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## **THE VALE WOULD DOUBLE NUMBER OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES BUILT IN NORTH SOMERSET**

- **Latest Government stats show just 129 new affordable homes were built in North Somerset last year**
  - **The Vale would double the number of affordable homes built**
- **Council's target is 150 a year despite 3,300 people on its own housing list**
  - **Latest data shows a growing gap between wages and house prices<sup>4</sup>**

Just 129 new affordable homes were built in North Somerset last year (2016/17), according to the latest Government figures released last week<sup>1</sup> (19 June 2018).

That's an increase of 24 extra new homes compared to the previous year (2015/16) when only 105 were completed.

However, if Taylor Wimpey's plans for three new villages adjacent to Bristol – known as The Vale - were to go ahead, that number would be doubled.

The Vale would provide a total of 1,800 affordable homes built at a rate of about 120 a year, for the next 15 years.

Taylor Wimpey is proposing that 40 per cent of the 4,500 homes it hopes to build would be affordable, exceeding the Council's own policy which sits at 35 per cent.

900 of the 1,800 new affordable homes would be for rent - managed by a housing association - while the other 900 would be so-called *Starter Homes*, sold at a 20 percent discount.

There is a huge unmet need for affordable homes in North Somerset. There are currently 3,300 people registered on the Council's HomeChoice waiting list – with 300 more being added *every month*<sup>2</sup>.

The Council's website states: "It is unlikely that you will be offered social housing unless you are in severe circumstances. Around 600 properties become available each year but there are about 3,300 households waiting on the HomeChoice register with over 300 new applicants every month."

According to the official report undertaken for the West of England Joint Spatial Plan<sup>3</sup>, North Somerset has a shortfall of 4,800 affordable homes.

Despite this huge deficit, the Council's own target for new affordable homes sits at just 150 a year.

In a worrying development, the latest report from the National Housing Federation (NHF)<sup>4</sup>, which represents housing associations, shows the average price of a house in North Somerset has gone up by £20,000 in one year – while wages have actually *gone down*.

According to the NHF, the average North Somerset house price increased from £251,607 in 2016 to £271,631 in 2017. Meanwhile average income levels actually fell by £224 (from £27,612 in 2016 to £27,388 in 2017)<sup>4</sup>. The cost of the average home in North Somerset is now 9.9 times the average income – up from 9.1 last year.

Despite this sobering picture, North Somerset Council has excluded The Vale from the Joint Spatial Plan. Councillors at one local Parish Council – Long Ashton - said they will "fight to the death to stop this development taking place". However, several other North Somerset Town and Parish Councils have stated their support for the Vale, saying it is the most sustainable location.

Taylor Wimpey's project director Gareth Hawke, said: "The current situation for North Somerset residents struggling to buy or rent a home they can afford is very worrying. There are too many people for the inadequate number of affordable homes...and clearly that situation is showing no signs of improving.

"The Vale won't solve the problem alone, but it would be a really big help for struggling local families. Unlike other sites the Council has favoured – particularly those at Banwell and Churchill – we can absolutely guarantee 40 per cent of our homes will be affordable – and we would be onsite and building those homes as soon as permission was granted.

"We urge North Somerset Council to think again about its decision to exclude The Vale, for the benefit of all those people on its own housing waiting list – a list which should be shrinking not growing."

More details of *The Vale* are available at [www.thevale-northsomerset.co.uk](http://www.thevale-northsomerset.co.uk) where interested parties can provide feedback and sign-up for regular email updates.

People can also find out more and sign up for updates via The Vale Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/taylorwimpeythevale/> or follow the Twitter feed @twthevale.

**ENDS**

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<sup>1</sup> Figures as reported in the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, Affordable Housing Supply Statistics (AHS) 2016-17, published 19 June 2018; the total new build completions in North Somerset was reported as 129; if refurbishments are included that rises to 141 - the figure quoted by North Somerset Council in its own Monitoring Report 2017, is a little lower at 138 total new affordable homes completed in 2016/17.

<sup>2</sup> According to North Somerset Council's website, on the Applying for Social Housing page.

<sup>3</sup> West of England Joint Spatial Plan: Wider Bristol HMA Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

<sup>4</sup> National Housing Federation Home Truths 2017/18: The housing market in the South West.

**Note to media:**

Taylor Wimpey UK, part of Taylor Wimpey plc, is one of the largest residential developers in the UK. It operates from 24 regional offices across England, Scotland and Wales, and builds over 14,500 homes every year. Taylor Wimpey is a responsible homebuilder that is committed to health and safety, environmental sustainability, providing excellent customer service and engaging with local communities. In 2017 Taylor Wimpey contributed over £413 million to local communities in which it builds across the UK via planning obligations, providing, for example, local infrastructure, affordable homes, public transport and education facilities; Taylor Wimpey continues to innovate with its range of high quality and energy efficient house designs on developments across the UK; Taylor Wimpey has a strong and sustainable customer base, with over 90% owner-occupiers. First time buyers accounted for 41% of Taylor Wimpey's sales in 2017, with a range of offers available to help first time buyers purchase a home of their own; Taylor Wimpey seeks to be an inclusive company which values people as



individuals – whether they are employees, customers or other stakeholders. It aims to be successful through a creative and innovative workforce that reflects the diversity of the local communities in which it works.

For more information please visit [www.taylorwimpey.co.uk](http://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk)

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Taylor Wimpey operates from 24 regional offices across England, Scotland and Wales and builds over 13,500 homes each year. Taylor Wimpey is a responsible homebuilder that is committed to health and safety, environmental sustainability, providing excellent customer service and engaging with local communities.

1. Taylor Wimpey has a strong and sustainable customer base, with over 90% owner-occupiers. First time buyers accounted for 38% of Taylor Wimpey's sales in 2016, with a range of offers available to help first time buyers purchase a home of their own.
2. Taylor Wimpey does much more than build homes; it strives to make a positive contribution to both local communities and the local area. In 2016 Taylor Wimpey contributed over £363 million to local communities in which it builds across the UK via planning obligations, providing, for example, local infrastructure, affordable homes, public transport and education facilities.
3. Taylor Wimpey continues to innovate with its range of house designs on developments across the UK. The range is designed to be high quality and extremely energy efficient. The house types are very flexible with different internal layouts and a wide range of exteriors that complement local landscapes and streetscapes.
4. Taylor Wimpey seeks to be an inclusive company which values people as individuals – whether they are employees, customers or other stakeholders. We aim to be successful through a creative and innovative workforce that reflects the diversity of the local communities in which we work. Embracing diversity enables Taylor Wimpey to succeed in a competitive environment.

For further information please visit [www.taylorwimpey.co.uk](http://www.taylorwimpey.co.uk)