

Leeds Affordable Housing Benchmark Transfer Update 2018/19

1.1 This is the first annual update of the Affordable Housing benchmark prices that were agreed in May 2017 using a revised methodology. This methodology is the same based on earnings data with adjustment to account for households on benefits. The main stages of the methodology are:

- i Ascertaining lower quartile and lower decile earnings
- ii Translating individual earnings to household earnings
- iii Applying affordability criteria
- iv Translating affordability into square metre benchmarks

Step 1 – lower quartile and decile earnings

1.2 The earnings figures were taken from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)¹ which are published annually and can be easily and quickly inserted into our methodology to update the benchmarks when needed. Figures are for a combination of full time and part time² male and female earnings of individuals resident in Leeds and are provided as quartiles and deciles.

Step 2 – household earnings

1.3 The ASHE source only provides earnings data for individuals, not households and no alternative regular reliable free data sources for household earnings could be identified. Therefore, the methodology translates individual earnings into household earnings. Data from the Office of National Statistics 2015³ was used to understand the distribution of different sizes and types of household in Leeds. Using the earnings of individuals enabled the earnings profiles of typical single and family households to be generated. It should be noted that the earnings of childless “couple” households has deliberately not been factored into single households because this would have the effect of exaggerating the benchmark prices for flats, making them unaffordable for many single households.

Step 3 – affordability criteria

1.4 Affordability will be different depending on whether affordable dwellings will be sold to a registered provider or rented directly in developments of private rented sector (PRS) dwellings. Sale dwellings are subject to standard mortgage multiplier maximums whereby single households are typically able to borrow 3 x gross salary and family households are typically able to borrow 2.5 x gross salary. A 5% deposit is then added onto those figures. For rental dwellings it is assumed that rents payable should not exceed 25% of gross earnings to be regarded as affordable.⁴

¹ ASHE link:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofresidencebylocalauthorityashetab8>

² 75% Full Time and 25% Part Time earnings on a 3 year average to dampen volatility of annual change in PT earnings

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/detailed-data-for-modelling-and-analytical-purposes>

⁴ Leeds SHMA (2011) assumes that a household is considered able to afford market housing in cases where the rent payable would constitute no more than 25% of their gross household income.

Step 4 – square metre benchmarks

- 1.5 The practice of requesting, negotiating and agreeing affordable housing with developers is helped by having benchmarks in a £/sqm form. It takes away the complexity of setting a multitude of different benchmarks for different dwelling sizes and it offers developers ability to quantify the cost of affordable housing in Leeds before they buy land. Some assumptions have to be made to translate affordability benchmarks into a £/sqm form. Generally speaking it is expected that single person households would be suited to living in 1 or 2 bedroom dwellings and therefore it would be appropriate to use single household affordability to calculate a square metre figure for apartments. Likewise, given that family households are thought to be suited to living in dwellings of 3 or more bedrooms it would be appropriate to use family household affordability to calculate a square metre figure for houses. With reference to the nationally described space standards it is assumed that a 48 square meter dwelling would provide a reasonable proxy for apartments of a high density city centre character, 55 square metres for suburban apartments, whilst an 85 square meter dwelling would provide a reasonable proxy for houses.

The benchmarks calculations are as follows:

HOUSES		SALE BENCHMARKS					
FAMILY HH*		INCOME PW	INCOME PCM	ANNUAL INCOME £	2.5 X GROSS ANNUAL SALARY £	5% DEPOSIT	£/sqm at 85 sqm AVERAGE
LOWER DECILE		416	1802	21620	54051	56753	667.68
LOWER QUARTILE		529	2291	27489	68722	72158	848.92

APARTMENTS		SALE BENCHMARKS					Suburbs	City Centre
ALL (M + F)		INCOME PW	INCOME PCM	ANNUAL INCOME £	3 X GROSS ANNUAL SALARY £	5% DEPOSIT	£/sqm at 55 sqm AVERAGE	£/sqm at 48 sqm AVERAGE
LOWER DECILE		241	1046	12549	37648	39530	718.73	823.55
LOWER QUARTILE		310	1343	16116	48347	50764	922.99	1057.59

APARTMENTS		PRS RENTAL BENCHMARKS			25% OF GROSS INCOME £			£/sqm at 48 sqm AVERAGE	
ALL (M + F)		INCOME PW £	INCOME PCM £	ANNUAL INCOME £	PW	PCM	PA	PW	PCM
LOWER DECILE		241	1046	12549	60.33	261.44	3137	1.26	5.45
LOWER QUARTILE		310	1342.972	16116	77.48	335.74	4029	1.61	6.99

Appendix 3

Affordable housing benchmark prices and rents in Leeds for 2018/19

Table 1 below sets out the prices that the City Council would normally expect developers to dispose of affordable dwellings to Registered Providers. They are derived from the mortgage payments that low earning households in Leeds would be able to afford. They translate the affordability standards set out in Policy H5 of the Core Strategy into benchmarks that can be applied in practice achieving consistency between different developments. It is expected that Registered Providers will pass on the affordability to occupiers subject to reasonable administration costs.

Table 1: Affordable Sale Prices

Dwelling Type	Affordability	Benchmark £/sqm
House	Lower Decile	667.68
	Lower Quartile	848.92
Apartment in Suburbs	Lower Decile	718.73
	Lower Quartile	922.99
Apartment in City Centre	Lower Decile	823.55
	Lower Quartile	1057.59

Table 2 below sets out affordable rent benchmarks. These apply in situations where a Private Rented Scheme Provider and the City Council have agreed that affordable housing provision will be provided on-site, or in buildings off-site. Management companies responsible for administering the rental of dwellings would be expected to rent the affordable dwellings at rents that accord with the benchmarks subject to arrangements agreed with the City Council.

Table 2: Affordable Rents for PRS Schemes

Dwelling Type	Affordability	Benchmark £/sqm/week	Benchmark £/sqm/mth
Apartment	Lower Decile	1.26	5.45
	Lower Quartile	1.61	6.99

An explanation of how the benchmarks were calculated is set out in the report to Development Plan Panel of 7th March 2017 entitled “Affordable Housing Benchmarks Update”. It is intended that the benchmarks will be updated annually using the same methodology.

The benchmarks apply to the gross internal floorspace of dwellings, and exclude service or maintenance charges.