

Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Asset Management Plan

2016-2019

(October 2016)

Contents

1. Introduction	page 2
2. Background and Context	page 5
3. Challenges for Rotherham	page 7
4. Housing Asset Management – the business case	page 10
5. Framework of strategies, plans and policies	page 11
6. Portfolio of assets	page 12
7. Key asset management plan priorities	page 17
8. Holistic Asset Management	page 22
9. Delivering the plan	page 23
10. Action plan	page 27
11. Appendices	page 30

Author

Kerry Brentnall,

Programme Manager,

Strategic Housing and Investment Services

(01709) 334969

1. Introduction

The Asset Management Plan, improvement programmes and actions that flow from this document have been developed to help support Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's (RMBC) Corporate and Housing Strategy objectives. This plan demonstrates that RMBC have clearly recognised that well maintained and sustainable properties are fundamental to ensuring we meet the expectations of current and future customers.

Following the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) publishing 'Working together to redefine asset management' report and our links with Mears Group, Rotherham was one of a few Authorities selected to work with Richard Medley, Director of assets and neighbourhoods, at the CIH on the formation of this plan.

Over the past ten years there has been a significant level of investment undertaken to the housing stock and estates totalling circa £430million. There have been a number of notable successes including:-

- Completed the delivery of the Decent Homes Programme to circa 21,000 properties,
- Improved the appearance, thermal efficiency and helped improve fuel poverty for tenants that live in the 857 Non Traditional built properties,
- Built/Acquired over 180 new build properties,
- Upgraded 6 out of 18 District Heating Schemes,
- Completed 65 Environmental projects, schemes include elements such as landscaping, parking and fencing.
- The improvement of the only high rise block in Rotherham, Beeversleigh which comprises of 48 one and two bedroom flats. Work includes; upgrade of the district heating system, installation of sprinklers, new kitchens and bathrooms.

The property assets are an essential component to the delivery of affordable housing within Rotherham, they are more than simply "bricks and mortar". They play a key part in shaping tenants and resident's quality of life, and are integral to developing communities as a whole.

It is recognised that there needs to be a shift in the way asset management is delivered, over the course of the past ten years the focus has been on reaching the Decent Homes standard. This is the more traditional approach which delivers 'Asset Maintenance'. This is being superseded by a more dynamic way of using resources to maintain homes and services.

The National Housing Federation definition of property asset management is:-

"Asset Management is the range of activities undertaken to ensure that the Housing Stock meets the needs and standards for the future."

In order to develop this approach there needs to be a full understanding of the long term performance of current assets, and using this information as a tool in which to make strategic decisions about their future in terms of;

- Retention or Disposal
- Investment
- The housing portfolio; does it meet current and future customers needs/aspirations

At the heart of this plan is the concept of 'Holistic Asset Management', which is based on a Diagnose, Plan, Invest, Learn cycle. By adopting this approach it ensures that asset decisions are informed by all relevant factors.

Rotherham Council is required to maintain the stock to a number of different standards under the Housing Acts. In relation to Asset Management the following key areas must be adhered to:

- Decent Homes Standard
- Various Health and Safety Legislation including compliance including but not restricted to:
 - Gas Safety
 - Electrical Safety
 - Legionella Prevention
 - Asbestos Management
 - Fire Safety

In conjunction with this the 'Rotherham Standard' was adapted as part of the Decent Homes programme. This standard ensured that all stock:

- Meets required Health and Safety Standards
- Has repairs carried out in a timely fashion to a high standard
- Has key items such as kitchens and boilers replaced and updated based upon an enhanced industry standard

In addition to this the aim is to also:

- Improve energy efficiency of our tenants homes
- Invest in communal and external environment
- Provide customer choice in replacement of major items such as kitchens

Asset management goes beyond investing in good repair and improvements. Asset management is about reviewing and changing the asset base to deliver the right accommodation in the right location with both current and future customer needs at the heart of the decision making process providing homes and communities in which people choose to live. It must consider quality and value for money, particularly the whole life of a

home and how the future running costs will affect customers. In this challenging financial climate where it is estimated that the HRA will lose significant financial resources over the next 30 years it is even more prevalent that the investment decisions made are based on robust information and that a series of options are considered to ensure the asset portfolio holds quality stock in the right locations. To undertake this the next three years will see a lot of work being carried out so that we understand further the long term sustainability and lifecycle costing of the stock, including their net present value (NPV). This is why the 2016 - 2019 Asset Management Plan has been developed as a framework to deliver more than component renewal on a like for like basis, but as a catalyst for change in which RMBC invests in the long term future of each property and the community in which it is located.

2. Background and Context

Delivery of the Asset Management Plan will contribute significantly towards the Council's overall corporate vision, which is as follows:

Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share. We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind.

To achieve this as a council we must work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focused relentlessly on the needs of our residents.

The Corporate Plan has four main priorities which the Housing Strategy and Asset Management Plan is helping to address:

Corporate Plan 2016-18 priority	Example of how housing can help
Every child making the best start in life	Children require safe, warm homes to grow up in if they are to learn and fulfil their potential. Housing cuts across each of the themes identified to ensure Rotherham is a child-centred borough, for example: -We will consult with and engage children and young people on housing issues -We will work with the Early Help team to support families with children -Staff and partners will be trained on safeguarding and tackling child sexual exploitation so they can spot the signs and make referrals -We will increase and improve the accommodation available for children and young people
Every adult secure, responsible and empowered	Decent housing underpins positive physical and mental health and can help older people to remain in their own homes for longer, potentially reducing costs in health and social care services
A strong community in a clean, safe environment	Housing can have a significant impact on one's feeling of wellbeing, and sense of security and community. Strong regulation and enforcement to improve the quality of residential areas
Extending opportunity, prosperity and planning for the future	The delivery of our housing growth plan will contribute significantly to the overall economic growth of Rotherham, by providing homes for people who will be attracted to work in Rotherham as well as meeting local need, and creating jobs and training opportunities

Strategic Housing Vision

1. People living in high quality homes, whether in the social rented, private rented or home ownership sector
2. Rotherham Council playing its part by being the best housing provider in the country, delivering high quality services and support, and peaceful and well-managed neighbourhoods
3. A smaller gap between the most and least disadvantaged neighbourhoods, so that all of Rotherham's people can live in safe, healthy and vibrant communities
4. No households living in homes that are poor in terms of energy efficiency

This plan plays a fundamental role in delivering this vision and the action plan detailed at the end of this document demonstrates which part of the vision each action will help deliver.

The Housing Strategy is updated every three years to ensure the document remains relevant. The cycle of review for the Asset Management Plan has been developed to align with the Housing Strategy review periods.

The Asset Plan links closely to the Housing Strategy and the HRA Business Plan therefore this document should be read in conjunction with these documents.

3. Challenges for Rotherham

Both locally and nationally these are difficult times for local authorities and their tenants. The Council's initial long term financial forecast under self-financing showed that Rotherham had a significant financial surplus. This has now come under significant pressure due to ongoing welfare reform and implementation of the Housing and Planning Act 2016. The housing strategy and HRA Business Plan sets out how as an authority we will try and mitigate/manage these changes but undoubtedly the amount of money the authority has to invest in its council housing stock will be adversely affected.

Whilst not all details have been published by Government to enable an accurate financial forecast, it is anticipated that the HRA will have significantly less resources which will have a net impact of a £260m reduction of funds available over the next 30 years to deliver this plan.

Other proposed policies such as fixed term tenancies (instead of the traditional 'lifetime' secure tenancies) and 'Pay to Stay' (whereby households earning over £30K will be required to pay higher rents) are likely to encourage more Right to Buy (RTB) applications.

Analysis of RTB information informs that;

From the period April 2012 to December 2015 360 sales were completed.

In terms of property types, this is broken down as follows:

- Houses = 313 (87%)
- Flats = 45 (12.5%)
- Bungalows = 2 (0.5%)

In terms of property size, this is broken down as follows:

- 1 bed = 12 (3.3%)
- 2 bed = 81 (22.5%)
- 3 bed = 262 (72.8%)
- 4 bed = 5 (1.4%)

RTB sales projection through to 2018/19:

Indicator	2014/15 (actual)	2015/16 (actual)	2016/17 (projection)	2017/18 (projection)	2018/19 (projection)
Number of Council homes sold under the Right to Buy	112	145	170	200	230

Whilst RTB sales projections are always something of a 'best guess', it suggests that we can expect to sell around 600 properties over the next 3 years (including the year to-date), and, if we apply the same proportions identified above, these sales would theoretically be made up as follows:

- Houses = 522
- Flats = 75
- Bungalows = 18

In terms of stock size, and again using the same proportions identified above, the sales would theoretically be made up as follows:

- 1 bed = 20
- 2 bed = 135
- 3 bed = 437
- 4 bed = 8

There are currently 6,135 applicants on our housing register and there are an average of 15 bids per property advertised (this increases slightly for 3 bed houses). On average we advertise around 2,000 RMBC properties for social rent each year. The average bids per property have reduced over the course of the last two years due to changes in our allocations policy which limit the waiting list to only those in housing need.

The Rotherham Strategic Housing Market Assessment was completed in 2015. The study suggested there is a need for 900 new homes each year over the next five year period, 237 of which should be affordable housing including 170 new homes for social rent. The average rate of new build and acquisitions is well below this.

Work is currently being undertaken on tenant profiling so we can have a better understanding of who our tenants (and prospective tenants) are and then monitor how the profile is changing over time. This will be useful to support the Asset Management Plan going forward as we will be able to evidence where there is a need to remodel or acquire different types of stock to match the needs of our tenants and people on our housing register.

Due to changing demographics, like many areas Rotherham has an ageing population and our current housing offer falls short of what older people aspire towards. We need more high quality homes that are suitable for older people and more choice. We also need more accommodation that meets the needs of young people.

The latest Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD2015) show that deprivation in Rotherham has increased slightly over the past five years, with the borough now ranked 52nd most deprived district (53rd in 2010).

As these are transitional times the Strategic Housing Team are continuing to monitor and undertake assessments on the impact of all of these changes. The results of which will be fed into this plan over the course of the next twelve months. It is therefore important that this plan links very closely and has the flexibility to adapt to reflect the ever changing political and demographic landscape.

4. Housing Asset Management – the business case

Why is it important to have an asset management plan?

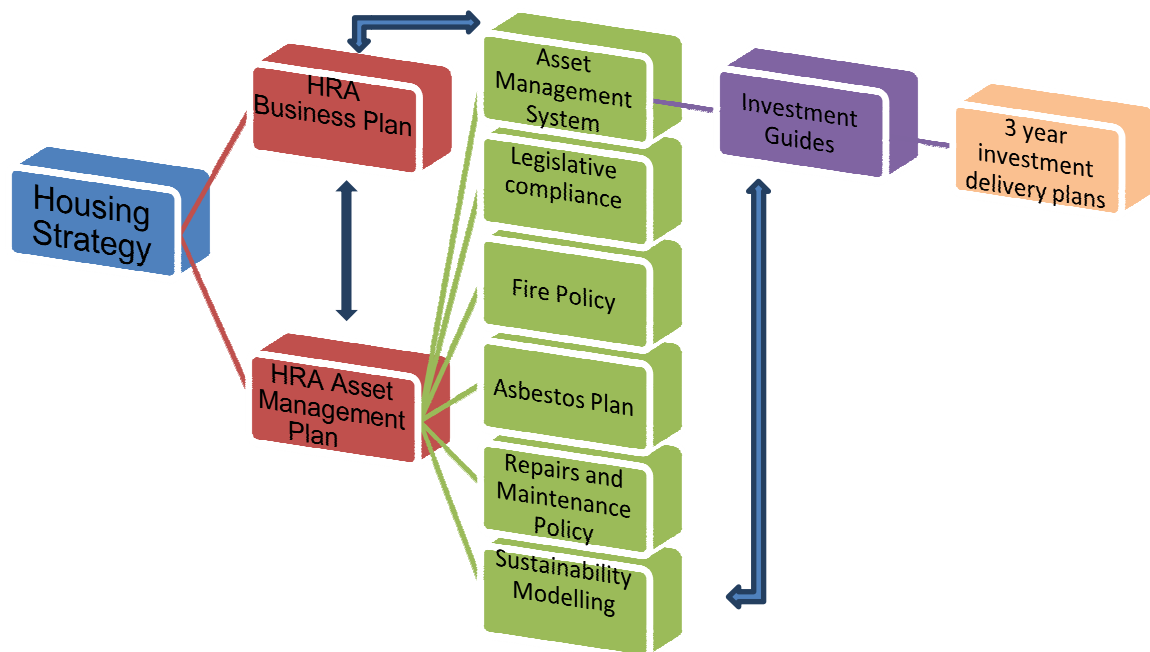
The assets are at the very heart of the organisation; this is why it is important to have a sound approach that has the support of all stakeholders.

There is potential for asset management to have a significant impact on;

- Delivering what tenants and residents need – high quality homes that are well maintained and have features/attributes they need.
- Delivering against the VfM agenda – optimising the use and value of the asset base.
- Delivering regeneration and wider neighbourhood/community sustainability.

5. Framework of strategies, plans and policies

The Asset Management Plan is supported by a hierarchy of plans, policies and systems all of which are crucial to enabling the plan to be successful. This is illustrated by the following diagram;



Some aspects of this model indicate new ways of working, such as the implementation of a new asset management system 'Keystone', which drives the development of sustainability modelling and investment guides. Through the delivery of the actions within this plan it will enable Rotherham to embed a forward thinking approach to asset management.

6. Portfolio of assets

As at the 1 April 2016 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's HRA owned a total of **24,170** assets; this includes **20,663** residential dwellings spread out across **66** estates. The main asset types are broken down as follows;

Houses



10,595

Flats



5,323

Bungalows



4,745

Garages

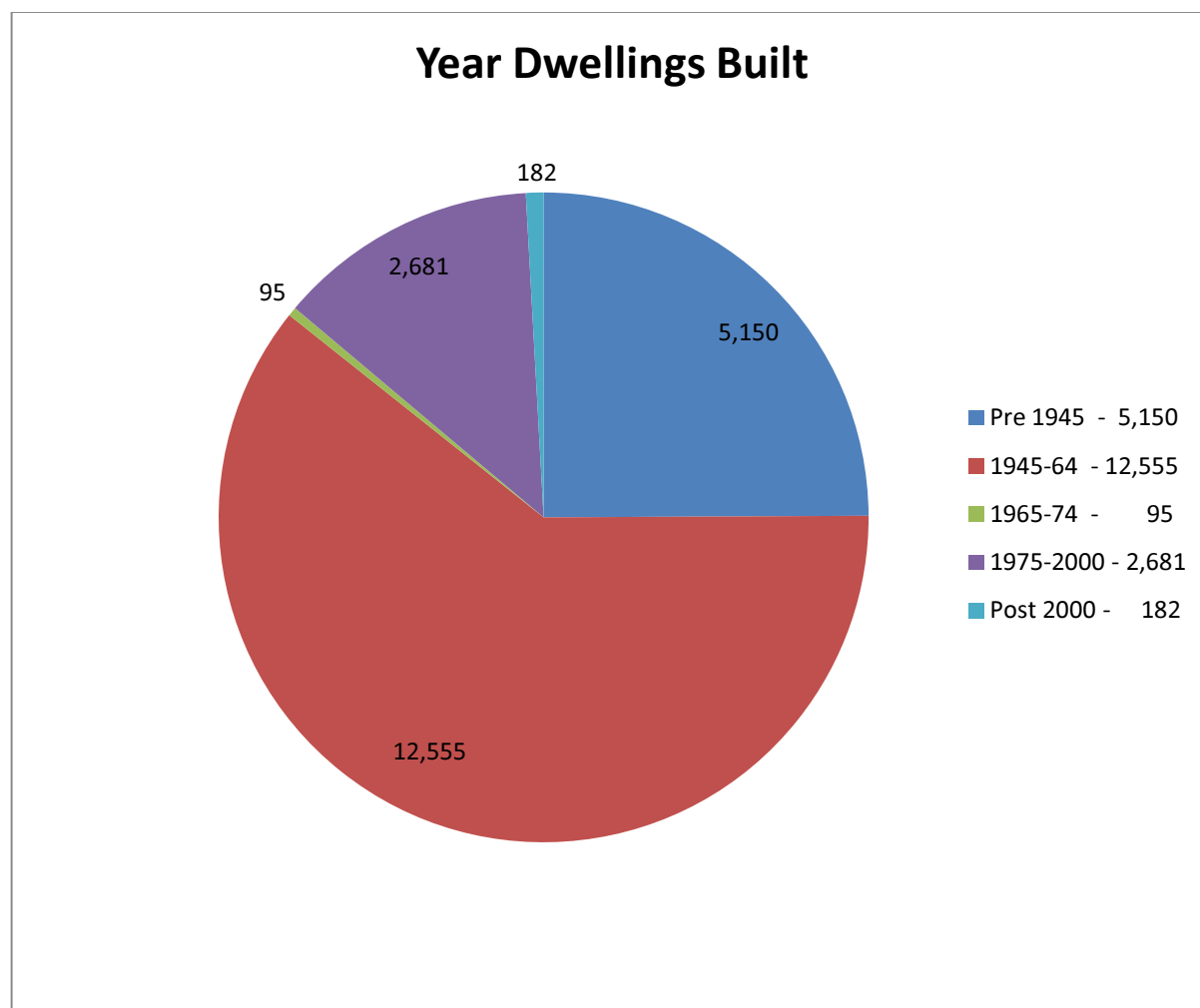
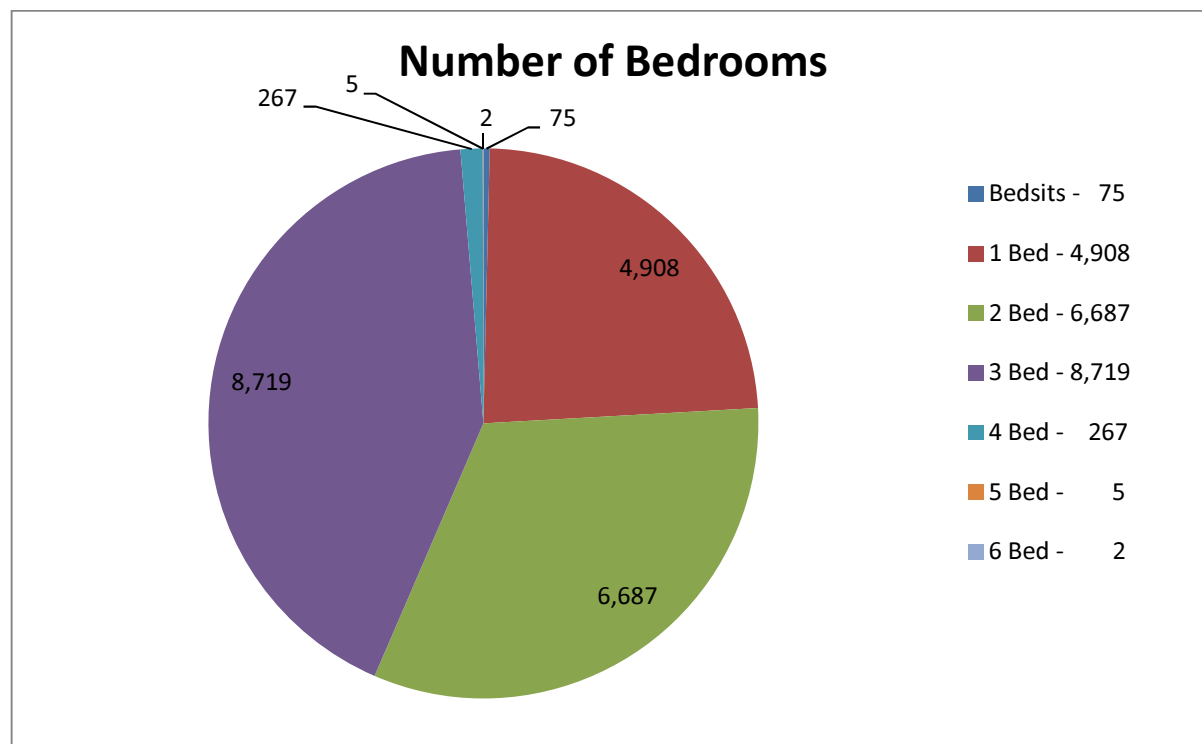


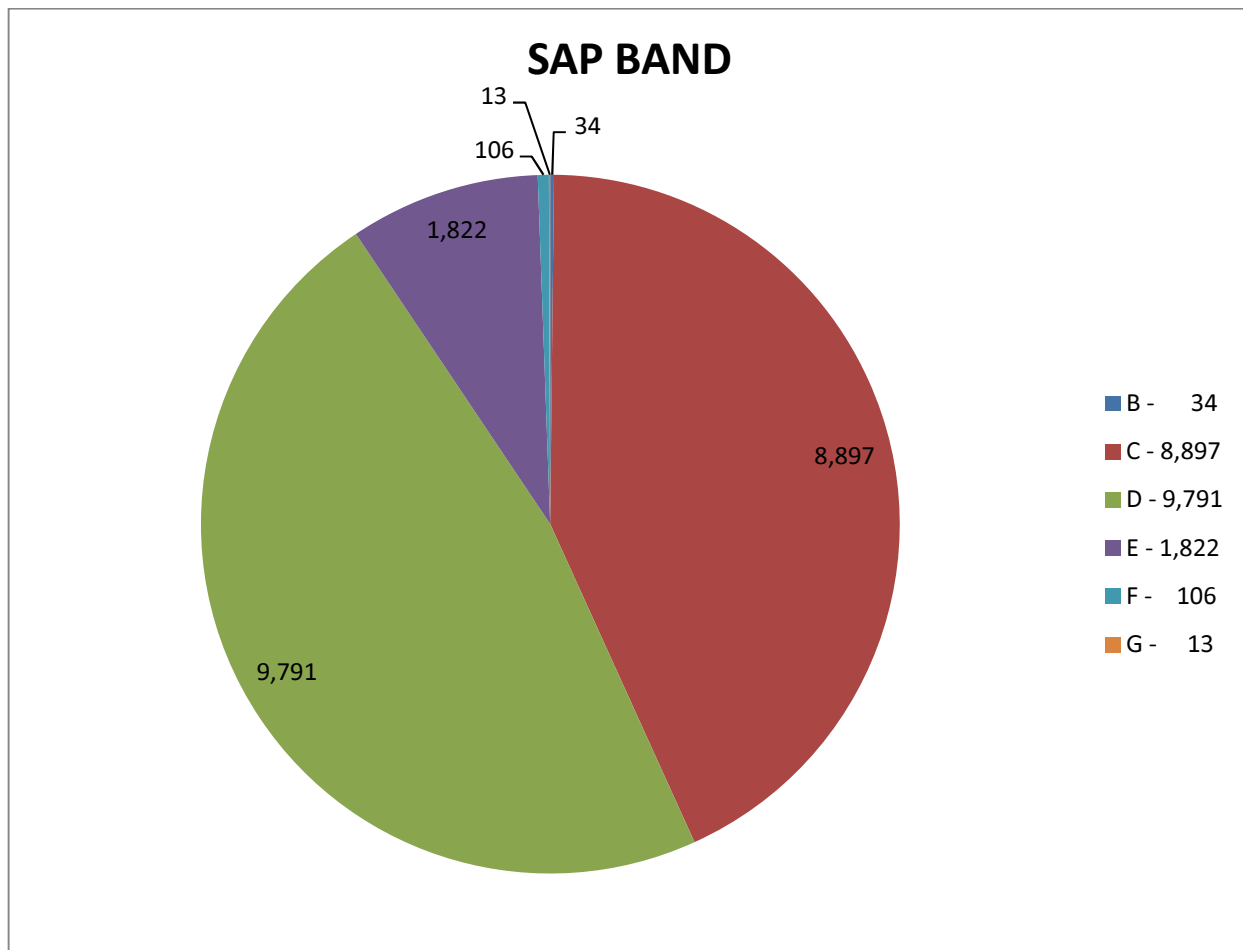
3,451

The portfolio consists of just one high rise block and **857** of properties are built using non-traditional methods, all of which will have received improvement works to increase their energy efficiency by the end of 2016/17.

In conjunction with the above we also manage **56** Community Centres, circa 600 acres of green space and an abundance of footpath's and paved areas, which are in the process of being quantified. We also run, maintain and improve 18 District Heating Schemes, of which 3 are bio mass, these schemes provide circa 1300 properties with heating and hot water.

A more detailed make-up of the stock is represented by the following information;





The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) is the methodology used to assess and compare the energy and environmental performance of dwellings. SAP scores a building for Energy Efficiency between 1 and 100, and places the property within bands A being the most efficient and G being the least. Its purpose is to provide accurate and reliable assessments of dwelling energy performances that are needed to underpin energy and environmental policy initiatives.

SAP quantifies a dwelling's performance in terms of: expected occupancy, energy use per unit floor area, a fuel-cost-based energy efficiency rating (the SAP Rating) and emissions of CO₂ (the Environmental Impact Rating). These indicators of performance are based on estimates of annual energy consumption for the provision of space heating, domestic hot water, lighting and ventilation. Other SAP outputs include estimate of appliance energy use, the potential for overheating in summer and the resultant cooling load.

This pie chart shows that there are a small number of properties that fall into bands F and G. These properties are a priority for a review to ascertain what cost effective works can be carried out to improve their thermal efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and more importantly assist tenants that are in fuel poverty.

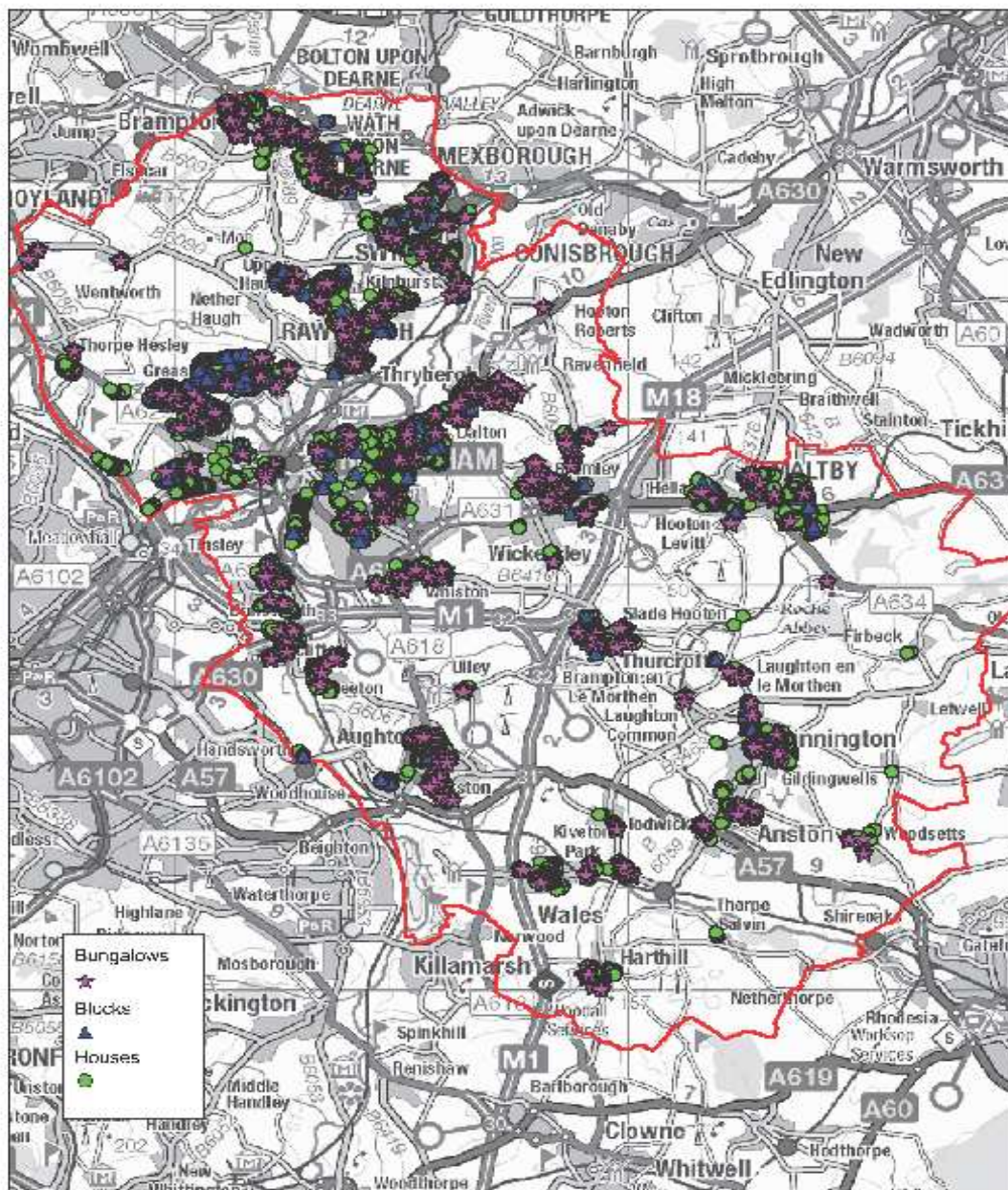
Breakdown of stock by ward

WARD	BEDSITS	BUNGALOW	FLAT	HOUSE	MAISONETTE	Grand Total
Anston And Woodsetts Ward		118	50	240		408
Boston Castle Ward	14	32	360	504	39	949
Brinsworth And Catcliffe Ward		194	175	249		618
Dinnington Ward		212	79	292		583
Hellaby Ward		101	24	168		293
Holderness Ward		241	154	401		796
Hoober Ward		447	249	563	5	1,264
Keppel Ward	1	122	211	429		763
Maltby Ward		140	111	464		715
Rawmarsh Ward		443	337	777	1	1,558
Rother Vale Ward		231	260	339	1	831
Rotherham East Ward	13	265	304	1,173	9	1,764
Rotherham West Ward	3	142	239	623	32	1,039
Silverwood Ward		307	196	370		873
Sitwell Ward		152	41	165		358
Swinton Ward		230	360	482	29	1,101
Valley Ward	15	388	246	1,241	37	1,927
Wales Ward		251	39	271		561
Wath Ward		365	75	647		1,087
Wickersley Ward		174	163	272	26	635
Wingfield Ward	29	190	1,347	925	49	2,540
Grand Total	75	4,745	5,020	10,595	228	20,663

Geographic Distribution of Housing Stock

This map demonstrates that a high proportion of the stock is situated in central to northern Rotherham.

Rotherham Borough Properties



7. Key Asset Management Plan Priorities

There are six key priorities within this plan which include;

1. Health & Safety (compliance)

Statutory compliance and Health and Safety Legislation is essential. The authority has developed contracts and programmes to meet statutory obligation and best practice. Key areas include, gas servicing, electrical safety, asbestos management, legionella and fire risk assessments.

2. Sustainable Portfolio

Historically, asset management has been about replacing components at the end of their lifecycle. However with reduced resources and changing demand within the affordable housing market, this approach will not deliver the standard or type of property that current and future tenants demand. This plan is the first step in a journey towards holistic asset management and how we make the 'best' choices between 'Repair, Refurbish, Remodel, Sell, Demolish or Build'.

This ethos is also embedded into day to day working protocols to ensure that high levels of investment are not undertaken on unsustainable stock. The following threshold have been set for void property and structural works;

<£25K

If costs fall below £25K then the investment decision remains with the relevant officer within CSD/Investment Team.

£25K - £45K

If costs are between £25K and £45K the Programme manager will undertake a feasibility exercise, if the property is sustainable works will progress, if not sustainable the property will be referred to the Strategic Housing Team to undertake a full option appraisal.

>£45K or property unsustainable

If the costs are above £45K or the property is deemed to be unsustainable then the Strategic Housing Team will undertake an option appraisal then a report will be prepared for Housing and Neighbourhoods Senior Management Team (SMT) for further consideration.

The full High Investment Voids Protocol can be found at **Appendix A**.

3. Maintain and improve the standard of the assets

Partnership contracts are in place with Wilmot Dixon Ltd. and Mears. Together they deliver the following services;

- Responsive Repairs
- Planned Repairs
- Capital Investment
- Void property repairs and improvements
- Gas Servicing
- Electrical Testing
- Fire Risk Assessments
- District heat repairs and improvements
- Adaptations

In addition to the Partnership contracts procurement frameworks such as YorBuild and Efficiency North are utilised to secure contractors to deliver parts of the Capital Programme.

Approximately £40million is spent on the stock annually undertaking the above services. The budget is currently split by £21million in planned replacements and £19million in responsive repairs and servicing, this equates to a ratio of 53/47%.

It is anticipated that over the life of this plan a high percentage of the improvement budget will be spent on replacing external elements to properties, this includes items such as new roofs, fascia's, soffits, rainwater goods and installing external wall insulation to solid wall or hard to treat properties. In order to prioritise this work, analysis has been undertaken using repairs and stock condition information which has highlighted 'Hot Spot' areas which fall into a 'priority need' for investment.

The area's include a number of streets in the following villages;

- Herringthorpe
- Rawmarsh
- Kimberworth Park
- East Herringthorpe
- Maltby

Works will be underway during 2016 for Herringthorpe and Rawmarsh, and the subsequent areas will follow in the proceeding financial years.

During 2016/17 work will conclude on the development of Investment Guides for each strand of the capital programme. Once this work is concluded detailed three year investment plans will be publicised.

Over the life of this plan, pressures from changing legislation mean that there will be less financial resources available to deliver investment programmes and services. Therefore work needs to be undertaken to review key policies and service delivery including;

- The voids standard
- Repairs and maintenance policy
- Specification and scope documents including life cycle costing
- Investment Guides
- Review existing and future contractual arrangements with partnering agencies
- People strategy delivering these service

All of these reviews will take into account the ethos of Holistic Asset Management to ensure repairs and improvement works are undertaken to sustainable stock in an effective and efficient way, delivering value for money for RMBC and its stakeholders.

4. Increase Energy Efficiency

Through the decent homes programme and investment in external wall insulation for the Non Traditional stock, the performance of the assets has improved. However over 50% of the stock still has a SAP rating of D or below. Comparing this with over 80% of national properties having a SAP rating of C or above, there is work to do to understand what cost effective improvements can be delivered to raise the stocks rating. In particular the first priority will be to assess the small cluster of stock that falls into bands F and G. The review will ascertain what cost effective works can be carried out to move them up to a band E.

A study will be undertaken to understand in more detail the stock's performance and what measures can be implemented to improve it.

5. Transforming Neighbourhoods

The design and quality of estates has a bearing on quality of life. They can impact upon physical and mental health, safety and security, ability to access or move to and from facilities, perception of place, and general happiness with surroundings. In turn these factors effect resident satisfaction with where they live and ultimately how socially sustainable our estates can be. To drive these improvements forward an Environmental Investment Guide has been developed and can be found at **Appendix B.** The main aim of this guide is to take opportunity to make environmental improvements as part of wider neighbourhood investment.

6. Value for Money

Value for money (VFM) has been a driver for Rotherham for a number of years, however more recent changes such as 1% rent reduction, high value property levy and introduction of universal credit it is anticipated that there will be a big impact on the amount of money available to deliver housing services.

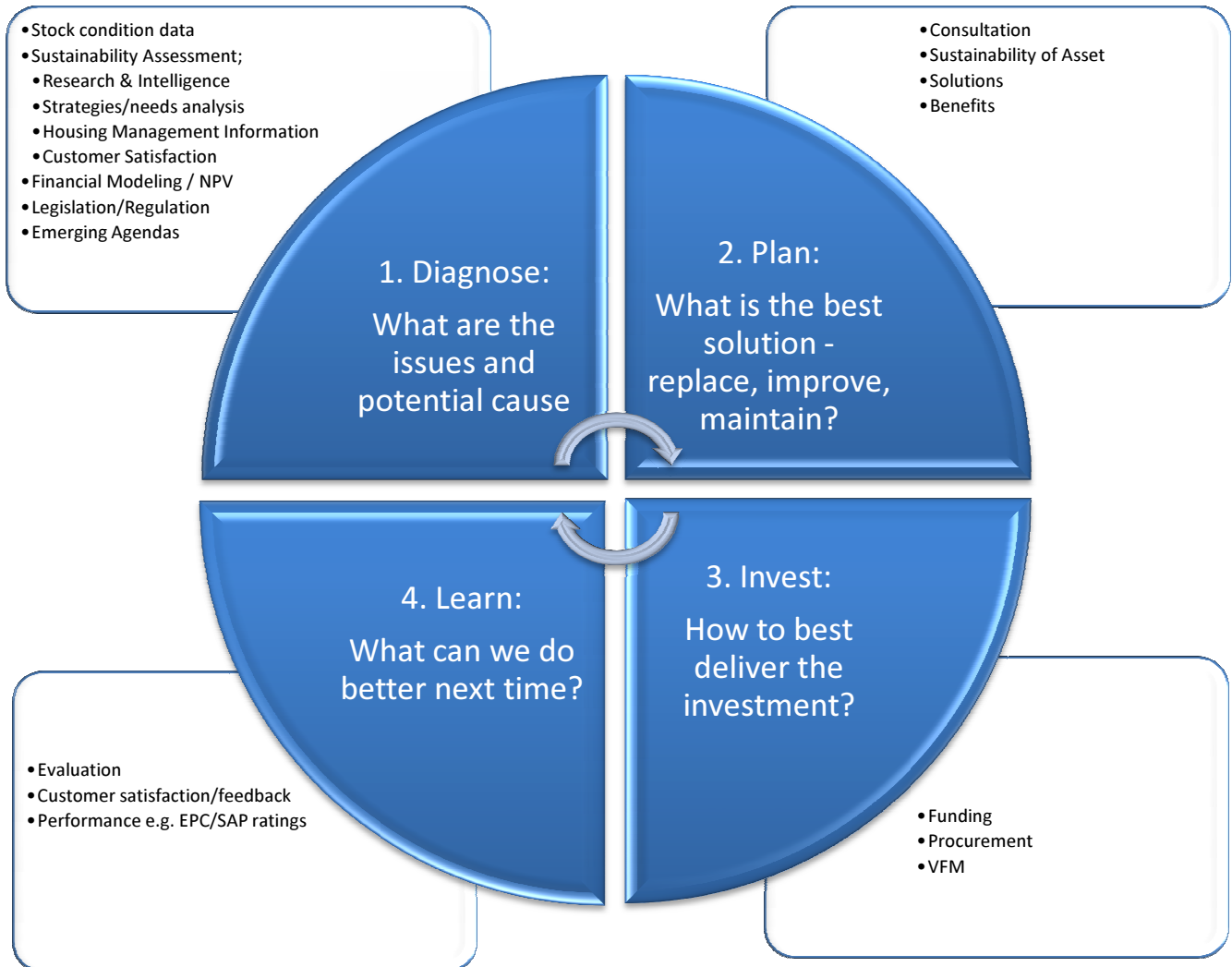
There are still a number of uncertainties that will be confirmed over the course of 2016/17, but financial scenario modelling has been undertaken and it is anticipated that the amount of money available for repairs and investment will be;

Planned 30 Year Investment Programme from 2016-17										
			Decent Homes	External Works	Communal Blocks	Responsive & Cyclical	Voids	Disabled Adaps	Garages	Other
Survey Years				£	£	£	£	£	£	Totals
										£
1	to	1	3,537,900	9,585,000	1,800,000	19,075,000	2,340,000	2,070,000	225,000	4,735,800
2	to	2	3,537,900	9,990,000	1,800,000	19,075,000	2,340,000	2,250,000	225,000	8,920,800
3	to	3	767,528	12,649,209	2,247,019	19,075,000	2,340,000	2,250,000	486,000	2,260,800
4	to	4	2,839,933	10,437,786	2,247,019	19,075,000	2,340,000	2,250,000	486,000	1,585,800
5	to	5	9,256,850	9,278,032	2,717,350	19,075,000	2,080,000	2,000,000	432,000	1,409,600
6	to	6	6,558,995	9,278,032	2,717,350	19,075,000	2,080,000	2,000,000	432,000	1,409,600
7	to	7	2,852,552	14,429,873	2,317,350	19,075,000	2,080,000	2,000,000	432,000	1,409,600
8	to	8	2,255,399	14,429,873	2,317,350	19,075,000	2,080,000	2,000,000	432,000	1,409,600
9	to	9	1,937,095	13,528,006	2,172,516	19,075,000	1,950,000	1,875,000	405,000	1,321,500
10	to	10	1,860,905	10,794,479	2,397,350	19,075,000	2,080,000	2,000,000	432,000	1,457,600
11	to	15	12,562,778	50,218,037	12,306,750	95,375,000	10,400,000	10,000,000	2,160,000	7,240,000
16	to	20	33,358,049	28,527,667	12,367,744	95,375,000	9,620,000	9,250,000	1,998,000	6,519,400
21	to	25	55,152,962	1,550,902	8,630,726	95,375,000	7,280,000	7,000,000	1,512,000	4,933,600
26	to	30	18,136,468	410,850	13,186,752	95,375,000	10,400,000	10,000,000	2,160,000	7,048,000
Total			154,615,314	195,107,745	69,225,278	572,250,000	59,410,000	56,945,000	11,817,000	51,661,700
										1,171,032,037

This is a significant and real reduction of £273m over 30 years, which puts VFM as a key priority moving forward. To achieve and monitor this, a new VFM strategy will be developed In conjunction with other relevant Neighbourhood and Housing Strategies.

8. Holistic Asset Management

The main ethos of this plan is centred on holistic asset management and how RMBC will make the transition from more traditional asset management. Holistic asset management not only takes into account the physical investment but the outcomes for the individual tenant, the wider community and the town as a whole. The principals of this way of working are illustrated below;



This is a long term approach that will take time to develop, implement and refine to ensure maximum benefit to all. The key tool that will be used to implement this will be Keystones Sustainability Modelling module.

9. Delivering the plan

The following key headings will be integral to delivering this plan;

- Data Management and Information Systems**

Data is going to play a crucial role in shaping the holistic asset management model. Rotherham is in the middle of implementing a new IT system 'Universal Housing', which includes a new asset management system 'Keystone'. The implementation of Keystone has allowed us to review what data we need to hold in order to deliver holistic asset management. Therefore to ensure that the stock condition information we hold is robust there will be a rolling programme of 10% stock condition surveys undertaken each year.

Keystone data is held on a 'real-time' live database, which is constantly updated with additional stock information from refurbishment programmes and surveys. In short, every time there is work or a survey undertaken to a property, the data base is updated, which in turn updates the assets stock condition information.

In conjunction with this, repairs and management information will be overlaid to ensure that any investment undertaken is targeted in the right areas.

- Finances**

Over the life of this Asset Management Plan the proposed budgets which will be approved as part of the HRA 30 year business plan are as follows;

Planned 2016-17 to 2018/19 investment									
	Decent Homes	External Works	Communal Blocks	Responsive & Cyclical	Voids	Disabled Adaps	Garages	Other	Totals
Survey Years	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
2016/17	3,537,900	9,585,000	1,800,000	19,075,000	2,340,000	2,070,000	225,000	4,735,800	43,368,700
2017/18	3,537,900	9,990,000	1,800,000	19,075,000	2,340,000	2,250,000	225,000	8,920,800	48,138,700
2018/19	767,528	12,649,209	2,247,019	19,075,000	2,340,000	2,250,000	486,000	2,260,800	42,075,557
Total	7,843,328	32,224,209	5,847,019	57,225,000	7,020,000	6,570,000	936,000	15,917,400	133,582,957

These budget forecasts will be subject to annual budget setting therefore the figures above will be used as a guide in which to plan investment, but may be subject to change.

In general terms there has been a 10% reduction made to the resources available to invest. To help manage this reduction, and ensure our properties continue to meet the Decent Homes standard stock condition surveys are being undertaken to assess if elements within properties need replacing, or if the life can be extended.

An example of this is the roof of a property, the components lifecycle, as defined by the Decent Homes legislation estimates that a roof will last 50 years. In reality there are some roof coverings that will last up to double that time frame. So where possible following assessment the life of elements will be extended if in a good serviceable condition.

There are some exceptions to the 10% reduction for some of the smaller schemes which have been identified as a priority for investment, the financing for these schemes is included in the 'other' section the forecast. They include;

- £500k per annum to contribute to Energy Efficiency Work
- £800k per annum to deliver Environmental Projects which improves the neighbourhoods in which our tenants live.

- **Tenant, Leaseholder, resident and stakeholder involvement**

Involvement of RMBC's key stakeholders is integral to delivering this plan. The key concerns raised by tenants were in relation to the external/communal areas of their properties and the estates in which they live.

The recent tenant satisfaction (STAR) survey advised that just over 8 out of 10 tenants are satisfied overall by the service that RMBC provides as a landlord. Nearly 8 in 10 tenants also indicate satisfaction with the way the council deals with repairs, as well as the condition and quality of their home. These are excellent results, which demonstrate how the Decent Homes Programme has delivered improvements to our tenants' homes.

However when the dissatisfaction is analysed tenants living in flats in the north of the borough reported significantly lower levels of satisfaction. This is also echoed by feedback from Leasehold residents. Therefore work is being undertaken to identify investment needs in these areas and relevant programmes of work will be delivered over forthcoming years.

Continued stakeholder involvement is critical to the plans success, so to ensure we involve the right people at the right times a capital works consultation framework will be developed over the course of 2016.

- **Contract/Works Management**

The current works delivery model, established in November 2010, relies on two external contractors working across seven work streams:

- Reactive Repairs
- Minor Voids (Revenue Funded)
- Major Voids (Capital Funded)
- Planned Works (Revenue Funded major repairs)
- Cyclical Works (Gas & Electrical compliance)
- Aids and Adaptations

- **Capital Programmes**

The current contracts with Wilmot Dixon Ltd and Mears run until the end of April 2019, with the possibility of extending to April 2020, at which point a new arrangement will be put in place.

The Capital Programme is also supported by the procurement of additional Contractors, this is undertaken by the council's Building Design Team within Regeneration and Environmental Services, under the direction of Strategic Housing and Investment Services (SHIS). The works are procured in the main through established framework agreements, this way resource and skill requirements can be fulfilled and underpinned by Value for Money ethos.

- **Delivering works on site**

The Contract and Service Development Team (C&SD) is the main delivery arm of Housing and Neighbourhood Services and is responsible for delivering the majority of planned and responsive repairs to the housing portfolio.

The Councils Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy sets out the scope of work to be delivered by the repairs service in respect of meeting the statutory duties imposed on the council by the Housing Act, Right to Repair and health and safety regulation.

The specification and scope documents are currently being reviewed to ensure consistent delivery across all work streams whilst taking into account quality and life cycle costing.

Beyond this the investment undertaken onsite will underpin this plan by ensuring that the Decent Homes Standard is maintained and where possible enhanced across the stock.

- **Aids and adaptations**

RMBC is committed to ensuring that tenants are able to live independently in their homes for as long as possible and we will carry out minor adaptations such as grab rails, half steps/ lever taps and additional internal handrails as part of the fast track scheme, improving the customer experience and saving RMBC time and money. For more significant work, an occupational therapist referral is required.

- **Leaseholders**

Within the stock portfolio there are 508 leaseholders who have purchased flats within blocks which Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council still own. The law requires that leaseholders paying variable service charges and these individuals must be consulted before a landlord carries out qualifying works or enters into a long-term agreement for the provision of services.

The Investment Team and C&SD work closely with the leaseholder section to ensure, RMBC remains compliant in its landlord duties and income is maximised when undertaking works to blocks containing leaseholders.

- **Monitoring and reporting**

This plan will be monitored by the Programme Manager within SHIS. Six monthly updates will be provided on the action plan in the form of an update report to Housing and Neighbourhood Services, Strategic Management Team.

This plan includes projects/actions that may need input from and/or to be delivered in partnership with other Directorates particularly Adult Services and Children and Young People Services. There are currently mechanisms in place for the Housing Strategy to be monitored by the Strategic Housing Forum, which includes representation at the director / senior management level from Adult Services, Children and Young Peoples Services, Planning, Economic Development, Public Health and other partner and voluntary sector organisations. It is therefore the intention of any cross cutting projects to be fed into and monitored by this group.

10. Action Plan

Priority	*Strategic Housing Vision	Why is this a priority	How we will do this	Responsible Team	Target Date
1. Safety	1 & 2	Complying with all relevant legislation by ensuring we meet all safety requirements set out by law.	a. Achieve 100% gas safety checks each year b. Achieve 100% solid fuel checks each year c. Undertake electrical testing every 5 year's d. Undertake water hygiene audits	C&SD	Ongoing PI monitoring and auditing.
			e. Manage asbestos appropriately, with 100% of properties having a current management survey. f. Asbestos Reg 4 checks undertaken each year to communal/public assets g. Have a programme of Fire Risk Assessments undertaken on all relevant stock; and act on recommendations h. Develop and implement a suite of compliance monitoring and reporting	SHIS – Investment Team	Ongoing PI monitoring and auditing. 31/12/16
2. Sustainable portfolio	1, 2 & 3	For Rotherham's housing stock to be fit for purpose for both now and the future and analyse the question;	a. Undertake a 10% rolling programme of stock condition surveys each year b. Develop Keystone	SHIS – Investment Team	31 March each year. 31/03/18

		Repair, Refurbish, sell or demolish?	Sustainability Modelling c. Gain an understanding of the stocks NPV d. Undertake review of HRA paths and communal walkways e. Conclude the review of; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Garage Sites 2. Communal Halls 3. HRA Land Phase 2 	Housing & Estates Services SHIS – Growth Team	31/03/18 31/03/18 31/03/17 31/03/17
3. Maintain and improve the standard of assets.	1 & 2	For Rotherham's housing stock to continue to meet Decent Homes and improve on this.	a. Robust 30year investment plan b. To have in place a suite of investment guides which will set out investment plans for the forthcoming years c. Capital programme consultation framework.	SHIS – Investment Team	31/03/17 31/03/17 31/12/16
			d. Review the specification documents including lifecycle costing and linkages across all work streams e. Review affordability of the 'Rotherham Standard'	SHIS – Investment Team & CSD	31/12/16 31/08/17
			f. Review the voids standard g. Review the Repairs and Maintenance policy	CSD	31/12/16

			h. Develop Housing Services VFM Strategy.	Business & Commercial	31/08/17
4. Energy Efficiency	4	To increase the efficiency rating of tenants homes.	a. Undertake an assessment of remaining hard to treat properties b. Understand the performance of current technologies/products	SHIS – Investment Team	31/12/17 31/03/18
			c. Review and Develop investment programme and system performance of all District Heating schemes	SHIS – Investment Team & CSD	31/12/16
5. Transforming Neighbourhoods	1, 2 & 3	Help revitalise existing estates, whilst trying to design out ASB and improve safety.	a. Implement the environmental investment guide b. Delivery of annual environmental programme.	SHIS – Investment Team	31/12/16 By 31 March each year.

***Strategic Housing Vision**

1. People living in high quality homes, whether in the social rented, private rented or home ownership sector
2. Rotherham Council playing its part by being the best housing provider in the country, delivering high quality services and support, and peaceful and well-managed neighbourhoods
3. A smaller gap between the most and least disadvantaged neighbourhoods, so that all of Rotherham's people can live in safe, healthy and vibrant communities
4. No households living in homes that are poor in terms of energy efficiency

11. Appendices

Appendix A - High Investment Voids Protocol

Decision making protocol for void Council properties requiring high levels of investment

Introduction

This document sets out how decisions will be taken regarding void Council properties that require high levels of investment to bring them up to a lettable standard.

Decisions need to be made consistently and within a reasonable timescale so properties can be brought back into use to maximise rental income.

Aims:

- To ensure we invest in sustainable stock
- To provide a clear and consistent approach for dealing with properties which require investment
- To ensure we make best use of stock and it meets demand

Scope: This includes properties which become void, or are returned to us at the end of a lease agreement or existing stock requiring a change of use or conversion.

Responsibilities

Void properties

Initial assessment:

The Voids Team Manager within the Contracts and Service Development Team (CSD) will be responsible for determining the level of investment required when a property becomes void. This will include taking responsibility for receiving the keys, securing the property and carrying out the initial survey to establish costs.

<£25K

If costs fall below £25K then the investment decision remains with CSD. If not, the property will be updated on the Universal Housing system as VUN (void unavailable) by the Technical Support Officer - Voids Team and details will be passed to the Investment Team Manager.

£25K - £45K

The Social Housing Officer and Investment Manager will be responsible for circulating a pro-forma to the consultee list (below) and carrying out a sustainability assessment of the property.

If costs are between £25K and £45K and the property is deemed sustainable then the investment decision will be with the Investment Team Manager to progress.

>£45K or property unsustainable

If the costs are above £45K or the property is deemed to be unsustainable then the responsibility will sit with the Strategic Housing Team, Social Housing Officer. An options appraisal report will be prepared for Housing and Neighbourhood Services Senior Management Team (SMT) for further consideration.

Properties being returned to RMBC at the end of a lease agreement or where a change of use / conversion has been proposed

Initial assessment

The Investment Team Manager will be responsible for determining the level of investment required when a property is returned at the end of a lease agreement or a change of use / conversion is required. This will include taking responsibility for receiving the keys, securing the property and carrying out the initial survey to establish costs.

<£25K

If costs fall below £25K property details will be passed to the Contract and Service Development Manager to progress.

£25K - £45K

If costs are between £25K and £45K the investment decision will remain with the Investment Team Manager to progress. The Social Housing Officer and Investment Manager will be responsible for circulating a pro-forma to the consultee list (below) and carrying out a sustainability assessment of the property.

If costs are between £25K and £45K and the property is deemed sustainable then the investment decision will be with the Investment Team Manager to progress.

Void Team to be kept informed and if required the property will be updated on the Universal Housing system as VUN (void unavailable) by the Technical Support Officer - Voids Team.

>£45K or property unsustainable

If the costs are above £45K or the property is deemed unsustainable the decision will sit with the Strategic Housing Team, Social Housing Officer. An options appraisal report will be prepared for Housing and Neighbourhood Services Senior Management Team (SMT) for further consideration.

Budgets will need to be discussed with Business and Commercial Programme Manager to ensure funds can be released to cover the cost of refurbishment if it has not been agreed in an existing budget provision.

Timescales

Timescales for decision making under £45K are set out in the flow chart at the end of this document. Over £45K will trigger an options appraisal, this will be completed and a report prepared within three weeks of the property becoming referred and will be presented to DLT for approval.

Recording

The Voids Team (Senior Technical Officer / Admin Team) will maintain a record of which properties have entered the high investment decision protocol. Voids Team, Housing Investment and Strategic Housing will be responsible for keeping the records up to date as the decision progresses. The final decision should be recorded against the asset via the UH system.

Decision-making

A cost model has been developed to help guide officer decisions and can assist in determining the cost effectiveness of the investment at any stage. The cost model also includes a number of sustainability questions to assist the Social Housing Officer with a final options appraisal.

Note: a sustainability matrix will form part of the new asset database, Keystone. This is expected to replace the cost model.

Priority should be given to decisions relating to:

- Stock which meets the needs of older people or those with specialist housing need
- Stock which is located in a high demand area i.e. above the borough average

Consultation

The following teams will be consulted as part of the options appraisal and will need to provide supporting information and / or comments via a pro-forma which will assist with the final assessment:

- Investment Team
- Strategic Housing
- Voids Team
- Key Choices
- Housing Growth
- Housing Finance
- Housing and Estates Management

Options appraisal

If a final report is required, a range of options should be fully explored and clear recommendation presented to Housing and Neighbourhood Services Senior Management Team (SMT) for consideration. Responsibility for this will sit within the Strategic Housing Team with the Social Housing Officer.

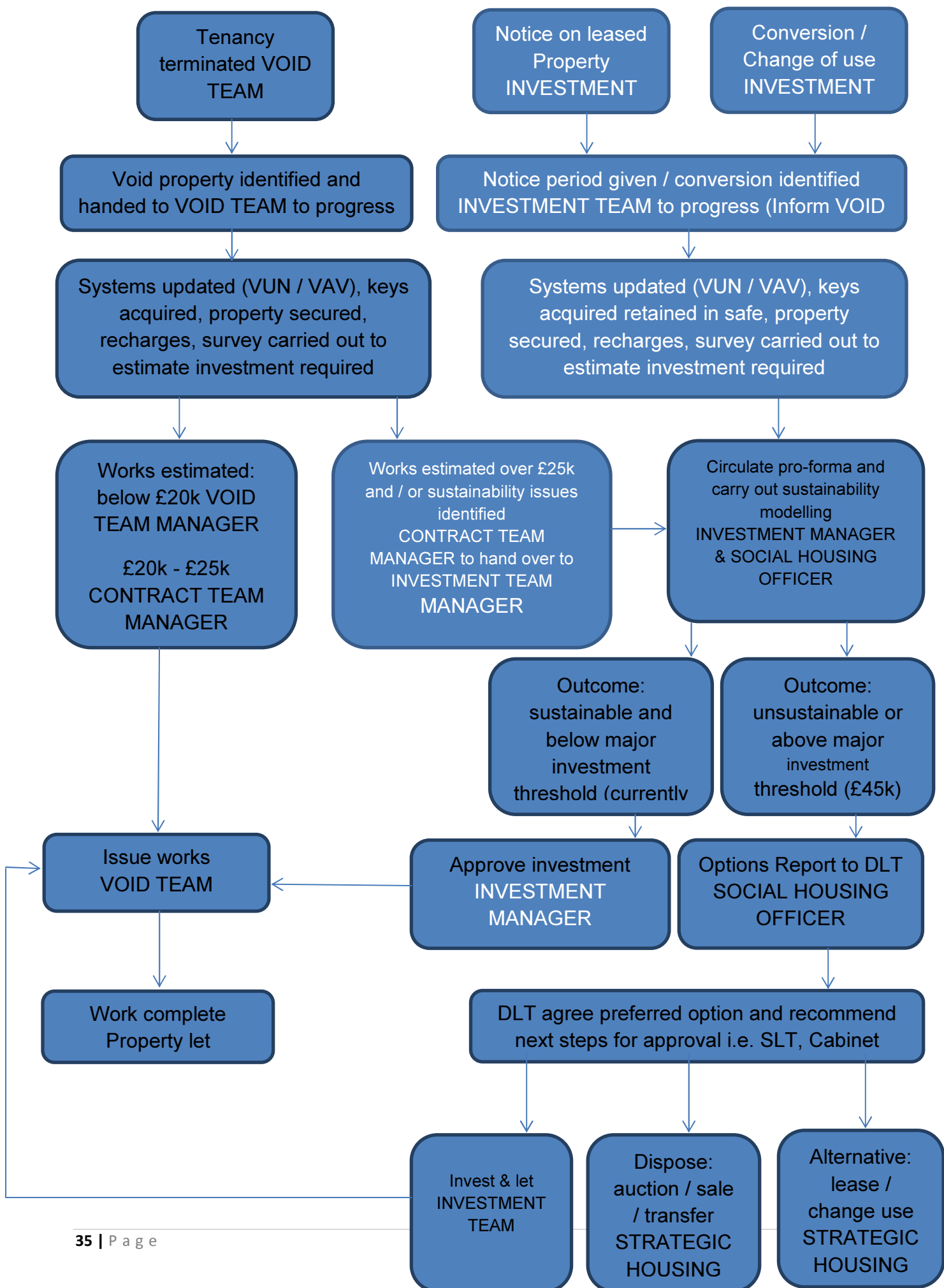
Options will include:

- Retain and invest
- Change of use or conversion to meet demand
- Lease
- Dispose

If disposal of stock is recommended then every effort will be made to engage with partners and local housing providers to retain as social housing provision wherever possible.

Sign off record	
Date of meeting:	14.06.16
Title of meeting:	Housing and Neighbourhood Services, Senior Management Team
Authoriser:	Tom Bell, Interim Assistant Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services
Responsible team:	Strategic Housing
Date of review:	1 year or on the introduction of the sustainability modelling function

Strategic Housing & Investment Service High Investment Void Property Protocol	
Property address / type / size:	
Void date / no. of days void:	
Recommendation: i.e. invest, market, transfer	
Key reasons for recommendations: i.e. Include details such as investment modelling, indication of work required and wider sustainability issues.	
Date:	
Officer:	
Outcome of decision:	
Meeting and date of decision:	
Officer / team responsible for actioning decision:	



Estate Investment Guide

Strategic Housing Investment Service

2016



Contents

Background.....	38
Aims	39
Objectives	39
The Environmental Improvement Programme	40
Delivery Routes.....	42
Resident Engagement	44
Budget	44
Profiling of Estates	45
Priority Investment	45
Guidance & Exemplars	47

Background

The design and quality of our estates has a bearing on our quality of life. They can impact upon our physical and mental health, our safety and security, our ability to access or move to and from facilities, our perception of place, and our general happiness with our surroundings. In turn these factors effect our satisfaction with where we live and ultimately how socially sustainable our estates can be.

The Programme Delivery arm of Strategic Housing Investment Services is responsible for the upkeep of the councils housing stock including all associated housing land. In tandem with strategies for our housing stock, the Estate Investment Guide focusses on where and how best to deliver improvements to the public realm or communal grounds, delivered through the Environmental Improvement Programme. Unlike other investment guides this document will not set a fixed long term programme of where and what environmental works will be delivered, but it will be used as a platform in which to holistically link environmental works in with other neighbourhood investment, such as an external programme to houses and bungalows or a communal programme for flats. This way of working will support one of the Councils main priorities in delivering ‘A strong community in a clean, safe environment’

Aims

The main aims of the Estate Investment Guide will be to:

- Identify main area's for investment during the 2016-19 period
- Tackle issues relating to health, safety, and security through environmental improvements
- Improve the social sustainability of our estates and neighbourhoods by making them more desirable places to live
- Reduce future maintenance costs and make best use of housing land
- Link environmental improvements to other wider investment streams

Objectives

In order to achieve our aims we have set the following objectives:

- The physical profiling of council housing estates and integration of data with new information management systems
- Establish a review period to update estate information and priorities
- Prioritise estates and types of investment
- Identifying key projects and establish a rolling three to five year programme of investment
- Produce best practice guidance and use exemplar schemes as a template for future investment
- Establish procedures for the delivery of both proactive and responsive schemes
- Engage with local residents through the design and delivery process

The Environmental Improvement Programme

What makes schemes delivered through the environmental improvement programme different from focussed interventions and general maintenance is the opportunity to consider the design of the estate as a whole, tackle all the key environmental issues in one concerted effort, and produce lasting benefits. Typical elements that are considered as part of a more comprehensive scheme include:

- Security & boundary treatment
- Access for all (pathways, steps, and ramps)
- Parking
- Bin storage
- Lighting
- Drainage
- Soft landscaping

Example Project: Calladine Way, Swinton

In response to issues of ASB, litter, poor access, and difficulty in upkeep to a central greenspace within the Fitzwilliam estate the Environmental Investment Programme was able to:

- Realign paths and simplify entrance points
- Remove litter traps and reduce secluded spaces around the green
- Re-site existing equipment in more appropriate locations and introduce informal play facilities
- Resurface areas in poor condition and re-contour the profile of the space



Before



After

The benefits of the improvements include:

- Reduced levels of crime
- Increased use of the park

- Reduced maintenance costs
- Up-lift in appearance and desirability of the estate
- Improved access for all residents

Example Project: Gray Avenue, Aughton/Swallownest

In response to issues around the security of rear gardens, ASB, general blight and damage to boundaries, condition of paths and steps, the Environmental Investment scheme was able to:

- Make best use of hard surfaced areas to increase parking
- Relay paths and steps to properties using current building standards
- Respond to resident feedback and include elements such railings to the local neighbourhood centre for people with mobility issues and the removal of seating which had been a magnet for ASB
- Address areas of poor and inappropriate surfacing
- Introduce secure fencing to rear gardens



Before



After

Note: image to the right taken immediately after hard-works and before grass seeding

The benefits of the improvements include:

- Better parking facilities
- Improved access for all residents
- Reduced maintenance of housing land
- Increased security for vulnerable residents
- Greatly improved estate appearance/image

Delivery Routes

There are two potential routes which projects are delivered through the Environmental Investment Programme, those being:

Responsive – *Dealing with specific local needs and demand or dealing with short term issues that arise quickly, possibly brought on by a change in the condition of the estate. These projects are generally small scale and focussed on a particular area within an estate, flagged by neighbourhood management or brought to the council by residents through various routes.*

Proactive/Programmed – *Tackling estate and borough wide issues highlighted through assessment. These tend to be larger scale projects which take a variety of issues into account and can be quite complex to coordinate all the works, therefore requiring a greater level of expertise and budget to deliver a comprehensive scheme.*

There are benefits to both ways of working and a need for flexibility between the two so we can deal with both long and short term issues, responding to immediate concerns yet having certainty to levels of spend and tackling the wider issues our estates face.

Procedure for Delivery

The type of scheme will determine the process by which they are delivered.

Proactive schemes are generally estate-wide in terms of scale, cover many different interventions, and can be complex in terms of delivery. Such schemes require design and engineering professionals to interpret the client brief, bring together all the works, issue detailed specifications to contractors, and provide close management of works on site.

Responsive schemes, however, are often small scale interventions that require less design input and deal with a single contractor. Therefore it is usually the case that this can be dealt with directly by housing unless technical expertise is required.

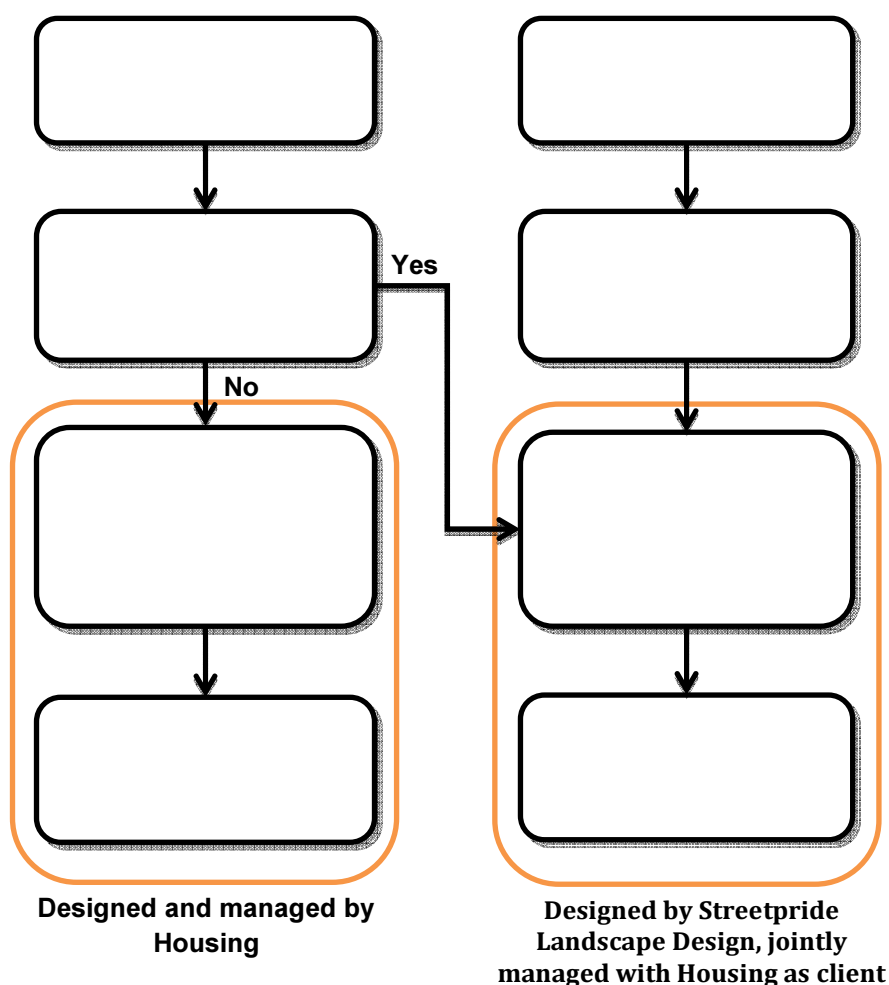


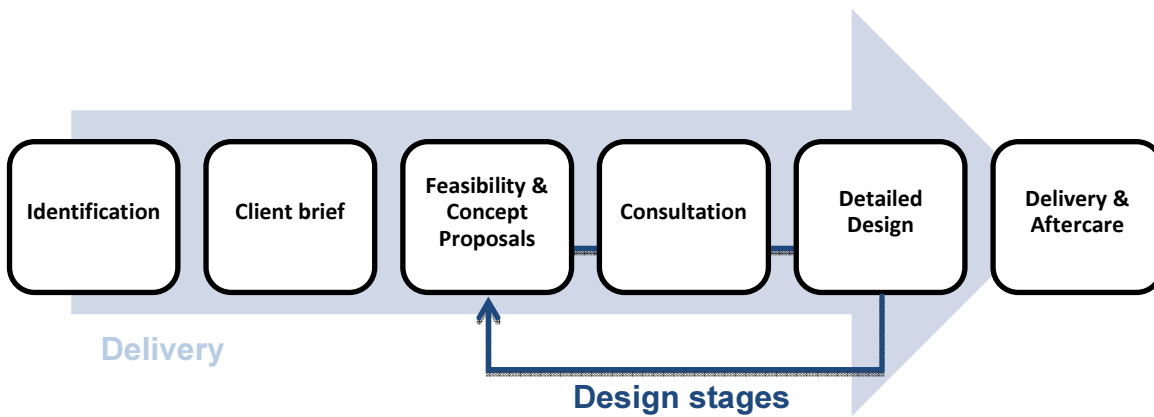
Diagram showing the route taken for delivery based on scale and complexity

Stages of Delivery

Delivery of more complex proactive schemes can be broken down into stages

1. **Identification** – schemes are identified through housing estate assessments, which are linked to council priorities and wider investment streams
2. **Client Brief** – A clear brief stating the issues faced, aim and objectives for the scheme, and an indication of budget is agreed and shared with the design team
3. **Feasibility & Concept Proposals** – Following survey and analysis initial proposals are drafted by the Landscape Design team with an indication of potential costs
4. **Consultation** – Residents and stakeholders have an opportunity to highlight environmental issues on the estate, review initial suggestions, and propose any changes. Further consultation is often required following more detailed design work and amendments

5. **Detailed Design** – A formal scheme is designed based on feedback from initial proposals, ready to be issued for costs. Further design work can be required following consultation of detailed designs proposals
6. **Delivery & Aftercare** – Following approval of the tender report Streetpride Delivery Team commence on site, overseen by Landscape Design and Housing



The design stages of delivery are repetitious, requiring numerous drafts based on feedback and information as the scheme evolves, before issuing the detailed plans.

Resident Engagement

Engaging and involving residents in the design process remains a vital part in the delivery of environmental works. The scale of proposals will determine the level of engagement required, but typically a scheme involves the following methods:

- Questionnaires to understand issues faced in the area, specifically regarding the environment
- Sharing of initial proposals based the feasibility report
- Consultation events to allow face to face discussion on proposals
- Feedback on questionnaire responses and how this has shaped detailed designs with the opportunity for further comment
- Individual consultation on aspects that effect specific households (e.g. boundary changes)

Feedback allows us to understand the issues people feel strongly about in relation to the physical aspects of their environment and highlight wider issues that can be picked up by colleagues within the council. This allows us to tailor designs and pick up any issues missed.

Budget

The annual Environmental Improvement Programme budget for 2016/17 is set at £700k. It is proposed that this is increased to £800k for at least the next two years.

The assessment of the estates and identification of key projects does suggest that a higher level of spend could be sustainable if funds were available.

The budget is currently split between proactive and responsive schemes. Due to the scale of spend needed for proactive schemes, the level of cost in comparison to smaller Responsive schemes, and the need for a continued programme of investment throughout the borough the majority of the budget is allocated towards these works. With £655k allocated to proactive schemes and £45k for responsive.

The lesser budget allocated to responsive projects is divided between the three Area Housing Managers and the areas their staff cover:

- Wentworth North & Wentworth South
- Rother Valley West, Rother Valley East, & Wentworth Valley
- Rotherham North & Rotherham South

This allows an even spread of responsive investment throughout the borough and an even demand on resources, with managers and their teams helping to drive these schemes. It is intended that the responsive budget be used by Area Housing Managers to fund projects in their entirety, or used as match/contributory funding with other funding sources to enable investment on housing estates.

Profiling of Estates

Similar to the appraisal of housing stock it is essential to undertake assessments of housing estates. A survey method has been established to evaluate estates and areas of housing land based on principles within 'Building for Life 12' (a nationally recognised method to assess the quality of residential schemes) and those within typical condition surveys with a focus on health & safety. The assessments highlight the issues experienced and their severity.

Review Period

Assessments have taken place across a variety of estates within the borough, including all of the neighbourhoods classed as deprived. It is the intention that all estates be reviewed every 3 years to account for any changes in the condition or particular stresses on the environment.

Priority Investment

Location

There is great disparity between the quality of environments of housing estates within Rotherham and therefore a great difference in need depending on location.

The 2016 '*Survey of Tenants and Residents*' revealed that the most dissatisfied with the quality of their homes were from Rotherham North area assembly, and from those in flats, while the most satisfied tend to live in bungalows.

Initial profiling of estates throughout Rotherham supports the notion that areas with a high concentration of flats also suffer from poor environments. This dissatisfaction with the condition of such estates could be for a number of reasons including:

- A perceived lack of ownership felt by the residents over pieces of land
- The amount of flats built around the same time period and the landscaping has come to end of its life cycle
- A lack of investment in the environment
- The difference in living standards between residents that share the same space
- The openness and lack of private space associated with flats
- The design and layout of similar housing estates built around the same time period which have become less compatible with modern life

The opportunity to provide change through environmental interventions is limited to areas where the council have greater control of the land. Therefore it goes hand in hand that the large open housing estates, typically consisting of flats, are in most need of intervention and offer the greatest potential for change through the Environmental Improvement Programme.

It is anticipated that such open estates concentrated within the Rotherham North area assembly boundary, which includes Wingfield, Munsbrough, Kimberworth Park and Rockingham, will provide a focus of the programmed work over the next 3 year funding period.

Need

While the initial profiling of estates identified locations in most need of continued investment there is also an identified need to support those that are most vulnerable and most affected by the quality of their environment.

Rotherham has an aging population which has a higher number of 65 to 84's than the national average. This particular age group and those who are less mobile suffers greater inconveniences when faced with poor conditions or poorly designed environments, impeding access to local services, shops, and community facilities, which in turn effects social inclusion and health. Furthermore, poor conditions constitute a greater risk of slips and falls, with more severe consequences.

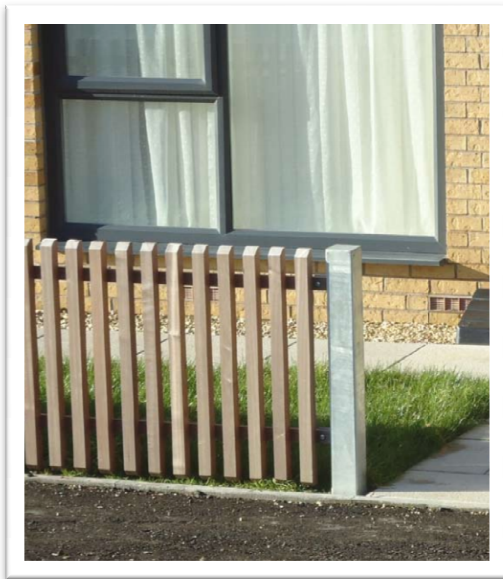
Working closely with Housing Management areas where there is a concentration of elderly and less mobile residents will be identified for more detailed access surveys. This will form part of the programmed environmental works.

Guidance & Exemplars

Review of completed schemes

Many of the estates have identical house types and near identical approaches to the design of their environment. A review of completed schemes provides an opportunity to reflect on aspects that work well or less well given the situation, and to use that information to best inform similar schemes coming forward, essentially creating a template of works that can be programmed more accurately.

Resident feedback and post completion evaluations will be undertaken on each scheme to identify ways in which we can improve future delivery.



Best practice from comparable schemes

Local and national examples of estate regeneration provide an opportunity to evaluate the standards and specifications used on similar projects, and bring forward best practice within Rotherham.

Some of the best examples to examine are new affordable housing schemes, where innovation, robustness, and cost efficiency are fundamental elements when considering design. It is also useful to understand how different organisations address common issues around planting, security and privacy, particularly when making improvements to our more open estates.

Left & below: Fencing from a scheme recently completed by Sheffield Housing Company. The galvanised steel posts with hardwood timber slats at 0.9m offer a modern, low maintenance alternative for front boundaries which still allow surveillance of the street.

This is an example of a common element we introduce in areas where the public and private realm benefits from being defined. Cost comparisons against more traditionally used fencing will help us understand if this can reduce initial costs and long term maintenance.



Specifications

In order to ensure schemes are robustly designed and appropriate for the given situation, common elements need to be delivered to an agreed specification based on current building standards, best practice, and cost. The following common elements will be specified:

- **Paths** (construction detail and desirable widths)
- **Steps** (construction detail, hand rails requirements, and desirable widths)
- **Timber fencing** (posts, style, height, gravel boards, finish, appropriate locations)

- **Metal fencing** (type, height, appropriate locations, fixings, finish)
- **Railings** (width of bars, finish, types, posts)
- **Planting** (appropriate locations, types)
- **Parking bays** (construction detail including drainage)
- **Bin Stores** (appropriate locations, standard layouts)

These elements will be brought together in a supporting specification document for use when issuing works.