

Ambition: housing target that reflects northern need

The Northern Position

There is no shortage of housing ambition in the North – only a shortage of new, high-quality homes. The North makes up around a sixth of the country’s entire projected housing need, much of that is concentrated around the seven city regions.

Homes for The North commissioned research in 2017 to understand the level of housing need across the North and how future economic-led scenarios would influence the number of new homes needed. The final report, ‘Future Housing Requirements for the North’, finds that 50,000 new homes are needed every year to keep up with demand and support the ambitious scale of economic growth across the North as outlined in the Northern Powerhouse Independent Economic Review¹. This figure presents a serious challenge as well as an opportunity, particularly as current housebuilding completions are much lower, at 35,560 in 2017/18 across the 72 Northern Local Authority areas².

Our Ask

The Government should adopt a formal target of 50,000 new homes per year in the North, used as a benchmark for assessing housing provision set out in local plans. The use of unambiguous targets will ensure that the North gets the homes it so urgently needs

Potential impact

If the Government is to rebalance the economy, it must do all it can to enable Local Authorities to accurately plan for the homes needed in these areas. Through adopting a benchmark figure of 50,000 new homes per annum in the North, the Government can ensure that Local Authority housing need projections are aligned with economic ambitions driving towards a more balanced UK economy.

An ambitious development target will only be met through partners working closely together at a local and national level to support a positive economic future for the North. Working with the Government to release land, access funding and increase opportunities for the development of new homes, development plans can continue to grow to meet Northern need.

The devolution agenda gives Local and Combined Authorities the opportunity to shape regional housebuilding projections that truly meet the needs of local people as well as creating buoyant economies where people choose to live, work and play. Adopting the 50,000 homes per year target will focus the minds of Local Authority leaders and metro-mayors in respective locations to create thriving communities with the right homes in the right places, boosting economic outputs.

Homes for the North is already building on this research through further modelling of economic scenarios linked to Transport for the North’s strategic plans to 2050. With better connected cities, increased job prospects and a strong housing offer, the North can relieve some of the intense housing pressures facing London and the South East, while at the same time continuing to grow its thriving Northern cities.

¹ Homes for the North (2017) ‘Future Housing Requirements for the North’

² MHCLG Data Tables 253 permanent dwellings started and completed, by tenure and district