YDNPA Statement on Housing

The purposes of the National Park Authority are;

> **• to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage of the national park;**
>
> **• to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities by the public.**

The landscape has been home to people and industry for thousands of years, and the National Park Authority, therefore, also has an additional duty:

> **• in taking forward the two national park purposes, [to] seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities.**

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan is the overarching strategy for delivering the purposes and the duty. The Management Plan is prepared by a Steering Group of public, private and voluntary sector organisations, and representatives of local businesses. The Plan sets out a shared 40-year vision for the National Park, which includes an ambition that the National Park should be:

> ***Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need*.**

And this is supported by a specific objective for housing:

> ***6.1. Support the completion of 250 new dwellings by 2030, of which at least half will be social housing, affordable or local occupancy homes to attract and retain younger working age households.***

The Authority's role in housing

The Authority has a legal duty to work with developers, housing authorities and rural housing providers to support the social and economic wellbeing of local communities. The Authority does not build, manage or finance housing but it does identify sites for future development which support public and private infrastructure such as schools, retail services and communications and which indirectly support community sustainability. The Authority is directly responsible for preparing the Local Plan and making decisions on planning applications.

Planned housing growth

Within the Yorkshire Dales National Park land for development is precious and sites for new housing are in short supply. The Authority needs to carefully plan and release suitable sites to ensure good outcomes for the National Park and its communities.

Making better use of the existing stock

In addition to building new homes, the Authority wants to see better use made of the existing stock. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Strategic Housing Market Assessment (July 2024) reported that there were 13,094 dwellings in the National Park and 10,272 households. This indicates that 2,822 dwellings (22%) are not permanently occupied and that the existing stock is grossly underused. The equivalent figure for non-permanently occupied housing in England and Wales in 2021 was 6%. The high-quality environment of the Dales is associated with strong demand for second homes and a high prevalence of holiday rental property. There are an estimated 1,561 (12%) 'non- residential dwellings' (holiday lets and vacant property) and 1,263 (10%) second homes.

We want to see:

1. Sufficient numbers, types and tenures of new housing built that will maintain services, support the economy and start to reverse population decline

   This is a strategic Local Plan objective. Evidence indicates that at least 50 new homes will be needed each year to meet local housing need and attempt to stabilise population decline and aging.

2. As much new affordable housing as possible to meet the need to live in the National Park

   Increasing the amount of affordable housing is critical to community and economic viability. Development that does not contribute meaningfully to that goal is, therefore, of limited value in the National Park. Affordable homes will be provided on allocated housing sites beside open market homes, and on 'rural exceptions sites' on the edge of towns and villages.

3. Houses in the right place

   Housing growth will continue to be focused in the larger, more accessible towns and villages where services are concentrated but there will also need to be scope to respond to local needs in the smaller villages. New housing will need to avoid sites that are at risk or flooding or other substantive safety issues.

4. Housing of the right size and standard

The National Park needs new homes that are attractive for family living but it also needs flats and shared accommodation that meet the needs of smaller, elderly and younger households. New homes should have amenities such as garden space, high quality broadband, mobile signal connections and electric vehicle charging.

5. Greener homes

New homes should be comfortable, energy efficient and affordable to heat. They should be designed to adapt to the changing climate. New homes will need to comply with or exceed national building standards which over time will ensure that all new housing will achieve low carbon emissions and deliver more in terms of biodiversity.

6. Fewer under-occupied houses

The Authority wants to see more of the existing houses in the National Park being lived in permanently. All new housing should be restricted to permanent occupancy to prevent it being lost to second homes or holiday letting.

7. More efficient use of existing buildings

The Authority will support appropriate conversion and re-use of existing buildings which will also conserve heritage, landscape character and minimise carbon emissions. It will encourage sub-division of large properties for multiple occupation and shared living, in particular by the young and the elderly.

8. Greater diversity in housing delivery

As well as small builders, the Authority is keen to work with a wide variety of housing providers. The Authority would like to see more schemes coming forward from housing associations, local housing authorities, rural estates and community housing groups.

Contact us

If you wish to discuss a specific site for housing development, please contact our Development Management team planning@yorkshiredales.org.uk

If you wish to discuss more general issues relating to policy and process, please contact our Planning Policy team localplan@yorkshiredales.org.uk

Or phone us: 0300 456 0030

Or write to us: Planning Policy, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Yoredale, Bainbridge, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 3EL.