INTRODUCTION

The 2011 Wakefield District Strategic Housing Market Assessment is a major research study which will continue to shape the future planning and housing policies of the District. The research will help inform policies contained within the Council’s Local Development Framework and Housing Strategy; and the SHMA can be used when considering planning applications. The study has been carried out by arc4 Ltd and has included:

- A review of existing (secondary) data;
- A survey of recent movers’;
- Stakeholder engagement and workshops; and
- Focus group work

The findings from the study provide a robust and defensible evidence base for future policy development which conforms to the Government’s published Strategic Housing Market Assessment guidance.

HOUSING MARKET CONTEXT AND HOUSING AREAS

Wakefield District is located in West Yorkshire and has a population of 323,900\(^1\). The three main urban areas within the District are the City of Wakefield, Castleford and Pontefract. Additionally there are eight smaller urban areas, five local service centres; and series of villages primarily located to the south-east and south-west of the District. Wakefield District is an integral component of the Leeds City-Region and there are strong travel-to-work and migration linkages with Leeds.

The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) suggests that a housing market is self-contained if upwards of 70% of moves (migration and travel to work) take place within a defined area. An analysis of migration data suggests that 72.7% of households move within the District. In terms of travel to work patterns, 60.6% of residents work in the District and 39.4% commute out to work.

On the basis of these data, Wakefield District can be defined as a self-contained housing market area in terms of household movement but in terms of travel to work, Wakefield has strong linkages with Leeds and is part of the City Region housing market area.

Within Wakefield District, no sub-area can be described as a self-contained housing market areas as fewer than 70% of moving households originated from

\(^1\) ONS mid-year population estimates 2009
within the same sub-area and fewer than 70% of economically active residents work in the same sub-area.

**HOUSE PRICES**

In line with national trends, median house prices across Wakefield District have increased dramatically over the period 2000 to 2010, from around £48,000 in Q1 2000 to £134,950 in Q4 2007. Prices have subsequently fallen and in Q1 2011 the median price was £115,000. Median prices have tended to mirror the Yorkshire and Humber Average and have been lower than those for neighbouring Leeds and for England as a whole.

**DWELLING STOCK**

There is a total of 146,710 dwellings in Wakefield District of which 2,593 have been vacant for six months or more and 486 are second/holiday homes, resulting in a total of 143,631 occupied dwellings.

Overall, across Wakefield District\(^2\)

- 70.3% of occupied dwellings are owner occupied, a further 24.3% are social rented, 5.2% private rented and 0.2% are intermediate tenure;
- 74.8% of properties are houses, 12.2% are bungalows, 12.2% are flats/maisonettes, and 0.7% are other property types (e.g. caravans);
- 8.4% have one bedroom, 31.2% have two bedrooms, 46.6% have three bedrooms and 13.7% have four or more bedrooms;
- 16.4% of households are dissatisfied with state of repair, with private renters most likely to express dissatisfaction. Wakefield and District Housing has invested nearly £400m in modernising the vast majority of its stock and the 2010 Tenant Satisfaction Survey reported that 10.4% of households were dissatisfied and of those only 3.2% were very dissatisfied and 7.2% were fairly dissatisfied.

**DEMOGRAPHIC DRIVERS**

The population of Wakefield is estimated to be 323,900\(^3\) with Office for National Statistics projections showing an increase to 371,400 (14.7%) by 2033. The number of households are expected to increase by 25.9% from 139,000 in 2008 to 175,000 in 2033 or an annual increase of around 1400.

Over the next few decades, the age profile of residents in Wakefield District is expected to change dramatically. There will be a significant ‘demographic shift’ with both the number and proportion of older people increasing. Overall the number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 62.4% (or by

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\(^2\) Data from 2007 household survey

\(^3\) ONS 2009 mid-year population estimate
by 2033; the number of 75+ residents is expected to increase by 83.1% (21,200) and the number of 85+ residents is expected to increase by a dramatic 141.7% (or by 10,200) by 2033. Currently, 17% of all residents are aged 65 and over and this is projected to increase to 24.3% by 2033.

ECONOMIC DRIVERS

According to the ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, lower quartile earnings in Wakefield District in 2010 were £17,009. This compares with £17,540 for the region and £18,668 for England. Median incomes are £22,823, compared with a regional median of £24,076 and national median of £26,312.

60.6% of economically active residents live and work within Wakefield District and 39.4% work outside the District, particularly Leeds (24.1%).

HOUSING NEED AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing need is defined as ‘the quantity of housing required for households who are unable to access suitable housing without financial assistance’. A key element of the study is to explore the scale of housing need and the extent to which additional affordable housing is needed.

Affordable housing is defined as either social rented, affordable rented (rents up to 80% of market rents) or intermediate housing (e.g. shared ownership and shared equity) which is provided and made available to eligible households (i.e. those who lack their own housing or live in unsuitable housing) who cannot afford to meet their needs through the market. Intermediate affordable housing is housing at prices and rents above those of social rents, but below market prices or rents.

Across Wakefield District, there are 13,609 existing households currently in housing need and of these 11,886 cannot afford open market solutions to address their need and after taking into account those already living in affordable housing there is an annual requirement from 1,135 existing households in need. Additionally, there is an annual requirement from 1,161 newly-forming households and existing households falling into need who cannot afford open market housing. When this need is compared with the available supply of affordable housing (1,524 each year), the result is an overall annual shortfall of 772 affordable dwellings. This figure is a measure of the extent to which the requirement for affordable housing is greater than the current supply. Table ES1 provides a summary of annual affordable shortfalls by location.

In terms of the split between social rented and intermediate tenure, 28.7% of existing and newly-forming households in need (or 663 households) could afford an intermediate tenure product with an equity share of £50,000 and 8.7% (or 200 households) could afford an equity share of £80,000. The actual tenure split on individual sites should remain flexible and negotiated on a site by site basis. The final proportion of intermediate tenure dwellings to be delivered needs to be reconciled with the economic viability of delivering affordable housing on sites; the

4 Data from 2007 Household Survey
appetite of the HCA to fund intermediate tenure dwellings; and the ability of households to secure mortgages

Table ES1 Annual affordable housing requirements by sub-area, property size and designation (general needs/older person) 2010/11 to 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>General Needs</th>
<th>Older Person</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% by locality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smaller 1/2 Bed</td>
<td>Larger 3+ bed</td>
<td>All sizes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castleford</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normanton and Featherstone</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontefract and Knottingley</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield Central</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield North West</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakefield Rural</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% by designation/size</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that the needs analysis makes conservative estimates of the requirements from newly-forming households. Applying a household formation rate based on 1.7% of all households (based on the Survey of English Housing) would result in a doubling of the affordable shortfall. It should also be noted that the CLG needs assessment model does not factor in the role of the private rented sector in providing accommodation which is affordable.

**HOUSING DEMAND**

Housing demand is the quantity of housing that households are willing and able to buy or rent. Households aspire to a variety of dwelling types and sizes and based on the preferences of recently moving households these are summarised as:

**Type**
- 50.6% detached and semi-detached
- 25.6% terraced
- 13.0% bungalows; and
- 10.8% flats/apartments.

**Size**
- 41.7% smaller one and two bedroom;
- 40% three bedroom; and
- 18.3% larger four or more bedroom properties.
There is already a diverse range of dwellings which reflect household preferences across the District. A flexible approach to new open market provision is therefore needed which seeks to complement and enhance the residential offer across the District and provide dwellings for a variety of income groups, noting the stronger preferences amongst higher occupational group households for larger detached and semi-detached dwellings.

OLDER PEOPLE AND ADAPTATIONS
Addressing the accommodation requirements of older people is going to become a major strategic challenge for Wakefield District over the next few decades, with the number of residents aged 65 or over expected to increase dramatically.

The vast majority of older people want to continue to live in their current home with support when needed (72.9% of households responding to this question in the recent movers’ survey). The recent movers’ survey also suggested that respondents would consider a range of alternative types of provision including renting sheltered accommodation and extra care housing, renting from a housing association, buying outright and co-housing (where your home is part of a small community which shares facilities and activities).

SUPPORTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE
Key messages to emerge from discussions with supporting people and others working with vulnerable groups include:

- A lack of provision for people with mental health issues and a lack of community-based services including ‘step down’ services after leaving hospital and floating support;
- There has been a general shift over the past five years towards floating support;
- Disabled access dwellings are scarce commodity, with 84 currently on the waiting list;
- Some larger affordable properties are required by families on the waiting list;
- Access of single people to fair rented accommodation in decent areas is restricted and there is a concern that placing vulnerable single people in poor residential environments can lead to tenancy failures (through increasing incidences of debt and anti-social behaviour).