



**York & North Yorkshire**  
Housing Partnership

## North Yorkshire Tenancy Strategy Consultation

### Introduction

The York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership welcomes North Yorkshire Council's review of the Tenancy Strategy. The document is a useful and important reference for housing partners to frame their individual Tenancy Policies, particularly in outlining the landscape of housing and tenures in the area, and the Council's expectations of its housing provider partners. We welcome the flexibility offered by the Council to Housing Providers to maximise the various tenures available.

### General comments

We would welcome a review of the use of the word 'property' and instead substitute for 'home' where possible. This helps to recognise that the homes we offer are more than an asset for our customers, they are a foundation for comfort, stability and belonging.

It would be helpful to add a section to define the scope of this Strategy. This would allow policy areas which are related to the Tenancy Strategy, but which don't necessarily need to be included within it to be referenced. Examples include affordability, adaptations, downsizing and the Good Tenant Scheme. The scope would also ensure the Strategy remains focussed on its core aims.

The scope could helpfully outline the types of housing and stakeholders to which the Strategy applies (including the definitions of affordable housing which fall within the scope of the Strategy), the types of tenancies, the circumstances in which they are applied, and any other core parameters. Other tenures, such as private renting, fall outside the scope but it may be appropriate to outline the broader types of housing available in the area.

It would be helpful to include an additional section to the strategy to cover customer engagement and consultation as part of the development and implementation of this strategy.

### Background – Data tables

The table included on page 1 could be expanded to cover all the tenures listed in the second table. This would ensure that the numbers across both data sets correlate.

The table showing the data on demand for affordable housing across North Yorkshire (Page 2) provides valuable insight. However, it is important to consider that a significant proportion of applicants may already be occupying social housing, and therefore for many applicants a move would release a home for another household in need.

It might be beneficial to include data on the number of applicants who are not current tenants of social housing, assuming that such tenants are not excluded from the allocations scheme.

The York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership would also be interested to learn if the Council intends to review the Allocations Policy during the term of this strategy, for example, if demand for homes changes.

### **Strategic Links – National Context**

The timing of this strategy coincides with the Renters' Rights Bill which is currently under consideration in Parliament and is expected to be implemented by Summer 2025. This legislation is likely to have a substantial impact on the tenancy framework for both social housing and private rented homes. As such, it may be beneficial to include this in the national context section and detail around the likely implications for North Yorkshire Council, alongside expectations on Registered Providers to adhere to the new requirements. It would also be interesting to understand how the Council expects the Bill to impact on homelessness if private landlords exit the market.

Although it is unlikely to have been adopted by many providers, against the backdrop of the current financial challenges faced by the sector, it might be relevant to reference Chapter 4 of the [policy statement on rents for social housing](#). The policy states 'the government does not expect Registered Providers to adhere to its social rent and affordable rent policy requirements in relation to social tenants with high incomes', allowing Registered Providers to charge higher rents to households earning over £60k a year. Although this was published under a previous government, it has yet to be repealed so may be worth including.

### **Strategic Links – Local Context**

In this section it would be helpful to reference the other core local authority policies and strategies related to the Tenancy Strategy, such as those relating to:

- Homelessness
- Allocations
- Tenancy and Lettings
- Affordable Housing Development
- Housing Strategy

It would also be helpful to understand how these related policies and strategies align.

Just to note, there is a typo in the final sentence of this section.

### **Strategy – Aims and Objectives**

The view of The York and North Yorkshire Housing Partnership is that the core aim of this strategy should be to establish a high-level framework against which Registered Providers formulate their tenancy policies.

We also suggest that the aims and objectives make reference to place shaping and working with partners to deliver thriving and safe communities.

## **Sustainability – Affordability**

Affordability may not be a relevant subsection of this Strategy as affordability in itself is not necessarily resolved through a tenancy type. The affordable housing definition may fit more appropriately within a section outlining the scope of the strategy.

If a section is to be retained on affordability, the content related to conversions to affordable rent currently contained in the 'Mixed and Balanced Communities' section may fit here more appropriately.

## **Sustainability – Mixed and Balanced Communities**

As disposals are not specifically tenancy related decisions it might be more appropriate to reference the local approach to disposals in the scope or local context sections.

## **Sustainability – List of Tenancy types**

As mentioned above, the Renters' Rights Bill is likely to have a significant impact on the range of tenancies available to providers of affordable rented housing.

It might be useful to consider include a short paragraph in this section in relation to tenancies demoted by Court order as a result of ASB.

## **Sustainability – Review of Tenancies**

As the review of tenancies is not directly governed by the Tenancy Strategy this might be more appropriate as a subsection of the 'Flexible tenancies' section, and simply refer to individual Housing Associations having mechanisms for the review of tenancies.

The content relating to downsizing should also refer to the allocations policy as this defines how the move to a smaller property would actually be achieved. It might be helpful to expand this section to explain how downsizing moves are achieved and the expectation of Registered Providers to also support under occupiers to move within their lettings policies.

It would also be helpful to add a subheading for downsizing and adapted properties as it currently reads as if they are part of the 'Review of Tenancies'.

We support the intention to encourage downsizing where it releases much needed larger family type properties, however there may be some areas where there is high demand for smaller properties. A policy which increases demand for these types of homes might be counterproductive. It would be interesting to understand the data which informs this; however this is perhaps more fitting for an allocations or lettings policy.

## **Sustainability – Good Tenant Scheme**

The Good Tenant Scheme is a mechanism for offering additional priority to certain housing applicants. As it doesn't link directly to the types of tenancies offered it may be more relevant to an allocations policy, although it could be referenced in the local

context section of the Tenancy Strategy. It would also be helpful how this scheme works alongside the intention to meet housing need as high levels of transfers may limit the ability address urgent housing needs such as homelessness.

### **Accessibility**

We support the offer of support for vulnerable customers, and the expectation that housing providers will do the same. However, much of the description relates to the operation of the housing options and allocations service.

The strategy's provisions for supporting vulnerable groups, such as elderly residents, young families, or individuals at risk of homelessness, are vital. However, we urge the council to outline how these commitments will translate into actionable policies and ensure sufficient support mechanisms are also in place for existing customers.

We believe that accessibility, within the context of the Tenancy Strategy, should focus on providers considering factors such as property types, demand, and availability when developing their tenancy policies. This is particularly important when flexible tenancies are used to ensure the most effective use of affordable rented homes, while also ensuring that equality and diversity are fully considered.

Whilst the strategy mentions supported housing, it would helpful it is also outlined the commitment to existing or future supported housing and working with specialist third parties.

