

North Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2010-15

Executive Summary



Introduction

The Local Government York and North Yorkshire Housing Board (formerly the North Yorkshire Strategic Housing Board), has developed the first ever Housing Strategy for North Yorkshire and York, shaped by two rounds of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and residents.

Housing plays a fundamental role in everyone's life and influences people's access to opportunities. The authorities joining together in partnership to produce this Strategy are committed to responding to the diverse needs of the communities of York and North Yorkshire.

The Vision for the Strategy is:

"To make North Yorkshire and York an inclusive place where communities are sustainable and residents can have fair access to decent affordable homes and effective support when they need it"

Context

North Yorkshire is one of four sub-regions within the Yorkshire and Humber region. The North Yorkshire Sub-Region comprises the seven Borough/District housing authorities of North Yorkshire and the City of York Council. North Yorkshire County Council, the North York Moors National Park and the Yorkshire Dales National Park are also partners on the sub-regional housing partnership.

The North Yorkshire sub-region is one of the country's most beautiful and varied places with stunning countryside and coast and a rich heritage. It includes:

- the historic yet forward thinking City of York
- two of England's nine national parks - the Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors
- the Heritage Coast, three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, over 12,000 listed buildings

and many thousand more monuments and archaeological sites, including a World Heritage Site at Fountains Abbey.

North Yorkshire is an area of high demand for housing and buying a home on the open market is not an affordable option for many local people. Historically, the need to increase joint working and the pooling of resources has been a key strategic aim and sub-regional partnership working will be a fundamental mechanism in terms of ensuring delivery of this strategy.

The strategy will be used to obtain and direct future housing investment across North Yorkshire and provides a common framework for the participating authorities to develop their housing policies and initiatives. It therefore affects the lives of residents across York and North Yorkshire.

North Yorkshire is very different to other parts of the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Whilst recognising the need to align with regional objectives, stakeholders were keen to develop a strategy that reflects North Yorkshire's unique identity to ensure it retains a voice and continued funding for its priorities.

Whilst there are some clear regeneration challenges in some parts of the sub-region, North Yorkshire does not have the scale of growth, renewal and regeneration issues associated with some of the larger conurbations in the Yorkshire and Humber Region. Nevertheless, sustained but comparatively modest investment can, will and does make a huge impact in North Yorkshire in respect of delivering locally significant outcomes which substantially improve our residents' quality of life.

Purpose of the Strategy

The Strategy reflects the housing priorities of our communities and, coupled with other policy documents, (including the Sustainable Community Strategies for North Yorkshire and the City of York Council), will contribute towards their economic, social and environmental well being. It will also help to achieve delivery of actions contained in the Leeds City region Housing and Regeneration Strategy for those local authorities that are within the Leeds City Region.

The strategy sets out overarching priorities. It does not detail plans for the numbers or local distribution of housing in our communities. These will be covered in another document - the Sub-Regional Strategy. Nor does it include details of which specific local projects will receive funding, how much and where from. Where appropriate, this will be included in the separate Local Investment Plans and Local Investment Agreements for North Yorkshire and York which will be agreed soon.

However, in a time of increasing uncertainty and austerity - and when the housing landscape is changing almost daily - the North Yorkshire Housing Strategy will help us to prioritise limited resources to deliver innovative projects that will positively impact on the communities we serve. It will provide a stronger voice to lobby government and, coupled with the two Local Investment Plans which are currently being developed for the City of York and for North Yorkshire, it will help to crystallise our housing offer and to attract both public and private sector funding. The strategy is a platform from which we will articulate the need for targeted housing investment in North Yorkshire and York and a tool that will help support and steer us through what could be difficult times ahead.

Ambitions

In order to deliver the vision, the strategy signals a number of ambitions that stakeholders share in respect of delivering housing and housing services across the sub-region notably to:

- develop a better understanding of the housing needs of the communities across York and North Yorkshire including vulnerable groups and those with particular needs such as Gypsies and Travellers and Migrant Workers

- support the development of a wider range of housing choices and facilitate customer access to these choices through the provision of universal, clear and transparent advice about existing housing and housing support services
- directly invest in and encourage private investment in existing housing stock of all tenures within North Yorkshire, to ensure its sustainability and availability to meet the sub-region's current housing needs
- strengthen linkages to strategic economic development and regeneration priorities and maximise opportunities for additional affordable housing delivery through joint working with planning colleagues
- ensure that the homes and services we deliver are of an excellent quality, are efficient, represent good value for money and reflect a culture of continuous service improvement.

North Yorkshire's Strategic Priorities

Five key housing priorities have been identified:

- enabling the provision of more affordable homes
- maintaining and improving existing housing stock
- delivering community renaissance
- improving access to housing services
- reducing homelessness

Strategic Priority 1: Enabling the provision of more affordable homes

We need more homes that are affordable to local people. To help make this happen we propose to:

- deliver a programme of additional affordable homes, ensuring that these homes are of an excellent quality, are efficient and represent good value for money
- increase the availability of land for affordable housing
- gain a better understanding of the housing markets in North Yorkshire and the alternative delivery mechanisms they can offer, including targeting the re-use of unused second homes and other empty properties.

Strategic Priority 2: Maintaining and improving existing housing stock

Our existing homes are our most valuable resource, so it is important that we look after them and make best use of them. We propose to:

- spend money on making existing homes better so that they will last longer and to encourage others to do the same
- increase the energy efficiency of existing and new homes to help people run them more cheaply and to reduce the harm to our natural environment.

Strategic Priority 3: Delivering community renaissance

We need to tackle the challenges facing our local communities to ensure they remain vibrant and sustainable places where people want to live. We propose to:

- make our communities better by having regard to the location of jobs, the availability of public transport, schools, shops and other facilities and the need to regenerate some of our communities when making choices for housing investment

- help our rural communities to remain vibrant by offering specific support to deliver more rural affordable housing
- work with partners to better manage our local neighbourhoods, help people to live together happily and embrace cultural and religious diversity
- help all residents to have access to banking and other financial services/support
- help people get back into work.

Strategic Priority 4: Improving access to housing services

We want to put the customer at the heart of decision making and to increase housing choices for all, through the provision of universal, clear and transparent advice about existing housing and housing support services. We propose to:

- increase housing choices and improve housing advice services for older people
- offer improved housing services, advice and assistance for specific vulnerable groups
- offer services and grants to make sure that people with disabilities can live comfortably within their existing homes
- embrace cultural and religious diversity
- better understand and address the housing and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers, Black and Minority Ethnic groups and migrant workers
- offer support and help to match people with homes that are the right size and type to meet their needs
- work in partnership with local landlords to make the private rented housing an option for more people and to improve private landlord services.

Strategic Priority 5: Reducing homelessness

Homelessness levels remain relatively high within North Yorkshire and York because of the acute shortage of affordable housing. We propose to:

- do even more to prevent homelessness
- further reduce the use of temporary accommodation and improve the temporary accommodation we use
- do even more to tackle youth homelessness
- continue to ensure that housing support is available for homeless and vulnerable people.

Delivering the Strategy

An Action Plan has been prepared to ensure delivery of the Strategy and our investment priorities up to 2015. The action plan sets out what we want to achieve through the Strategy and how we will do it.

Beneath the Strategy and action plan will sit local authorities' own **local action plans** that will deliver the Strategy's five priorities through local projects and initiatives that best meet the needs and circumstances of communities.

Specific investment proposals and projects will be included in two other key documents: **Local Investment Plans** and **Local Investment Agreements** for the period 2011-2014 which are now being finalised for North Yorkshire and City of York.

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

This is essentially a six year strategy, covering priorities identified in the current 2008-2011 investment period and priorities for the 2011-2014 investment period.

The Local Government North Yorkshire and York Housing Board will be responsible for monitoring its progress.

Monitoring will be undertaken quarterly, and the Board will challenge local authorities that are not meeting their targets.

We do not think that our housing priorities will change significantly before the end of this Strategy period. However, we may need to quickly revisit them in Summer 2011 following the publication of the 2011-14 Local Investment Plans and Agreements to check that no changes need to be made.

We will review our priorities more thoroughly and reflect on our performance before we bid for more money in 2013. This will ensure that we target future housing investment effectively and where it will make the most difference to our residents.

More Information

Should you wish to view a full copy of the North Yorkshire Housing Strategy and our Sub Regional Action Plan please download it at our [website: www.northyorkshirestrategichousingpartnership.co.uk](http://www.northyorkshirestrategichousingpartnership.co.uk) or call in at your local housing department to pick up a copy free of charge.

Alternatively, please email: sue.walters-thompson@hambleton.gov.uk or contact Sue on 01609 767144.