



York & North Yorkshire

Affordable Homes Standard

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Foreword...

As a Partnership we're working to ensure that everyone across York and North Yorkshire has access to a high quality, warm, affordable home that meets their current and future needs. Together our members will deliver thousands of new homes across North Yorkshire over the next decade.

Building the right homes in the right places

As housing providers with a long-standing track record of delivering affordable homes, we want to ensure that the right homes are built to meet the housing needs of local communities across York and North Yorkshire.

This is why the York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership has developed an Affordable Housing Standard. The Standard has been developed and agreed by the Partnership which includes all 23 housing associations and the 2 local authorities that work across the region.

It sets out the required standards and a Section 106 (S106) framework for new affordable homes across North Yorkshire. By setting mutually beneficial standards, this guidance aims to streamline delivery, reduce risks, and enhance outcomes for future developments and S106 agreements.

S106 is an important mechanism to enable the delivery of affordable homes. However, it's also vitally important that homes delivered through S106 meet the needs of local communities across York and North Yorkshire.

Together we've made a collective pledge to only develop and acquire homes that meet the Affordable Homes Standard.

The Affordable Homes Standard will help us to deliver our shared ambition to provide fantastic homes and great places to live. It also supports the York and North Yorkshire Mayor's ambition to deliver high quality, affordable homes.

We will continue to build on our strong relationships and history of joint delivery with developers to create quality homes and places for our customers. And moving forward, homes which also meet our Affordable Homes Standard requirements.



Nick Atkin
Chair of the YNY Housing Partnership



About the Standard

To ensure the best outcomes our preference is for early engagement with developers.

To enable this, we have agreed specific requirements for any affordable homes we build, or acquire through S106. This includes space standards, fabric first approaches and the right mix of tenures to meet local housing needs.

In addition, we have developed a framework showing key elements to be considered to enable a positive collaboration between housing providers for planning, design, handover and operational maintenance arrangements.

Our Standards:

- 1** We will only develop or acquire homes that meet the Affordable Homes Standard.
- 2** We will work collaboratively across the Partnership to ensure we pay a fair price for high quality homes.
- 3** All homes must meet National Described Space Standards as a minimum.
- 4** Affordable Homes must be at least the same standard as and indistinguishable from market sale homes; and should include adequate in curtilage parking facilities.

5 To support cohesive communities that can thrive, affordable homes should be integrated across each development and their façades and location should be tenure blind.

6 Homes should be accessible and/or adaptable to suit customers throughout their lifetime.

7 Homes should reflect local demographics and housing need. To ensure we provide homes for single person households, families and an ageing population.

8 Our preference is for new homes with high levels of insulation (adopting a fabric first approach) as well as low carbon heating systems.

9 Homes that do not have high levels of insulation and/or low carbon heating systems should be designed to enable us to easily improve their energy efficiency.

10 We want to create developments that protect and enhance the natural environment and provide space for nature to thrive.



S106 framework

Area	Requirement	Overview
Pre-planning and scheme requirements	Programme and delivery schedule	<p>To make it easier for housing associations (HAs) to plan financially and secure funding, it's important that delivery programme timelines are agreed in advance. Keep HAs up to date regularly on progress and any changes should be agreed.</p> <p>When it comes to handovers, completed homes should be handed over in phases with an agreement on the maximum and minimum number per week. This helps with the management of housing allocations for new residents.</p>
	Sustainability and environmental targets	Housing providers have committed to specific sustainability and environmental targets and require developers to align with these targets and evidence how sustainability goals are being met.
	Fire strategy approval	Building safety is highly regulated, particularly for housing providers so it's essential that both the fire strategies and building designs are clearly understood to allow the effective management and maintenance of the building. Where relevant, the fire strategy and corresponding building design must be agreed with housing providers at an early stage.
Design and construction standards	Collaboration on inspection and snagging process	<p>It's important that housing providers inspect developments under construction and we'd like house builders to engage with us on this. Developers must also build homes that comply with the quality standards of housing providers and engage with inspection processes including witnessing the commissioning of all building services.</p> <p>Inspections by HAs will also ensure that properties meet the right quality standards to enable handover.</p>
Land, planning and legal framework	S106 restrictions and mortgage protection clauses	Housing providers should be engaged early to ensure that suitable mortgage protection clauses (MPCs) are included within S106 agreements. There are a range of factors which can affect the valuation basis on which housing providers can secure funding including affordability, nominations agreements and marketing restrictions. If these are inadequate it can affect the funding value so early engagement on S106 agreements is needed.

S106 framework

Area	Requirement	Overview
Operational management and maintenance	Complaints procedure aligned with the housing ombudsman code	Housing providers have their own complaints policies and must follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. Developers need to ensure that they provide information within the timescales requested and resolve complaints in line with the providers policy.
Design and construction standards	Service charges to be minimised	<p>Residents of affordable housing are often on low incomes. High levels of service charges make homes hard to let and mean that those wanting to buy a shared ownership property may struggle to get a mortgage. Therefore, service charges must be affordable, transparent and offer value for money.</p> <p>In addition, arrangements and conditions for managing agents should be agreed early on, and service charge information as accurate as possible.</p> <p>It's also important that designs minimise the impact of service charges. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal areas that are easy to clean and maintain. • Unadopted green spaces and public realm should be easy to maintain and be in proportion to the number of homes paying a service charge for its upkeep. • Mechanical and electrical components and systems such as lifts, communal heating, access control to be agreed with HAs.
	Timely rectification of defects during the warranty	<p>A two-year defect liability period (DLP) should be included in the contract and all defects should be fixed within agreed timelines. Having homes with defects can cause inconvenience to residents and cause complaints to the housing provider. Therefore, if timescales on remedying defects are not met, housing providers may look to recover their costs.</p> <p>All housing providers are committed to providing high quality homes and rectifying defects promptly is an important part of this.</p>

Our members

Housing Associations:

- Accent Group
- Anchor Hanover
- Beyond Housing
- Broadacres
- 54 Homes North
- The Guinness Partnership
- Harrogate Housing Association
- Harrogate Neighbours Housing Association
- Home Group
- Housing 21
- Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust
- Leeds Federated
- Muir
- Places for People
- Railway Housing Association
- Riverside
- Sanctuary
- South Yorkshire Housing Association
- Stonewater
- Thirteen Group
- Together Housing
- Vico Homes
- Yorkshire Housing

Local Authorities:

- City of York Council
- North Yorkshire Council

Contact us:

For more information about the York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership, please contact Matthew Wilson at the Northern Housing Consortium.

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