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NEWS

5th September

No affordable homes for first-time buyers in York, report reveals



By [George Dodd](#) | [@dodd_george](#)
Reporter

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Cllr Michael Pavlovic

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NO area of York is affordable for first-time home buyers, a new study has revealed.

The Post Office Money study found that York is a coldspot for first-time buyers - with no areas across the city deemed affordable for people taking their first step on the property ladder.






York is among eight areas in the UK - including Warwick, Guildford, Woking, Oxford, Watford, Brighton and Cambridge - that has a zero per cent rating for affordable areas across the city.

In the report, which used Office for National Statistics data, homes were deemed unaffordable if they cost more than four-and-a-half times the average local first-time buyer income.

Ross Hunter, product director for Post Office Money, said York was seeing house prices increase by three per cent year-on-year, while the average first-time buyer wage was increasing by just one per cent.

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He said: “Historic cities like York are appealing to high-income people and due to things like planning restrictions, the demand is greatly outweighing supply.

“Consequently, we see more people from outside the city purchasing houses rather than first-time buyers, for who it can take years of dedicated effort in order to gather the necessary funds.”

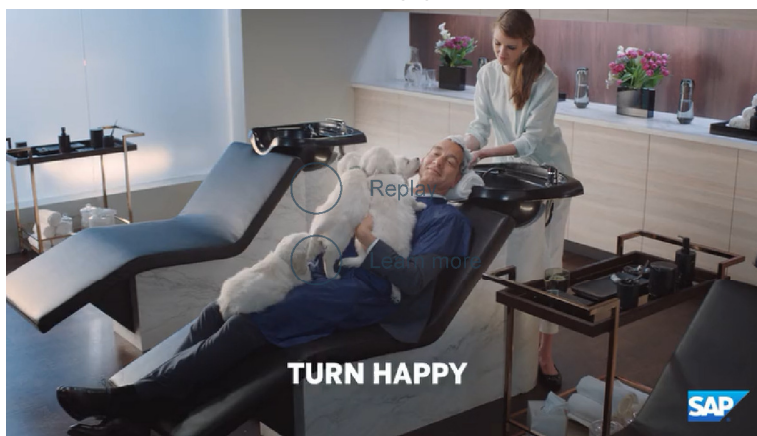
Labour spokesman for housing in York, Cllr Michael Pavlovic, said: “The evidence is sadly familiar to so many York families who’ve found themselves dreaming of living in the city in which they were born and raised and in which they work.



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“Labour has long been highlighting the inequality faced by our workers priced out of the city, something the Lib Dems in coalition with the Tories, and now as the largest party in coalition with the Greens, have constantly failed to address.”

He said nearly two thirds of new homes planned for council plots will be sold at full market price.

Cllr Pavlovic said: “The council’s current house building programme on council land will sell almost two thirds of all homes built at full market price, meaning they are failing to take advantage of a once in a generation opportunity to maximise genuinely affordable housing for the city. Sadly their housing policies will only increase the gap between the haves and the have nots and push more people out. York deserves better.”



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Cllr Denise Craghill, [City of York Council](#) executive member for housing, said the affordability of housing in York was a “major challenge” and she was looking to increase the number of affordable homes.

She said: “The council’s own housing delivery programme, which is now getting well underway, is the first step in setting a high standard of new housing in York which will include housing that is affordable to buy, to rent and to live in.”

Tom Brittain, the council’s assistant director of housing and community safety, said: “York is a very desirable place to live and, like other cities affected by high house prices, we want to make sure that people can get on the property ladder and can enjoy living here.

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“Currently, some 15 per cent of the city’s housing is affordable to rent or buy and, with York’s average property prices eight to nine times higher than the average wage, we are underway with delivering 600 new homes across York.

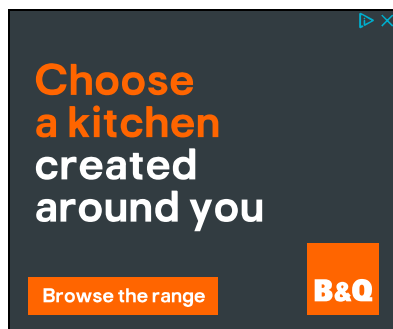
“Of these, 40 per cent will be affordable: twice the level required by our planning guidelines and whose cost will be offset by the sale of the other homes on the open market.

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“Twenty per cent of these homes will be offered on a shared ownership basis and can be chosen by the applicant from the open market, or bought from the council. We’re currently working with 75 applicants to buy between a 25-75 per cent share of a home with a minimum five per cent deposit.



“The submitted Local Plan seeks to provide sufficient housing to meet the needs of the city over the lifetime of the plan, to enable the building of strong, sustainable communities. It also includes targets for at least 20 per cent affordable homes in larger developments which would mean around 4,000 more affordable homes to rent or buy across the lifetime of the plan.”

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