



West Yorkshire
Housing Strategy 2040
Executive Summary

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West
Yorkshire
Combined
Authority

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Foreword

In developing our first West Yorkshire Housing Strategy, I have reflected on the value of having a safe, secure and affordable place to call home.

As Mayor, I have the privilege of meeting residents in every corner of West Yorkshire. I recently met a family who shared with me their experience of living in a poor quality private rented home, struggling to get repairs done and faced with the threat of eviction if they were to complain too much. When I met them, they had just moved into a new social home and were thrilled with the safety, security, warmth and longevity that their new home provided.

During our conversation I was reminded of my own experience growing up in social housing – not having to worry about uncontrollable rents, disrepair or the looming threat of a no-fault eviction. Fundamentally, housing is a basic human right and everyone is entitled to a decent home, a place where they can put down roots – the literal foundations needed to live a good and healthy life.

That is why we need to continue to accelerate action on housing at a regional level, and why we have set a clear mission statement to focus our work to 2040:

Our ambition is to create safe and inclusive places to live that meet the needs of our residents.

We will do this by working with our partners to deliver sustainable and affordable homes in well-connected communities where people choose to live.

Ensuring that West Yorkshire is a place we are proud to call home.

Success can be accelerated when we work together, with a shared vision, towards collective objectives like the ones set out in our first regional Housing Strategy for West Yorkshire. Our vision for housing in West Yorkshire is ambitious. We will create a region where people can move between home, work and recreation with ease. We are putting net-zero and sustainability at the heart of our work and making sure no one is left behind with equality, diversity and inclusion being at the forefront of our minds as we implement the strategy across the region.

We are realistic in our outlook – we know there are no quick fixes to the problems many people face when it comes to finding a safe, affordable and long-term home. But we won't let this hold us back, we will unite and accelerate the excellent work already being done by our five local authorities, and we will bring together public and private sector partners across the region to achieve our ambitions.

Tracy Brabin
Mayor of West Yorkshire

Introduction

Everyone across West Yorkshire should have a safe and affordable home in a thriving community that is well-connected to places they need to access for employment, education, healthcare, recreation or other opportunities.

The West Yorkshire Combined Authority brings together the local authorities of Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. Within this document, **our first West Yorkshire Housing Strategy**, we shape our future journey to deliver on the housing needs of people and places across

our region. Delivering the truly affordable homes and thriving, healthy communities that people need will help us to achieve the shared vision that we set out in our West Yorkshire Plan for a prosperous, happy, well-connected, sustainable and safe West Yorkshire. **A place we are proud to call home.**

Our objectives



Objective 1

Boosting the supply of the right homes in the right places



Objective 2

Increasing the provision of truly affordable, accessible and adaptable homes



Objective 3

Improving the quality of our existing homes



Objective 4

Creating resilient places that support the wellbeing of our residents

Our guiding principles

Sustainability

Create and grow sustainable and well-connected neighbourhoods, contributing to the region's net zero carbon ambitions

Equality and inclusive growth

Diverse housing offer across the region, reflecting and responding to the needs and well-being of our communities

Our track record of delivery

Since our inception in 2014, we have developed a strong track record for delivery across the region. We have:

As a region delivered over 1,500 affordable homes in 2022/23 – the highest number of affordable housing completions in West Yorkshire since 2010.

1

Demonstrated our ability to deliver at pace through the **Brownfield Housing Fund**, which will see 5,400 new homes developed on underused brownfield land previously a blight on our communities.

2

Established a landmark **Strategic Place Partnership** with Homes England. This identifies our priority areas for housing-led growth and regeneration with the capacity to deliver over 40,000 homes by 2040.

3

Invested in resource and capacity across all five West Yorkshire local authorities to support the development of housing projects that will help to enable the delivery of over 22,000 homes in the region.

4

Built a strong network of social housing providers through the **West Yorkshire Housing Partnership**, who collectively provide a fifth of all homes across the region.

5

Supported the retrofitting of over 3,200 social homes to improve their energy efficiency.

6



Our role

The devolution deal and the election of the first Mayor of West Yorkshire in May 2021 cemented a regional ambition for delivering sustainable and affordable housing. Nonetheless, the Combined Authority forms only one part of the housing system essential to deliver on our housing mission:

Our ambition is to create safe and inclusive places to live that meet the needs of our residents.

We will do this by working with our partners to deliver sustainable and affordable homes in well-connected communities where people choose to live.

Ensuring that West Yorkshire is a place we are **proud to call home**.

This West Yorkshire Housing Strategy articulates the need and demand for a **good quality, truly affordable and adaptable housing offer across the region**. Through this strategy, we outline the outcomes we collectively want to achieve across West Yorkshire and how we are going to get there. We recognise that as a public body, we cannot achieve our mission alone, but it is essential that we set a **strategic direction for housing delivery and improvement across our region**, so that our partners can work together to deliver for the people of West Yorkshire. We will enable this by collaborating with and convening partners to create networks of opportunity, using our tools, flexibilities and powers to support local authorities to deliver and unlock sites and systems where the market is not serving the needs of our people. We will leverage in additional funding to invest in homes for the future across West Yorkshire.

Joining up our spatial ambitions

West Yorkshire is made up of a network of unique cities, towns and villages, all with their own identities and proud cultures which provide the foundations of great places to live.

Together with our five local authorities, our spatial plans, partnerships and strategies collectively reflect our ambitions to tackle the climate emergency, achieve inclusive growth and deliver well-designed places.

Our landmark **Strategic Place Partnership** with Homes England identifies priority areas across each local authority area within our region where housing-led regeneration can have a transformative impact, with capacity to deliver over 40,000 homes by 2040.

Throughout our activity, we will continue to take a spatial approach to identify where co-ordinated public sector intervention, private sector investment and partner collaboration can deliver for places, people and communities across West Yorkshire.

Our guiding principles

The Housing Strategy sets out two guiding principles: **sustainability** and equality and **inclusive growth**.

These principles underpin and guide the steps we will take to achieve our objectives. We will weave these principles into our work with partners, our programmes and how we monitor and measure delivery against our objectives.

Our objectives

We will achieve our housing mission by 2040 by focusing our activity on four core objectives.

These have been developed in close collaboration with our partners and using a robust and in-depth regional evidence base on the housing challenges that West Yorkshire faces.





Objective 1

Boosting the supply of the right homes in the right places

Delivering the number of homes at the scale our region needs is a significant challenge in the current economic and geo-political climate. Our work to date has helped to unlock delivery across our region and supported the recovery of house building after the COVID-19 pandemic, but levels of housing delivery are not even across our region. Some areas struggle to attract the housing investment they need due to low land values or the higher costs of making land ready to build housing on.

We need to work together to ensure that these places can realise their true potential as vibrant communities, and prioritise our delivery on brownfield land. Central to the work of the Combined Authority will be ensuring that new, existing and growing communities are better-connected, linking our investment in homes to investment in an improved transport network. Planning these together, will ensure that our residents have greater choice in where they live and how they access jobs and leisure activities, in turn improving residents' quality of life.

To boost the delivery of the right homes in the right places, we will need a range of providers to work with us. We will work to diversify the market by supporting both large housebuilders – who play a key role in delivering at scale across our region – as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and locally-driven interventions, such as community-led housing providers. This diverse network of providers will need robust and resilient supply chains, and a skilled workforce to deliver the homes we need for the future.

Outcomes

To meet these challenges and deliver on Objective 1: Boosting the supply of the right homes in the right places, we will work towards the following outcomes:

Deliver a robust pipeline of housing development opportunities aligned to well-connected places.

Support local authorities to deliver on housing need set out in local plans.

Improve the number of sustainable homes developed.

Increase in the number of homes delivered in Spatial Priority Areas.



Objective 2

Increasing the provision of truly affordable, accessible and adaptable homes

Through our work, we have sought to turbocharge the delivery of affordable homes, building strong networks with our social housing providers through the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership. In 2022-2023, we saw 1,536 affordable homes delivered, the highest number completed in a single year since 2010-11. Despite this positive progress, there are still not enough affordable homes in West Yorkshire to meet present and future demand.

There are nearly 85,000 households on housing waiting lists across West Yorkshire, and the acute housing need felt across the region creates a challenging environment for our local authority partners, with over 1,100 households in temporary accommodation. These issues are exacerbated by ever-increasing private rental costs – Leeds, for example, has seen rents increase by around 23% in the past five years alone.

These spiralling costs and the current economic climate are making home ownership increasingly unaffordable. There are additional challenges that we face in West Yorkshire, such as the high relative cost of transport to access jobs and higher costs associated with heating our ageing and fuel-inefficient houses, which make it even more difficult for people to buy their first home.

Across our lives, the place we live plays a significant role in keeping us healthy and independent. We must ensure that our homes are adaptable to support the changing needs of an ageing population, as well as ensuring that we have an adequate supply of specialist or supported accommodation to meet the requirements of residents who need more from their housing.

Outcomes

To meet these challenges and deliver on Objective 2: Increasing the provision of truly affordable, accessible and adaptable homes, we will work towards the following outcomes:

Increased delivery of affordable housing across all local authority areas.

Improved access to the housing market for low-income households.

Support local authority partners to address housing need.

Increased support for local authorities tackling homelessness.

Increased levels of accessible and adaptable housing.



Objective 3

Improving the quality of our existing homes

Decent quality, sustainable and energy efficient homes are an essential ingredient for the health, well-being and zero-carbon future of the region. However, in many areas of West Yorkshire, homes are older, less energy-efficient and poorer quality than the national average. This leads to high energy bills and compounds fuel poverty across the region. That is why we are working at pace to develop our Better Homes Hub and are investing heavily in decarbonising social homes across the region to support everyone in West Yorkshire to live in a warm, comfortable and low-carbon home.

Poor quality housing can also have a significant detrimental impact on health, and official estimates indicate that one in every five homes across West Yorkshire does not meet the statutory minimum safety standards for housing or may be in a state of disrepair. The condition of homes in the private rented sector, which now houses 20% of West Yorkshire residents, is a particular cause for concern. An estimated two in every five privately rented homes across West Yorkshire fail to provide decent quality accommodation to residents. This not only impacts individual households – it costs the national economy and the NHS an estimated £18.5 billion per year. We urgently need Government to give us the powers and resources to join up the work of housing and health colleagues, as well as the long-term, sustainable investment needed to deliver decent, climate resilient homes that are fit for the future.

Outcomes

To meet these challenges and deliver on Objective 3: Improving the quality of our existing homes, we will focus on the following outcomes:

Work towards eliminating non-decent homes across West Yorkshire.

Improve the quality of homes in the private rented sector.

Increase the number of low carbon homes to work towards our net-zero targets by 2038.

Reduce the proportion of households in fuel poverty.

Reduce the incidence of health issues related to housing quality.



Objective 4

Creating resilient places that support the well-being of our residents

West Yorkshire is made up of diverse and flourishing communities, yet the distribution of health, wealth and opportunity is not even across the region. High-quality housing can have transformative impacts on places and communities. We must work to ensure that our physical, digital and community infrastructure are robust, and that our neighbourhoods are great places to live and play, where people can safely walk, wheel and cycle. We will build on the strengths of our existing places, ensuring that our homes and communities play their vital role in supporting the health, safety and happiness of residents.

In some places, residents have limited access to green space, and this issue disproportionately impacts people from ethnic minority communities. Parks are essential and promote wellbeing across the whole community. Access to safe outdoor space particularly affects women and girls across the region and children. We will ensure that our work is targeted to address these inequalities.

We want walking, wheeling and cycling to be the natural choice for short journeys, and for all places to be well-connected by public transport. Right now, there is heavy reliance on car use in the region, and only around 0.2% of journeys made by our residents are by cycle, much lower than the 2% average across England.

To succeed, great places require local amenities and community infrastructure, as well as good digital connectivity, including high speed broadband. We will work with partners to create sustainable places that meet the needs of existing, growing and future communities.

We must also ensure that our infrastructure is resilient to meet the demands of our changing climate. Around 3% of properties in West Yorkshire are situated within a flood zone. We are investing up to £22 million to reduce flood risk backing an ambitious programme to safeguard our communities and businesses.

Outcomes

To meet these challenges and deliver on Objective 4: Creating resilient places that support the well-being of our residents, we will work towards the following outcomes:

Improved neighbourhood safety and health through improvements in quality of place.

Support for developments with access to green space and space to play.

Support for developments that facilitate active travel.

Improved infrastructure resilience.

Find out more
[westyorks-ca.gov.uk](https://www.westyorks-ca.gov.uk)

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All information correct at time of writing