

Workshop 1 – High quality places to live



North Yorkshire is an attractive place to live: Harrogate has been voted the best place to live in the country, there are two national parks, a picturesque coastline and rural areas of outstanding natural beauty. However, this attractiveness together with low average wages has resulted in a housing affordability gap that is amongst the highest in England.

To tackle this we need to build more homes, support high quality employment and invest in supporting infrastructure whilst preserving the things that make the county attractive and working to involve communities in shaping where they live and work.

Facilitators:

Sarah Hall, Housing Strategy Manager – York, North Yorkshire and East Riding
Karen Anderson, Specialist (Home Ownership and Supply), Homes and Communities Agency

Sarah and Karen introduced themselves and outlined the structure of the session. Sarah would set out an overview of the sub-regional housing context with Karen providing information on some of the national / government led funding interventions and opportunities. Through group work delegates would then feed in more detailed, local insight with the overall aim of identifying ways to work together to address housing related issues and needs in North Yorkshire.

A hand out was provided with a range of data to support the workshop.

The North Yorkshire context

The area is attractive to retirees and 2nd home owners as well as commuters and existing communities, which all contribute to high house prices. Many jobs are poorly paid which makes it hard for people to access housing to buy or rent near their employment. In Harrogate, average house prices are 10x average earnings. The house price to income multiplier is high across all of North Yorkshire. The average age at which people become home owners without parental assistance is 37.

Private rents also have a significant affordability gap.

Other area of concern are North Yorkshire's aging population, the fact that younger people move out of the county with a related reduction in the pool of available workers. A lack of quality infrastructure, particularly around broadband, makes it difficult for home working and micro-businesses to develop. There are also large amounts of existing housing stock which is hard to heat which impacts further on housing costs.

On a brighter note the number of completions (houses built) is improving.

The role of the Homes and Communities' Agency

The Homes and Communities' Agency is the government's housing, land and regeneration agency. It also regulates social housing providers in England. The agency provides investment to increase the number of new homes built in England, including affordable homes and homes for market sale or rent. They also have a role in improving existing affordable homes and bringing empty homes back into use as affordable housing. Karen works across Yorkshire and the North East.

The Home and Communities Agency has a range of grant and loan schemes to enable its work. It can provide loans (at commercial rates, so no state aid issues) to help finance developers and builders and get stalled development progress.

Karen outlined a number of programmes:

- **Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme (SOAHP) 2016 to 2021** which aims to increase the supply of Shared Ownership, Rent to Buy and Affordable Rented homes in England by March 2021. From a £4.7billion pot there is £1.3 billion of capital grant remaining.

Shared ownership schemes allow people to purchase 25-75% of the property with the provider charging rent on the remaining equity. These schemes are quite common across Yorkshire.

SOAHP also supports provision of general needs and specialist affordable rental accommodation for older, vulnerable and disabled people. This includes supported housing and also designated housing where access to support is provided where needed.

Rent to Buy schemes mean that people can rent a new build home at an affordable rent (80% of market rent) allowing them to save with the first option to buy, continue to rent or move; although providers can opt to sell the property after 5 years and not continue to rent it,. These schemes are aimed at people in work and first time buyers/household following relationship breakdown.

- **Housing Infrastructure Fund** local authorities/combined authorities can bid for funding towards infrastructure to enable stalled developments. The Forward Fund element is for major infrastructure to release large sites or groups of sites and is available to upper tier or combined authorities who are required to rank their own bids. The Marginal Viability element is for smaller sites requiring infrastructure or remediation and is available to local authorities, who again must rank any bids.
- Other schemes include bringing empty homes back into use, and in 'hot' North Yorkshire housing markets providers have purchased homes on the open market and made them available for shared ownership.
- **Estate Regeneration Funding** supports the regeneration of mainly social housing estates to enable them to become more mixed tenure, encouraging new builds, refurbishments and demolition where appropriate, involving significant community engagement. Northern areas have tended to benefit from capacity funding to undertake master plans and financial options appraisals to see if they can get interventions to stack up for the recoverable capital loan available – there is no gap funding.

Housing is government's top domestic priority although policy development has been slowed down by the impact of the fire at Grenfell Tower.

The role of the York and North Yorkshire Housing Board

The Board seeks to present a single, sub-regional voice on housing, showcase achievements and raise concerns. Its strategy is to focus on having the right housing in the right places underpinned by nine priorities. Looking to the immediate future, there are some concerns about homelessness levels, potential negative impacts of the rollout of Universal Credit leading to more rough sleeping, sofa surfing etc. The Board is challenging the latest government consultation on a new way of calculating housing need as the need calculation could lead to a reduction in the number of new homes in the area.

There are opportunities to change the way we build houses and there are currently local pilot projects, supported by The Rural Housing Enablers and Community First Yorkshire, enabling communities to build to meet their own needs through Community Led Housing models.

Workshop

Attendees broke into 2 groups to consider 3 questions:

1. How does housing affect you and your services?
2. How can we work better together to address housing need?

3. What could better homes and communities look like?

Group 1

- Developers benefit from a tight market, giving them a motivation to limit supply and maximise profit from each development. We need to find a way to facilitate small entrants to chip away at the hold of large developers/builders.
- There was a sense that the system does not enable building for vulnerable groups with excessive planning restrictions.
- There is a vicious cycle around control and cost of land which makes it very challenging to build affordable homes. Local authorities are facing financial pressures which mean they need to maximise any assets so won't / can't release land at reduced value for building affordable homes. In addition they don't have much land. HCA receives land transferred to it from Other Government Departments e.g. Ministry of Justice (but not MOD, which is of interest in NY) and similar arguments would apply. There is also a lack of brownfield land.
- There was some discussion about the potential for market disruption – Leeds has an interesting eco developer as a challenger brand but infrastructure, size of North Yorkshire and rurality doesn't make it a good fit.
- Encouraging people to say "Yes" to all housing developments would help.
- We are facing recruitment challenges for many jobs e.g. care work as young people move away. Jobs, transport, broadband infrastructure are inadequate.

Group 2

- There is frustration that guidance around local neighbourhood development plans does not enable a focus on the future so restricts new ideas.
- Need to encourage communities to get involved in housing – saying "Yes" to plans which will deliver. Need to work in partnership with communities around developments. Need to move communities towards an acceptance of larger developments. It would help if communities could have opportunities to build houses specifically to meet needs of local residents or required workforce to meet community needs.
- Need to improve completion rates. May need to accept some builds on green belt/greenfield.
- Lack of affordable housing options means people get trapped in their homes. S106 money is rarely used for affordable or accessible homes.

- We need housing for the workforce needed to meet care / health needs of aging population.
- Need suitable housing for disabled people and low paid workers.
- Need smaller units / high quality rented for younger people.
- System needs to allow innovation.
- Parish Councils need to recognise the need for rental accommodation.
- Developers need to work better with communities in order to deliver on community needs. Communities are frustrated by the ability of developers to cherry pick.
- How can we facilitate acceptable development?

Workshop One - Housing

Facilitators:

- Sarah Hall, Housing Strategy Manager- York, North Yorkshire & East Riding
- Karen Anderson, Specialist (Home Ownership and Supply), Homes and Communities Agency

Background

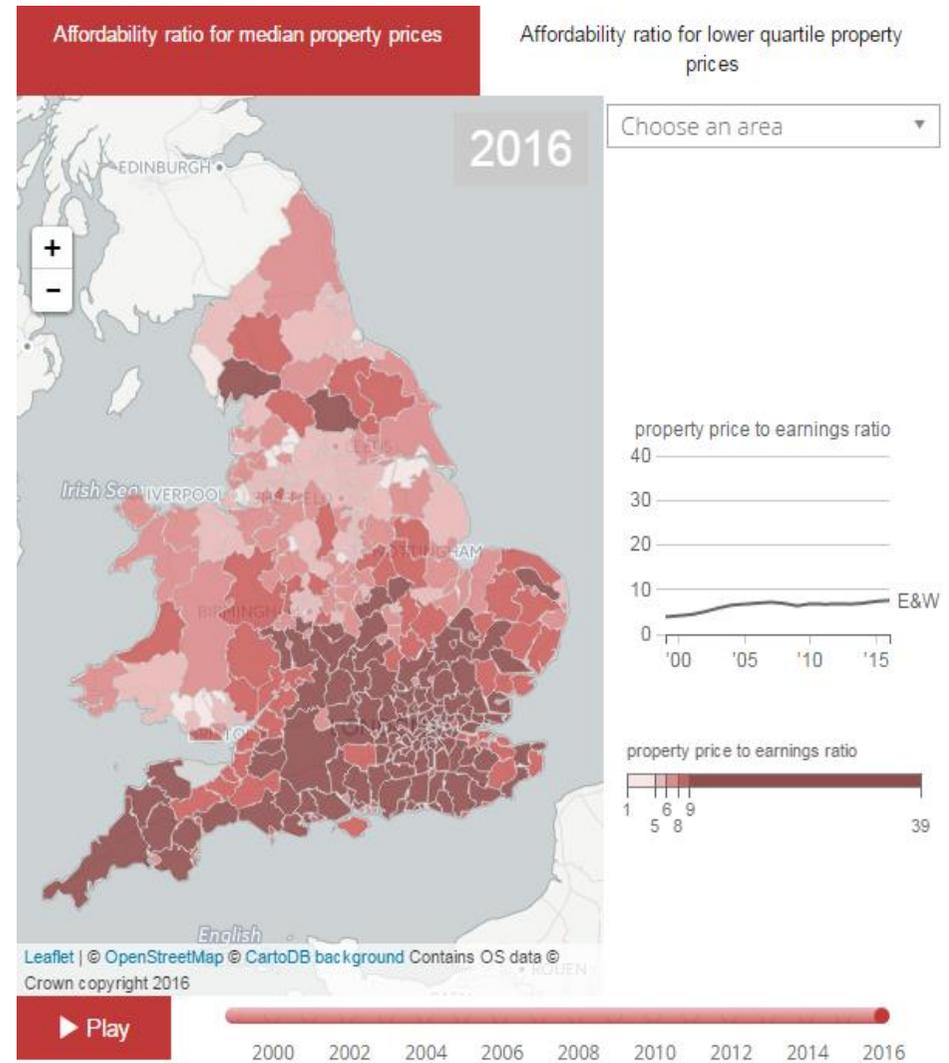
North Yorkshire is an attractive place to live: Harrogate has been voted the best place to live in the country, there are two national parks, a picturesque coastline and rural areas of outstanding natural beauty. However, this attractiveness, together with low average wages, has resulted in a housing affordability gap that is amongst the highest in England. To tackle this we need to build more homes, support high quality employment and invest in supporting infrastructure whilst preserving the things that make the county attractive and working to involve communities in shaping where they live and work.

Workshop Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to work with attendees to understand:

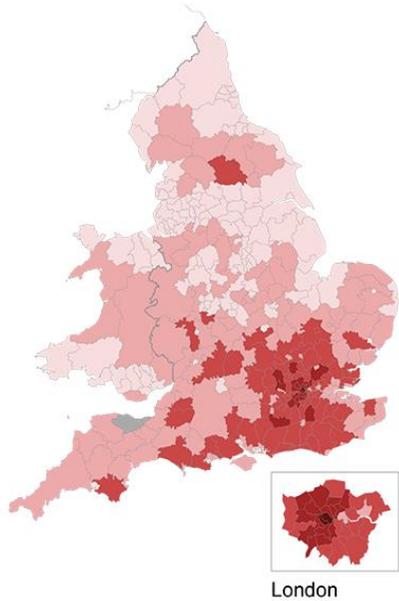
1. Key issues around housing in this area
2. Work that is on going across the County to address these
3. Barriers and Opportunities for Housing Delivery in N.Yorks
4. Where does housing figure in your service area
5. How can we work together to address issues and needs

Key Issues



Source: [House Price Statistics for Small Areas and Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS](#)

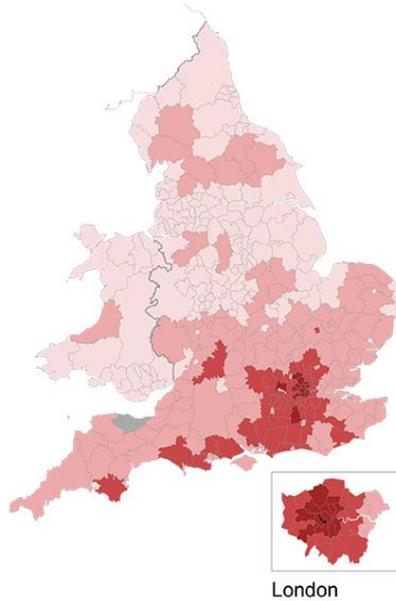
Workplace-based



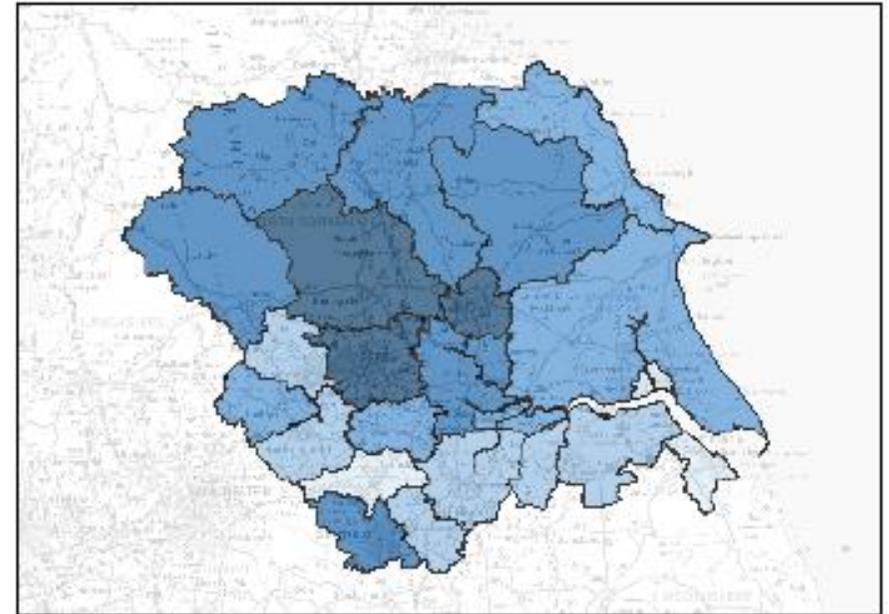
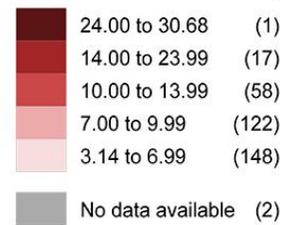
Ratio of house price to workplace-based earnings¹
(Total number of areas = 348)



Residence-based



Ratio of house price to residence-based earnings¹
(Total number of areas = 348)



Highest median rent in Y+H are in North Yorkshire (£575)

Current Work

Housing Strategy 2015-21 at www.nycyerhousing.co.uk

Main Priorities

Work with Partners to increase the supply of good quality new housing – all tenures & locations

Ensure our housing stock meets the needs of urban, rural and coastal communities

Ensure that housing stock meets the diverse needs of communities at all stages of their lives

Ensure new homes are of a high design & environmental quality

Continue to make best use of existing stock & ensure it is of a decent quality to meet community needs

Ensure all homes have a positive impact on health & well being and are affordable to run

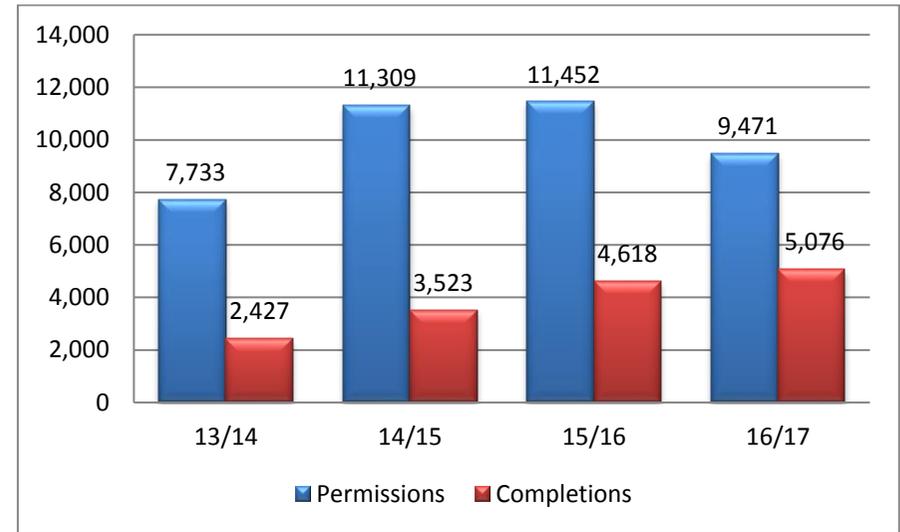
Continue to reduce homelessness

Ensure housing is allocated fairly and on the basis of need

Provide appropriate housing and support for those with specific needs

Key Aims

- Double the rate of housebuilding (from 2012/14 levels), to around 5,400 p.a.
- Triple the rate of Affordable Housing delivery to around 1,600 p.a.
- Get Local Plans in place
- Increase diversity in size, type and tenure, including for older people
- Increase energy efficiency and reduce the impact of housing on health & wellbeing
- Continue to prevent homelessness through partnership working



Barriers and Opportunities

Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of SME builders • Skills shortages • Local Plans & Housing Numbers • Land values and lack of economies of scale • Unimplemented planning permissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offsite manufacture and modern methods of construction • Community Led Housing • Older persons housing needs • Govt focus and HCA funding • Self and Custom Build

Working Together – Workshop Questions

1. What housing issues affect your services/area of work?
2. How can the issues above and yours be addressed through partnership working?