

GET PLYMOUTH BUILDING

Working Plymouth 5th March 2014



Background

On 24th August 2012 the Get Plymouth Building (GPB) programme was launched by Councillor Mark Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance with responsibility for housing delivery. The GPB programme was created following research into national publications looking at how housing supply could be increased.

In a report to the Growth and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 20th February 2013 Councillor Lowry announced the release of 10 City Council sites as part of the GPB programme (Minute 66) and agreed to report progress annually to the relevant scrutiny panel.

GPB contains 8 initiatives and aims to accelerate housing delivery and in particular bring forward greener and more affordable homes:

- 1** We will work with landowners and developers to discuss how we can remove the barriers to development and unlock **stalled sites**. There are currently 4,151 homes with planning permission on 25 sites yet to be built.
- 2** We will seek to assist new development proposals to be worked up on **lapsed sites**, currently 1,933 homes with planning approval expired, to further encourage development momentum in the current housing market.
- 3** We will complete a review of all **Area Action Plan sites** of 11,233 homes that have yet to commence to identify and help unlock future development opportunities and work to support those about to propose development.
- 4** We will fast track through the planning system all new development opportunities brought forward under the **call for sites**, seeking to identify new development proposals in the city.
- 5** We will identify and make available City Council owned sites to support **self-build**, including options for individual plots and groups of serviced plots for sale. We plan to complete a serviced plots pilot and follow up with further releases of council owned land in the form of plots or serviced plots for self-builders.
- 6** We will help bring forward housing on **small sites** by helping to unblock development barriers and proactively encourage housing providers to take a fresh look at sites with less than 15 homes.

7 We will work to ensure that increased and accelerated housing delivery takes place on the 10 **city council owned sites** that have been ring-fenced to provide over 600 new homes of which 43% will be affordable and Code for Sustainable Homes level 4; which is well above current policy and what the market is currently providing.

8 We will identify **new funding mechanisms**, explore new models of delivery and seek to maximise government funding opportunities to help deliver a step change in the quantity and quality of new homes delivered in the future. The development and launch of RENTplus in Plymouth aims to deliver 500 homes over the next five years.

GPB aims to deliver over 2,000 homes and over 800 jobs in local construction and supply chains over the next 2-3 years by taking an innovative approach to housing and planning for homes. This in turn will lead to a boost in regeneration momentum in the city estimated to be worth £18.1 Million to the local economy.

The approach to land releases in both the GPB and Plan for Homes programmes has been cited by the Housing Minister, Kris Hopkins, as an example of best practice in the foreword to the recently published Affordable Housing Programme 2015 – 2018 Prospectus.

On 25th September 2013 the Working Plymouth Scrutiny Panel received a detailed report on progress with the 8 initiatives (Minute 17). This update report focusses on initiative number 7 and provides the first annual update since the announcement of the 10 sites in February 2013.

City Council Sites

What we said we would do

Having prepared streamlined Site Planning Statements for all sites to enable a fast track approach to be taken to identifying the development potential, we said we would work with partners to bring forward planning applications during 2013 and planned for development on all sites to be completed within 2 years . Across the 10 city council sites the expectation was that over 600 homes in total would be delivered of which 43% would be affordable.

What we have done

We have held inception meetings with all of the delivery partners, completed site licences to allow for topographical and other site surveys to be conducted, advised ward councillors of the development proposals and commenced Development Enquiry Service pre-application discussions on all of the sites.

As at 20th February 2014 the position is:

- 2 Sites have commenced construction (Astor Centre, Lipson and Ernesettle Community Centre, Ernesettle)
- 2 Sites are about to start construction (Plym View, Efford and PLUSS Centre, Southway)
- 1 site is at planning application stage (Mannamead Centre, Mannamead)
- 5 sites are at pre-application stage. On 2 of these officers have had to go through a detailed Section 77 process with the Department of Education regarding replacement playing pitches which has led to substantial delays. On 3 of the sites the original development partner appointed withdrew their proposals because they could not deliver them and this necessitated new delivery partners to be appointed which delayed progress on these sites. However all 5 sites are now progressing well.

It is now estimated that a total of 644 dwellings will be delivered on these sites, with 313 of these being affordable homes including 9 self-build units (48.6%). This represents an increase in the total number of units and represents a 5.6% increase in the levels of affordable units to be delivered. All the affordable housing units will be built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 or above.

Progress up to February 2014	No. of Sites	Dwellings
Completed	0	0
Under Construction	2	52
Projected	8	592

Astor Centre, Lipson

Proposal: 12 flats, 100% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: AJM/Oakley

Status: Under construction

Progress: AJM/Oakley, a local construction company, is working with Aster and having secured planning permission in October 2013 commenced work on site in January 2014.

Mannamead Centre, Mannamead

Proposal: 28 dwellings, 44% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: Pillar Developments

Status: Planning application stage

Progress: Following extensive consultations with local residents a planning application was submitted in January 2014.

Plym View, Efford

Proposal: 50 houses, 48% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: Spectrum

Status: Commencement of development imminent

Progress: Planning permission granted in December 2013. Development is expected to start on site in March 2014.

PLUSS Centre, Southway

Proposal: 17 dwellings, 100% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: Westward Housing

Status: Commencement of development imminent

Progress: Planning permission granted in January 2014. Development is expected to start in March 2014.

Ernesettle Community Centre, Ernesettle

Proposal: 40 unit extra care scheme, 100% affordable

Development Partner: Aster Homes

Status: Under construction

Progress: planning permission was granted in September 2013 and initial site clearance work started on site in January 2014.

Former Tamerton Vale Primary School, Tamerton

Proposal: 90 dwellings, 35% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: Galliford Try/Devon and Cornwall Housing Association

Status: Pre-application stage

Progress: Pre-application discussions have commenced but the focus has been in addressing the Section 77 issues in relation to the re-provision of playing pitches with the Department of Education.

Former Southway Primary School, Southway

Proposal: 156 dwellings, 30% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: Plymouth Community Homes

Status: Pre-application stage

Progress: Pre-application discussions have commenced but the focus has been in addressing the Section 77 issues in relation to the re-provision of playing pitches with the Department of Education.

Former Chaucer Way Primary School, Honicknowle

Proposal: 129 dwellings, 40% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: Spectrum

Status: Pre-application stage

Progress: On 30th July 2013 the originally appointed development partner, Linden Homes, withdrew their proposal for the site. On 14th October 2014 Spectrum were appointed as the new development partner, who is now making substantial progress with pre-application discussions.

Former West Park Primary School, West Park

Proposal: 50 dwellings, 100% affordable – all Code Level 4

Development Partner: Trathen Properties

Status: Pre-application stage

Progress: On 30th July 2013 the originally appointed development partner, Linden Homes, withdrew their proposal for the site. On 14th October 2014 Trathen Properties were appointed as the new development partner, who is now making progress with pre-application discussions.

Former Woodlands/Hillside Schools, Whitleigh

Proposal: 72 dwellings, 50% affordable – all Code 4/Passivhaus

Development Partner: Bouygoues

Status: Pre-application stage

Progress: On 30th September 2013 the originally appointed development partner, Sanctuary Housing, indicated that they could not deliver their submitted scheme on viability grounds. On 9th December 2013 Bouygoues were appointed as a new development partner and an initial inception meeting was held on 17th December 2013.

Conclusion

The managed release of city council sites has helped stimulate housing development activity in the city. The proactive coordination of land, planning and housing inputs has enabled very fast progress to be made between the announcement of a land release and the start of construction.

On 2 of the sites initial construction work started just 11 months after the announcement of the release of land and on 2 further sites construction is expected to start after only 13 months. This is a speed of delivery that is far faster than those achieved under normal development timetables.

The initiative is expecting to deliver more homes with a 5% increase in the number of affordable units on the 10 sites released compared to what was originally envisaged.

A further benefit of the initiative is that all the affordable units – some 313 units are to be built to Code Level 4 or above, thereby addressing long term fuel poverty issues.

It is suggested that around the second anniversary of the GPB programme in August 2014 that a full update is given to the Working Plymouth Scrutiny panel on all 8 of the initiatives.

Paul Barnard
Assistant Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
Planning Department
20th February 2014