



Rural Housing
Enablers

Rural housing in North Yorkshire

THE CHALLENGES

Living in rural North Yorkshire is an aspiration for many, but the reality often falls short due to the lack of available affordable homes. This challenge impacts local businesses, making it difficult for them to recruit and retain employees. By supporting local shops, pubs, schools and other facilities, the people living in these areas play a crucial role in ensuring that money circulates within the local economy, and they help to build a sustainable community for future generations.

Many people who grew up in rural areas are likely to want to remain in their home village, especially if their family and close friends are there too.

We're aware of the struggles faced by people seeking either affordable rental homes or the means to purchase a home. The challenge is real and affects people of all ages at many stages in life.

INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE IN HOUSING NEED

CAN YOU RELATE TO ANY OF THESE SITUATIONS?

- You're hoping to inherit a farm, home or piece of land but you haven't considered what would happen if your family lost it
- Your home is tied to your job and you're not sure what you'd do if you lost your job
- You're in a private rented home - you worry about what you would do if your rent became unaffordable
- You'd like to buy a home in your local area, but you can't find one that's affordable and you don't know where to find one
- You'd like to build your own home, but you don't know what land is available or where to look
- You're a young family or looking to start a family and need a larger home
- You're an older resident wanting to downsize or get a more accessible home
- You're hoping to move back to your village after university or because you've got a job nearby, or you need to care for relatives or need care yourself
- You're unable to rent a home or don't know whether social, affordable or market rent is the best option for you
- You're unable to buy a home or even get a mortgage or don't know what products are out there, such as shared ownership, Discount Market Sale/First Homes, Rent to Buy or Market Sale.



HOW YOU CAN GET HELP?

If you're concerned about being able to find an affordable home now or in the future, or just curious to see what advice is out there, you can get help from any of the following:

RURAL HOUSING ENABLERS (RHEs)

RHEs provide a free and impartial advice service throughout the rural areas of North Yorkshire. They are employed by North Yorkshire Council and have supported local communities, landowners and parish councils for the past 20 years to develop affordable housing to meet the identified needs of local communities.

The RHEs work in partnership with 20 Registered Providers of housing, who bring their expertise and access to government funding schemes. The majority are not for profit organisations which work in partnership with local communities to meet local need.

You can contact the RHE partnership with your request for help by email: affordablehousing@northyorks.gov.uk. They will provide you with advice and, depending on the circumstances, can pursue a number of the following options:

- Liaise with your local parish or town council to gain support to undertake a survey to establish the housing needs of your community and inform what type, size and number of homes are required
- Help to explore options so you can find the solution that suits your community
- Arrange a village walkabout to identify suitable locations for a Rural Exception Site and contact the landowner to discuss availability and price. Rural Exception Sites are small sites located on the edge of rural settlements that can be built on, provided they are used for affordable housing for local people
- Speak to North Yorkshire Council's planning or National Planning Authorities and policy teams on your behalf to get initial suitability advice about possible development sites
- Bring together all parties and act as the honest broker to find a solution
- Facilitate community consultation and engagement
- Ensure the community is informed of the processes being followed and understand the jargon used
- Work with those looking for a home, so that they are registered on North Yorkshire Home Choice and know what stages need to be followed
- Celebrate with the community when any homes are completed and occupied

YOUR PARISH OR TOWN COUNCIL

Parish and town councils represent the grass roots of local democracy and know their communities well.

They may be concerned about the lack of affordable homes in the local area and can ask for a housing needs survey to be carried out by the RHE. This is the starting point if new homes are to be delivered on rural exception sites.

Parish and town councils play a critical role in engaging with local people to ensure they understand why a survey is being carried out and to encourage them to take part.

REGISTERED PROVIDERS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS)

A Registered Provider can provide social and affordable housing to people at up to 80% below market rents. Many are not-for-profit and occasionally some are profit providers. Both types are registered with the government agency, Homes England.

Registered Providers will ensure homes are only allocated to eligible residents who meet an identified housing need.

Where local councils have retained their own housing stock, they are able to develop new affordable homes in most areas.

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL AND ITS COUNCILLORS

North Yorkshire Council is responsible for having policies in place to secure the delivery of new homes, including affordable and specialist homes.

It holds a list of preferred Registered Providers that could deliver new affordable homes on allocated sites, Rural Exception Sites and windfall sites - those not specifically allocated for development on the local plan, but unexpectedly become available for development during the lifetime of the plan.

Where the need for a Rural Exception Site has been evidenced through a housing needs survey, the council will work with the RHE, parish or town council and Registered Provider to ensure that a potential scheme is sympathetic to its surroundings and fits within the overall housing strategy.

The council's planning team can provide pre-planning advice and guidance on suggested sites and the design and quality of the proposed development. It is responsible for processing the planning application, making a decision on the application and securing any associated legal agreements.

Division councillors on North Yorkshire Council play a key role in providing local leadership on housing, advocating the benefits of affordable housing and working with parish and town councils to engage with the wider community, not just those who have an identified housing need.

If you want to contact your local councillor directly, you can find their details at northyorks.gov.uk.

HOW ARE NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES PROVIDED?

New affordable homes in rural areas are normally provided in one of the following three ways.

RURAL EXCEPTION SITES

These are often the only means of delivering new affordable homes in rural communities and most planning authorities have a rural exceptions policy in their local plan.

North Yorkshire Council will consider a piece of land as a Rural Exception Site if it meets an identified housing need. Homes planned for such sites must be designed and built to blend in with the characteristics of the village and meet Nationally Described Space Standards.

A Rural Exception Site is generally land that:

- Sits on the edge of the village boundary but adjacent to the development limit
- Is being considered to meet a locally identified housing need
- Is for affordable homes only to rent or buy and managed by a Registered Provider or estate

RHEs can identify local housing needs at no costs to the local community. They will also gather secondary data to support this need and hold future consultation events to promote the work. These events enable community residents to understand what is being proposed, explain how they can be involved and register their own housing need.

ALLOCATED SITES

Councils with planning authority responsibility are required to have an adopted local plan which sets out where new homes may be built. Government policy states that sites for five or more homes can be allocated in the local plan for new homes.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that an element of new affordable homes can be sought on sites of 10 or more homes.

Each council will also set policies for the percentage of new homes to be provided as affordable homes on each site. The percentage will vary between local plans.

A legal agreement, known as a Section 106 agreement (s106), makes development proposals acceptable in planning terms. The delivery of affordable homes is generally secured through this agreement. It specifies the number, size, type and tenure of the affordable homes to be provided or the amount of financial contribution towards new affordable homes in lieu of on-site provision.

WINDFALL SITES

These are sites that have not been identified or allocated within the local plan. Many rural settlements have few, if any, sites allocated because available sites fall below the minimum threshold. Smaller sites comprising of one to four homes may come forward as windfall sites.

THE COST OF HOMES IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT WOULD COST YOU TO RENT OR BUY A HOME IN NORTH YORKSHIRE?

A rule of thumb states that a household should not spend more than 25% of their total annual income to rent a home or 35% of their total household income to buy a home.

Area	Average house price (£)	Income required to purchase 80% share (£)	Monthly private rent (£)
North Yorkshire	324,399	74,148	770
Richmondshire	307,608	70,311	613
Hambleton	329,107	75,225	696
Craven	309,145	70,662	656
Ryedale	340,687	78,871	723
Scarborough	225,799	51,611	577
Selby	279,541	63,896	757
Harrogate	419,975	95,994	944

Broadacres (Registered Provider) affordable rents:

	One bed (£)	Two bed (£)	Three bed (£)
Per week	99.89	125.34	126.18
Per calendar month	399.56	501.86	504.72

	United Kingdom	Yorkshire and Humber
Average mean house price	£377,216	£235,436
Mean annual earnings	£35,012	£31,673
Ratio house price to Income	11	7
Mean monthly private rent	£960	£709
Unemployment rate	3.7%	3.5%

Note: Secondary Data Source National Housing Federation Home Truths 2022/23, unless stated otherwise

The lack of affordable housing is often the reason for rural businesses being unable to recruit or retain employees. From the figures on the adjacent page you can see why. Even when rural businesses pay their employees a good wage, it may not be enough to rent a home and definitely not enough to be able to buy a home on the open market.

This is why a suite of new intermediate options have been introduced to the affordable market, made possible by local councils, Registered Providers, developers and mortgage lenders working together. These are:

SHARED OWNERSHIP

Potential buyers that meet the eligibility criteria to purchase a share of the property and pay 2.75% rent on the unsold equity until they own 80% of the property. They can purchase from a 10% share and increase their share ownership in 1% increases up to a maximum of 80% ownership. A deposit on the 10% or whatever share they purchase is required. The Registered Provider will pay up to £500 per major repair during the first 10 years.

DISCOUNT MARKET SALES

These homes are sold to eligible purchasers (you must live in the specified area and not be able to purchase a home at full market value) at a discount of at least 20% of the open market value. Whenever the home is resold, the discount will continue to apply in perpetuity. This may be secured by a Local Land Charge. Private developers can provide these homes if the discount and potential purchaser are approved by the local council.

RENT TO BUY

Potential buyers who meet the eligibility criteria part buys and part rents the property. They agree to a period (three to five years) when they will rent at an affordable rent level, while saving to pay a deposit and purchase the home.

However, if they cannot purchase at the end of the agreed period, the Registered Provider may ask the local council to convert the home status to affordable rent. This decision will be at the council's discretion, as the property will have been approved for Rent to Buy during the planning process.



CAN LOCAL COMMUNITIES DO ANYTHING TO HELP THEMSELVES?

Local communities, like yours, can take responsibility for instigating the delivery of new affordable homes in rural areas, thereby helping to keep family networks together and support a thriving economy.

Refer to the 'how you can get help' section of this leaflet on how best to start the process. You could also look to good practice examples of how other communities have worked together to deliver new affordable homes.

If a housing needs survey is required to establish local housing need, it is important that you take part and encourage others to do so. The level of responses can greatly impact on the likelihood of a development being successful.

When a scheme is worked up in partnership with a Registered Provider, you and your neighbours may have concerns, such as the location of the scheme, the number of affordable homes being proposed and the scheme design. We would encourage you to discuss your concerns openly as there may be ways to resolve them or find an alternative solution.

Once a planning application is submitted, you can provide comments (to support or object) in line with the information published on the site notices and council website.

If planning permission is granted, it's good practice to keep track of how the development is progressing. Attending parish or town council meetings is a good way to do this.

Make sure that you, your family and friends register on northyorkshirehomechoice.org.uk - this is where all affordable homes in North Yorkshire are advertised and will allow you to formally express your interest in the new affordable homes. Homes will be allocated against the criteria set out in the planning permission and any associated legal agreements.

REAL LIFE STORIES OF PEOPLE IN HOUSING NEED

KATIE AND JAMES' STORY

Katie is a district nurse travelling throughout the rural villages and James works as a gamekeeper on the nearby estate.

They want to start a family, but currently live in a remote, small cottage, and are struggling to keep up with the rising private rents and associated bills such as council tax, electricity and fuel to run their home and vehicles.

Both sets of parents and grandparents have lived in the village for generations and are there to assist with childcare and support in the future.

Recently some affordable homes were developed in the nearby village in partnership with the parish council, landowner and Registered Provider.

They've received the news that they've been allocated one of the new homes as they met the local connection and employment eligibility criteria.

Everyone in the village is pleased to see Katie and James get a home along with others who have lived in the area all their lives. Their life is a bit easier now and Katie has announced she is expecting their first child.



MIKE'S STORY

Mike is 25 and has lived at home with his parents and siblings all his life, in a small, terraced house in the village. He works on the neighbour's farm, earning £280 per week, but has aspirations of getting his own place soon and starting a family.

There are limited properties for rent in the village and, due to the high rental prices and competition when any do become available, he cannot afford one and doesn't know when or how to apply.

His only option to get a home of his own is to move out to the nearest large settlement. This would have an impact on him as it would cost him to travel to work, he would not be at home to help his parents financially and he would have no disposable income to save to buy a home in the future.

Mike's story is real and is commonplace within rural communities. Without affordable housing, he and many more have had to move away, resulting in loss of income to local businesses and a smaller community.

GRAHAM'S STORY

Graham is nearly 80 years old, but still potters along and cannot hear of retiring yet. He still does some part time jobs for friends. Graham's wife sadly died recently following a short illness.

They had lived in a large family home with their children for many years, but it was too large for one person and no longer fit for purpose. Graham could no longer keep up with the rising costs. With no mortgage protection or insurance, the home would have to be sold.

Graham did not know what to do and, being a very proud man, he did not want to ask for help.

Looking at all the options available to him, selling his home and clearing his mortgage and debts, was the best solution.

In terms of next steps, he had too much income to be eligible to rent an affordable home and private rents were astronomical - a two bed bungalow was in the region of £900 a month. There have never been any affordable homes built in the area, he did not have enough money to buy a home outright and was too old to get a mortgage again.

Graham has now bought a lodge on a residential site, where he can live for 11 months of the year. He will visit family or go on holiday for the remaining month.

His aspiration is that he will be able to move his lodge onto his own land, but at the moment, planning legislation does not allow this.

Graham wants to remain in the area where he and his family have lived for most of their lives. He needs them to be close to provide him with care and support as he grows older.

CLAIRE'S STORY

Claire is 30 years old and has just taken up a permanent job in the Leeming Bar area near Bedale and is commuting from Darlington every day.

Up until six months ago she was unemployed and ever since has been looking for a new job. The offer of this job was welcomed and meant she would get to meet people and not be sat at home within four walls 24/7.

She has settled into her new job but is struggling with the cost of commuting 60 miles every day. She works shifts and has been unable to find anyone coming from the same direction to participate in a car share rota, which would help her.

She currently rents privately in Darlington and there are limited number of rented properties in Leeming Bar, where house prices are high. Claire would struggle to afford a large enough mortgage on her salary and has been unable to save a very large deposit.

If there were more affordable homes built in Leeming Bar, she would meet the local connection criteria through working in the parish. This may also help employers retain and recruit staff as many travel to Leeming Bar from far and wide and experience the same issues as Claire.



INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WITH LAND TO OFFER FOR DEVELOPMENT

Are you a landowner or estate manager with a site that you think would be suitable for affordable homes?

Any proposed site needs to be on the edge of or adjacent to the development limit of the village.

Half an acre to an acre could possibly be developed for 6 to 12 homes, all dependent on the site and type needed by the local community.

Get in touch by email: affordablehousing@northyorks.gov.uk



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