

Exploring The Art of the Possible

Thursday 17 November 2022



Working together to deliver rural housing to meet local needs and sustainable communities

Estate owners and their agents from across North Yorkshire are to be given key advice on how to help introduce local needs sustainable housing on their estates in an event which is being staged this autumn.

This seminar is being organised by the North Yorkshire Rural Task Force, which is chaired by North Yorkshire County Council's chief executive Richard Flinton, and the Country Land and Business Association (CLA).

The event from 9.30am until 4.15pm on Thursday, November 17, will be held in Hovingham includes a tour of the schemes within the village. Lunch will be served in Hovingham Hall by kind permission of Sir William Worsley, who was one of the commissioners on the landmark North Yorkshire Rural Commission.

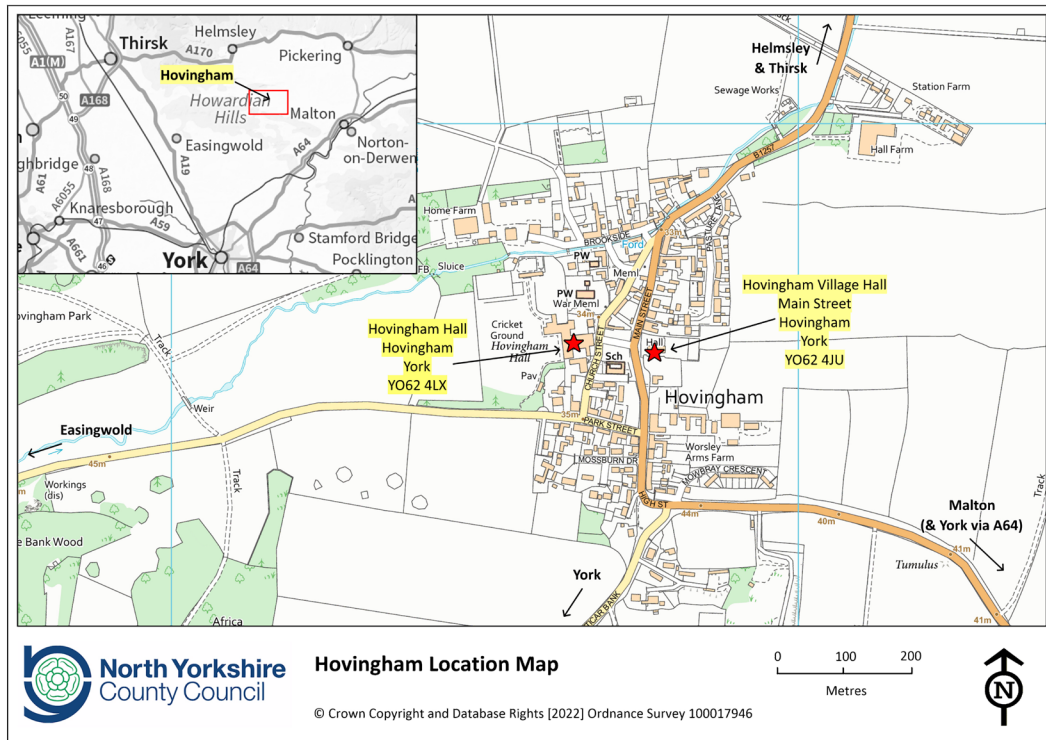
North Yorkshire County Council launched the independent Rural Commission in the autumn of 2019 to investigate a host of challenges which were affecting countryside communities. The Rural Commission's final report was published in July 2021, and included a series of recommendations to help tackle the long-running issues affecting the countryside, including a critical lack of sustainable housing in rural villages. The commissioners recommended that North Yorkshire County Council should set up a rural task force to support the delivery of key actions to tackle the issues highlighted in the final report. The North Yorkshire Rural Task Force was assembled in 2021 and meets regularly to monitor progress on the activities of key partners, including efforts to introduce more affordable rural housing. During a recent challenge session organised by the Rural Task Force, it was suggested that a regional networking seminar should be staged with North Yorkshire estates to highlight the need for more sustainable housing and to provide expert advice on planning, financing schemes and also engaging with local communities.

This specifically designed event in November will include an audience mainly of landowners and land agents who operate in North Yorkshire.

By looking at national and local good practice examples, the “The Art of The Possible” seminar aims to inspire attendees by exploring what has been delivered to date, explaining how existing schemes were developed and the challenges that were overcome. The event aims to:

- Showcase innovative rural sustainable housing delivery in rural villages
- Demonstrate how collaboration can lead to more local needs and sustainable housing being delivered.
- Facilitate new partnerships and ways of working in North Yorkshire.

Recognising that ‘one size never fits all’, it is hoped the seminar will help new partnerships and ways of working to develop in North Yorkshire.



Sustainable Communities: The role of housing in strengthening the rural economy

This report, published as part of the CLA’s Rural Powerhouse campaign, explores how many communities across rural England and Wales are struggling with a lack of housing stock. Put simply, communities where local people cannot afford to live are not sustainable.

The CLA is campaigning for a pragmatic approach to house-building in rural areas. Many villages could benefit enormously from small scale developments, providing affordable homes to local people and, as a consequence, strengthening the fabric of the local economy and community.

Conclusion

Housing is central to the sustainability, viability, and vitality of rural communities. For the economy in rural areas to thrive, for the health and well-being of communities and for a well-managed environment, there needs to be an adequate supply of rural homes in the right place and of the right size and tenure.

The growing demand for rural homes in a post-pandemic England and Wales offers important opportunities for leveling up the economy in rural areas, and urgent action is necessary to avoid an even greater disparity between supply and demand, and deepening of the rural housing crisis.

For the risk to become an opportunity, the planning system must support and enable organic, incremental growth in all rural communities. This can only be achieved if local housing need is assessed and met within the community, rather than within the wider authority and if local planning authorities change the way they assess the sustainability of settlements.

In order to encourage and support more land to be brought forward to rural affordable housing, the risk, uncertainty, and high cost of obtaining planning permission must be mitigated by introducing permitted development rights for rural exception sites. In addition, the inheritance tax burden for a landowner building and retaining affordable homes for rent must be removed, so that more landowners can choose to build affordable rented homes despite the low returns.

The recommendations in this CLA report, Sustainable Communities: the role of housing in strengthening, the rural economy, are critical for rural renewal, leveling up the economy and for diverse, sustainable, and resilient communities.

Summary of recommendations

In order to create sustainable communities and strengthen the rural economy through housing, the CLA believes the following actions are necessary.

- 1.** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) must return to policy which promotes organic incremental growth of settlements of fewer than 3,000 inhabitants, which would lead to a small number of houses in a larger number of villages.
- 2.** Local authority sustainability assessments should be reformed, to place greater emphasis on digital connectivity in recognition of the services that can be accessed online: and to assess which services could be supported if developments are enabled.
- 3.** Local planning authorities should be mandated to undertake a housing needs assessment across all rural settlements without a housing allocation so that identified local need can be met at a local level.
- 4.** Permitted development rights should be introduced for new-build affordable housing for discounted rent on rural exception sites.
- 5.** Conditional exemption from inheritance tax should be expanded to affordable rented housing for the period the homes remain let as such.

Rural Commission Specific

Specific Actions - Housing

- The formula for designating affordable housing must be revised by The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government so that it does not reflect market value in an area but rather average income in the area.
- The County Council should be enabled to have the power to levy a charge on second homes which must stay in the county and be used to further affordable housing.
- Each of the 730 parishes in rural North Yorkshire should build five houses over a ten-year period, leading to 3,650 new homes. 40% of this housing stock must be affordable or available for rental.
- A scheme must be developed which prioritises the access of essential and low-paid workers to affordable homes in rural and remote areas.
- The District Council must ensure housing is affordable through the promotion of shared ownership, community-led housing initiatives, and adequate property for rental available on the market.
- The Country Land and Business Association (CLA) should work with the local planning authorities to encourage landowners to increase housing provision in estate villages. Examples of good practice must be shared.
- Local authorities must work with estate owners to establish 10/20/50 year plans for estate villages.
- The County Council needs to understand the challenges of managing old properties and provide free advice on how to improve their energy performance.

Logistics for the Day

The event will be held in the Village Hall opposite Hovingham Hall at Hovingham (YO62 4LF); parking will be available on the day at the green in front of Hovingham Hall.

A Free Lunch will be held at Hovingham Hall, and there will be a tour of housing schemes on the Estate prior to lunch.

To enable opportunities to network, share ideas, and explore opportunities, the Riding School at Hovingham Hall will host a range of stands staffed by specialist colleagues from a range of organisations, including:

- The Country Land and Business Association
- North York Moors National Park
- Broadacres Housing Association
- The North and East Yorkshire Rural Housing Enablers
- The North and East Yorkshire Community Led Housing Hub
- Homes England

Agenda

Facilitator for the day - Dr Justin Ives

Village Hall

- 09.30 - 10.00 Registration and refreshments
- 10.00 - 10.05 Introduction to the day (Chair Richard Flinton)
- 10.05 - 10.25 "Welcome to Hovingham Estate and the development of a sustainable community". (Sir William Worsley)
- 10.25 - 10.35 Hovingham Q and A
- 10.35 - 10.50 Refreshments
- The art of the possible: (10.50 - 12.30)**
- 10.50 - 11.30 Blenheim (Roger Filer - Property Director)
- 11.30 - 11.40 Blenheim Q and A
- 11.40 - 12.10 Eakring (Chris Parsons)
- 12.10 - 12.20 Eakring Q and A
- 12.20 - 12.30 Questions to the panel (Blenheim, Eakring, Hovingham)
- 12:30 - 13.30 Tour of schemes at Hovingham (Alice Hayter - Estate Manager)

Hovingham Hall

- 13.30 - 14.30 Lunch and networking
- Making it work in North Yorkshire (14.30 - 15.15)**
- 14.30 - 15.15 RHE Partnership and Broadacres
- 15.15 - 15.30 Panel discussion (RHEs/Broadacres/North Yorkshire Home Choice/Planning)
- 15.30 - 15.50 CLA - sustainable rural communities and the role of affordable housing in levelling up the rural economy (Avril Roberts - Policy Advisor)
- 15.50 - 16.00 CLA Q and A
- 16.00 - 16.10 Next steps: moving forward from here (Richard Flinton/Justin Ives)
- 16.10 - 16.15 Closing remarks (Cllr Carl Les)

Experts from a range of housing related fields (financing, allocations, planning) will be present on the day to answer questions.

Parking is available on the day on the green opposite the Village Hall, this will be signposted, see map.

Speaker Biographies

Richard Flinton



Richard Flinton, who is currently Chief Executive of North Yorkshire County Council, will take on the same role at North Yorkshire Council.

The new unitary authority will launch on 1 April next year following the merger of the county council and the seven district and borough authorities as North Yorkshire.

Richard has been closely involved in securing a proposed devolution deal from the Government for York and North Yorkshire, which is set to see a mayor elected in May 2024 to oversee key decision-making powers and millions of pounds of funding.

He celebrated his 30 year anniversary with the county council in 2017, having started as a trainee trading standard officer. He became the authority's Chief Executive in 2010, and is also the chairman of the North Yorkshire Rural Task Force, which was set up in the wake of the North Yorkshire Rural Commission's final report in July last year.

Richard chairs the North Yorkshire Chief Executives group and the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum. In 2014 he chaired the Local Authority Delivery Group which co-ordinated the staging of the Tour de France Grand Départ in Yorkshire. He is also the lead Chief Executive for Yorkshire and Humber on children's services.

He is honorary secretary of The Association of County Chief Executives (ACCE)., as well as the ACCE's lead officer on finance issues and is a member of the national steering group looking at the future of local government funding.

Richard is married with two children and lives in Ryedale.

County Councillor Carl Les - Leader



County Councillor Carl Les was elected leader of North Yorkshire County Council in May 2015. Cllr Les, has represented the Catterick area for over 20 years and was deputy leader of the council prior to his election as the authority's leader.

Cllr Les has been a member of the North Yorkshire Police Authority for 15 years and now chairs the Police and Crime Panel.

Apart from being a councillor he brings his professional business experience from working in the Visitor economy.

Following his graduation, Carl worked and managed the family business before selling it and retiring in 2014.

Alongside his business and council activity he was always active in the community being a school governor and trustee, a Chair of North Yorkshire Youth and Chair of CABs service.

He is also the volunteer Commercial Director of Wensleydale Railway plc.

Dr Justin Ives



I am a Chartered Accountant with a passion for Social Housing, being born in a council house in Sunderland. I have a firm belief that everyone deserves a safe, warm, high-quality place to call home.

Throughout my local government career I have been involved in social housing, whether looking after Housing Revenue Account/Housing Business Plan finance or leading the operation and establishment of local government housing companies. Over the last 18 months I have led the Local Government Reorganisation Housing Workstream in North Yorkshire, amalgamating seven statutory housing services and three stock-holding Councils with around 9,000 homes. I am also a Board Member of Broadacres Housing Association, a role I have held for the last four years.

Sir William Worsley - Hovingham Estate



Sir William Worsley Chairs the Hovingham Estate in North Yorkshire. He is Chair of the Forestry Commission and was the Government's National Tree Champion from 2018-2020.

He was Chairman of the National Forest Company from 2016-2020 and was President of the Yorkshire Agricultural Society from 2000-2001. He is also Chairman of the Howardian Hills AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

He is a former President of the CLA and a former member of the North York Moors National Park Authority. He was a member of the North Yorkshire Rural Commission.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and of the Royal Agricultural Societies.

Helen Fielding



Helen Fielding is Broadacres' Director of Development and Investment.

Helen has a long track record in rural and affordable housing, having worked for many years in Hampshire and North Yorkshire in strategic housing and delivery and with Homes England, where she was responsible for affordable housing.

She is passionate about providing housing solutions in rural communities housing investment across the North.

An adopted Yorkshire-woman, Helen lives in Northallerton.

Roger Filer - Property Director Blenheim Estates



A Chartered Surveyor with over 30 years' experience in planning and development along with mixed portfolio asset management experience.

Roger has worked for both the Prudential and P&O Properties as well as running his own property asset management business.

He joined Blenheim in 2003 as Property Director and takes a lead on all real estate matters but specifically strategic land promotion, development, property investment and portfolio management. Blenheim Estate have developed their own award-winning affordable housing delivery model.

Chris Parsons - Eakring Estate



Chris Parsons was born and brought up on the family farm in Eakring, then a very small agricultural/industrial village in Nottinghamshire.

He moved away from the village to follow a career as a medical osteopath, but eleven years ago Chris was catapulted back into running the family business after a sudden death.

His family farms about 1,500 acres and have a property portfolio that includes office, live and work space and residential lets.

Chris' is committed to environmental sustainability and they expanded the yard, put on as many PVs as possible and have a share in generating power from turbines.

But this passion is perhaps most evident in the 25 acres of wild flower meadows and old orchards that he maintains at his home in Gloucestershire.

Avril Roberts - Policy Advisor CLA



Avril Roberts is the CLA's Property and Business Policy Adviser, she advises CLA members on housing and tourism.

Prior to joining the CLA Avril worked for a housing association in their development team. Part of Avril's role at the CLA is to lobby government on the importance of rural housing and ensuring a long-term supply of affordable homes to support the rural economy. The CLA published this year their Sustainable Communities report. This report looks at the barriers to rural housing delivery and makes recommendations for increasing supply. Avril will talk of the importance of rural housing in Levelling Up the rural economy.