

Housing Associations, Devolution and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority:

A prospectus for partnership and action to deliver homes and support neighbourhoods, inclusion, growth and sustainability.

September 2020





Bradford
Calderdale
Kirklees
Leeds
Wakefield

Preface

Devolution in West Yorkshire presents an unprecedented opportunity for housing associations to work in partnership together and with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and local authorities to achieve shared goals.

Naturally, working together will include focus on providing more and better homes. But it is also about regenerating our places, contributing to local economies and COVID recovery, advancing low carbon ambitions, combatting homelessness, supporting good health and connecting people to jobs, skills and opportunity.

This prospectus, prepared by West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, sets out how we can work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to help deliver its vision. It is intended as a start point for discussion with WYCA, mayoral candidates and local authorities around how we can deliver change together.

Our proposals focus on five ambitions that support the devolution deal and Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) goals, respond to diversity, and will assist recovery from COVID-19 impacts:

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- 1 Building new homes**

 - 2 Tackling the climate emergency and fuel poverty**

 - 3 Regenerating local areas**

 - 4 Connecting people to economic opportunity**

 - 5 Supporting health, care and homelessness**

The opportunities discussed around these ambitions illustrate what is possible and potential ways forward. But they are also high level and flexible enough to allow evolution and innovation in response to local messages, practicalities and goals.

Combining our collective efforts, expertise and will with those of the Combined Authority and its partners will enable a breadth, scale and pace of action that has not previously been possible. Doing so would help the Combined Authority to make a difference using the freedoms and resources that devolution provides; efficiently deliver on our shared ambitions and goals as housing providers; and transform the lives of local people in every part of West Yorkshire.

Collectively we have...

Financial turnover:

£709,670,000

Total combined turnover for the ten housing associations during 2018/19

Housing stock:



140,578

Total number of homes owned or managed on 31 March 2020



91,463

Homes owned or managed in the five West Yorkshire districts



34,937

Total homes in Wakefield



27,515

Total homes in Bradford



13,424

Total homes in Leeds



11,135

Total homes in Calderdale



4,452

Total homes in Kirklees

Carbon reduction:



2,838

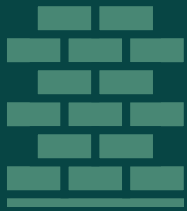
Number of tonnes of CO2 reduced during 2019/20



4.10%

Percentage of CO2 reduced during 2019/20

New development:



5,347

Total number of new affordable homes built over last three years - 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20



2,105

New affordable homes built over last three years - 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 in West Yorkshire only



575

Total number of new market sale homes built over last three years - 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20



338

New market sale homes built over last three years - 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 in West Yorkshire only

2,724

Annual target for new affordable homes delivered



535

Annual target for market sale homes delivered



Residents helped:



3,173

Total number of West Yorkshire residents assisted with skills, inclusion and employability during 2019/20

Workforce:

5,236

Total number of employees for the ten housing associations

3,751

Total number of employees living in West Yorkshire

£28,290

Average salary of West Yorkshire employees



111

Total number of apprentices we've employed so far

90

Number of apprentices we've employed so far in West Yorkshire

Housing associations & ambition



Housing associations & ambition

Housing associations in West Yorkshire recognise the huge opportunity provided by devolution, the ambitions of the emerging Local Industrial Strategy (LIS), and the need to bounce back and create a bright, resilient and equitable future in the wake of COVID-19.

This prospectus, prepared by West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, sets out how we can work with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) to help deliver its vision. It is intended as a start point for discussion with WYCA, mayoral candidates and local authorities around how we can deliver change together. The five ambitions it presents offer a clear idea of what is possible and potential ways forward, but are also high level and flexible enough to allow evolution and innovation in response to local messages, practicalities and goals.

Housing associations are uniquely placed to contribute to the future of West Yorkshire. We are dynamic social businesses with a long term interest in the places we work in and the people and communities we serve, but also independent, commercially aware organisations that can make things happen and deliver real change.

We can help West Yorkshire to deliver many of the 5,000 additional homes it needs per year to meet identified need, and we can do much more besides. That includes regenerating our places, contributing to local economies and COVID-19 recovery, advancing low carbon ambitions, supporting health, combatting homelessness and connecting people to jobs, skills and opportunity.

In 2020, we also supported health and wellbeing through our COVID-19 response and recovery work, including to assist with benefits, debt and to prevent homelessness.

Crucially, as organisations with stakeholders rather than shareholders, we do not direct dividends to distant parties or seek quick and maximum profit at the expense of long term, sustainable solutions. Our values are about social wellbeing, as well as serving and bettering the places we are rooted in and the people who live in them. We invest everything we make back into local communities.

We share the vision of diverse and inclusive growth articulated in the LIS to transform Leeds City Region by boosting productivity, improving skills, helping businesses to grow and tackling the climate emergency so that everyone can benefit from a strong economy.

Above all, we see the potential to work together. We know we could deliver more in West Yorkshire and direct a greater proportion of our investment, new homes and activity here if obstacles to doing so are removed through creative solutions and partnership working. As housing associations coming together with a single voice as the 'West Yorkshire Housing Partnership' we aim to make that easy.

**New
partnership
for more
and better
homes**



New partnership for more and better homes

The announcement of a directly elected Mayor for West Yorkshire in May 2021 presents a unique opportunity.

By making decisions in West Yorkshire about West Yorkshire, we can improve the lives of local people. To do this, we need a new partnership which places the need for more and better homes at the forefront of the agenda.

To develop and embed a future relationship and to drive and oversee subsequent delivery, we propose a new 'compact' between our group of independent housing associations, working together with a single voice, and the Combined Authority and its local partners. Strategically, this will allow straightforward and strategic conversations between decision makers that set the direction and priorities and frame the resources that support them. At practitioner level, this can be backed by work to agree detail around specific opportunities and projects, building on existing collaboration.

Partnership is key to the way we and other housing associations work, including with each other; with the communities we operate within; directly with local authorities; alongside local authorities and the private sector; and potentially with the Combined Authority. The latter model has successfully been used in other parts of England, for example in Greater Manchester where housing providers have come together to form the Greater Manchester Housing Providers Group. Another model, used in the Liverpool City Region, is the appointment of a housing association Chief Executive as a Mayoral Advisor. We are flexible in terms of the type of structure to be employed and have no set partnership model in mind.

The guiding principle of building this partnership is about action rather than words. It must lead to change and benefits that would not otherwise occur, and of a scale and value that makes working together worthwhile for all those involved.



Partnership is key to the way we and other housing associations work

Five ambitions, one goal



Five ambitions, one goal

We see five broad win-win ambitions where great progress can be achieved to support the devolution deal and LIS goals, and to assist recovery from COVID-19 impacts:

- 1 Building new homes**
- 2 Tackling the climate emergency and fuel poverty**
- 3 Regenerating local areas**
- 4 Connecting people to economic opportunity**
- 5 Supporting health, care and homelessness**

These ambitions are interlinked and mutually reinforce one another. They enhance the physical fabric of homes and places, the social fabric of our communities and the economies that underpin them. Realising these opportunities together will support the region's vision for inclusive growth encompassing wealth creation, quality of life, and a sustainable, resilient future.

Five integrated ambitions:

1. Building new homes		2. Climate emergency and fuel poverty	
3. Regenerating local areas		4. Connecting people to economic opportunity	
5. Supporting health, care and homelessness		This is our offer to West Yorkshire.	

West Yorkshire today



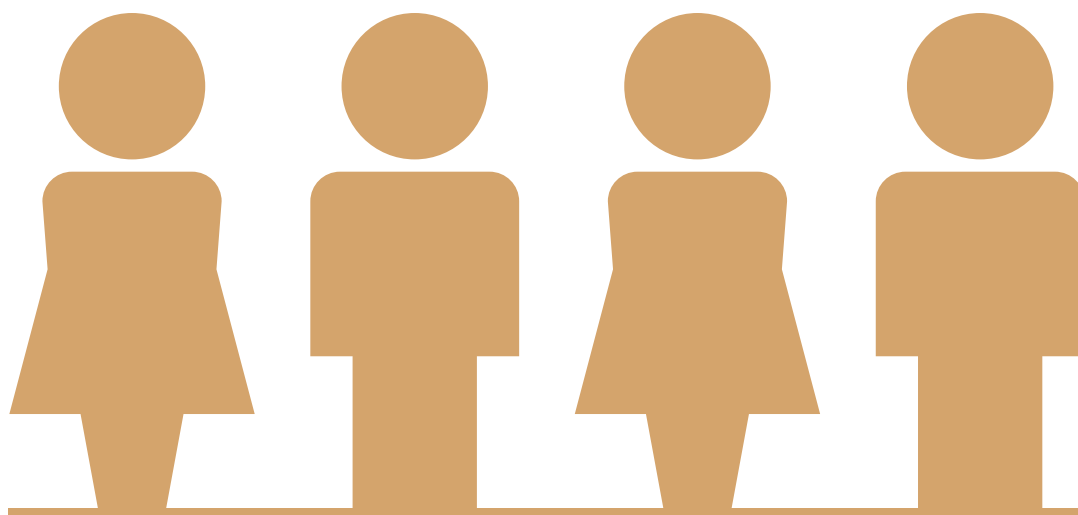
West Yorkshire today

West Yorkshire covers a sizeable, geographically varied area spanning urban and more rural areas in all of its five districts, and combining a great deal of hilly terrain with flatter land to the East.

It has one of the greatest concentration of cities in England and considerable commuting flows, but is on the doorstep of two national parks. Economically it includes prosperous and desirable areas, but also some of the most disadvantaged places in England. Its population of over 2.3 million people is diverse in every respect, including ethnically and in terms of health and economic disparities.

As organisations that are of the North as well as working within it, we are fully committed to the levelling up agenda, both with regards to narrowing the prosperity gap between West Yorkshire and the national average, and to ensuring that places within it – including smaller towns and deprived communities - are not left behind. Historically, some areas have prospered, such as the West of Yorkshire part of the 'golden triangle' between Leeds, Harrogate and York, whereas less attention has been given to smaller towns such as Keighley (in Bradford), Todmorden (in Calderdale), Dewsbury (in Kirklees) or Pontefract (in Wakefield). Levelling up also means levelling up within West Yorkshire itself.

As local housing associations we know West Yorkshire and its myriad places, and are committed to its communities and their future. We have the know-how and flexibility to develop in tricky areas such as hilly and contaminated sites. We tailor homes and developments to local people's needs.



Over 2.3 million people live in West Yorkshire

West Yorkshire today

Diversity

West Yorkshire is one of the most ethnically diverse areas in England. In the 2011 census, 18.2% of West Yorkshire residents classified themselves as non-White including 11.6% South Asian, 2.1% Black, 2.1% Mixed and 2.4% Other. In cities such as Bradford the number is much higher with 37% classing themselves as non-White.

Communities with high BAME populations can experience acute levels of social deprivation which impact on people's health. Overcrowding is also a significant issue for many BAME families, particularly Pakistani and Bangladeshi households.

It was therefore not a surprise when numerous studies showed that Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the health of BAME people, including in West Yorkshire. A Public Health England report concluded that people in the UK of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian, Caribbean and Other Black ethnicity had between a 10% and 50% higher risk of death from Covid-19 when compared to White British.

The virus is also likely to have equally imbalanced consequences for their employment and housing prospects. A recent survey conducted by charity Hope Not Hate¹ found that individuals of BAME origin living in the UK were twice as likely to have lost their job during the pandemic, and a third more likely to have had their hours reduced. Further, the study discovered that 9% of respondents had struggled to pay their rent during the pandemic, against around 5% nationally.

Devolution provides the directly elected Mayor with a gilt-edged opportunity to establish West Yorkshire as a standard bearer for inclusion with people from all ethnicities, including pathways to access high quality affordable homes and a better quality of life.

Commitment to enhancing inclusion for diverse communities is at the core of the integrated approach in this prospectus and spans all five of its Ambitions. Reflecting this, our activities and proposals will have particular benefits for diverse neighbourhoods and BAME communities, including:

Ageing well -

Creating an environment where older BAME people can live healthy and fulfilled lives.

BAME homelessness -

Enabling people from diverse backgrounds to access and sustain housing.

Equality of opportunity -

Facilitating access to good quality education, training and jobs for BAME people.

Diverse and thriving cities -

Investing in inner city areas to facilitate social cohesion and vibrant places to live and prosper.

Research, targeted funding and stimulating economic activity will be important to achieving these goals.

¹ <https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/bame-brits-twice-as-likely-to-have-lost-their-job-during-furlough-new-study-finds>

West Yorkshire today

COVID-19 recovery

West Yorkshire Housing Partnership partners are already managing COVID impacts and contributing to recovery, and this prospectus purposefully aligns with the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan.

The proposals within the prospectus squarely support the 'Accelerated Infrastructure' action area, including must-win battles around new homes, low carbon, modern methods of construction and resilient infrastructure. But they also support the other two action areas of Good Jobs & Resilient Business and Skills & Training; the two broad goals of Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Environment; and can advance key West Yorkshire propositions, notably on transition to net zero and the role of housing within this.



Ambition 1: Building new homes



Building new homes

The challenge and opportunity

The West Yorkshire Housing Partnership can make a key contribution to meeting West Yorkshire's desperate need for new housing. We can build substantial numbers of good quality affordable homes, for the people and places that really need them, working closely with the Combined Authority and local authorities to tune the detail to local needs.

Analysis for Homes for the North showed that over a 10 year period to 2017 there was a shortfall of over 50,000 new homes in West Yorkshire compared to the number identified as being required through the Objective Assessment of Need.² Closing that shortfall means doubling the average number of new homes built annually³ at a time of great economic uncertainty, when based on previous experience, private developers and housebuilders are likely to reign in rather than expand their plans for building new homes.

“Once we commit, we get things done”

As housing associations, we are anchor organisations in our respective areas of operation, that are in it for the long term. With a rental business model and access to long term finance via the capital markets, we are resilient to the short-term ups and downs of the economy and property market. So, once we commit, we get things done. And while we are able to plan and build new homes on our own, we have the flexibility, partnership working experience and commercial nous to be able to work with the private sector and to deliver further new homes when opportunities arise. We can therefore play a big part in helping to build the homes West Yorkshire needs.

Our ethos and financial models mean that quality and innovation are central to what we do. We are committed to building good quality homes that stand the test of time. In line with that, we are interested in and open to utilising new and modern methods of construction that can deliver quality, low carbon homes and provide good value for money. One of the barriers to doing so is the erratic and small-scale pipeline for homes using these techniques. By working together and planning long-term, there is much greater potential to make full use of these methods.

What we are already doing

On top of our existing provision of over 91,000 homes in West Yorkshire, our collective recent, current and planned new development activity includes:

- Building 2,100 new affordable homes in West Yorkshire over the last three years, spread across all five local authority areas.
- Building 575 homes, 338 of which are in West Yorkshire, for market sale over the past three years.
- Targets to build over 2,700 affordable homes per year for social rent, affordable rent and low cost home ownership across the areas we work in, including in West Yorkshire.
- Targets to deliver 535 market sale homes per year, including in West Yorkshire.
- Application of modern methods of construction.
- Working through strategic partnerships such as with Homes England to invest grant funding in building affordable new homes. A programme approach avoids bidding rounds and enables a long-term, strategic approach and development at scale.

Case study - Leeds Federated:

Newhall Gate/Newhall Walk, Belle Isle

Newhall Gate/Walk is a £4m development by Leeds Federated of 33 new 2, 3, and 4 bed affordable homes for rent in the Belle Isle area of Leeds.

Leeds Federated worked in partnership with Leeds City Council, Homes England, the local tenant management organisation and the community to deliver a well-designed, affordable and sustainable development.

Scheme delivery built in positive local social impacts including achieving apprenticeship targets, employing local labour and engaging with the local school before and during the building works. Almost all of the tenants who moved into the new properties in early 2018 have remained.

² Lichfields for Homes for the North, *Future Housing Requirements for the North*, August 2017

³ Compared to an average of 4,905 homes per year between 2014 and 2024 based on difference between Objectively Assessed Need (OAN) and the 2014 SNHP

Building new homes

How we can do more

There are extensive opportunities for us to make a bigger contribution to solving housing need in West Yorkshire. We see five ways in which we can do this:

- **Build more homes in West Yorkshire** – while we have targets for the number of homes we build in the future, where we build them depends on the opportunities that arise. By working together to identify and progress such opportunities we can build more of our homes in West Yorkshire.
- **Build homes on all types of sites** – we can utilise a broad range of sites, including challenging ones that require more investment and which many developers avoid. As organisations with a long history in West Yorkshire, we are able to successfully develop hilly, brownfield or contaminated sites and those with other complications if the resources are in place to allow that.
- **Work in closer partnership** – we are able to work with a spectrum of partners (e.g. on transport/ infrastructure, health, education and in the private sector) and through joint working models to get things done at scale, cost-effectively and quickly.
- **Make more use of innovative construction methods** – we have the expertise, awareness and desire to make best use of new technologies. We could apply these in more developments in West Yorkshire to improve quality and cost-effectiveness. There is also potential to use innovative methods to build carbon neutral homes and ensure that good digital connectivity facilitates agile working and remote access.
- **Support local economies, procurement and suppliers** – as local anchor organisations we contribute by employing local people and buying goods and services. Building more new homes in West Yorkshire will enable us to procure more goods and services from local suppliers and help to create and sustain jobs.

All of this will make a major contribution to the West Yorkshire economy and its recovery from the impacts of COVID-19. Building new homes creates local business opportunities and jobs, directly and indirectly in the supply chain and allied industries.

Case study - Yorkshire Housing: Market sale and shared ownership homes

Yorkshire Housing develops and sells market sale and shared ownership homes through its 'Space Homes' brand. On average it provides 75 new homes for market sale and 125 new homes for shared ownership per year - 40% of the new homes it delivers.

Homes range from 2 to 5 bedrooms and provide a range of options to meet different customers segments and income levels, usually as part of a wider mixed tenure mixed income offer. Space Homes is registered with the Homes England Help to Buy scheme and eligible customers can benefit from this initiative. Profit from market sale activity is used to provide additional new mixed tenure homes.

Examples of developments include West Park Grange in North Leeds, which offers 50; 2,3,4 and 5 bedroomed homes for rent, shared ownership and mainly market sale. Moreover, the £16.6m St David's scheme in Otley utilised a site with flood risk and steeply sloping terrain challenges and offers 75; 2, 3 and 4 bedroomed homes for market sale, shared ownership and rent to buy – with an option to purchase the home after an initial rental period. Both schemes have proved highly popular.



“By working together to identify and progress such opportunities we can build more of our homes”

Building new homes

Making it happen

Three ingredients are needed to unlock the additional new homes and contribution we could deliver:

Land – housing associations can be out-bid for land by private developers seeking to maximise short term profit, or end up with only the most challenging sites. Housing associations are anchor institutions with a long term stake in the communities we operate within, less driven by the requirement for short term financial gains.

Making more land available to us at a price and position where it can be developed is central to heightening the contribution we can make. We recognise that there is an uplift in the value of land when it is developed and are happy to share the development risk and reward.

The need for new housing means that all interested parties have room to play their part. We will also work with community land trusts to meet shared goals.

Funding – whilst we have a good track record of development, lack of resources can limit the scale of development. More homes could be built if there was financial support from WYCA to allow housing associations to take on sites that would otherwise not be viable, including ones that may be supported through the new Brownfield Housing Fund. Often we are not talking about funding housing associations directly, but funding to remove obstacles to development. These might be overcoming demolition, remediation or access issues.

Partnership – creating partnerships that bring housing associations together with the Combined Authority and local authorities, and working with the private sector and Homes England, would enable us to think big, plan strategically and deliver at scale, as well as to work even more closely with local housing and planning teams.

The Benefits

While the exact number and nature of benefits will depend on the scale and detail of what we agree together, the collective potential benefits include:

- Thousands of additional homes per year, of types and sizes and quality that match local need, made available to local people at affordable rents and prices.
- Transformation of hundreds of often smaller sites, including ones that would otherwise be left derelict and are desperate for improvement and productive use.

- Increased spend with local suppliers, supporting hundreds of West Yorkshire businesses and jobs within them.
- Additional homes of high quality with good space standards available for people of all ethnic backgrounds, including older people and those with larger families.
- A major and long-term economic stimulus that will aid recovery from COVID-19, from the jobs, training, investment and business opportunities that come from building new homes, and also from planning for, equipping and maintaining these homes.

Case study - Incommunities: Homes breathe new life into inner city site

Incommunities is proud of its record in regenerating former housing sites through new homes. One example is Chain Street in Bradford, where the group linked up with private developers (Barnfield Construction and QSH), Bradford Council and Homes England to complete a family-sized city centre housing project on cleared land. This provided 32 homes for affordable rent, outright sale and private rent, which complemented conversion of two blocks of outdated flats into 16 homes for rent. A linear park, supported by the Council, completed the development. Incommunities' vision and investment has contributed to the revitalisation of the city's historic Goitside quarter and the growth of the area's diverse community.





**Ambition 2:
Tackling
the climate
emergency
and fuel
poverty**

Tackling the climate emergency and fuel poverty

The challenge and opportunity

In response to the global climate crisis, all West Yorkshire local authorities have declared a climate emergency. WYCA is seeking to become a net zero carbon economy by 2038, and to capitalise on economic opportunities around carbon reduction, energy and green jobs. In support of that, the LIS seeks to future-proof existing and future housing to reduce fuel poverty and create healthy, sustainable communities.

Residential housing is the 4th biggest sector for greenhouse gas emissions. It is responsible for 15% of emissions (excluding electricity use and house building) and the sector's emissions have risen in recent years⁴. The need to improve its performance through energy efficiency and greater use of renewable energy could not be clearer.

West Yorkshire also suffers from pronounced fuel poverty. Over 120,000 households are fuel poor and in every district the proportion is above national average, rising to around 1 in 7 households in Bradford, Leeds and Kirklees. The impact is felt by the poorest and most vulnerable, and will be more so as COVID-19 further hits incomes and jobs.

The challenges to overcome are multiple. Poor, outdated housing can have appalling energy efficiency but is expensive to improve. For individual owner occupiers, the hassle, costs and complexity involved in installing measures deter action, while it is also hard to group homes together to undertake improvements at scale and reduce costs. In the private rented sector, while the benefits accrue to tenants, the costs are borne by landlords which reduces their incentive and ability to act. The same goes for new homes, where the additional costs of building low carbon, green homes can make them unviable.

Working with social landlords presents a practical way forward. We are able to work at scale across many homes, to take a long term view that aids the economics, and are committed to making improvements for environmental reasons and for the wellbeing of residents – energy efficiency is one of the few ways a landlord can put money into their pockets, as well as support comfort and health. We can collaborate to exploit new funding streams and opportunities such as the £50m social housing retrofit pilot programme announced by the Government as part of its COVID-19 recovery package.

These opportunities to work at scale include renewable energy generation associated with homes, new low or zero carbon homes, home efficiency measures where feasible, and stock replacement where retrofitting measures are not viable. In partnership, housing associations and WYCA have great potential to address the economics, develop innovative solutions, create green jobs and vastly improve energy performance. We can improve areas and lives through replacing obsolete stock - which many housing associations in West Yorkshire have some of in their portfolio - with good quality carbon neutral new homes. More widely, we can reduce carbon and air pollution impacts by upgrading vehicle fleets, reviewing our logistics and enhancing low carbon connectivity.

Case study - Connect Housing: Climate emergency and PassivHaus

Connect Housing has been investing in sustainable building technology for over 20 years, both for new build schemes and retrofitting existing properties. In 2017, Connect built the first social housing PassivHaus scheme in West Yorkshire. These super-energy efficient homes reduce energy use to less than a quarter of current building standards, and tenants report energy savings and enhanced levels of comfort compared to their previous homes. These properties were also the first built by Connect to incorporate solar photovoltaic panels with battery storage. They have generated nearly £12,000 of energy since installation, with direct savings to each resident of over £600.



⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862887/2018_Final_greenhouse_gas_emissions_statistical_release.pdf

Tackling the climate emergency and fuel poverty

What we are already doing

West Yorkshire Housing Association partners are already making a difference:

- We have invested millions of pounds in energy works, for example to replace inefficient heating systems.
- Some associations have begun to measure their carbon emissions and set targets to reduce them as part of carbon reduction strategies and initiatives.
- We invest in new and innovative measures to improve performance, for example by installing ground source heat pumps and solar panels (including with battery storage in one project, which can cut electricity bills by 60%).

Case study - Together Housing: Installation of ground source heat pumps

Together Energy is part of the Together Housing group and is removing expensive to run, carbon hungry night storage heater systems in 709 properties. The heaters are being replaced by shared loop ground source heat pumps which provide green energy and are up to three times more efficient than storage heaters. On average, this will save residents £195 per year on heat and hot water, and it provides a long-term income stream via the Renewable Heat Incentive which the organisation can reinvest.



How we can do more

We want to adopt an ambitious, strategic approach which maximises carbon savings from transport and within new and existing homes while keeping properties affordable for those living or moving into them. This would support WYCA's net carbon zero goals, including reduction of emissions from buildings, and the Government's agreement (expressed in the Devolution Deal) to support progress on work including retrofitting and to address fuel poverty. Opportunities include:

- **Extending work to decarbonise existing homes** through more ambitious and extensive renewable energy and retrofitting measures, including use of innovative technologies, and advising on how finance mechanisms can enable viability.
- **Enabling energy transfer and connection** so that any excess energy generated from properties with renewable technologies such as solar panels and ground source heat pumps, which cannot be used by residents, can be more easily moved between properties and buildings locally to maximise use and revenue.
- **Ensuring high energy standards in new homes**, anticipating new benchmarks like the Future Homes Standard, and being open to working with partners to incorporate wider 'green' measures such as around green infrastructure and flood prevention.
- **Replacing obsolete, costly and carbon-intensive housing** where it has reached the end of its useful life and retrofitting is neither practical nor cost-effective.
- **Taking action to reduce emissions from transport** – such as through more use of electric vehicles in our fleets; ensuring new homes are connected to facilities, public transport and cycle routes; and digital technology that enables home working.
- **Creating 'green jobs' and skills** – more people need to be trained and employed to carry out the required work, including through apprenticeships and links to schools and colleges. This will support economic recovery and link to the new £2bn 'Kickstart' scheme to assist young people facing or at risk of unemployment.

“We want to adopt an ambitious, strategic approach which maximises carbon savings from transport”

Tackling the climate emergency and fuel poverty

Making it happen

A combination of three factors will enable housing associations to maximise their impact in reducing carbon emissions and fuel poverty:

Funding and Finance Models – up-front viability gaps often prevent new homes being built to high energy and carbon standards, or installation of retrofitting measures, even though those deliver long term savings. Pressing for devolved powers to raise home energy standards, funding to close viability gaps, or new win-win financial and regulatory models that work for all parties, could enable movement from good standards to best practice. There is potential for example, to take advantage of the Government's £50m pilot on decarbonisation and retrofitting in social housing announced in the 2020 Summer Statement as part of an economic stimulus package.

Partnership working for retrofitting and greener homes – joint working between West Yorkshire Housing Partnership, WYCA and local authorities could smooth the path for ambitious but complex options. Those include providing the critical mass and co-ordination needed to allow retrofitting at scale where viable, and demolition of obsolete stock where it is not viable to enable replacement with new low carbon homes. Partnership could also enable progress on other Devolution Deal goals such as skills and training; or green and blue infrastructure and flood risk reduction, where organisations could achieve their goals through working with West Yorkshire Housing Partnership partners and their properties to incorporate relevant measures.

Innovation, intelligence and new technology – sharing and transfer in of expertise, ideas and best practice, e.g. from specialists within West Yorkshire partners, could help to develop new pilot schemes and solutions and to share knowledge of what works. It could also assist with options such as district heating and energy transfer and storage, where green energy generation and energy use can be better connected.

The Benefits

While the detail of the benefits will depend on the scale and nature of what we agree together, in broad terms they include:

- Considerable reductions in carbon emissions and energy use, in a sector where making progress has been difficult.

- Big reductions in fuel poverty, with the benefits greatest for low income groups, including cost savings, warmer homes and improved health.
- Green jobs, skills, innovation and apprenticeships - which will help individuals and the economy, and enable the building of green homes and installation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy generation at the scale required.
- Business and economic growth opportunities based on manufacture and supply of low carbon technology, equipment and materials for new build and retrofit.
- Contribution to the regeneration of areas (see Ambition 3) through upgrading homes and replacing obsolete stock, and wider social and environmental benefits where energy improvements go alongside green and blue infrastructure. This would support the Devolution Deal's goal of creating high-quality, low carbon developments and green and blue infrastructure.

Case study - Yorkshire Housing: Improving Insulation

Yorkshire Housing worked with Dyson Energy Services to identify electrically heated West Yorkshire homes with failing cavity wall insulation. They successfully accessed more than £200,000 of funding to cavity clean, remediate and replace this to improve the energy efficiency of 155 homes, mainly in blocks of flats. The typical saving per resident will be around £100 per year. This was part of a wider Yorkshire Housing project improving 387 homes across Yorkshire during 2019 and 2020.



Ambition 3:

Regenerating local areas



Regenerating local areas

The challenge and opportunity

22% of West Yorkshire residents – over 500,000 people in total - live in areas in the 10% most deprived in England⁵, including a disproportionate number of people from BAME backgrounds. In four West Yorkshire districts, around a third of people live in the 20% most deprived areas nationally, while in Bradford it is nearly half (49%). Between 2015 and 2019, well over twice as many areas in West Yorkshire became more deprived rather than less so compared to others in England⁶.

Housing associations can play a key part in the regeneration of areas and help to turn around this position.

Although West Yorkshire Housing Partnership partners cover a wide range of places across West Yorkshire, we have a concentration of homes in more deprived areas that can suffer from poor reputations, and where market failure can make development unviable without support and partnership, including with the private sector. That includes significant numbers of homes in areas generally seen to be highly deprived such as Dewsbury in Kirklees; Burmantofts and Richmond Hill in Leeds; Tong in Bradford; Airedale and Ferry Fryston in Wakefield; and in the Park, Ovenden and Illingworth, and Mixenden areas of Calderdale.

Many of our homes are in areas that have suffered industrial decline and which need new life, prospects and purpose, including smaller towns outside of the biggest cities and centres. Towns such as Keighley, Todmorden, Dewsbury and Castleford have played a proud part in West Yorkshire's economic history, affect the wellbeing of hundreds of thousands of people today, and can make a big contribution to a revitalised future and recovery from COVID-19. Programmes such as the Stronger Towns Fund recognise this, and housing associations can help to make these a success through integrated, place-based regeneration, making good use of brownfield sites and combining housing and physical development with people-based interventions.

What we are already doing

West Yorkshire Housing Partnership partners already help to support and regenerate local areas:

- We play a long-term anchor institution role supporting the viability and quality of life of places by providing, managing and maintaining good quality, affordable homes.
- We take an active interest in areas and sites that others leave behind and operate in smaller towns and villages as well as larger centres.
- Housing creates the stimulus for area-based regeneration and renewal. New development and regenerating older homes tackles negative place perceptions that can impede investment.
- Through respecting diversity and cultural needs and regenerating areas with sizeable BAME communities, we support equality and combat disadvantage and injustice.

Case study - Accent:

Redeveloping Ripleyville to create affordable homes

Accent's Ripleyville estate in Bradford was built in the 1970s. It was modern then, but the 160+ flats are now dated, prove expensive to heat and the scheme's design lends itself to anti-social behaviour. Acutely aware of the need for change, Accent asked residents what they wanted for their scheme's future and 80% of them voted to demolish and rebuild the scheme. The subsequent individual support package to help residents move out includes the statutory home loss payment of £6,400 and help to find and apply for a new home and with moving and settling in. The most important work now starts with the new homes in Ripleyville due to be ready by Spring 2022.

22%

Of West Yorkshire residents – over 500,000 people – live in areas in the 10% most deprived in England

⁵ Based on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is based on factors including incomes, employment, health, housing, crime, access barriers and living environment

⁶ <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=963ae350758341308404941cc3628f63>

Regenerating local areas

How we can do more

West Yorkshire Housing Partnership partners can work with WYCA, local authorities and commercial and wider partners to help revive the fortunes of towns, cities and villages. Through an integrated, partnership approach we can:

- **Deliver more centrepiece regeneration projects** – that replace dilapidated housing that epitomises decline to local people, and instead provide new, good quality affordable homes that align with other interventions to catalyse area renewal.
- **Regenerate brownfield and underused sites** – we can transform derelict and disused sites that drag down an area’s image and prospects into valuable assets through high quality development and environmental improvements.
- **Bring attention, investment and renewal to places seeking a new purpose** – we have a long term stake and many homes in these places and can underpin their future through providing good homes, ongoing investment, and sparking new development that improves the look, feel and reputation of places.
- **Invest in places and contribute to the success of specific regeneration programmes** and schemes within them, such as related to the Stronger Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund, and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. For example, we are ideally placed to contribute ideas and insights, and to incorporate new housing into the repurposing of town centres under existing programmes, and to add to the success of major new regeneration programmes when they are launched.

“We’re ideally placed to contribute ideas and insights, and to incorporate new housing into the repurposing of town centres”

Case study - WDH: Regenerating neighbourhoods

WDH is working in partnership with Wakefield Council to regenerate estates as part of the Knottingley and Ferrybridge Vision and Masterplan to 2028. WDH is committed to nine projects which support the vision, including celebrating greenspaces, ensuring safer places for residents to live, boosting local aspirations, breaking down barriers to employment and providing more quality, affordable housing.

WDH is also working with Wakefield Council to create a regeneration masterplan for Pontefract Town Centre and surrounding areas. This will reconnect the town centre with its communities and transport hubs, promote economic growth, and provide a distinctive, sustainable and mixed community with high quality residential and recreation opportunities.

The plan includes proposals to redevelop the Horsefair estate, close to Pontefract Town Centre, around which WDH is engaging customers and stakeholders to ensure their views are reflected. Ultimately, ‘Project Pontefract’ will create pride in place, safe and secure homes and improved links to surrounding neighbourhoods that will enrich the quality of life for residents and local people.



Regenerating local areas

Making it happen

Successful regeneration depends on an integrated, partnership based approach (as demonstrated through models such as the Single Regeneration Budget in the past), focused on the places where change is most needed and possible. Key elements that will enable housing associations to maximise our impact are:

Area-wide and holistic regeneration focused on places with economic challenges needs to be at the heart of a new economic model in West Yorkshire. Economic opportunity and the benefits of large-scale infrastructure projects will not simply trickle down from wealth creating hubs to areas with lower economic growth, higher unemployment and lower skills. This is even more important given the impacts of COVID-19 which are exacerbating existing inequalities.

“Utilising housing associations as active participants at the heart of strategic partnerships”

Strategic partnership – utilising housing associations as active participants at the heart of strategic partnerships linking economy, infrastructure, education, health and environment, as well as housing issues. This will allow us to feed in housing expertise and insights from a long-term, anchor organisation perspective.

Specific place based collaboration – working with West Yorkshire Housing Partnership partners in the planning and delivery of individual, place-based regeneration programmes, and in engaging with local communities, will help to maximise their success.

Alignment of Investments – WYCA, local authorities and other partners need to align their investments and activity with housing interventions. By doing so, the chances of making substantial and lasting impacts on those places is greatly increased.

Funding and resources – place-based housing renewal often involves brownfield and complex sites and/or the replacement of old and problematic stock. Funding or investment by partners to address barriers to schemes is usually necessary to ensure they are financially viable (see also Ambitions 1 and 2). Opportunities such as bids to the new Brownfield Housing Fund may provide one avenue to address this, and seeking flexibilities or pilot schemes to remove VAT on regeneration work may also assist.

The Benefits

- Immediate improvements to housing, living environments, the protection and enhancement of green areas, and the look and feel of places – leading to progress on relevant Index of Multiple Deprivation domains and reduced stigma and blight.
- Signals to market and improved confidence which help to catalyse wider investment and social and economic regeneration that support jobs, incomes and wellbeing.
- Greater cost-effectiveness and impact from other streams of WYCA and local authority investment and activity through a joined-up approach.
- Reduced inequality, with the greatest benefits going to poorer, deprived and left behind areas and people, including BAME communities.
- Much improved chances of success in regenerating areas of stubbornly persistent deprivation and complex brownfield sites – linked to creating clearer purpose, roles and opportunities for places, including in a COVID-19 recovery context.
- Heightened success in bidding for regeneration programmes and schemes, and in delivering change through these, e.g. Stronger Towns Fund, Future High Streets Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Case study - Leeds and Yorkshire: Featherbank Forest

Leeds and Yorkshire Housing is committed to supporting community initiatives in areas around its homes and recently transformed an underused piece of land in its ownership next to its Rosemary Thompson House scheme into a fabulous woodland classroom for pupils at Horsforth Featherbank School. Now known as 'Featherbank Forest', it is used to deliver learning for all pupils in a natural, outdoor setting.

This is one example of how Leeds and Yorkshire worked in partnership with this local school which lacked outdoor space and now benefits from an additional classroom in a safe outdoor space to deliver all areas of the curriculum.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Los Angeles, with a blue color overlay. The text is centered over the image.

Ambition 4:

**Connecting
people to
economic
opportunity**

Connecting people to economic opportunity

The challenge and opportunity

Despite improvements over recent years, unemployment levels, benefit claimants and economic inactivity in West Yorkshire were all above average during 2019⁷. Furthermore, over 135,000 working age adults had no qualifications - above 9% of those aged 16-64 in every district except Leeds and well above the national average of 7.7%.

This picture will worsen substantially once the impact of COVID-19 comes through in the data and the furlough scheme is phased out during 2020. Some forecasts suggest unemployment will rise to as high as 10% nationally, and potentially higher in West Yorkshire. Already, the numbers claiming benefits here have more than doubled from 45,000 people aged 16-64 in early 2019 to nearly 107,000 as of May 2020, with the claimant rate rising from 4% to 9% in the worst affected district.

The challenge to help people back into work will be pronounced, and even greater for those with low qualifications or who were already further away from the labour market.

Connecting people to economic opportunity is a priority for housing associations. There is a strong overlap between the areas we provide homes in, and areas of deprivation in West Yorkshire, and social housing residents can experience barriers to employment due to their qualifications or skills not matching what is required in a modern economy. For example, in one housing association, 65% of its 9,000+ working age residents in West Yorkshire receive some form of assistance to help them pay the rent such as Universal Credit or Housing Benefit. This is not untypical and the percentage will be even higher for some housing associations in West Yorkshire.

We are committed – and already working – to improve the employment prospects of our residents. There is great potential for us to work more closely with WYCA and local authorities to achieve this through building people's skills, confidence and employability, providing work experience and training opportunities and helping them to secure jobs, including in the green economy. Doing so is all the more vital given the jobs and economic impacts of COVID-19, which are hitting young people and those with lower incomes and skills especially hard.

“Connecting people to economic opportunity is a priority for housing associations”

⁷ <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157127/report.aspx?town=Leeds>

What we are already doing

West Yorkshire Housing Partnership partners are helping employment, local economies and supporting disadvantaged people in a range of ways:

- We actively work to support inclusion and help residents to build skills and access employment. We assisted 3,170 West Yorkshire residents in this way in 2019/20.

“We actively work to support inclusion and help residents to build skills”

- As anchor institutions, many of our employees live locally – around 3,750 in total in West Yorkshire. The average salary for these employees is over £28,000, much of which will be spent locally and support local businesses and jobs.
- We are nearly all Real Living Wage employers, which helps to prevent poverty, reduces inequalities and adds to the money recirculating in local economies.
- We provide apprenticeships and work experience opportunities, including roles such as gas and electrical engineers, and for individuals who are finding it difficult to secure work. In total we collectively employ 90 apprentices in West Yorkshire.
- Individual partners are active in specific programmes focused on regeneration in deprived areas, sometimes as delivery partners in funded projects led by local authorities and LEPs. Examples include projects to advance the life chances of young people and tailor-made packages that provide mentoring, training and support and work with employers and individuals to identify and access entry-level jobs.
- The HACT Social Impact calculator demonstrates that for every £1 invested in these kinds of services, £17.90 is generated in social value to the local economy.

Connecting people to economic opportunity

Case study - Unity:

Employment services and Unity Enterprise

Unity Homes and Enterprise's client base in Leeds is particularly diverse with 60% of residents from BAME backgrounds, including emerging communities new to the country. In 2000, it established a subsidiary company, Unity Enterprise (UE), to support local entrepreneurial activity. UE now runs three business centres with 142 affordable business units for more than 80 diverse businesses across three centres. Financial surpluses are used to further improve facilities and offer additional support for tenants including business breakfasts and professional advice on banking, marketing and HR.

Building on this success, Unity Employment Services (UES) was created in 2011 to enable tenants and surrounding communities to access employment, training and volunteering opportunities. In 2019, UES helped 119 people into jobs, 179 to improve their skills and employability through training and 24 people to find voluntary work. In total, UES has supported more than 1,500 people into employment, training or volunteering, with each individual given a plan tailored to their specific needs.



How we can do more

We can expand the reach and impact of our work to connect people to economic opportunities through closer partnership working with WYCA and local authorities. We can:

- **Employ more local people directly** – we have an ageing workforce, particularly in our trades – plumbing, electricians and grounds maintenance staff. We are actively seeking people in our communities close to our bases in West Yorkshire to fill these roles. Expanding local activity will expand the work opportunities that we offer, including green economy jobs in retrofit and manufacture of low carbon technology.
- **Provide more good quality apprenticeship and work experience opportunities** – including ones working directly with us, on the properties that we manage, and related to projects we are involved in across a range of job types and levels. This can help young and unemployed people into work in a tough economic climate and connect to the Government's £2bn 'kickstart scheme' to support jobs and training.
- **Share information and contact routes to support those needing help** – housing associations know their residents and details such as their employment status. We can identify people – including inactive people who are difficult to reach and those without digital skills or access – who could benefit from support that partners provide.
- **Deliver more inclusion, training and employability projects** – including for and with partner organisations, and through funding bids and programmes. We have a strong track record in projects which help people with challenges and who are far from the labour market to build skills, confidence and become job-ready. Our work can be expanded and connect to the Government's stimulus and support package for apprenticeships, training and work opportunities to help combat unemployment.

“We can expand the reach and impact of our work to connect people to economic opportunities through closer partnership working”

Connecting people to economic opportunity

Case study - Manningham HA:

Xperience volunteering

The Xperience Volunteering Project was launched in 2020 and is led by Manningham Housing Association (MHA) in Bradford. It aims to give local people and service users an opportunity to learn new skills and gain confidence, improve self-esteem and build emotional resilience and move towards paid employment.

To date MHA has taken on five volunteers who provide user-led support to local communities including volunteer-led IT projects, online coffee mornings, a job club and peer mentoring. All MHA volunteers have access to a range of personal development training including how to become more confident, using social media, Word, Excel, budget management, first aid and food hygiene.

Making it happen

There are practical ways forward that will sustain and expand the work we are doing to enhance local jobs, skills and inclusion and to tackle inequalities, including those faced by BAME communities. This will join up with physical infrastructure measures including housing provision and area regeneration:

Funding and partnership – will enable us to build more homes and regenerate more areas, and also allow us to offer more jobs, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities to local people – including through accessing Government funding.

Stronger connection with local employment, skills and digital inclusion projects, as well as education providers such as colleges – with the right arrangements in place, we can both widen the reach and impact of the projects that we deliver, and promote schemes run by partners to housing association residents.

Joint bids and proposals – as an active partner in funding bids, we can enhance their chances of success by bringing in expertise, delivery capacity and match funding.

Aligning people-focused and property-led regeneration – working together we can make plans so that work to build skills and employability takes place in the same areas as that on physical regeneration, enhancing the chances of long term success for both.

The Benefits

- More people benefiting from training, skills development and work experience.
- Increased employment opportunities and more local people in good jobs and apprenticeships.
- Greater cost-effectiveness and impact from other streams of WYCA investment and activity through a joined-up approach.
- Reduced inequality through the greatest benefits going to poorer, deprived and 'left behind' areas and people, including BAME communities.
- Securing more funding - and greater benefits to local people and areas - through successful bids and proposals.
- Reduced dependency on grants, benefits/Universal Credit and foodbanks.

Case study - Incommunities:

Bradford employment hub

Incommunities' Employment Hub is transforming lives and supporting job seekers hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Dedicated advisors offer free support online or over the phone covering how to search job sites, write effective CVs and build interview skills, as well as offering in-work support and more. Prior to COVID-19, the Hub ran maths and English classes in community centres for anyone looking to get into work or wanting to improve their skills. Since lockdown these options and job clubs have successfully continued via online platforms and by telephone. The Employment Hub builds on Incommunities track record of improving customers' lives and regenerating communities, for example via an EU-funded 'STEP' programme which helped over 400 people into work. The Hub is part funded by the European Social Fund and supported by Bradford Council.



Ambition 5: Health, care and homelessness



Health, care and homelessness

The challenges and opportunities

There are strong links between housing, health and care. Working together provides opportunities to enhance wellbeing, reduce health inequalities and tackle homelessness.

Poor housing represents a similar risk to the NHS as physical inactivity, smoking or alcohol. Cold, damp homes can increase the risk of cardiovascular, respiratory and rheumatoid conditions, reduce dexterity amongst older people and increase the risk of falls. A healthy population is a productive and prosperous one and vice-versa. However, estimates have put the cost to the NHS of poor housing at £1.4bn a year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a harsh light on the huge inequalities in our housing system between the comfortably housed, the insecurely and badly housed, those suffering from overcrowding (notably in BAME communities), and those without anywhere to call home. It is forecast that thousands of people will suffer permanent health issues from COVID, and mental health impacts will be profound. Increased unemployment, reduced incomes and uncertain futures will bring complex health issues and hit the vulnerable and those already in poorer health the hardest. Already we have seen a huge increase in demand for help and advice about debt and benefits.

COVID has also intensified the need to address the challenges of an ageing population at a time when there is already a crisis in social care. Leaders and clinicians in our region have called for a 'reset' to the planning, commissioning and delivery of health and care, building on progress made during the pandemic. We need to re-examine health and care connections, models and solutions, and housing and housing associations are integral to doing so.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a harsh light on the huge inequalities in our housing system”

Case study - Together Housing: Frickley Mews

Together Housing has developed the Frickley Mews 'housing with care' scheme in South Elmsall, a deprived area in Wakefield district. This innovative, high quality development provided 67 one and two bedroom apartments at affordable rents to people aged over 50 with an assessed care need, alongside 45 family homes. It provides a modern response to growing care needs by combining independent living with personalised care, and on-site facilities such as a salon, a bathing suite, landscaped gardens and a bistro/restaurant.

The project was part of a wider local regeneration scheme and included demolition of poor quality private sector rented and owner occupied stock which were bought out using grants. During construction, the developer (Wates) supported 13 apprentices, facilitated local educational workshops and spent £4.7m with local suppliers.

Homelessness is one of the greatest challenges that society faces. Whilst its causes and solutions are complex, street homelessness is a visible sign of a failing society that should have no place in modern Britain.

Rough sleeping is only the tip of the iceberg. Statutory homelessness extends to those who lack a secure place in which to live, but homelessness also includes those who are staying in hostels, B&Bs or on friends' floors and sofas. It occurs across West Yorkshire and is heavily concentrated in Leeds - the city had 1,202 of 1,383 eligible homeless people in West Yorkshire in 2017/18⁸.

The priority given to homelessness by Greater Manchester's Mayor shows how combined authorities can be drawn to the issue and make a difference. This is not something that housing associations, local government or the voluntary/ community sector can resolve on their own. But by working together, we can develop sustainable solutions that encompass all types of homelessness. Addressing homelessness also involves focusing on the growing private rented sector. And while some landlords provide a good service, many tenants in the private rented sector suffer from limited security of tenure, increased costs and poor conditions.

⁸ https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/healthprofiles/data#page/3/gid/3007000/pat/6/par/E12000003/ati/101/are/E08000016/iid/92314/age/-1/sex/4/cid/4/page-options/oww-do-0_car-do-0

Health, care and homelessness

What we are already doing

We contribute to health and care in a number of ways, for example:

- We provide affordable, safe and warm housing (including for many key workers) as part of our core purpose.
- We provide care and support for people who need more than a home.
- We support community activity that impacts positively on health and wellbeing including befriending/peer support networks and public health initiatives.
- We work with local authorities and others to access funding to develop innovative specialist care and supported housing, e.g. women's refuges, extra care schemes and step up/down schemes that prevent delayed transfers of care.
- We have direct expertise of working with key client groups, e.g. young homeless people, people with mental health issues, older people, those with dementia, and those with multiple and complex needs.
- We are collaborating to create solutions to improve health outcomes around the four priorities of the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership's Housing and Health Programme – homelessness and rough sleeping, learning disabilities and autism, mental health and ageing population.

Case study - Connect Housing: Engage Leeds Consortium

Connect Housing and three other organisations – Gipsil, Barca and Riverside - form the Engage Leeds consortium. This consortium supports 1,500 people from all tenures every year across Leeds - preventing homelessness, sustaining accommodation and independent living, and integrating communities to improve networks and reduce isolation. In 2019/20, 97% of clients had their housing needs met, 91% improved their physical health, and 93% became better at managing their mental health and wellbeing. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the offer expanded to support 229 people previously rough sleeping by placing them in accommodation such as hotels.

Case study - Connect Housing: Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership

Connect Housing is part of the innovative Kirklees Better Outcomes Partnership (KBOP), which supports people who face an increased risk of homelessness to live independent and fulfilling lives in their own homes. It works alongside people to help them secure and maintain accommodation, improve health and wellbeing, access education and employment, and develop the skills they need.

KBOP is a consortium of housing associations, other local specialist community organisations, Bridges Outcomes Partnerships and Kirklees Council - forming the largest social outcomes based contract in Europe.

In its first year KBOP partners supported over 1,300 participants and enabled them to achieve 11,633 positive outcomes, identify their ambitions and prevent homelessness.

We are actively combatting homelessness through a variety of approaches:

- We let homes to people in most need.
- We support those at risk of losing their homes (e.g. due to mental ill health or rent arrears) and prevent homelessness through tenancy sustainment services.
- We have provided properties for use as temporary accommodation for homeless people, and provide move-on accommodation, freeing up hostel spaces for rough sleepers.
- We work with and in some cases run women's refuges, and identify people at risk of becoming homeless through domestic violence or safeguarding issues.
- We support young people, who are particularly vulnerable, and provide 24/7 accommodation projects for young homeless people including care leavers.
- We work in collaboration with councils to advise them if a tenant is at risk of eviction, for example due to antisocial behaviour or rent arrears. This is part of the National Housing Federation's Commitment to Refer.

Health, care and homelessness

How we can do more

There are considerable health assets in the region, including NHS organisations, NHS Digital, universities, local authorities and businesses; and health and social care structures are already changing. Utilising our anchor role in local communities we can work with health partners, WYCA and others to co-create interventions to improve the health and well-being of the population. As well as increasing the availability of affordable, rented housing, we could help by:

- **Developing a West Yorkshire Health & Housing Work Programme** – co-producing a workplan to tackle the 4 priorities of the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Housing Programme, including partnership working to pilot practical solutions.
- **Providing more specialist housing** – accessing funding to enable provision of innovative health, care and support solutions designed in collaboration with NHS and adult social care partners. This includes providing more choice for older people to move into safe, supportive housing which supports independence and also frees up much needed family accommodation. The provision of ‘step/up down’ services (such as the Heatherstones Court model in Calderdale) could considerably ease the burden associated with delayed transfers of care from hospitals.
- **Develop our key worker offer** – strengthening our offer for key workers and supporting the NHS with the workforce challenge. This could be homes for low cost ownership such as shared ownership or homes for rent.
- **Widen preventative action** – such as supporting those facing challenges that could put them at risk of future homelessness, through projects that help them to address their challenges and gain employment. In addition, we can contribute to the development of digital healthcare, supporting older people to stay at home for longer.
- **New partnership to assist local authorities in delivering Homelessness & Rough Sleeping strategies** in districts across West Yorkshire. We have a track record in working in partnership on homelessness issues, and could further support residents with help on addiction, health issues and pathways towards employment.
- **Improving the private rented sector** – working together, housing associations could potentially establish an ethical lettings agency to manage tenancies on behalf of private landlords.

Making it happen

To move from options to concrete action that makes a difference, we need:

Partnership and prioritisation – whilst housing associations, local authorities and charities are already working together, there is potential to build on the foundation of existing good work to forge new solutions, building on the emerging partnerships that are developing to support the integration of health and social care.

Funding – solutions are likely to require significant long-term resources, both for accommodation and support, and partners will need to explore and make best use of new and existing funding streams to support this work.

Learning from best practice – an increasing number of successful projects have made a difference in the UK and abroad. We need to research these, refine and pilot them if required, and then roll them out at scale.

“Longer (healthy) life expectancy and reduced health inequalities”

The Benefits

- Longer (healthy) life expectancy and reduced health inequalities for the general population, BAME communities, and those with mental health needs, learning disabilities and autism.
- Reduced pressure on adult social care and residential placements, and widened options for independent living for older people.
- Reduced hospital admissions, GP attendance, and delayed transfers of care.
- Considerably reduced homelessness of all types.
- Less public expenditure on the problems that emerge as a result of homelessness, and on dealing with the issue in a short-term but ineffective way.
- Eliminating or greatly reducing street homelessness in town and city centres, with benefits for the centres concerned and proper homes for those who had slept there.

The way forward



The way forward

In this prospectus, we have demonstrated the scale of the needs and challenges around creating more and better homes. Housing associations are already doing much to deliver this and to achieve progress in many other areas too.

There are great opportunities to do much more still, and at greater scale and pace.

Not only will this deliver benefits that meet our own social and economic goals, it will advance the ambitions of the new Local Industrial Strategy and the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal, for growth, inclusion, innovation, healthy communities, a carbon-neutral future, and rapid and sustained recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.

Across the five Ambitions we have set out there are strong interlinkages between the types of action we can catalyse, and also barriers to progress that reoccur repeatedly. These include the need for land and a place-based focus; funding and resources; alignment of approaches and investments; sharing of knowledge and best practice; and partnership at the strategic and the practical level. With creativity, dynamism and desire, all of these are surmountable.

We look forward to combining our collective efforts, expertise, investment and will with those of the Combined Authority and its partners to address these barriers and unlock the considerable opportunities ahead. The first step to unlocking these benefits is forging strong and lasting partnership. While we are not fixated on any single structure or set agenda, we know that collaboration – between housing associations acting together as one, and with the Combined Authority and its partners – will be an essential and powerful foundation for progress. Coming together will allow shared exploration of interests, challenges and opportunities, and agreement about practicalities, priorities and the best way forward.

Doing so will demonstrate the ability of West Yorkshire to make a difference using the freedoms and resources that devolution provides; efficiently deliver on our shared ambitions and goals; and transform the lives of local people in every part of West Yorkshire.

“We look forward to combining our collective efforts, expertise, investment and will with those of the Combined Authority and its partners”

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