



Report to:	Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee
Date:	29 February 2024
Subject:	West Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2040
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Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 This report updates the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee on progress made in relation to the West Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2040.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is to seek endorsement of the Strategy (attached at Appendix 1) and agreement by members of the Committee to recommend the West Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2040 to the Combined Authority for approval.

2. Information

Background

- 2.1. The existing West Yorkshire Combined Authority policy position was established in the Housing and Regeneration Strategy 2014, which was built on in the Leeds City Region Housing Vision 2019. Since then, there have been significant changes to the local, regional and national operating context and political settlement, including the election of the Mayor of West Yorkshire and the establishment of a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England. These changes have created a need for a renewed, clear strategic direction to guide our housing activity at a regional level, adding value to the vital work undertaken by local authorities and our partners.

- 2.2. In addition, the Mayor and five West Yorkshire local authority leaders launched the West Yorkshire Plan 2040 in June 2023. The West Yorkshire Plan sets out the collective ambitions of the Combined Authority and local authorities across five missions that collectively aim to achieve the vision for ‘a brighter West Yorkshire’. Each objective within the Housing Strategy connects to our missions set out in the West Yorkshire Plan.
- 2.3. The West Yorkshire Housing Strategy is an opportunity to present a regional trajectory to 2040 which links to and mirrors our wider focus on inclusive growth, sustainability, equality, diversity and inclusion.
- 2.4. The Housing Strategy is an evidence-led document, which draws upon extensive research and intelligence surrounding the housing related challenges and opportunities across the region. The strategy is grounded in partnership working, recognising that the objectives and outcomes can only be realised through working together.
- 2.5. The Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee have previously received updates on this evidence base and the development of the strategy document over the course of 2022 and 2023. The Committee received a full update on the then outline Housing Strategy at its meeting on 26th October 2023, which it endorsed for public consultation.

Overview and structure

- 2.6. The Housing Strategy sets out an overall mission statement for housing in West Yorkshire and four objectives that have been agreed with partners:

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.



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 well-being of our residents

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.

- 2.7. Our work to achieve this mission will focus on the four thematic objectives centred around the key challenges that our region faces. These objectives are underpinned by two guiding principles, **sustainability** and **equality and inclusive growth**, which will act as golden threads to connect and guide our various strands of activity. Following feedback from partners, we have spent time reviewing and simplifying our objectives to more clearly reflect the activity each will likely entail.
- 2.8. In terms of structure, each objective within the strategy document is divided into two parts. The first, **rationale**, brings together the evidence base built upon the challenges our region faces within the scope of that objective. This section is important as it aims to articulate the current baseline position across the region, which the Combined Authority and partners can then use as evidence to construct programmes, interventions and communicate with external stakeholders. The second part, **outcomes**, sets out in broad terms what we would like to achieve through our activity and that of our partners in relation to the challenges identified under the objective.
- 2.9. Appended to the Housing Strategy is our emerging delivery plan, which sets out existing activity under each objective as well as our planned actions for years 1 to 5 of the strategy. We also set out our asks of central government and other key stakeholders, specifying the additional resources and powers that we need in order to succeed.
- 2.10. We are also developing a suite of monitoring indicators, which build on the high-level indicators reported annually in the State of the Region and presented periodically to the Committee within the Monitoring Indicators report. These will allow us to monitor progress against the outcomes proposed in the strategy. We are working with our Research and Intelligence Team to consider the most appropriate approach to monitoring and reporting, which we will share with the Committee at a future meeting.

Engagement

- 2.11. The Housing Strategy has been co-developed with partners and subject to extensive internal and external engagement over the course of its development. Senior officers across local authority teams have had opportunity to review the document and have been heavily involved in our evidence and policy development work. Beyond this, Combined Authority officers have leveraged significant input from other public, private and third sector partners including through forums such as the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, which brings together the region's major providers of social housing.
- 2.12. Aligned to item 9 on the agenda, the Housing and Health Network have also been engaged during the development of the strategy with particular links made to the connections between good quality housing and health throughout the strategy. The strategy sets out the commitment to build upon the partnership agreement between the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board to strengthen the collaborative working between housing and health professionals in the region, contributing towards improving population health.

- 2.13. The development of the Housing Strategy has also been subject to oversight by the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee. The Committee received an update on the initial evidence base used to develop the strategy in Winter 2022/23, and subsequently reviewed an outline of the full strategy prior to public consultation at its October 2023 meeting.

Public consultation

- 2.14. A five-week online public consultation was conducted by the Combined Authority through its YourVoice platform across November and December 2023. This resulted in 1,174 visits made to the YourVoice page, with the majority (65%) of these originating from direct clicks on e-mail links, for example those sent by our partner organisations. A further quarter of those visits were through social media engagement.
- 2.15. We received 113 completed submissions, and results have been provisionally analysed to allow time for the views expressed to influence and shape the strategy document.
- 2.16. The full consultation outcome report is currently being drafted by the Combined Authority's consultation and engagement team and will be released on our YourVoice platform once finalised.
- 2.17. Beyond the online public consultation, we have also made contact with seldom heard groups in the region in order to invite comments on the Housing Strategy, and to develop relationships that may enable us to focus our activity and monitor its impact on groups with protected characteristics and other minority groups. We continue to seek further engagement with seldom heard groups across West Yorkshire as we move to launch and deliver the strategy and we are working with the Combined Authorities Inclusivity Champion to broaden our engagement as much as possible.
- 2.18. Key takeaways from our provisional analysis of the survey responses include:
- High levels of support for our two guiding principles (sustainability & equality and inclusive growth) with over 80% of participants agreeing/ strongly agreeing with this approach.
 - High levels of support (majority agree/strongly agree >75%) for the majority of the challenges identified across all four Housing Strategy objectives, indicating support for our characterisation of the challenges our region faces.
 - High levels of support for the outcomes we have identified across all four Housing Strategy objectives. Of the 18 outcomes consulted on, 14 received >75% agree/strongly agree responses, indicating significant endorsement of our direction of travel. No outcome failed to receive majority support.
 - For example, on **Objective 1**, 84% of survey respondents agreed that we should build more sustainable homes in low socio-economic areas, and 92% of respondents agreed that when building new homes, we should ensure that there are good transport links in that area. This shows significant support for our commitment within strategy to linking housing with opportunity through delivering the right homes in the right places.
 - In our provisional qualitative analysis of **Objective 1** responses, we found that several respondents were concerned about difficulties associated with a sufficient supply of affordable homes, with related concerns about the planning process. Several respondents

also highlighted a preference for development on brownfield land and the need to make better use of existing underutilised buildings.

- Under **Objective 2**, 74% of respondents felt that housing across our region is not affordable for local residents, and 78% agreed that there are too many people on waiting lists across West Yorkshire. In terms of outcomes, 90% of respondents agreed with our outcome to provide support to local authorities in addressing housing need.
- In our provisional qualitative analysis of **Objective 2** responses, although there was support for additional specialist housing to support our ageing population, several respondents felt that we ought to widen our focus here to also capture accommodation needed by those with physical and/or mental health conditions requiring support.
- Under **Objective 3**, 86% of respondents felt that homes across the region are not energy efficient. In terms of outcomes, 97% of respondents agreed that we should improve the quality of our homes to achieve better health outcomes. A smaller majority of survey respondents (57%) felt that private rented sector homes across West Yorkshire are of poor quality, with a significant number of respondents (29%) indicating that they did not know whether this was a challenge for our region, reaffirming the importance of a regional evidence base on this issue. By contrast, 85% of respondents agreed with our outcome relating to improving the quality of homes in the private rented sector.
- Our provisional qualitative analysis under **Objective 3** points to concerns around impacts of poor energy efficiency on those with low incomes, which is reflected in our evidence base. Several respondents also talked about difficulties associated with improving existing stock, and issues arising from a lack of investment over time.
- In responding to **Objective 4**, 92% of respondents felt that there should be improvements to the way our neighbourhoods are designed. There was slightly less agreement here (68%) with our outcomes relating to reducing inequality by integrating different socio-economic groups within neighbourhoods, and by integrating different types of housing. However, this is still a notable majority of agreement, indicating general support for these outcomes.
- In our provisional qualitative analysis of **Objective 4**, we found several respondents mentioned the need for improved community infrastructure such as schools, health centres and hospitals. This theme appeared across the data and was also noted in Objective 1 as well as in responses to our guiding principles.

Action taken in response to public consultation and partner feedback

- 2.19. Since the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee last reviewed the Housing Strategy outline at its October 2023 meeting, we have taken on board feedback around the structure of our objectives and outcomes. We have re-visited the objective under which each outcomes sit to ensure a consistent and logical approach across all four objectives, with each linking to a distinct policy area. We have not made significant changes to the outcomes themselves, based on support from partners and through the public consultation, as detailed above.
- 2.20. Nonetheless, in light of the feedback we received through the public consultation, we have:

- Made explicit reference to focusing on brownfield land development and recognised the opportunity to undertake further work to reuse existing building for residential development where this is suitable under **Objective 1**.
 - Made clearer reference to the need for affordable housing delivery under both **Objective 1** and **Objective 2**, linking development to wider issues of affordability across the region.
 - Under **Objective 1**, we have strengthened the links between housing and connectivity, improving the alignment between the Housing Strategy and the Connectivity Infrastructure Plan.
 - Under **Objective 2**, we have broadened our focus around accessibility and adaptability of housing to include needs across the life course. This responds to points made in the public consultation around the need to focus on support needs of those with physical or mental health conditions and/or disabilities.
 - Under **Objective 3**, we have strengthened our narrative on the condition of our homes, pointing out widespread decency issues and the need for co-ordinated action to address this at a regional level.
 - Under **Objective 4**, we are considering the views expressed surrounding the need for additional community infrastructure (e.g. schools, health centres and hospitals) when building new homes. Whilst specific decisions relating to infrastructure requirements linked to developments form part of the planning process (which is a function of local authorities), we are focussed on ensuring we take a place-based approach across our priority areas (for example the focus areas of our Strategic Place Partnership) which considers the infrastructure and fabric of communities alongside the development of homes. We have embedded this narrative into Objective 4 and our delivery plan.
- 2.21. A full draft of the West Yorkshire Housing Strategy has been developed to incorporate these changes, attached at Appendix 1. Further detailed engagement on this document has been undertaken with senior officers in districts, and with the West Yorkshire Housing Partnership.

Next steps

- 2.22. Following comments and endorsement from the Committee, the Mayor's foreword and executive summary will be developed and included in the document before it is presented to the Combined Authority. Combined Authority officers will continue to refine the document prior to the Combined Authority meeting to incorporate any further feedback received from members and local authority partners.
- 2.23. A final version of the Housing Strategy will, subject to endorsement and agreement by the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee, be presented to the Combined Authority for approval at its meeting on 14th March 2024.

- 2.24. Following approval, the Housing Strategy will be fully designed and plans for a launch in Spring/Summer 2024 will be developed.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1. Sustainability, as one of our guiding principles, will underpin our activity under the Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy links to and references the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan, as well as existing programmes including the Better Homes Hub, our regional retrofit programme. The strategy sets out the Combined Authority's intentions for improving the quality of new and existing housing stock, contributing to our 2038 net-zero carbon ambitions. It also sets out our response to the infrastructure and community challenges posed by the climate emergency, such as increased risks of flooding.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1. Inclusive growth is identified as part of the 'Equality and Inclusive Growth' guiding principle of the strategy. The Housing Strategy aims to progress our work on inclusive growth, ensuring that as many people as possible, from all of our diverse communities, can contribute to and benefit from our interventions. We will work to monitor how the implementation of our strategy affects communities that may face multiple exclusion and disadvantage.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1. The Housing Strategy is underpinned by principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. The evidence base indicates that, across all strategy areas, we must continue to work to understand the diverse housing experiences of those with protected characteristics, as well as other marginalised and minority groups across our region.
- 5.2. We continue to develop our engagement with seldom heard groups across West Yorkshire to ensure the voice of diverse communities is reflected in the development and delivery of the strategy.
- 5.3. The Housing Strategy has been subject to a completed Stage One Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and we are currently completing our Stage Two EqIA, which will be drafted prior to the strategy being presented to the Combined Authority.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1. There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1. There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

9. External Consultees

- 9.1 Engagement with partners has been carried out throughout the process of developing the strategy with feedback incorporated at each stage. A full public consultation also took place through November/December 2023.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1. That the Place, Regeneration and Housing Committee endorses and recommends the West Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2040 for approval by the Combined Authority.

11. Background Documents

- 11.1. The following background documents are referred to in this report:

[Leeds City Region Housing Vision](#)

[Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England](#)

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – West Yorkshire Housing Strategy 2040 [draft]