# Proposal for extension of the North and East Yorkshire Rural Housing Enabling Service to provide a Westmorland Dales Rural Housing Enabler

## Purpose/Aim

* 1. To improve the supply of affordable housing by piloting an extension of the Rural Housing Enabler (RHE) service to those parts of Yorkshire Dales National Park (YDNPA) in Cumbria and Lancashire known as the Westmorland Dales.

## What it will provide

* 1. The full RHE service (see Appendix One) to advance pipeline schemes into the Westmorland Dales that are currently in the pre-development stages of the Broadacres Housing Association, South Lakes Housing and Eden Housing Association development programmes.
  2. Enhance the capacity of the Yorkshire Dales National Park in its role as local planning authority so it can implement its Local Plan and meet its objective to ‘Support locally-sustainable development that will improve the National Park as a high-quality place to live, work and visit.’[[1]](#footnote-1)
  3. Bring new schemes into the pipeline by:
* Helping deliver the affordable housing element of the new Local Plan site allocations by:
  + Contributing to the final stages of site selection – including detailed viability testing to determine actual affordable housing delivery potential.
  + Negotiating with and supporting landowners to ensure sites are better placed to ‘hit the ground running’ once adoption has been confirmed.
  + Identifying how commuted sums can best be used.
  + Capture and apply to other schemes the lessons learned from the hybrid rural exception site/allocated site in Sedbergh.
* Helping to deliver a pipeline of rural exception sites including sites identified by the YDNPA that were unsuccessfully submitted for allocation in the Local Plan
* Building on and sharing the experience of delivering Community Led Housing and Self Build affordable housing in Crosby Ravensworth, Dent and the Upper Eden Valley.
* Working with Sedbergh School to bring forward sites in their ownership that meet local affordable housing needs, including school employees.
  1. Evidencing local housing needs using a range of mechanisms and trialling new approaches
  2. Working with and supporting communities and parish councils
  3. Enhance the rural housing enabling capacity of constituent local housing authorities, South Lakeland and Eden District Councils as they merge to become Westmorland and Furness Council.
  4. Show case and share good practice to ensure new rural affordable housing provides high quality, well designed, energy efficient homes.

## Outputs and Outcomes

* 1. The ultimate aim of the pilot is to increase the number of new affordable homes built in the Westmorland Dales. However, experience shows that rural schemes, particularly those on rural exception sites, often take longer than three years from conception to completion. The proposed output and outcome measures will take this into account, be achievable within the two-year timeframe of the pilot and provide a firm foundation for long term delivery.
  2. The actual outcomes and outputs for each of these will be agreed with project steering group, made up of the key partners, at the inception of the pilot as part of the on-going evaluation of the project through its lifetime.
  3. Number (TBA) of pipeline schemes that have planning permission in place
  4. Number (TBA) of pipeline schemes that have advanced through at least three pre-development stages
  5. Number (TBA) of sites identified/number of sites with Option Agreements in place
  6. Adoption of formal and informal working practices (TBA) that demonstrate that the RHE has enhanced enabling capacity of the local housing authorities and National Park Authority.
  7. Evaluation framework that monitors and supports delivery of the agreed outputs and outcomes.
  8. Feasibility study and report covering:
  9. Feasibility of providing an RHE service in the Cumbrian parts of YDNPA
* Feasibility of extending the RHE service to all rural Cumbria
* Governance arrangements for an agreed RHE service
* Funding model for an agreed RHE service

## Staffing

* 1. Mirroring the level of RHE resource available in the rural districts of North Yorkshire, this will be a 0.5 FTE post.
  2. Line management and support will be provided by the North and East Yorkshire RHE network manager as the employer.
  3. Day to day management will initially be provided by the Yorkshire Dales National Park.
  4. The first step will be to recruit an RHE, potentially drawing on existing resources available through the North and East Yorkshire RHE Network or extending Action with Communities in Cumbria’s housing work*.*

## Governance

* 1. The pilot project will be overseen by a steering group whose membership will include:
* Yorkshire Dales National Park
* The relevant local housing authorities.

Local government re-organisation means that the named local authorities will change, but the expectation is this will include the new Westmorland and Furness authority and North Yorkshire Council.

* The North Yorkshire and East Riding RHE Network manager.
* The relevant Registered Providers to include, but not be limited to, Broadacres Housing Association, South Lakes Housing and Eden Housing Association.
* Action with Communities in Cumbria – which also hosts the Cumbria Community Led Housing Hub.
* Homes England.
  1. Through the evaluation of the pilot the future governance arrangements for the Westmorland Dales RHE role will be explored with the aim of having an agreed arrangement by the end of the pilot.

## Funding

* 1. Homes England will grant fund the pilot in full for a period of two years.
  2. The evaluation of the pilot will explore future funding arrangements including the feasibility of adopting the North and East Yorkshire mixed funding package for the Westmorland Dales RHE role. The aim will be to have an agreed funding arrangement agreed by the end of the pilot.

## Costs of running the project

* 1. The total cost of providing an extension of the RHE service to the Westmorland Dales area of the YDNPA for two years is £66,746 (this cost excludes the evaluation costs which are set out at 8 below). A breakdown of the costs is provided in Table One.

**Table One: Breakdown of Westmorland Dales RHE project costs**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Year 1 | Year 2 |
| Salary and on-cost (0.5 FTE) | 20,579 | 22019 |
| Line and project management\* | 1,500 | 1,500 |
| Office/phone/IT equipment and access\*\* | 2778 | 1770 |
| Recruitment | 500 |  |
| Staff insurance | 100 | 100 |
| Car allowance | 750 | 750 |
| Miscellaneous travel | 200 | 200 |
| Promotional activity | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| HNS costs (printing/postage/advertising) | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Total annual costs | 28,407 | 28339 |
| Total RHE costs for 2 yrs. | **56,746** | |
| Evaluation costs | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| **TOTAL PROJECT COST** | **66,746** | |

### Costing Assumptions

* 1. Currently, the equivalent cost for employing a 0.5 FTE RHE post in North Yorkshire is £20,579 per annum. This includes salary and on-costs. It is based on a FTE equivalent salary of £31,659 with £9,498 on-costs. A 7% pay increase has been factored for year two.

\* Line and project management by North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Manager

\*\* Yorkshire Dales National Park hosting costs include:

Single day per week desk space £1292 pa

Smart phone £ 273 – one-off purchase year 1

Laptop £735 - one-off purchase year 1

MS License £350 pa

Call charges for Smart phone £128 pa

## Evaluation and feasibility study costs

* 1. An evaluation and feasibility study support the project and will report on the experience of the pilot and provide recommendations on its continuation into a permanent role, including geographic coverage, remit, funding and governance arrangements.
  2. The evaluation will be an integral part of the pilot from start to finish, with full input of all the partners as part of an iterative process for its design, implementation and management. Drawing on the advice and experience of Social Return on Investment approaches and advice in HMT’s Magenta Book, which provides guidance on evaluation of public policy interventions, three types of evaluation are involved. Process evaluation to identify what can be learnt from how the pilot was delivered. Impact evaluation, to assess what difference has it made. Value for Money evaluation that will examine how the costs and benefits compare with those identified at the outset of the pilot. Table Two sets out the four proposed key steps.

**Table Two: Key steps in Evaluation of Westmorland Dales RHE project**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Stage** | **Purpose and content** |
| Evaluation design | Agree the objectives of the pilot  Identify current position  Identify the external factors that will impact on it being able to meet those objectives  Agree the outcomes and outputs  Identify and agree the monitoring information that is available/will be collected – who will be involved  Agree the evaluation questions and lines of exploration – including financing the project in the longer term  This will be through a meeting of the key stakeholders (project steering group) starting by putting together a Theory of Change to agree the matters noted above |
| Evaluation  (In the latter stages this will include testing the appetite and feasibility of financing and governance arrangements for a more permanent service) | Collection of baseline data  6 monthly collection and analysis of monitoring data  6 monthly interviews with the RHE  6 monthly interviews with each of the key stakeholders  6 monthly meeting with the Steering Group to report back and discuss/agree any changes needed to the pilot |
| 18-month evaluation report | Provide report of evaluation results and findings |
| Designing the future service | Report back the evaluation findings to key stakeholders  Workshop to design and agree future:  Geographic scope  Role remit  Funding model  Governance arrangements |
| Final evaluation report |  |

* 1. Subject to a detailed evaluation framework being approved it is anticipated that the cost of the evaluation would be in the region of £9,900 plus expenses.

## Background – why the post is needed

* 1. The latest evidence commissioned to inform the Yorkshire Dales National Park Local Plan review shows the extreme problem of unaffordability of homes in the open market and private rent, and the loss of housing to second and holiday homes. [[2]](#footnote-2) This not only has an impact on those unable to afford a home, but it is also undermining the social and economic sustainability of the National Park as a report on its socioeconomic well-being concluded, ‘The current socioeconomic trajectory of the YDNP indicates that its ability to maintain vibrant communities is likely to be reduced in the future.’[[3]](#footnote-3) In responding to these challenges YDNPA has a fine balancing act to play, to meet its statutory Purposes and its statutory social and economic duty. Its primary mechanism to achieve this is through its Local Plan policies which state that the ‘emphasis for new housing provision inside the National Park is on meeting the social and economic needs of its communities.’ [[4]](#footnote-4) Furthermore, Government policy expects National Park Authorities ‘to maintain a focus on affordable housing and to work with local authorities and other agencies to ensure that the needs of local communities in the Parks are met.’[[5]](#footnote-5)
  2. However, its ability to deliver this priority is constrained by a lack of housing enabling resource. It is not the local housing authority, it has a very small planning policy and Development Management team, there is in effect only one RP with an appetite to build small schemes in the National Park, the District Council areas are the principal focus of the North Yorkshire RHEs that cover the National Park and their roles do not extend into Cumbria. The lack of these resources exacerbates other factors that commonly hinder delivery of rural affordable housing including site supply, challenges identifying housing need and community suspicion and localised opposition. In consequence, levels of delivery are low, with 85 new affordable homes being completed in the National Park between 2010 and 2020.
  3. This issue is more acute in Cumbria. Nearly a third of the National Park’s population is found in the areas of Cumbria and Lancashire covered by this proposal. This includes Sedbergh as its largest town and an area designated as an extension to the National Park in 2016. This area has seen only 21 affordable completions (over three sites) over the last decade. Between 2018/19 and 2020/21 there were no affordable housing completions on rural exception sites in the county. [[6]](#footnote-6) In part this too is a consequence of the lack of RHE resource which last reported in 2015 and ceased to exist in 2018. Despite this Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) has continued to support the delivery of rural affordable housing. It has a strong relationship with the Lake District National Park and attends the Cumbria Housing Supply group, although its focus is private development on large schemes. In 2019 ACT established a Community Led Housing (CLH) Hub and has supported several groups interested in this form of delivery. Recently this has involved working with the North Yorkshire and East Riding CLH Hub on a possible CLH scheme in Dent. However, the funding for ACT’s housing work, including the Hub, is precarious and it is likely that its service will reduce in the coming year.
  4. In contrast the North and East Yorkshire RHE Network has continued to provide a service that has contributed to the delivery of 1,559[[7]](#footnote-7) homes over the last five years (figures for 2021/22 = 309 dwellings).

**Table Three: North and East Yorkshire RHE Programme completions 2012-13 to 2021-22**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme Year** | **Completions** | **S106** | **RES** | **100% AH** |
| 2021-22\* | 309 | 128 41% | 31 | 150 |
| 2020-21 | 300 | 254 85% | 22 | 24 |
| 2019-20 | 370 | 342 92% | 20 | 8 |
| 2018-19 | 405 | 259 64% | 6 | 140 |
| 2017-18 | 175 | 136 78% | 12 | 27 |
| 2016-17 | 174 | 151 87% | 16 | 7 |
| 2015-16 | 177 | 108 61% | 34 | 35 |
| 2014-15 | 179 | 73 41% | 75 | 31 |
| 2013-14 | 64 | 54 84% | 6 | 4 |
| 2012-13 | 71 | 27 38% | 44 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | **2224** | **1532** | **266** | **426** |

\*North Yorkshire excluding Harrogate BC; rural completions including Harrogate = 440 2020/21

* 1. Unlike many other RHE services in England it has a relatively stable financial position that involves a mix of grant and fee income, with the latter being directly related to levels of delivery. It also has a unique governance structure. The RHEs are all employed by one local authority, but their time is assigned to specific local authorities. Day to day management is by the relevant council, but line management and support through the RHE Network is provided by the York, North Yorkshire and East Riding (YNYER) Housing Strategy Manager. This arrangement ensures the RHE focus is on delivery and effectively balances constructive and close relationships with the local authorities and RP partners, whilst also maintaining a degree of RHE independence. It also brings other advantages, not least a direct reporting line on rural affordable housing into the YNYER Strategic Housing Board.
  2. It is testament to the strength of that strategic voice that the Devolution Deal for York & North Yorkshire includes a commitment ‘to work collaboratively to unlock the barriers to rural affordable housing delivery’. Homes England funding to extend the RHE service to cover all the Yorkshire Dales National Park would be a first step in demonstrating that commitment.

JoL 01/02/23

# APPENDIX ONE

## NORTH YORKSHIRE AND EAST RIDINGF RHE JOB DESCRIPTION

The job description provided below is that for the current North and East Yorkshire RHEs. This will be subject to a job evaluation as part of Local Government Reorganisation and a new format will need to reflect this and may change as a result of Human Resources requirements at the new North Yorkshire Council.

**JOB PURPOSE**

This position is employed by Hambleton District Council on behalf of a partnership of local authorities. The partnership is led by the Rural Housing Enabler Network which comprises both local authority and other stakeholder representatives and reports directly to Local Government York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Board.

The partnership supports a network of RHE posts, currently operating across North and East Yorkshire. Each post holder is located within the relevant local authority’s premises, line managed by the Housing Strategy Manager for York, North Yorkshire & East Riding, with day to day management and support provided by the relevant local authority.

For the purposes of this document, the term ‘rural’ denotes communities and settlements with a population below 3,000.

From time to time the post holder may be required to work across district boundaries to supplement resources where required.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES SPECIFIC TO THE POST**

1. To identify, develop and progress affordable housing opportunities in the rural parts of the District
2. To engage with parish councils, landowners, Registered Providers (RPs) and developers to seek opportunities for rural affordable housing development, and promote affordable housing options in rural communities.
3. Where sites are identified for rural affordable housing, or with an affordable housing element, to liaise with a range of organisations and individuals to facilitate necessary housing need surveys, planning applications and, where appropriate, confirmation of funding.
4. To negotiate with developers, landowners and agents to ensure that the most appropriate rural housing solutions are achieved.
5. Work closely with local authority housing and planning officers, the RHE network and the Housing Strategy Manager to contribute to and influence the development of strategy, policy and practical initiatives to increase the supply of rural affordable housing.
6. **Identify and progress rural housing opportunities**
7. Approach parish councils and others to promote the value of rural affordable housing and identify potential development opportunities
8. Commission/undertake rural housing need surveys and their analysis, collating and reporting their results
9. Work with community representatives, landowners, planners, architects, RPs and others to progress potential schemes, to ensure an appropriate type, mix and tenure in accordance with the Council’s policy
10. Negotiate with landowners, developers and their agents to achieve optimum numbers, type, quality and mix of affordable housing on rural sites
11. Deal with enquiries on planning policies relating to rural affordable housing provision and targets
12. Comment and provide specialist advice on the rural housing implications of planning applications and policies as appropriate
13. Prepare evidence on rural housing need and, where required, represent the Authority at appeal or inquiry hearings relating to the provision of affordable housing in rural areas
14. **Policy development**
15. Develop innovative and best practice in rural affordable housing delivery across the sub region, influencing national policy as required
16. Work closely with housing and planning officers, and the York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Housing Strategy Manager to develop and contribute to policy and strategy relating to rural affordable housing and to promote the work of the RHE partnership through events, newsletters and the York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Strategic Housing Partnership website.
17. Work with RHEs in East & North Yorkshire, RPs, Homes England, and the Local Government York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Housing Board to represent the needs of the sub region in order to secure and maximise available resources for rural affordable housing, in line with sub regional strategic priorities
18. Contribute to wider corporate policy from a rural perspective
19. **Liaison with Key Stakeholders and Partners**
20. Work with a wide range of partners to identify and develop rural affordable housing schemes that meet local need, to prioritise support for schemes that meet strategic objectives
21. Ensure that appropriate Section 106 and nomination agreements are agreed between all parties
22. Co-ordinate the promotion and advertising of a range of rural housing options with a wide range of partners and stakeholders
23. **Monitoring and reporting**
24. Develop systems for the monitoring and review of data from relevant information sources to ensure a robust awareness of housing trends, needs, supply and land, and ensure that appropriate systems are maintained
25. Ensure that work programmes and delivery of projects are monitored, and provide regular monitoring reports to the Rural Housing Enabler Network, Local Government York, North Yorkshire & East Riding Housing Board and others
26. Ensure that RP nominations and lettings of rural affordable homes are monitored, and comply with nomination and Section 106 agreements

**CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES** (Note – these will cease post 31.3.23 as these are for Hambleton District Council)

* To comply with the requirements of Health and Safety legislation, including HDC’s Policy & Procedure
* To comply with the requirements of General Data Protection Regulations and all such related legislation, maintaining confidentiality at all times
* To comply with the requirements of Data Protection legislation, maintaining confidentiality at all times
* To comply with the Council’s commitment to Equality and Diversity
* To comply with all policies and procedures of HDC relevant to the role
* To undertake learning and development activities which will enhance your capabilities and the overall capacity and performance of the Council
* To undertake other duties relevant to and commensurate with the pay grade of the post
* To comply with and work to the spirit of the Organisational Values – see list below

**ORGANISATIONAL VALUES** (Note – these will cease post 31.3.23 as they are Hambleton District Council values. New values for North Yorkshire Council are currently being approved)

* **OPEN –** honest and transparent in the provision of our services to the community
* **RESPONSIBLE –** and accountable for our actions as individuals and as an organisation
* **CUSTOMER FOCUSED –** and committed to providing and improving upon a high quality, customer focused service
* **FAIR –** to all on an equal basis
* **RESPECTFUL –** and value our work colleagues and stakeholders

1. <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/06/Yorkshire-Dales-National-Park-Local-Plan-2015-30.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2020/03/YDNP-National-Park-2019-SHMA-Final-Report.pdf>

   <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2022/06/YDNP-First-Homes-Paper-FINAL-VERSION-10-Feb-22.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/12/Socioeconomic-Wellbeing-Main-Report-November-2019.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/06/Yorkshire-Dales-National-Park-Local-Plan-2015-30.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/221086/pb13387-vision-circular2010.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. DLUHC – Live Tables – Local Authority Housing Statistical Returns [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Whilst RHEs are involved in the vast majority of rural housing schemes, not all rural housing completions are enabled by them. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)