

## REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 JANUARY 2026

## REPORT OF CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

# Petition - Stop further housing developments in Yarm

## Summary

This report presents a petition calling to stop further housing development in Yarm. The purpose of this report is to provide background information and outline the appropriate options available to Council in responding to the petition, in accordance with the Council's Constitution and governance framework

## Recommendations

That Council receives the petition and determines one of the following courses of action:

1. Note the petition and take no further action.
2. Refer the petition to the appropriate body for further consideration.

## Detail

### 1. Receipt and Validation of the Petition

- 1.1 A petition titled "Stop further housing development in Yarm" was submitted to the Council by Yvonne Wallace, who is the lead petitioner. Following validation on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025, in line with the Council's Petition Scheme, the petition was confirmed to contain approximately 2000 valid signatures, exceeding the 1,000-signature threshold set out in paragraph 5 of the Scheme for referral to a meeting of full Council.

- 1.2 The petition reads:

*"Having lived in Yarm for the last 40 years, I've witnessed firsthand how the overdevelopment of our beloved town has strained its resources to breaking point. From the heart of a passionate resident and advocate for Yarm's sustainable future, I urge you to join me in calling for a halt to the construction of any more housing estates in our town.*

*For more than two decades, Yarm has been overwhelmed by numerous new housing developments. These projects, while intended to provide homes for growing populations, have inadvertently placed immense pressure on our local infrastructure. Schools are becoming overcrowded, and access to healthcare services has become*

*increasingly difficult, with residents sometimes waiting weeks for a simple doctor's appointment.*

*Our roads, once tranquil, are now a constant source of frustration, infested with traffic congestion. Peak hours have become a ordeal, with gridlocks prompting exasperation among commuters and causing disruptions to daily life. The charm of our town is slowly eroding under the weight of overpopulation, and the very characteristics that make Yarm unique and desirable are under threat.*

*The local council and Stockton Borough Council must recognise that Yarm cannot sustain further housing expansions without significant and immediate investment in infrastructure. We need a comprehensive evaluation of what Yarm realistically can handle, taking into account the capacity of our schools, medical facilities, and transportation networks.*

*Let us protect what makes Yarm special. It's time for our voice to be heard before it's too late. We must advocate responsible development that honors the town's capacity and prioritises the welfare of its current residents.*

*Please sign this petition if you, too, want to secure a sustainable and prosperous future for Yarm without further unnecessary housing developments."*

- 1.3 In accordance with the Petition Scheme, the petition organiser (or their representative) will be given five minutes to present the petition at the Council meeting. The petition may then be debated by councillors for a maximum of 30 minutes, following which Council will determine how to respond.

## **2. Background**

### **Policy**

- 2.1 [The Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#) and the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) enshrine the duty of all Local Authorities to develop spatial plans (Local Plans) for their administrative area and to determine applications for development or change of use across that area, in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations, such as the nationally set [National Planning Policy framework \(NPPF\)](#) indicate otherwise.

## **3. Local Plan**

- 3.1 The [Stockton on Tees Local Plan](#) 2019 -32 was agreed by full council in January 2019. The Local Plan sets out the Council's policies and proposals to guide planning decisions and establishes the framework for the sustainable growth and development of the Borough up to 2032. It covers a range of matters including the number of new homes that are needed and where they should be located; the amount and proposed location of new employment land; protection and enhancement of the natural and historic environment; provision of new infrastructure and improvement of town centres and community facilities in the Borough.
- 3.2 As with any long-term plan, certainty is greater in the early years of a plan and to reflect this, the local plan was reviewed in 2024 establishing that a new Local Plan is required. However, intervening amendments to the NPPF have made a number of changes to the Local Planning regime, changes to the process for submission and agreement, the introduction of mandatory housing targets and the forthcoming establishment of a range of national policies that will need to be taken into account in the setting of a new plan. The council are still awaiting the detailed guidance to define these policies before commencing the new local plan.

- 3.3 Once gateway one is commenced the planning process is expected to take at least 30 months before a new plan is formally adopted by Full Council. It must comply with national policy and be agreed by the Secretary of State for planning. The process includes extensive public consultation, and a public inspection on site allocations and on all matters of local policy.
- 3.4 Due to the introduction of mandatory targets for additional housing growth across the country, the existing Local Plan cannot currently evidence the availability of a deliverable 5 year land supply. This weakens the applicability of the Local Plan when Planning committee are determining residential planning applications, until a 5 year supply is demonstrated. This may lead to applications being given planning permission even though they are not identified as sites in the Local Plan. These decisions will be considered by Planning Committee but may also be referred to appeal and determined by the Planning Inspector.

### Decision Making

- 3.5 The determination of planning applications is by either Planning Committee or delegated to Officers in accordance with our Scheme of Delegation. Generally, decisions regarding major planning applications are taken by the Planning Committee, which is composed of a representative group of elected Councillors. Smaller applications such as change of use or residential extensions or small developments are generally delegated to the professional planning officers of the Council. There is an appeals process to the Planning Inspectorate if an application is refused.

### Housing growth in Yarm

4. Table 1 below details the percentage of gross housing completions across the borough between 2015 and 2024. As detailed below the greatest percentage of completions across this period occurred within the Core Area, Stockton, and Ingleby Barwick

**Table 1: Gross Delivery by location 2015/16 to 2023/24**

Location	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total (%)
Billingham	10.6	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.5	0.2	4.0	0.2	0.0	1.2
Core Area*	6.5	33.8	16.6	27.1	30.2	22.0	19.3	8.3	13.8	21.7
Eaglescliffe	3.3	4.6	11.2	6.4	3.2	1.9	0.6	11.9	16.2	6.5
Ingleby Barwick	24.3	16.7	19.8	14.2	12.6	17.0	20.2	7.7	12.1	15.7
Rural	2.4	2.0	4.9	8.3	3.9	8.7	6.2	22.8	10.3	7.2
Stockton	35.1	16.7	9.7	10.8	21.1	15.3	23.3	28.7	28.6	19.8
Thornaby	7.7	11.9	0.1	4.3	5.3	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.1
Wynyard	0.0	4.6	9.6	11.2	9.0	15.9	11.1	14.0	11.4	9.5
Yarm	10.1	9.6	28.2	17.5	14.3	16.5	15.3	6.4	7.6	14.2

\* Regenerated River Tees Corridor from Local Plan

## Petition Scheme

- 4.1 The Council's Petition Scheme provides that:  
*"The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. They may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee. Where the issue is one on which Cabinet are required to make the final decision, the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision."*
- 4.2 The issue raised by the petition, is the perceived over development around Yarm and the impact this has on local amenities and infrastructure. This is exactly the purview of the local plan making process which will recommence in 2026.
- 4.3 Accordingly, Council may:
- Debate the matter;
  - Request further investigation (e.g. through the Local Plan Working Group); or
  - Take no further action.
- 4.4 This framework ensures that petitioners are heard, and their concerns considered, while preserving the Council's constitutional and statutory decision-making structure.

## Community Impact and Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment

5. None

## Corporate Parenting Implications

6. None

## Financial Implications

7. None

## Legal Implications

8. The Local Planning Authority cannot fetter its discretion by introducing a policy against development of a specific class without following the Local Plan procedure. Each application must be considered on its planning merits in accordance with the legislation.

## Risk Assessment

9. None

## Wards Affected and Consultation with Ward/ Councillors (refer to Concordat for Communication and Consultation with Members)

10. The petition relates solely to the ward of Yarm but the impact of not building houses in Yarm would result in increases in house building targets across all other wards

## Background Papers

[Stockton on Tees Local Plan 2019-2032](#)

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Petition Scheme

Constitution – Part 3 (Council Procedure Rules)

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