

Planning for Climate Change Case Study



Creating a framework for sustainable development on Sheffield's Housing Market Renewal (HMR) sites

- **Local authority area:** Sheffield City Council
- **Stakeholders:** Joint working between the Planning Service and the Housing, Enterprise and Regeneration Service (landowner)



Summary

To facilitate the sustainable development of neighbourhoods in the Housing Market Renewal Area through the promotion of high quality and sustainable development on Council-owned land.

Key learning points

- Value leadership and the need for skilled and knowledgeable teams integrated within your organisation.
- Be clear about what you want to achieve, recognise complexity and the importance of interaction with other stakeholders needs (including the private sector).
- Develop an evolutionary approach.

Background and method

- Sheffield City Council has used the opportunity of Housing Market Renewal (HMR) Pathfinder status to develop its approach to the sustainable development of Council owned land. This has been achieved through strong leadership and the creation of dedicated and skilled teams, neighbourhood planning, the creation of green specifications, and the development of effective delivery mechanisms. The work has been recognised nationally as good practice, anticipated developments in govt policy, and utilised the latest policy tools & initiatives including Eco Homes, Code for Sustainable Homes, BRE Specifications, etc.
- The HMR programme began in 2005 with briefs written for individual sites and the development opportunities advertised on the open market. Although effective in identifying development partners the process was lengthy, expensive, and lacked the real potential to improve practice as individual teams prepared separate briefs with little in the way of a framework.
- The Council prepared a Developer Panel, a select-list of pre-qualified developers, that it would offer sites to and a Designer

Panel of high quality design consultancies. Perceived advantages of this approach were improving relationships and better communication of the Council's requirements, increased speed and the resultant quality of the offer.

- The Council's teams worked with staff across the Council to prepare the HMR Developer Manual and ran quality-cost competitions with the panel. The Manual sets out the requirements for the competition which included meeting one of three sets of quality standards. The three standards, standard, silver and gold enabled the council to vary the financial return or best-practice value of each site. The range of quality standards was based on English Partnerships' (now the Homes and Communities Agency) Quality Standards.
- A site-specific Market Brief was prepared and used with the Manual setting out the design and planning requirements along with the land-owners requirements.
- Although experiencing the housing crash the Developer Panel model was criticised for a number of reasons. The quality-cost competition process was still seen as too lengthy and expensive, relationships were seen as adversarial, there was a lack of trust, and single site development was not seen as cost-effective for developers in delivering regeneration benefits. In 2007 the opportunity arose to create a Local Housing Company through the Housing Green Paper 'Homes for the future: more affordable, more sustainable'. The Sheffield Housing Company (SHC) is being created as a joint venture between the Council and the private sector following a process of competitive dialogue taking around 12 months.
- The SHC will deliver 2500 houses over the next 10-15 years. Construction of the first homes delivered by the SHC will commence in 2012, and 3 of these will achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6.
- The BREEAM Communities¹ Framework has been developed by the Council to replace the Developer Manual as the tool to specify and measure the sustainable quality of development for the SHC. The framework measures the level of sustainable development and is more flexible allowing developers to select, over the mandatory standards required, the areas of quality they wish to invest in so as to gather the requisite number of points required.
- Developed from the BRE standard model, the BREEAM framework is bespoke to Sheffield Council but benefits from a quality audit from the BRE who retain ownership of the specification. Scheme assessment by an independent accredited assessor is required ensuring a consistent standard of quality and faster negotiations on determining the acceptable quality standard.
- Barriers overcome to deliver more sustainable development on local authority land:
 - Achieving political and senior management support for a balance of cost and quality in development.

¹ See http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/local_housing_companies

- Be clear on what the essential outcomes are (including a specification) and ensure the developer partner (and other stakeholders') awareness of the value and cost of quality.
- Harness the experience and skills of the private sector through enabling a flexible approach to delivering the outcomes required.
- Provide enabling support to facilitate delivery partners and to ensure that public sector resources are optimised in impact.
- Ensuring procurement process is fit for purpose and proportionate to the value of the scheme.
- Ensuring technical knowledge and skill of staff to be able to articulate and negotiate on the Council's requirements.

Results - Key outcomes and impacts

- The process of ensuring sustainable development in Sheffield's HMR areas has been evolutionary, with a number of key results such as the Developer Manual, the setting up of the SHC, and the use of the BREEAM Communities framework.
- Developer Manual shortlisted for 2007 RTPi Planning Awards
<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?id=1472>
- Sheffield HMR programme achieves Beacon Homes for the Future status 2008/09 (Page Hall showcase Housing, Park Hill, SWAN, Thriving District and Local Centres, building new homes, residents charters and Green Homes etc)
<http://www.localinnovation.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=17450989>
- IDeA case study - SCC Developer Manual and meeting cultural needs through new developments
<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=15628499>
- PAS case study of HMR Development Team and HMR Developer Manual - "Making a Difference - Improving planning outcomes for the whole community"
<http://www.google.co.uk/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=+HMR+Developer+Manual+-+%E2%80%9CMaking+a+Difference+-+Improving+planning+outcomes+for+the+whole+community%E2%80%9D+&aq=f&aqi=&aql=&oq=>
- LGA Housing Commission 'Housing shortages: what Councils can do' Page 29 of
<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/publications/publication-display.do?id=15312442>
- Housing Design Awards 2010 – Shirecliffe: Project Winners
http://www.hdawards.org/archive/2010/winning_schemes/project_winners/shirecliffe.php

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References / Links

Sheffield Neighbourhood Regeneration Services; <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/regeneration/housing-regeneration>

Sheffield HMR Developer Manual: <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/regeneration/sheffield-site-redevelopment-programme>

Sheffield Housing Company <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/regeneration/housing-regeneration/sheffield-housing-company>

Neighbourhood Masterplan and Frameworks <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/planning-and-city-development/planning-documents/background-reports>