

Factsheet 1

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing has been a key priority for the Council for a number of years. There is a high level of need for affordable housing in North Norfolk due to the cost of housing in relation to average incomes.

What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable Housing is homes provided to meet the needs of eligible households who needs are not met by the market, to be affordable homes must:

- Be provided at a cost low enough for households to be able to afford with regard to local incomes and house prices
- Be protected as affordable in perpetuity and if this restriction is lifted, the subsidy is recycled into new affordable housing provision.

There are 3 types of affordable housing:

- Social Rented
- Affordable Rented Housing
- Intermediate Housing

What is Social Rented Housing?

Properties which are owned and managed by Local Authorities or Registered Providers (Housing Associations) and which are let at target (sub market) rents controlled by Government.

What is Intermediate Housing?

Properties at rents which are above social rents but below market rents or properties for sale at below market prices. Intermediate housing must meet the definition of affordable housing above but excludes Affordable Rented Housing. In North Norfolk, intermediate housing has mainly been provided as shared ownership (see Fact Sheet 9).

What is Affordable Rented Housing?

Properties which are let by Housing Associations and Local Authorities to households who are eligible for social rented housing. A property let on an Affordable Rent will be let at a rent of up to 80% of the local private market rent for that type of property, this includes any service charges.

How is Affordable Housing Provided?

As affordable housing is let or sold at less than market prices, subsidy is needed to ensure that the housing is affordable. The main source of public subsidy is provided by the Homes and Communities Agency. Increasingly other forms of subsidy are being used to top up public subsidy or replace it, with market homes for sale (or in some cases rent) being developed and the surplus generated by these dwellings providing the subsidy needed to deliver the affordable dwellings.

Private subsidy is the subsidy provided by private developers, when they provide affordable housing on eligible market sites as required by planning policy. Such properties will generally be sold on to a Housing Association at a discounted price which reflects the private subsidy. The North Norfolk Core Strategy (available on the Council's website) sets out the affordable housing requirements for eligible sites in the district.

Who is the Homes and Communities Agency?

This is the national body which funds and regulates Registered Providers. All funding is provided through a competitive process to ensure value for money and deliverability of schemes which are funded.

How is Affordable Housing provided?

The Council has an enabling role, it identifies housing need and works with Housing Associations to develop affordable housing schemes which meet the identified housing need. On market sites, the Council advises the private developer what type and size of affordable housing should be provided on their site and if the developer states that it is not viable to provide the level of affordable housing required, will carry out a viability assessment and negotiate the appropriate level of affordable housing that the site is viable to provide.

How do we know what the housing need is?

There are 2 main sources of information. The Housing List shows the number of households who have applied for housing and the type of housing need they have. The Housing List allows us to look at the level of need at a settlement level, including identifying which households have a local connection to that parish or an adjoining parish. The district wide Housing Needs Survey (2007) shows that there is a need for an additional 921 affordable dwellings per annum in North Norfolk.

What different types of schemes are provided?

General needs housing schemes are provided in settlements where planning rules allow new housing to be provided, these schemes will be prioritised initially to those households which have the greatest housing need. When a property on a general need scheme is not required by a household with the greatest housing need, it will then be prioritised to a household with the strongest local connection to that parish or an adjoining parish. Exception Housing Schemes are provided to meet local housing need and properties on these schemes are prioritised for households who have a local connection to the parish in which the scheme is located or an adjoining parish. For more information on how affordable housing is let, please see the Housing Allocations Scheme [here](#).

Guide to Affordable Housing

A Guide to Affordable Housing has been produced for District and Parish Councillors, voluntary organisations and anyone with an interest in how affordable housing is delivered. Part 1 of the guide provides information on what affordable housing is, how the need for affordable housing is identified and how it is provided and managed. The guide also explains how local members and parish councils will be involved in the process of delivering more affordable housing to meet the identified housing need. Part 2 details step-by-step the process of providing affordable homes. It includes information on Exception Housing Schemes and how they differ to general need affordable housing schemes. The Guide to Affordable Housing can be found [here](#).

For more information, please contact:

Elaine Ferguson, Housing Development Officer, 01263 516282, elaine.ferguson@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Nicola Turner, Housing Team Leader – Strategy, 01263 516222, nicola.turner@north-norfolk.gov.uk