Rushcliffe Borough Council

Housing Delivery Plan 2022- 2027

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Forward

Welcome to our new Housing Delivery Plan 2022 to 2027. This Plan builds upon and replaces the previous Plan covering the years 2016 to 2021. This revised Plan celebrates the vibrancy and attractiveness of our borough yet recognises the challenges facing some of our residents and workforce. These challenges include the affordability of housing for younger households wishing to remain in the borough, the environmental sustainability of our housing stock, particularly in light of the increased cost of fuel, and our ageing population. More recently our housing service has responded proactively to the impact of the Coronavirus on our most vulnerable communities.

We have consulted with key stakeholders including Borough Councillors, Parish Councillors, neighbouring local authorities and Nottinghamshire County Council, Registered Provider partners, and key private and voluntary sector organisations. We consulted upon our proposed priorities, actions and associated targets prior to the drafting of the Plan. This is in order that partners had an opportunity to input at an earlier stage of the Plan's development and some of the original proposals have been amended in the light of consultee comments.

The three priorities within the Plan are:

Priority 1: Affordability and Sustainable Housing
Priority 2: Housing Quality and Environmental Sustainability
Priority 3: Homelessness and Support

The Council believe that these three priorities set a comprehensive and inclusive framework for effective delivery of housing services in the years ahead.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context

Good quality, affordable housing is important for a range of reasons. We all need a place to live and where we live should be safe, secure and affordable to us. That is a cornerstone of a functioning, developed and just society.

However, the housing market suffers significant market failure in large parts of the United Kingdom, including Rushcliffe. The key issues being:

- The overall supply of housing does not meet the overall demand for housing.
- The cost of buying housing is expensive relative to incomes, which disproportionally effects younger purchasers without existing equity.
- The quality of a significant proportion of the housing stock is poor in terms of its energy use, condition and suitability for current use.
- There is a lack of supported and adapted housing to meet the needs of special needs groups.

A main objective of national and local housing policy and strategy is to seek to rebalance the housing market and to intervene to address market failure. A further objective of national and local housing policy and strategy is to support and facilitate economic growth and the regeneration of place.

Construction is a strong economic driver and house building is key to meeting future housing needs and reducing the reliance upon unsuitable housing. The sustainability of new-build development is also important in terms of mitigating the carbon footprint of construction.

In order to seek to address the problems within the existing housing market and create strong, sustainable housing growth in the Borough, we have set out the following priorities for delivery within our Housing Delivery Plan.

1.2 Our priorities

Priority 1: Affordability and Sustainable Housing

The first priority seeks to ensure that the supply of new housing allocated to the borough is developed in a sustainable manner. This includes both the overall provision of housing and the supply of affordable housing.

Priority 2: Housing Quality and the Environmental Sustainability

The second priority focusses on the condition and environmental sustainability of the borough's existing and future housing stock. This includes action to improve housing conditions, particularly for those living in more insecure housing tenures. Improving the environmental sustainability of the borough's housing stock is a key plank in the Council's Carbon Management Plan. This priority also covers the Council's efforts to bring empty homes back into use.

Priority 3: Homelessness and Support

The third priority supports work to address all forms of homelessness from rough sleepers to households threatened with homelessness. The priority also outlines our work to meet the needs of specific groups, including those with disabilities, elderly persons and other groups that may require specialist accommodation or support or adaptation to their home.

1.3 Actions and targets

The Delivery Plan will set out actions and associated targets which shall support the delivery of our 3 housing priorities. The actions and targets that support our plan are set out within the respective chapters assigned to each priority area.

2. Borough profile

This chapter provides a brief overview and profile of the borough. This includes the population and household profile within the borough, a profile of the housing stock, an economic snapshot, and the cost and affordability of accommodation in the borough.

Key characteristics:

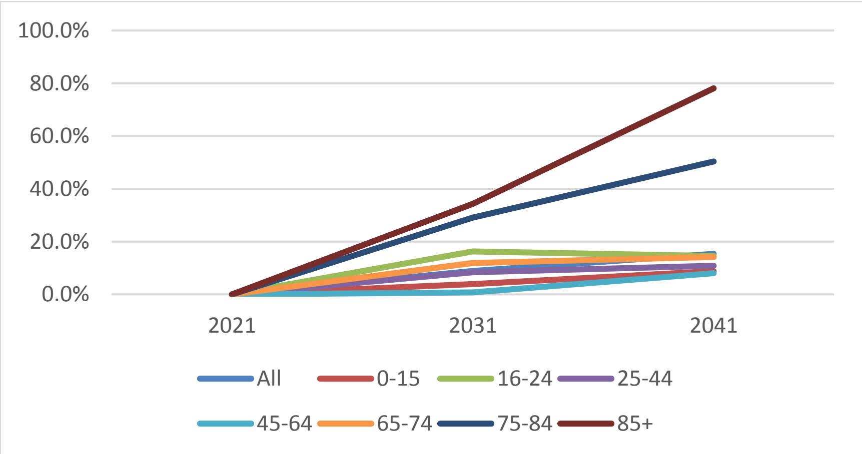
- Population projected to increase by 15% over the next 20 years (2021 to 2041);
- Projected population growth for the age cohorts (75-84 and 85+) are 50% and 78% respectively over the next 20 years; and
- Household growth is projected to exceed population growth at 19.6%.

2.1 Population and households

In 2021 Rushcliffe is home to an estimated 121,753 people. This is an increase of approximately 10,000 persons or just over 9.5% from the Census figure in 2011. The Borough's population is estimated increase by just under 20,000 people from 2021 to 2041, which is just over 15% from 2021.

The projected population increases for cohorts 'Under 16' to '65- 74' are within a range of 8% to just over 15% from 2021 to 2041. Figure 2.1 illustrates that the projected population growth of the '75-84' and 'Aged 85+' cohorts far outstrip that rate of other cohorts. These cohorts are projected to increase respectively by 29.1% and 34.3% from 2021 to 2031, and 50.4% and 78.1% from 2021 to 2041.

Figure 2.1: Population growth by age cohort

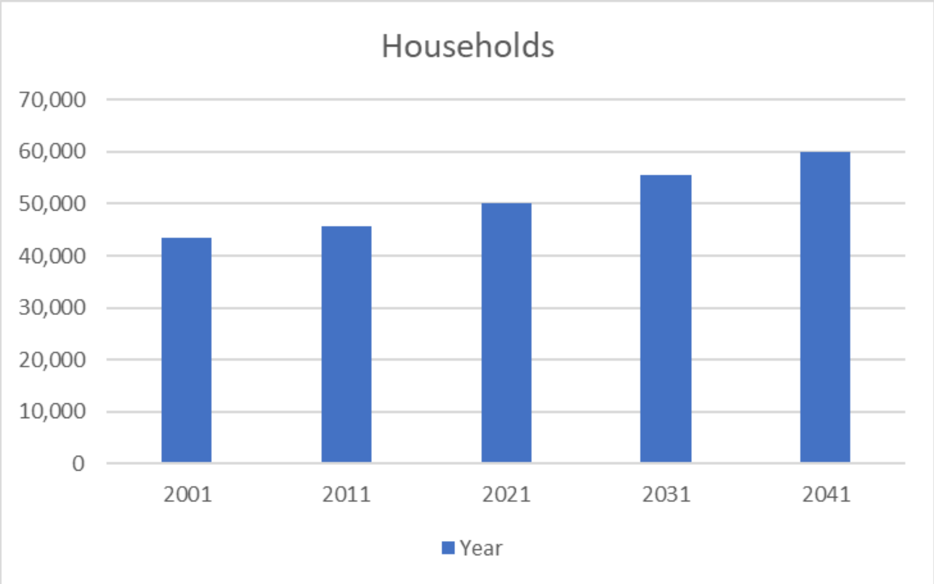


Source: ONS 2021

Populations form households, some of which may be single person households and some of which may be multi-generational households. The population occupies housing as households and so the size and characteristics of households are equally important. A key driver of all strategic planning and housing policy is to ensure that current and future housing meets the needs of current and future households. Projected household growth is a key component of the Standard Method to calculate the overall housing requirement for each local authority area.

The household projections below (Figure 2.2) are derived from the 2018 based household projections. It can be seen that the number of households in the borough has increased by 6,646 households (15.3%) from 2001 to 2021. Households are projected to increase by 9,794 households (19.6%) from 2021 to 2041. The population increase for the same period (2021 to 2041) is estimated as just over 15%. Hence it is projected that growth of households will exceed the growth in population over the 20-year period, which could indicate an accelerated growth in single person households.

Figure 2.2: Household growth 2001 to 2041



Source: ONS 2021

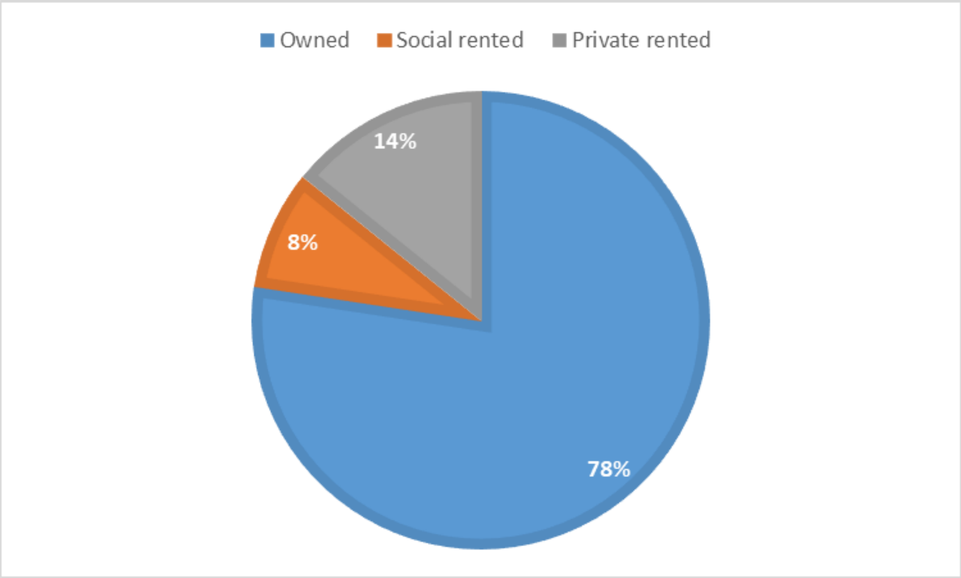
2.2 Housing stock

At the time of the last Census (2011) there were 47,349 household spaces which for the purposes of this Plan we can determine as dwellings. Of the total dwellings, 45,835 were usually occupied.

Table 2.3 indicates that at the time of the 2011 Census, 76.4% of the Borough's housing stock was owner occupied. Only 8.4% of the stock was 'affordable' rented, being either social rent or affordable rent. The vast majority of the affordable housing stock in the Borough is owned by Registered Providers, also known as Housing Associations. There were 333 shared ownership units at the time of the Census. Since 2011 to March 2021 there have been 861 affordable completions, of which 509 are for rent and 352 are of 'intermediate' tenure, the majority of which are shared ownership.

In 2011 13.3% of the housing stock was privately rented. Nationally since 2011 there has been a growth in the private rented sector at the expense of the owner-occupied sector. There is no reason to assume that Rushcliffe has not followed this trend.

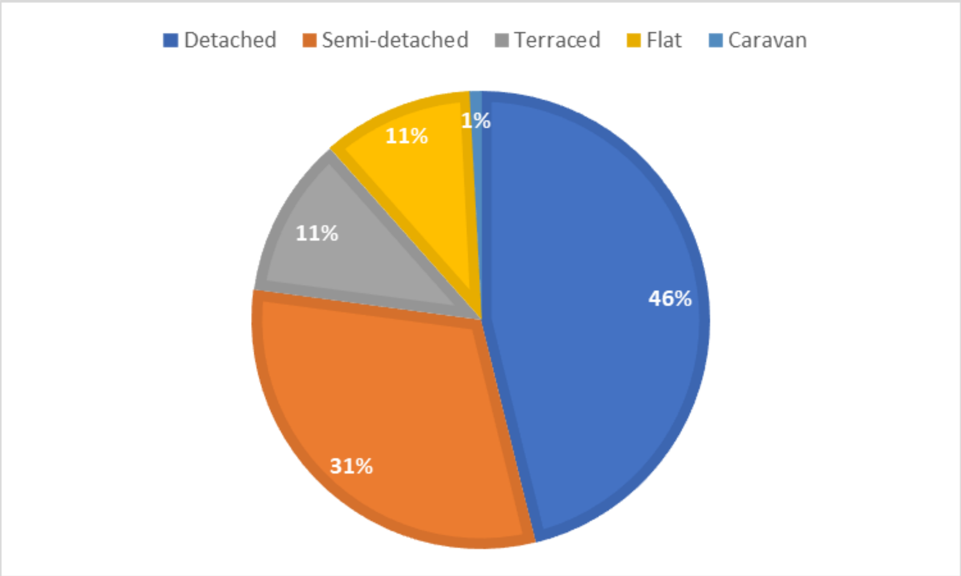
Figure 2.3: Housing tenure



Source: Census 2011

Figure 2.4 below sets out the type of housing in the borough at the time of the Census. The majority of the borough's housing stock is either detached (46.2%) or semi-detached (31.0%). Smaller proportions of the stock are terraced (11.4%) or flats (10.7%). Terraced housing and flats will tend toward more affordable entry level housing and smaller proportion of such will reduce the supply of entry level housing for new forming households. We will consider house prices in greater detail at Chapter 3.

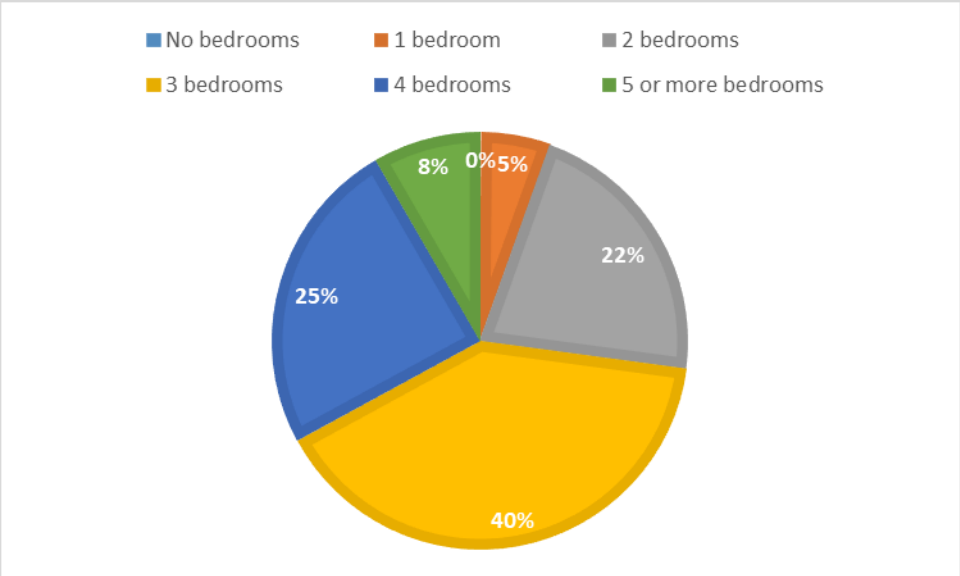
Figure 2.4: House type



Source: Census 2011

Figure 2.5 below illustrates the size of housing by 'number of bedrooms' across the Borough's housing stock. 39.9% of the stock is 3 bedroomed with 24.6% being 4 bedroomed and 21.7% being 2 bedroomed. As with type of housing, entry level housing for new forming households will tend to be provided by the smaller sized properties.

Figure 2.5: Number of bedrooms



Source: Census 2011

2.3 Economic activity and earnings

The latest Annual Population Survey figures from January to December 2020 indicate that 79.3% of Rushcliffe's population between 16-64, commonly referred to as the working age population, is economically active which is slightly higher than the county as a whole and in line with the national rate.

The self-employment rate and unemployment rate within the Borough exceeds the rate of both the county as a whole and nationally.

Table 2.1: Annual Population Survey Jan 2020 to Dec 2020

	Rushcliffe no.	Rushcliffe %	Nottinghamshire %	England %
Economic activity rate - aged 16-64	57,400	79.3	78.6	79.5
Employment rate - aged 16-64	54,100	74.7	74.9	75.7
% aged 16-64 who are employees	45,300	62.5	64.6	65.4
% aged 16-64 who are self employed	8,900	12.2	10.2	10.1
Unemployment rate - aged 16-64	3,300	5.8	4.7	4.8
% who are economically inactive - aged 16-64	15,000	20.7	21.4	20.5

Source: Annual Population Survey 2021

The graph overleaf (Figure 2.6) compares the proportion of working population within the various occupational groups in Rushcliffe compared to the county as a whole and the national picture. The data is derived from the Annual Population Survey. The occupational groups numbered in Figure 2.6 below are as follows:

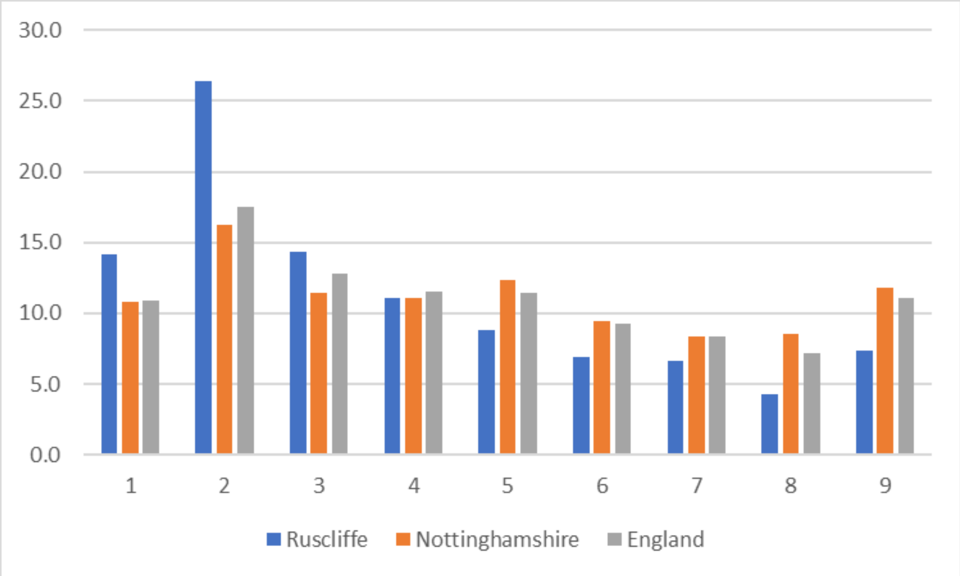
Table 2.2: Occupational groups

1.	Managers, directors and senior officials
2.	Professional occupations
3.	Associate professional and technical occupations
4.	Administrative and secretarial occupations
5.	Skilled trades occupations
6.	Caring, leisure and other service occupations
7.	Sales and customer service occupations
8.	Process plant and machine operatives
9.	Elementary occupations

Figure 2.6 indicates that Rushcliffe has a higher proportion of economically active residents in occupational groups 1 and 2 than comparative geographies. This is particularly pronounced in occupational group 2 which comprises 26.4% of Rushcliffe economically active residents in comparison to 16.2% across the county as a whole and 17.5% nationally.

Conversely the proportion of economically active Rushcliffe residents in occupational groups 5 to 9 is far lower than the comparative geographies.

Figure 2.6: Occupational group: economically active residents



Source: Annual Population Survey (June 2020 to June 2021)

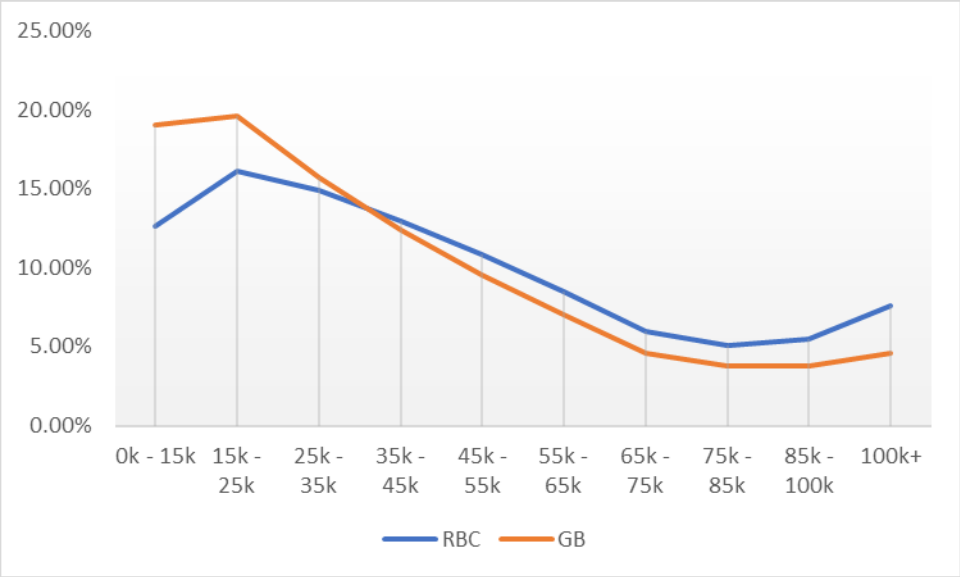
The following data on incomes is derived from CACI Paycheck data for 2019. This data estimates gross household income in the Borough and Great Britain (GB) as the comparator. The table below sets out the average and quartile salaries for Rushcliffe in comparison to GB. Rushcliffe shows a higher salary levels across all ranges. The graph overleaf sets out the salary distribution by income cohort in Rushcliffe and Great Britain. It can be seen that Rushcliffe has a lower representation in the lower salary bands than GB as a whole and a higher representation in the higher salary bands. This is to be expected given the disparity between average and quartile figures. This also chimes with the proportion of Rushcliffe residents in the higher occupational groups.

Table 2.3: Average and quartile salaries Rushcliffe and GB.

	Rushcliffe	Great Britain
Mean	47,762	39,964
Median	39,826	32,141
Upper quartile	63,999	53,612
Lower quartile	22,666	17,922

Source: CACI Paycheck data 2019

Figure 2.7: Gross household income Rushcliffe (RBC) and GB.



Source: CACI Paycheck data 2019

3. Priority One: Affordability and Sustainable Housing

3.1 Housing growth

An acceleration in the supply of housing is a key Government policy. The current Government, as did its predecessors, recognises that the supply of housing needs to increase at a national level in order to meet the demands of current and existing households. In fact the imbalance between the supply (or lack thereof) and demand of housing creates a major upward pressure on the value of housing. This was a key plank in economist Kate Barker's Government commissioned report published in 2004 named the Barker Review of Housing Supply. This review has formed the ammunition to support successive Government's rhetoric and policy around the need to increase housing supply to meet rising demands for housing.

Some commentators argue that there are many factors that impact the housing market aside from the imbalance of supply and demand. These include the emergence and expansion of the Buy to let market. More recently the expansion of student and short-term letting accommodation has also diverted supply from the residential market. The above have all been supported by historically low interest rates.

Although housing growth is unpopular with many communities, at present the Council's housing need figure is determined by government derived formula. The Council's role as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is to establish the most sustainable locations to deliver the required numbers of housing through the local planning process. If the Council does not have an up to date Local Plan, or a 5 year deliverable supply of housing or has not met the Housing Delivery Test over the last 3 years, it means that opportunistic and unsuitable housing applications are more likely to be granted on the basis that the Council has not enabled a sufficient number of the sites to be developed. Hence it is important that the LPA meets its deadlines in terms of delivering its emerging Local Plan.

Furthermore the vast majority of affordable housing is delivered by planning obligation on new build sites. The Council's affordable housing planning policies determine the amount and type of affordable housing provided on newbuild sites. The Council's affordable housing policies are set out in Policy 8 of the current Local Plan and in brief require all new build sites with over 10 net dwellings to provide a proportion of affordable housing onsite. This proportion is usually 20% or 30% of all dwellings and is controlled by way of a legal agreement, known as a section 106 agreement. In fact such sites are usually referred to as 'section 106' sites. In exceptional circumstances the Council will take a payment in lieu of onsite affordable housing to spend on affordable housing elsewhere if the provision of onsite affordable housing is not suitable.

Affordable housing delivered by way of planning obligation is defined by the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (Annex 2) as:

'Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- Affordable Housing for Rent (in accordance with the Government's policy on Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or at least 20% below market rents);
- Starter homes;

- Discounted market sales housing (sold at a minimum of 20% discount (or minimum of 30% if the property is a First Home)); and
- Other affordable routes to home ownership (including shared ownership and rent to buy).'

3.2 House price and affordability

Buying a home to live in has become increasingly unaffordable for many households, as the rise in property prices has outstripped the increase in incomes over the last 20 years. As the graphs below illustrate median and lower quartile house prices in the borough have increased more than incomes for both residents and workers. The ratio between house prices and incomes is set as an 'affordability ratio' defined as the multiples of salary required to access property at the respective entry levels. For example, in Table 3.1 below, in September 2002 median house prices were 5.46 times the median workplace salary and in September 2020 the affordability ratio was 9.29, so clearly affordability has worsened.

The reason we consider the incomes of both residents and the workforce is that the economy of the borough is reliant upon its workforce, many of whom may not actually work in the borough but may seek to due to their employment. In fact, the workforce income data is used to calculate the affordability uplift within the Standard Method which determines the borough's minimum housing need set out within the Local Plan.

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below indicate that the median affordability ratios for both residents and the workforce have increased. The differential between house prices and incomes is more acute for the workforce at a 9.29 ratio than for residents at a 7.86 ratio.

Table 3.1 Median house prices to median workforce earnings

	Sept 2002	Sept 2012	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Median house price	122,500	190,000	267,998	282,500	280,000
Workplace annual salary	22,437	24,639	29,997	30,619	30,153
Affordability ratio	5.46	7.71	8.93	9.23	9.29

Source: ONS 2021

Table 3.2 Median house prices to median resident earnings

	Sept 2002	Sept 2012	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Median house price	122,500	190,000	267,998	282,500	280,000
Resident annual salary	25,843	32,307	34,891	35,545	35,633
Affordability ratio	4.74	5.88	7.68	7.95	7.86

Source: ONS 2021

Table 3.3 and 3.4 consider lower quartile affordability ratios. The lower quartile house prices are determined as the entry level house price in assessments of affordable housing need determined through strategic planning process. Clearly affordability has worsened significantly since 2002. Again, the affordability ratios are higher for the workforce than residents. It is noticeable that affordability ratios increase in 2020 due to a reduction in incomes rather than an increase in house prices, which may be due to the impact of the lockdown and furlough scheme. In respect of house prices, the data for 2021 is not yet available for a full analysis. However it is understood that house prices have increased over the last year, driven in part by the stamp duty holiday, cheap mortgage finance and the so-called 'rush to the provinces' driven by the ability for people to continue to work from home on a semi-permanent basis.

Table 3.3 Lower quartile house prices to lower quartile workplace earnings

	Sept 2002	Sept 2012	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Lower Quartile House price	89,500	148,000	196,995	210,000	210,000
Workplace annual salary	15,078	18,451	21,365	21,347	20,909
Affordability ratio	5.94	8.67	9.22	9.84	10.04

Source: ONS 2021

Table 3.4 Lower quartile house prices to lower quartile resident earnings

	Sept 2002	Sept 2012	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Lower Quartile House price	89,500	148,000	196,995	210,000	210,000
Workplace annual salary	19,008	20,171	24,420	25,842	23,849
Affordability ratio	4.71	7.26	8.07	8.13	8.81

Source: ONS 2021

3.3 Private rental prices and affordability

The table 3.5 below considers average rent levels in Rushcliffe over the financial year 2020 to 2021. The median rent for Rushcliffe over last financial year was £725 pcm. The lower quartile rent which is viewed as the entry level rent was £625 pcm.

Table 3.6 compares private rent levels in Rushcliffe regionally and nationally. Rent levels in Rushcliffe clearly exceed the regional averages, which chimes with the economic profiling set out in 2.3. National averages are still higher than the Rushcliffe averages, so rent levels are still not comparable to the south of the country which bring up the national averages.

Table 3.5: Private rents in Rushcliffe 2020/2021 per calendar month (PCM)

	Count	Mean (£)	Lower quartile (LQ) (£)	Median (£)	Upper Quartile (UQ) (£)
Room	10	426	401	411	463
Studio	10	408	360	400	450
1 bed	80	541	495	548	595
2 bed	490	684	615	675	725
3 bed	340	861	725	800	950
4+ bed	130	1,314	1,000	1,225	1,450
Total	1,060	801	625	725	875

Source: ONS 2021

Table 3.6: Comparative private rent 2020/2021 pcm

	Mean (£)	LQ (£)	Median (£)	UQ (£)
Rushcliffe	801	625	725	875
Nottinghamshire	653	515	600	725
East Midlands	660	525	625	750
England	864	565	730	995

Source: ONS 2021

The table below considers Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates in comparison to lower quartile rental prices. The borough is covered by three Broad Rental Market Areas (BRMA). BRMAs are defined areas that form a rental market area. LHA rates are set at the lower of the 30th percentile of a list of rents within the BRMA and the previous LHA rate. The Grantham & Newark BRMA covers the far east of the borough and includes East Bridgford, Screveton and Flintham. The Leicester BRMA covers the south west of the borough and includes East Leake and Sutton Bonnington. The majority of the borough is covered by the Nottingham BRMA including West Bridgford, Ratcliffe on Soar, Ruddington, Keyworth, Cotgrave and Radcliffe on Trent. The Nottingham BRMA also covers the city of Nottingham and parts of Ashfield and Gedling.

An issue with the borough being covered by three BRMAs is that LHA rates differ across the borough, as can be seen from the below. A further consideration is that BRMAs covering Rushcliffe include a far wider geography within which rents are predominantly lower. This means that the LHA calculation is determined by a lower base rent level (30th percentile) than in Rushcliffe itself. This is evidenced is the fact that lower quartile (25th percentile) rent levels in Rushcliffe are noticeably higher than all BRMA LHA rates covering the borough.

This means that LHA rates in Rushcliffe will not meet the cost of lower quartile rental property in the borough. This makes it difficult for the Council to meet the needs of homeless households in the private rental sector in the borough.

Table 3.6: Local Housing Allowance rate pcm

Rate/ BRMA	Grantham & Newark (£)	Leicester (£)	Nottingham (£)	LQ Rushcliffe (£)
Shared accommodation	368.34	338.00	349.05	401
One bedroom	373.97	448.76	468.69	495
Two bedroom	483.69	563.46	548.51	615
Three bedroom	573.43	673.14	623.30	725
Four bedroom	792,83	892.57	797.81	1,000

Source: Valuation Office Agency 2021

3.4 Achievements since the last housing plan (2016 to 2021)

- Completed 8 rural exception site Housing Needs Surveys and distributed a further 3 surveys as part of the Rural Exception site programme.
- Provided 639 new affordable homes chiefly through section 106 delivery.
- Worked in partnership to progress with Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) phases 1 and 2 of the garage site in-fill scheme. This provided 23 units within phase 1 and will provide a further 10 units across 3 sites within phase 2.

- Successfully secured 42.5k Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) revenue funding and 302.4k capital funding for the provision of 6 permanent units of move on accommodation across South Nottinghamshire

3.5 Actions and targets

The key actions to deliver this strategic priority are set out in Table 3.7 below:

Table 3.7: Priority 1 Actions and Targets

Priority 1: Affordability and Sustainable Housing		
Action/Target	Responsible Dept.	Target date
Publication of Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan (GNSP) preferred options paper	Strategic Planning	January 2022
GNSP Submitted for Examination	Strategic Planning	November 2022
GNSP adopted	Strategic Planning	October 2023
Completion of MTVH garage site build programme phase 2	Strategic Housing	April 2024
Commit at least 50% of the available capital budget to support the delivery new affordable housing and identify schemes for the allocation of the remainder of the budget	Strategic Housing	March 2027
Deliver at least 750 new affordable housing dwellings over the term of the Plan.	Strategic Housing	March 2027
Explore opportunities to deliver rural exceptions sites in partnership with Parish Councils with the aim of securing at least 2 sites over the term of the Plan.	Strategic Housing	March 2027

4. Priority 2: Housing Quality and Environmental Sustainability

4.1 Housing quality

The Housing Delivery Plan considers all tenures of housing where, as a local housing authority, the Council has powers and obligations to intervene. The perceived focus of a strategic housing service is on delivery of affordable housing, homelessness and meeting the needs of households in housing need through allocation of the affordable housing stock. Nonetheless the Council has also statutory and regulatory duties across the private sector housing stock.

In comparison to neighbouring boroughs and Nottingham city, Rushcliffe has good quality private sector housing, both ownership and rental. Rushcliffe is an affluent borough and as such the housing stock is generally well maintained in good condition. However there are pockets of poor quality and poorly maintained housing, and the Council needs to maintain its oversight where properties fall below statutory standards. Where this occurs, it may indicate a householder struggling to maintain their property through ill-health or disability. There may also be referrals from private sector tenants about the condition of their property, although the vast of the private rental sector is well manged and does not present regulatory issues for the Council.

The main statutory arbiter of housing standards is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This is a risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings. It was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 and applies to residential properties in England and Wales.

Excepting 2020/21 where activity was reduced due to coronavirus, the Council can expect to undertake enforcement action on 20 to 30 category 1 hazards per year. This is illustrated in table 4.1 below.

Another area of responsibility for the Council is in respect of licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO), which require mandatory licensing under the prevailing HMO regulations. A licensable HMO is defined as a dwelling:

- that is rented to 5 or more people who form more than 1 household;
- where some or all tenants share toilet, bathroom or kitchen facilities; and
- where at least 1 tenant pays rent (or their employer pays it for them).

Table 4.2 illustrates the number of mandatory licenced HMOs and the number of HMO that require a mandatory licence. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that all mandatory HMOs have a valid licence and take appropriate enforcement action where this is not the case.

Table 4.1: Identified category 1 hazards

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
HHSRS Cat 1	18	26	22	32	22
Action to resolve	14	21	22	27	22

Source: RBC performance statistics 2021

Table 4.2: Licensable and licensed HMOs

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Licensable HMOs	200	200	220	177	240
licensed	196	195	208	177	196

Source: DLUHC (LAHS returns 2016/17 to 2020/21) 2021

4.2 Health and Housing

There are clear linkages between health and housing. Poor quality housing both in terms of its environmental efficiency and its poor condition, including hazards in the home, such as trip hazards leads to increased demand for acute NHS and other services.

Over the past decade, the infrastructure has been put in place to ensure more co-ordinated working relationships between health, social services and housing.

Health and Wellbeing boards were established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to act as a forum in which key leaders from the local health and care system could work together to improve the health and wellbeing of their local population. They became fully operational on 1 April 2013 in all 152 local authorities with adult social care and public heath responsibilities.

Sustainability and transformation plans (now partnerships) (STPs) were announced in NHS planning guidance (NHS England 2015). They are intended to cover three main areas: developing new models of care and improving quality; improving health and wellbeing of their population; and improving efficiency of their services.

STPs are now set to be replaced by a new integrated care structure featuring an interlinked Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Integrated Care Partnerships (ICP), the latter being place based partnerships focussed upon delivery. Rushcliffe falls under the South Notts ICP.

Irrespective of the changing strategic infrastructure, partnerships have focussed upon improving health outputs through interventions in housing. The King's Fund report on Housing and Health (2018) excerpts the following statement from the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire STP to demonstrate the recognition of the important link between the quality of housing and health.

"Nottingham and Nottinghamshire sustainability and transformation plan – proposals relating to housing and the home

- The plan recognises that people are living longer and that many, especially those living with multiple conditions, may be vulnerable due to their housing.
- Where possible services that do not need to be delivered in a hospital setting will be delivered in different ways, for example, through the use of assistive technology to deliver care in the community and in people's homes.
- An STP advisory group allows the voluntary and community sector, including home care providers and care homes, to contribute to the plan.
- More people will be offered the 'warm homes on prescription' scheme so that they can more easily afford to heat their home.
- The plan aspires to better support from housing providers to ensure that accommodation for people being discharged from hospital is safe to return to."

4.3 Environmental sustainability

Emissions from residential housing constitute about 15% of all UK greenhouse gases. According to a recent report from the National Housing Federation (NHF), England's 25 million homes produce 58.5 million tonnes of CO_2 every year. This is slightly higher than that emitted from car use annually in England. The NHF in tune with many other commentators cite the main reason for the high level of emissions as the overall poor quality of the existing stock. The UK's housing stock as a whole is far older than the contemporary developed countries and much of it is poorly insulated.

In March 2020, Rushcliffe Borough Council made a commitment to work towards becoming carbon neutral by 2030 for its own operations**.** The Council is also committed to supporting local residents and businesses reduce their own carbon footprint.

The Energy Savings Trust publishes Electrical Performance Certificate (EPC) data from sales and lettings within the borough. The EPC provides a Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating from A to G, with A being the most energy efficient and G the least. The graph below illustrates the SAP ratings by tenure in the borough.

By 2025 all new lettings, social and private, the property will need to meet SAP rating C and this standard will be applied to all existing lettings by 2028. It is noticeable that a higher proportion of both social and private lettings meet rating C than owner occupied dwelling. Properties with a F or G SAP rating should not be let. A higher proportion of owner-occupied dwellings are category A&B, which will predominantly relate to very recently built dwellings.

Figure 4.1: EPC SAP rating by tenure

Source: Energy Savings Trust 2021

4.4 Empty Homes

Another key area of activity for the Council in the last few years has been bringing empty homes back into use. The focus of this action is upon properties that have been empty for a considerable period of time and having a negative impact on the locality.

Vacant properties are a normal part of a functioning housing market. Properties may be empty awaiting sale or being refurbished or may be a probate situation. However, if a property is left empty for a considerable period of time, it is often neglected and starts to become a risk to neighbouring properties and a blight on the local area. Aside from the fact the Council is duty bound to bring long term empty properties back into use to contribute towards the housing needs of the borough.

A long-term property is defined as one that has been empty for more than 6 months. Data produced by Action on Empty Homes sets out the number of long-term empty properties within Rushcliffe and neighbouring boroughs as comparators over the last two years.

Table 4.3: Long term empty properties

	2021	2020
Rushcliffe	400	462
Broxtowe	352	552
Gedling	500	598

Source: Action on Empty Homes 2021

The Council's first Empty Homes Strategy was published in 2019 and covers the period until 2024. The Strategy identified 900 empty homes in the borough at the time of writing, of which 425 had been empty for more than 6 months and of which 100 had been empty for over 2 years.

As stated within the document the benefits of a strategy to deal with empty homes can be identified as social, regenerative, financial and strategic. A strategy can:

- assist in meeting housing need;
- improve housing conditions;
- assist with a reduction in crime and the fear of crime;
- regenerate blighted areas;
- increase Council Tax collection rates and empty home premiums; and
- generate additional income through the New Homes Bonus (NHB).

Much of the Council's work on empty properties is focussed on identifying, contacting and working consensually with the owner to bring the property back into. Should the Council need to take some form of enforcement action it has a number of tools at its disposal. However, enforcement is a time-consuming process. The main enforcement tools are as follows:

- Empty Dwelling Management Order (EMDO)- where the Council or a Registered Provider secures a management order to bring the property into use.
- Forced Sale- where the Council has secured a charge on the property usually because the owner has not paid council tax or bills for works in default, the Council can seek to enforce to reclaim its funds and thereby releasing the property in alternative ownership.
- Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)- where the Council uses its compulsory purchase powers to acquire property thereby enforcing ownership change.

4.5 Achievements since the last Plan

- Introduced new civil penalties under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to deal with rogue and criminal landlords.

- Developed and actioned an Empty Homes Strategy in 2019 supported by the appointment of a dedicated Empty Homes Officer.
- 27 empty homes brought back into use since the adoption of the Empty Homes Strategy in 2019 through direct enforcement.
- Action on 53 high priority long term empty properties being progresses through a combination of support and enforcement action
- £692,150 secured through Local Authority Delivery grant to support energy efficiency works in low performance homes where the applicant has a low income.
- 106 Category 1 hazards resolved through enforcement action.

4.6 Actions and targets

Table 4.5: Priority 2 Actions and Targets

Priority 2: Housing Quality and Environmental Sustainability		
Action/Target	Responsible Dept.	Target date
Support Local Authority Delivery fund/Social Housing Decarbonisation bids to provide environmental upgrades to MTVH stock in East Leake.	Strategic Housing	Mar 26
Support the Council's estates team to explore alternative premises SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure) rated A/B to utilise as the council's homeless hostel or, if that is not feasible, explore retrofit options for the existing premises.	Strategic Housing	Dec 24
Work with Registered Provider partners on a sub-regional basis to review their existing stock assets and support bids to improve energy efficiency.	Community Development	On-going
Reduce the number of properties with Health and Safety RSS Category 1 hazards on a year on year basis.	Environment Health	Annual
Reduce the number of long empty properties on a year on year basis	Environment Health	Annual

5. Priority 3: Homelessness and Support

5.1 Homelessness and rough sleeping

Housing is fundamental to the wellbeing of our residents, their families and our communities. Homelessness can affect anyone. Many households affected or who are threatened with a loss of their home will have family or social networks that are able to provide support or may be able to support themselves. Many households do not have support networks or the financial security to meet their own needs and the statutory services provided by their local council need to assist.

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal requirement on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness within their area, and develop and publish a strategy to prevent homelessness, based on the findings of the review. The Council in partnership with its neighbouring boroughs of Broxtowe and Gedling has recently produced for consultation its updated South Nottinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022-2027).

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 placed additional duties in meeting the needs of homeless households. The drive from Government is to reduce the overall levels of homelessness with express focus on the reduction of rough sleeping. The Government has launched a national 'Rough Sleeping Strategy' that sets out the intention to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it by 2027. This strategy is structured around '3 Pillars', which are commitments and actions surrounding:

- Prevention – integrated working with partner agencies to identify those at risk of rough sleeping before crisis.
- Intervention – a responsive outreach service to support rough sleepers to move off the streets and towards recovery and to identify new rough sleepers as quickly as possible.
- Recovery – support for individuals to find and sustain stable accommodation and to meet wider support needs.

Over the last 5 years the three boroughs, in partnership with others within Nottinghamshire County Council, have responded positively to the challenges and additional duties posed by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and more recently the Domestic Abuse Act. This has been achieved by expanding and creating new pathways to services for the most vulnerable applicants through the provision of specialist support and settled accommodation for vulnerable groups. This is an acknowledgement of the increase in complexity of cases and the number of individuals and families who present with multiple or complex needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a key role in shaping the national and local context of homelessness bringing to the fore the needs and vulnerabilities of rough sleepers. Significant efforts were made during the early stages of the pandemic to ensure that all rough sleepers had access to accommodation. Successful bids for Government funding have enabled the three boroughs to obtain long-term accommodation options for rough sleepers. However, the COVID-19 legacy issues, such as the 'furlough' scheme, the potential increase in unemployment, the moratorium on evictions are likely to compound the existing challenges faced by individuals already in precarious housing situations. This is likely to result in increased demand for housing advice and support over the coming years. To address this, we will look to build upon the health and social care partnerships strengthened during the COVID-19 response to ensure that services remain accessible to all.

The table below shows the number of applicants assessed as homeless under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Under the legislation applicants are either owned a Prevention Duty, a Relief Duty, or a Main Duty. According to the South Nottinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022-2027) review, the number of applicants assessed has been declining. In 2020/21 the number of assessments dipped due to the restrictions around the pandemic. Of the 167 applicants assessed in this period, 160 were assessed as having a duty owed under the legislation, of which 149 had a support need. Of these the three highest categories are a 'history of mental health problems' (50 applicants); 'physical ill health and disability' (20 applicants) and 'at risk/ has experienced domestic violence'(24). It is noted that applicants may belong to more than one support need category.

Table 5.1: Homeless applicants assessed

	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19
Assessed, *of which:*	167	301	389
Owed duty	160	285	324
With support needs	149	206	218
Prevention duty	93	235	261
Relief duty	67	50	63
Households owed no duty	9	16	65

Source: South Nottinghamshire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2022-2027) review

The main reasons for homelessness, in terms of the loss of the last settled accommodation, is consistently family and friends are no longer able to accommodate. This is followed by a private rented sector tenancy coming to an end, which is prevalent in the figures for the applicants owed a Prevention Duty. There has been a general trend of an increase in the prevalence of domestic abuse, both affecting support needs and in terms of accommodation loss. The waiting list data shows that there are significant numbers of people across South Nottinghamshire that are seeking and waiting for a social housing tenancy. The number of social housing lets through the boroughs' waiting lists is showing significant decline. These are lets for all reasons not just homeless applicants. Over the last 3 years there has been a reduction of around 30%.

5.2 Housing support

Disabled Facilities grants (DFGs) are mandatory grants currently up to £30,000 to support disabled adults and children to live in their own home. Grants for disabled adults are means tested whereas grants are not means tested for disabled children. The mandatory grant is supported by discretionary top-up grants that the Council can apply in accordance with their own published policy. The DFG is the Council's main capital support programme for householders.

DFGs range from small interventions such as stairlifts and walk-in showers to full house extensions and through floor lifts. The Council's grant officers and the County Council's Occupational Therapy teams work directly with clients to assess the best options to meet the client's needs within the available resources.

The Occupational Therapy teams are employed by the County Council and work across the seven borough and district councils. Rushcliffe Borough Council in partnership with our partner districts and boroughs and the County Council have worked towards a consistency of DFG policy across the county. This will require a revision to the Council's current DFG policy. The advantage of policy consistency is that it provides a clarity for the clients across the County area. It also allows the authorities to better align work practices, such as the procurement of suppliers.

Service delivery was reduced during the height of Coronavirus pandemic and consequent lockdowns. Over the last year this position has been recovered and it is anticipated that the Council will allocate its full budget and the previous underspend in 2021/22.

It is anticipated that demand for DFGs will continue to rise. The key challenges moving forward are the reduced availability of contractors. This has impacted the lead in time particularly for larger scale projects. Further to that the rising costs of construction is leading to a higher cost per grant.

The Council also manages a small Warm Homes on Prescription grant programme, which targets low-income householders in fuel poverty and intervenes by funding more efficient fuel sources or insulation. This is a small scale scheme but plays an important in assisting low income households in fuel poverty.

The Council also operates a home alarm service which provides a first responder service for vulnerable and elderly households. Although this is a 'paid for' service, a partnership agreement with Public Health has facilitated this service to be provided free for an interim period to facilitate the discharge of patients from hospitals. Currently the Council is introducing new digital hub-based models to replace the previous analogue models. The digital systems will be able to link with other components throughout the home, for example smoke alarms, flood sensors.

5.3 Supported housing

The provision of supported housing is limited in the borough. Research commissioned by the Nottinghamshire County Council indicates a gap in supported provision for:

- adults with a learning disability.
- adults with an enduring mental health.
- Care leavers.

There has been a lot of focus on rough sleeping and homelessness during the pandemic, which is welcomed. This has been focussed upon addressing the immediate issues of people rough sleeping, sofa surfing and so on. The Government narrative is now increasingly focussing upon longer term accommodation to assist in providing an enduring change in lifestyles and behaviours.

The third area is the provision of extra care accommodation for elderly householders who need a degree of support or security, and possible some bought in care at a later stage. These schemes negate the need for residents to move into care home provision. These mirror commercial supported retirement schemes of which there have been a few developed in the centre of West Bridgford recently but are rented at an affordable rent or sold on a shared ownership basis.

The Council is working with its Registered Provider partners and the County Council to provide additional supported housing as is required.

5.4 Achievements since the last Plan

- Successful implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act across all boroughs.

- Achieved 388 early interventions to prevent the threat of homelessness, 1070 successful homeless preventions and 153 successful homeless reliefs.
- Partnership working with the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to assist 3255 Rushcliffe residents to manage £6.8m priority and non-priority debts and achieve £85,375k in income gains.
- Establishment of a South Nottinghamshire Winter Night Shelter at Elizabeth House in 19-20. Commitment to continuation of a winter provision during COVID-19 pandemic and further 13 individuals assisted in 2020-21.
- Increasing units of supported accommodation within South Nottinghamshire with the expansion of Elizabeth House and through successful RSAP Funding bids in partnership with Framework with funding from the DLUHC. This alone will deliver 16 units of additional supported accommodation, targeted at rough sleepers.
- Successful implementation of the Government's Everyone In scheme during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to 55 rough sleepers being assisted off the streets in South Nottinghamshire.
- Successful continued partnership working and implementation of new initiatives through the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding, providing access to improved pathways for clients such as through the Homelessness Navigators and Call Before You Serve.
- In partnership with Framework, the provision of a comprehensive Street Outreach Service to assist rough sleepers off the street.
- Provision of support and accommodation for 41 (11 families) resettled as part of the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Programme, Vulnerable Children's Relocation Programme and Family Reunification.
- Successful partnership working to utilise 64k Better Care Funding (DFG) to purchase 591 home alarms to enhance access to customers on low incomes.

5.4 Action and Targets

Table 5.2: Priority 3: Actions and Targets

Priority 3: Homelessness and Support		
Action/Target	Responsible Dept.	Target date
Seek opportunities to provide extra care and other supported housing.	Strategic Housing	On-going
Adopt system wide solutions to improve wider health, wellbeing and housing outcomes (Housing Sub-Group)	Strategic Housing	On-going
Amend the Council's DFG grants policy and practice to provide a consistent service across the County	Strategic Housing	Sept 22
Approve DFG grants within 15 weeks of an application being made	Strategic Housing	On-going
Work with Nottinghamshire County Council to implement the Domestic Abuse Act and raise awareness of services	Strategic Housing	Mar 23
Review of the South Notts Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Action Plan	Strategic Housing	Apr 22
Review the Allocations Policy to ensure fair access for all people including those with protected characteristics	Strategic Housing	Mar 24
Allocation of at least 80% of disabled facilities grant capital budget per annum	Strategic Housing	Annual
Migrate all analogue home alarm system in use to digital systems	Strategic Housing	Mar 27

Maximise funding opportunities to support solutions to sustain tenancies for the most vulnerable	Strategic Housing	On-going

6. Monitoring and Resources

Monitoring

The Housing Delivery Plan identifies the key priorities in which we will work with partners to improve housing and housing related support services in the Borough.

Each priority is supported by actions and measurable targets. The Council will review progress against targets on an annual basis. The Plan itself will be subject to a light touch review every two years to ensure its priorities and actions remain relevant.

The relevant actions and targets are set out within the chapter assigned to each priority. Combined actions and targets for each priority are appended to this document.

Resources

The Plan is supported by the following capital and revenue streams:

Capital

- Affordable housing capital programme (internal).
- Homes England Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026.
- Better Care Fund, which funds Disabled Facilities Grants and the Warm Homes on Prescription scheme.
- Next Steps Accommodation Programme and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme Fund.

Revenue

- Homelessness Prevention Grant
- Domestic Abuse grant
- DLHUC Covid related emergency grants
- Rough Sleeping Initiatives grant

It is projected that action plan targets will be achieved within existing secured and projected resources available to the Council and its partners.

Contacts

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