



Rochdale  
Boroughwide Housing

Delivering Excellent Services –  
Building Stronger Communities

# **New Mutuels in Housing – the Rochdale story**

Mutuels Forum  
4 November 2010  
Gareth Swarbrick

# Social housing – some facts and figures

- 3.8m social rented properties nationally
- 1.9m of which Council owned
- Over 1m Council homes managed by Arms Length Management Organisations
- Public sector borrowing rules - over 200 stock transfers since 1989
- Various mutual housing models - Community Gateway, Community Mutual, Tenant Management Co-ops, etc

# RBH – who we are

- Set up in 2002
- Arms Length Management Organisation
- 13,800 properties
- 620 employees
- Turnover - £32m
- Capital investment programme - £9m



Rochdale  
Boroughwide Housing

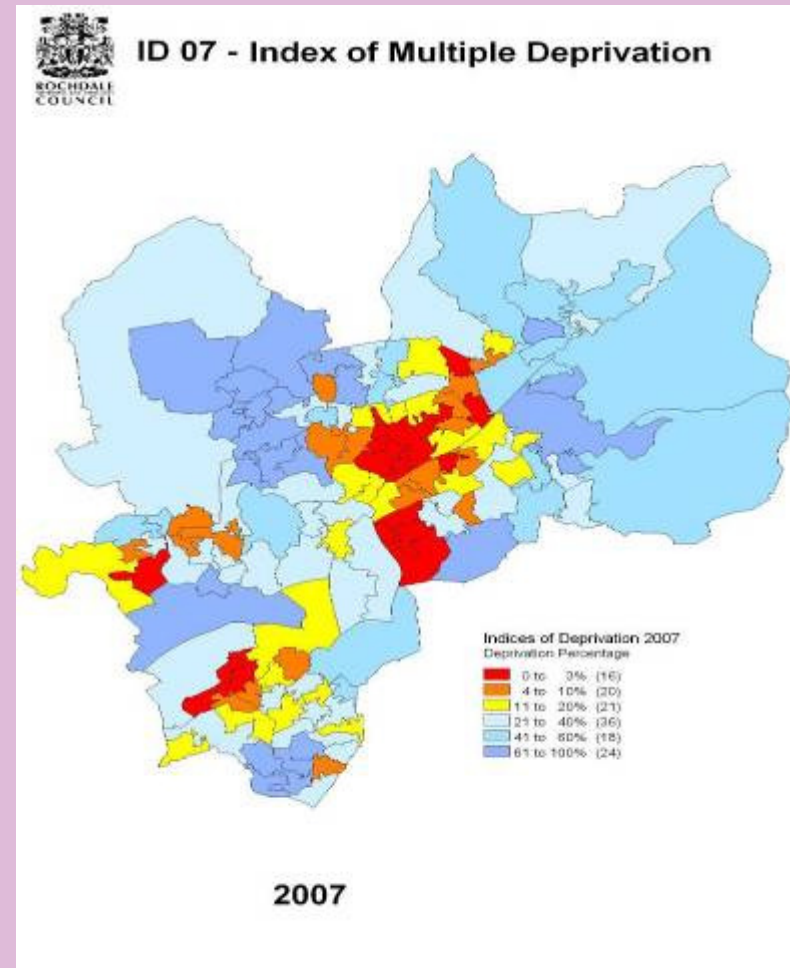
Delivering Excellent Services –  
Building Stronger Communities

# Rochdale – a place of contrasts



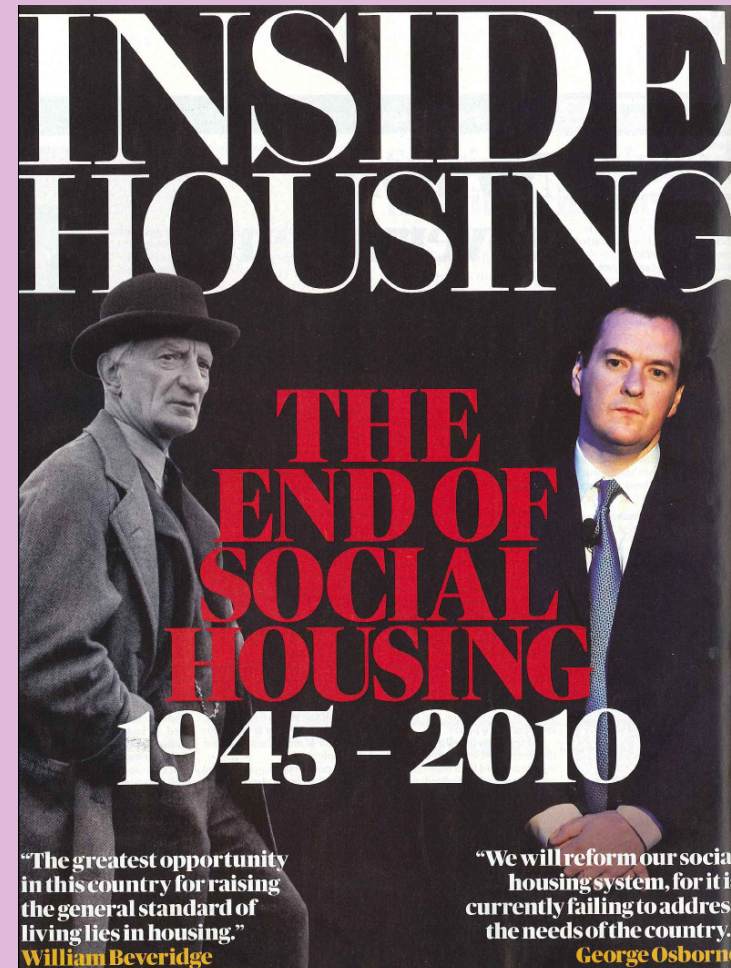
# Rochdale – the challenges

- Concentrations of acute deprivation
- Employment market restructuring
- Skills and Work
- Income
- Health
- Impact of public sector cuts



# Coalition Government – emerging policies

- No funding for social housing development
- Affordable rent?
- Security of tenure
- Rent policy for existing stock
- Welfare benefit reform



# What this means for RBH

- A need for:
  - Greater freedom and flexibility
  - Creativity
  - Resilience
- A need to:
  - Generate additional investment
  - Reshape what we do and how
  - Engage our employees and customers in this

# Our Future Options Review

- Investment & Involvement Commission – tenants, councillors, RBH Board members
- Independent Chair – Professor Ian Cole
- Assessment criteria
  - Revenue sustainability
  - Investment in homes and neighbourhoods
  - Role of biggest social landlord in borough
  - Customer (tenant) involvement in decision-making



Rochdale  
Boroughwide Housing

Delivering Excellent Services –  
Building Stronger Communities

# The options

- Remain within public borrowing limits
  - Go back to Council
  - Stay as ALMO
- Outside of public borrowing limits
  - Traditional stock transfer
  - Hybrid ALMO/stock transfer model
- Something new?

# Finding a new model – the starting-point

- People
  - The community served by RBH
  - Those who work for RBH



# Rochdale people – what do they need?

- Secure and decent home to live in
- Access to warmth and essential services
- A safe environment
- Ability to look after their own health and well-being
- Opportunity to learn and be trained
- Jobs and work
- **Tenants need these things, so do staff, 85% of whom live locally**

# Rochdale people – willing to take more responsibility

- Tenants
  - 81% satisfied with service but only 58% satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Employees
  - 86% satisfied with RBH as employer but other survey results show a desire to take more responsibility
- Can mutuality be a catalyst for:
  - Increasing active participation from customers and employees?
  - Thereby meeting our wider challenges?



Rochdale  
Boroughwide Housing

Delivering Excellent Services –  
Building Stronger Communities

# Our mutual heritage





Rochdale  
Boroughwide Housing

Delivering Excellent Services –  
Building Stronger Communities

# Our mutual heritage



# Our Vision

‘A unique and ground breaking model for the social housing sector, enabling us to reshape what we do, how we do it, and to generate additional investment in our homes and communities’

# Our Vision

- Co-ownership
  - tenants and employees as members
- Culture change
- Co-production
  - shared priorities
  - working together



# What this could mean for Rochdale

- A new type of mutual housing stock transfer
- Rooted in Rochdale
- Flexibility
- Efficiency
- Local economic benefits
- Opportunities
  - Energy
  - Financial Services
  - Ageing population
  - Training and employment



# Energy Sustainability

- Can the mutual housing body become an energy services provider?
- Generation and supply of heat and power
- Provision of services
  - Insulation
  - Retrofit
  - Smart metering
  - Micro-renewables
  - Education / behaviour change

# Financial Services

- Opportunity to provide a range of financial services to customers
- Directly:
  - Professional money advice
  - Education – financial capability
- Either directly or in partnership
  - Savings accounts
  - Personal loans
  - Microcredit for SMEs
  - Access to basic bank accounts

# The Ageing Population

- Reconfiguring elderly persons accommodation to meet future need and demand – deliver Council's Elderly Persons Housing Strategy
- Membership structure provides basis for adopting the Circle approach
  - On demand help for independent living
  - Volunteer neighbourhood helpers
  - Social network for teaching, learning and sharing
  - Employment opportunities
  - Reduced burden on public services

# Training and Employment

- Local employment
  - Apprenticeships
  - Traineeships
  - Local procurement – supply chains
- Training Academy - Centre of Excellence
  - Confidence building
  - Capacity building
  - Up-skilling
  - Support into work
  - Opportunities with local partners, contractors and suppliers

# What does this mean for Government?

- An exemplar Big Society housing project
  - Public sector reform
  - Community empowerment
  - Philanthropic action
- A model that is scaleable - the basis for a chain of mutual providers
- A model that is localist
- A model that will deliver
- But it is a model which challenges the housing orthodoxy

# Our next steps

- Investment and Involvement Commission final report – November
- Further meeting with CLG on 18 November
- Council Cabinet decision – December/January
- Detailed programme plan
- Work with CLG, HCA, tenants and employees to take forward
- Go live – April 2012?



Rochdale  
Boroughwide Housing

Delivering Excellent Services –  
Building Stronger Communities

# Thank you

