficient new Council homes through the Council House Build Programme</li> </ul>	January 2021	December 2025	Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC Head of Service - Strategic Housing, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design and start to deliver a long term borough-wide Housing Retrofit programme</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2022	Assistant Director for Strategic Housing, DMBC Head of Sustainability, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce a new Environment Strategy to identify options and plan carbon reduction actions in council housing stock</li> </ul>	January 2021	December 2021	Chief Executive, SLHD
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess and act on all options for new ways of funding and delivering carbon reduction in homes</li> </ul>	January 2021	December 2025	Head of Sustainability, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise the uptake of Green Homes Grants by residents</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2022	Head of Sustainability, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and enforce higher energy efficiency standards in private rented homes</li> </ul>	January 2021	December 2025	Head of Sustainability, DMBC Head of Service, Regulation & Enforcement, DMBC
	More households will be more resilient to flood damage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop information, advice and guidance to support people to make their homes more energy efficient</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2022	Head of Sustainability, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure housing retrofit schemes improve flood resilience wherever possible</li> </ul>	January 2021	December 2025	Director of Economy & Environment, DMBC
Enable and support people to plan, act and invest in their homes, to protect their independence and wellbeing for the future	People are better able to plan and make choices about their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote the take up of adequate household insurance against flood damage</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2022	Chief Executive, SLHD Director of Economy & Environment, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take a whole systems approach involving VCF sector and community members to understand how organisations work together locally on complex issues such as climate change and independent living</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2023	Director of Economy & Environment, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand the capabilities, opportunities and motivations that influence all our behaviour, in order to improve the success of policies and interventions</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2023	Director of Economy & Environment, DMBC
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop evidence-based, public facing information, advice and guidance, reaching and supporting everyone, and unlocking their capacity to future proof their homes</li> </ul>	January 2021	March 2023	Director of Economy & Environment, DMBC

## 7. Monitoring and reporting on progress

Monitoring will take place against the following key measures:

- Council House Decency standards maintained
- Access or use of Greenspace
- Council House Build new dwellings completed
- Improving energy standards for new and existing homes
- Number of new homes delivered
- More private sector homes have Category 1 hazards removed
- Number of people rough sleeping
- Number of people homeless
- Access to Private Rented Sector for homeless
- Council homes rent arrears
- Number of evictions and repossessions
- Faster provision of a more suitable settled home to all those accepted as homeless

### Monitoring and reporting against Action Plan progress and indicators

- Monthly updates to the Housing Renewal Group and Renewal Board
- Reported quarterly as part of the Council's Performance Management framework
- Quarterly Portfolio Holder briefings
- Six monthly reports to Executive Board.

## Glossary of Terms

ACM	Aluminium Composite Material
BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnicity
Brownfield Sites	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure
CHBP	Council House Build Programme
COM-B model	'Capability, Opportunity, Motivation and Behaviour' Model of Behaviour Change
DGT	Doncaster Growing Together
DSA	Doncaster Sheffield Airport
EPC	Energy Performance Certificate
FCA	Financial Conduct Authority
GVA	Gross Value Added
HADP	Housing Association Development Programme
HIAs	Health Impacts Assessments
HMO	House in Multiple Occupation
IoT	Internet of Things
Main Towns	<p>Large urban coalfield or market towns, with high levels of service provision and larger populations, that are outside the Main Urban Area of Doncaster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dunscroft, Dunsville, Hatfield and Stainforth</li> <li>• Thorne and Moorends</li> <li>• Mexborough</li> <li>• Conisbrough &amp; Denaby</li> <li>• Armthorpe</li> <li>• Rossington</li> <li>• Adwick and Woodlands</li> </ul>
MEES	Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards
MHCLG	Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government
NSAP	Next Steps Accommodation Programme
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PFR	Property Flood Resilience



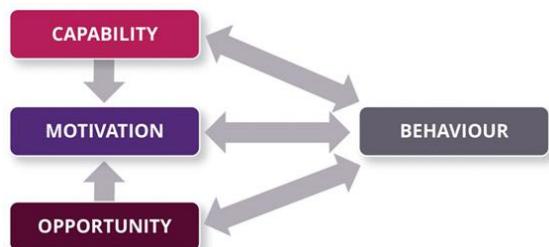
PHE	Public Health England
PRS	Private Rented Sector
PV	Photovoltaic
RAP	Renewal Action Plan
Retrofit	Changing a buildings systems or structure after its initial construction and occupation
RDaSH	Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust
SCATTER	Setting City Area Targets and Trajectories for Emissions Reduction; a local authority focussed emissions tool, built to create low-carbon local authorities
SCR	Sheffield City Region
Section 106 (S106)	A legal agreement between an applicant seeking planning permission and the local planning authority, which is used to mitigate the impact of a new home on the local community and infrastructure
SEE	Support, Education and Engagement
SEP	Strategic Economic Plan
SHDF	Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
SIL	Supported Independent Living
SLHD	St Leger Homes Doncaster
Supported Living	A service designed to help people with a wide range of support needs retain their independence by being supported in their own home
SYFR	South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
Town Deals	A Government fund to develop innovative regeneration plans to transform a town's economic growth prospects
UCMP	Urban Centre Masterplan
VCFS	Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector
WHO	World Health Organisation

## COM-B Model of Behaviour Change

Behaviour change approaches can be applied to a range of housing including older people's and specialist housing, energy efficiency improvements, housing management and tenancy sustainment and homelessness. Individual behaviour change takes place within complex systems and is supported and restricted by environmental, social, and economic factors. Although it is important to ensure that people can easily access and understand the information required to make proactive decisions in relation to meeting their housing, it should be acknowledged that each person's internal and external resources can significantly affect people's ability to do so. Often those who should be benefiting from information or a service may lack the efficacy or access, whilst those who have the skills, resilience and resources are better able to access available support, this is called an inequalities paradox and is increased by interventions that only aim to educate or that create barriers to access in order to manage demand.

In order to account for the complex internal and external factors that influence decision making the COM-B Model (Mitchie et al.) of behaviour change can be used. This model is the foremost model for behaviour change currently and represents a systematic review of over 1200 behaviour change studies. It can enable us to understand the influences, and also to plan effective and fair strategy. COM-B enables us to explore and understand an individual's capabilities, opportunities & motivations, how they interact and how they are framed within, and influenced by, their environment. COM-B will work best in a housing context when there is a good understanding of the complex housing system including services and local barriers/challenges and assets.

Figure: The COM-B Behaviour Model (Mitchie et al., 2011)



### Example: Housing for older people/changing needs/home adaptations

For some older people or people with additional needs, the move to residential care or more supportive housing occurs too late or follows a moment of crisis. It would be better if decisions about housing and support needs were made with the time and space to make a good decision; with full the involvement of the person and their support network. Whether that involves a planned move into more supportive housing, "rightsizing" into a new home, or adapting their home to better suit their changing needs in the long-term. In order to facilitate earlier, more considered decision-making we must not only provide better quality information and more support, we must have a better understanding of behaviour change and why people make the decisions they do.

A behaviour change approach could be used help people plan and make choices earlier without the pressure of immediate need or a crisis. A service/approach or system that takes this into account would have to consider all aspects of a person's life.

The table below provides examples of housing decision making against the COM-B model:

<p><b>Capability:</b> the attributes of the individual and how this impacts on their capacity (all can be affected by health, poverty and physical resources)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to read, understand information/language and access technology</li> <li>• Disability and sensory impairment</li> <li>• Ability to remember, comprehend make decisions</li> <li>• Ability to navigate a system or service</li> <li>• The language and clarity of information, where it is found</li> <li>• Support from services and advocates to explain and support decisions</li> <li>• Barriers to access and utilisation</li> <li>• Ability to apply for grants or use phone systems</li> <li>• Understanding of own future needs: for example, the need for a handrail or level access shower in the future</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunity:</b> The extent to which our behaviour is restricted or supported by the “system” or environment we live in</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources available to the individual e.g. equity in your house or a deposit for a property</li> <li>• Savings to buy adaptations and have them fitted</li> <li>• Rented property- up to the landlord whether to adapt the home</li> <li>• Social/family pressure and support</li> <li>• Systems: how easy is it to use a system such as the Accessible Housing Register?</li> <li>• Availability/waiting lists for support or assessments</li> <li>• Support to move house or to decorate</li> <li>• Declining income or debt issues</li> <li>• Universal credit</li> <li>• Knowledge and attitudes of carers and staff</li> <li>• Suitability of house for adaptations</li> <li>• Online systems/information</li> <li>• Support to apply for grants and funding or to access equity</li> </ul>
<p><b>Motivation (reason to do it):</b> Reflective processes and (evaluation, assessment and reasoning) and emotional (Impulses, emotions and habits)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong emotional ties to home and community</li> <li>• Fatalism- seeing a poor-quality old age as unavoidable</li> <li>• Experience of “older people’s housing” or other people’s experiences/stories</li> <li>• Life goals</li> <li>• Poor experiences of services in the past</li> <li>• Fear of change</li> <li>• Fear of humiliation/receiving help/being dependent</li> <li>• Cost/benefit analysis</li> </ul>