

THE PLAN FOR HOMES

Working Plymouth 10th December 2014



Background

On 18th July 2013 Councillor Mark Lowry, Cabinet Member for Finance, announced the intention to prepare the Plan for Homes which seeks to facilitate a transformational step change in housing delivery in Plymouth. The Plan for Homes is one of the key initiatives agreed as part of the new Corporate Plan on 22nd July 2013 (Minute 28). On 25th September 2013 the initial ideas being explored for the Plan for Homes was reported to the Working Plymouth Scrutiny Panel, who strongly supported the initiative (Minute 18).

On 1st November 2013 the Plan for Homes was formally launched as part of a major regional housing conference held at Devonport Guildhall. The Plan for Homes, containing 16 initiatives was formally agreed by Cabinet on 12th November 2013 (Minutes 62 and 62a) with funding approved by the City Council on 25th November 2013 (Minute 63).

The Working Plymouth Scrutiny Panel received a first update on 5th March 2014, providing progress on the delivery of the 16 initiatives. It was reported that 2 initiatives had been completed, 9 were progressing well and 5 required further progress to be made. It was agreed that a further progress report was made around the first anniversary of the launch of the Plan for Homes.

Progress with The Plan for Homes

The overall ambition of the Plan for Homes is to increase housing supply by 1,000 homes per annum for a 5 year period. It is expected it will create 2,000 jobs and put £45.3 Million into the local economy. The reporting period for the 5 year housing delivery programme is from 1st April 2014 to 31st March 2019.




As at 10th December 2014, 13 initiatives have been completed, 2 are progressing well, and 1 has been abandoned.




Headline outputs on the City Council land releases are:



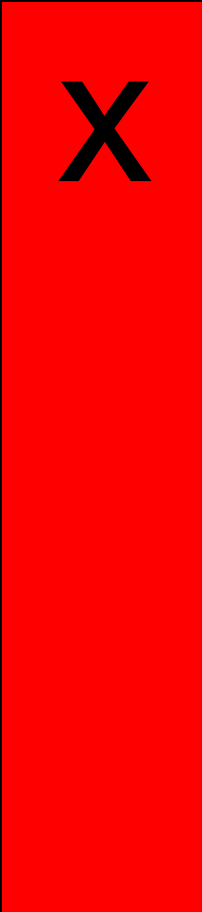
- 37 council owned sites have been agreed for release for housing, totalling 138.28 acres of land.
- The 36 sites in the city are planned to deliver 1,236 new homes of which 622 are affordable (50.3%).



- The one site outside the city is planned to deliver up to 750 new homes of which 300 are projected to be affordable (40%).
- Of the 36 sites in the city 63.7% of homes will be on brownfield land.
- Development has commenced on 4 sites with the first completions expected in March 2015.





Progress on each of the initiatives of the Plan for Homes is set out in the table below:

Initiative	Progress	Delivery Status
<p>We will create an Affordable Housing Loan Facility of up to £50 million to the Plymouth Housing Development Partnership.</p>	<p>Inclusion of a £50 million loan facility into the Capital Programme was agreed at the City Council meeting held on 25th November 2013.</p> <p>The loan facility criteria have been co-designed with the Plymouth Housing Development Partnership and the application and approval process has now agreed with Finance.</p> <p>The Affordable Housing Loan Facility is now 'Open for Business' and applications are invited from Registered Provider partners, Housing co-operatives and Community Land Trusts to support delivery of new and affordable homes.</p>	
<p>We will waive planning pre-application fees for all self-build projects, Code Level 4, 5 and 6 schemes and for affordable housing developments that meet our policy requirements.</p>	<p>A new Departmental Fees Policy incorporating these provisions has been the subject of consultation with the Plymouth Regeneration Forum and Local Agents Forum and was introduced on 2nd December 2013.</p>	
<p>Where appropriate, we will consider more flexible land and Section 106 payments to improve development cash flows to support a start on site by an agreed date.</p>	<p>The new process to consider future requests for Section 106 variations has been agreed which will apply to planning applications validated from 1st April 2014.</p>	

Initiative	Progress	Delivery Status
<p>Where the objective of sustainable linked communities is not prejudiced within a particular neighbourhood, we will consider off-site affordable housing contributions to unlock stalled sites, provided developers commit to starting on site by agreed date.</p>	<p>Initial scoping of sites was completed in December 2013. The Working Plymouth Scrutiny Panel on 5th March 2014 expressed some concerns about this initiative. The Portfolio Holder for Finance considered these concerns on 28th May 2014 and decided that he did not want to pursue this initiative any further, except where justified in one-off cases.</p>	
<p>We will work with the development industry to complete a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment to identify sites to substantially increase the supply of housing with planning permission.</p>	<p>A Strategic Market Housing Needs Assessment was completed in October 2013 and published in November 2013. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment was commenced in August 2013 and completed in June 2014.</p> <p>The assessment sits alongside other evidence documents to inform the development of the Plymouth Plan.</p>	
<p>We will release over 100 acres of land for housing by completing a Strategic Land Review by March 2014 to identify every possible city council-owned site suitable for housing development. We commit to release these sites in phases and as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>A Strategic Land Review was completed in March 2014 where 847 sites were considered, with 184 being assessed in more detail. Following detailed assessment, 40 sites were recommended by officers as potentially suitable for housing development.</p> <p>Following a series of meetings with ward councillors to seek their views on the proposed sites, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Co-operatives, Housing and Community Safety have agreed to the release of 17 of these sites for housing.</p> <p>To date the Portfolio Holders for Finance has agreed to release a total of 37 council owned sites that will result in 138.28 acres of land being released for housing.</p>	

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<p>We will develop a “flagship” scheme on a city council-owned site to encourage innovation and greater input from Registered Providers.</p>	<p>A call for schemes was made as part of the launch of the Plan for Homes at the Plymouth Housing Summit on 1st November 2013. Several schemes have been considered as potential flagship projects.</p> <p>It has been agreed that the Nelson Project, to be developed at the former St Georges Day Care Centre, is the flagship scheme to be delivered under the Plan for Homes.</p>	
<p>We will create a dedicated Sherford Delivery Team to enable a start on site at Sherford in 2014.</p>	<p>The Sherford Implementation Team had its first meeting on 17th October 2013. A planning permission and signed Section 106 was issued on 12th November 2013. Red Tree signed land deals during January 2014.</p> <p>A detailed development programme has been prepared with tree planting and highway infrastructure works starting from March 2014.</p> <p>The first reserved matters application for 170 homes was submitted on 31st October 2014. Construction of the first homes is expected to start in May 2015 and first occupations expected in December 2015.</p>	
<p>We will incentivise the delivery of city centre housing by creating a ‘city centre density bonus’ in order to provide more homes, as well as encouraging a broader mix of house types including one-bed properties.</p>	<p>The Working Plymouth Scrutiny Panel on 5th March 2014 expressed some concerns about this initiative. The Portfolio Holder for Finance considered these concerns on 28th May 2014 and decided that he did not want to pursue this initiative further.</p>	

Initiative	Progress	Delivery Status
<p>We will make more city council-owned land available for self-build and establish a streamlined planning process to deal with subsequent planning applications.</p>	<p>Self-build sites have been identified as part of the Strategic Land Review and land disposal process. A programme to deliver 102 self-build units on City Council sites has been planned as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serviced Plots model: 2 sites = 8 serviced plots • Self-build plots: 5 sites = 6 units • West Park: at least 22 serviced plots • Land at Kings Tamerton – at least 20 self-build units through mutual self-build co-operative • Chaucer Way – 4 serviced plots • Nelson Project: 12 Custom Build homes through Community Self Build Association • Bickleigh: at least 30 provided as serviced plots for Custom Build 	
<p>We will work with institutional investors to attract new investment into infrastructure for housing within Plymouth and consider how a “build now pay later” scheme could support housing delivery.</p>	<p>The following models are being implemented as part of the Plan for Homes: RENTplus and QSH.</p> <p>Planning permission was granted on 14th August 2014 for the first RENTplus scheme at Mannamead Centre.</p> <p>QSH have been selected for the conversion of the former SHIP hostel into new apartments.</p>	
<p>We will develop a Local Infrastructure Prospectus to support future infrastructure provision to support housing and regeneration projects.</p>	<p>Following a review of future potential infrastructure and other capital projects by Portfolio Holders, an initial framework for the Prospectus will be presented to the City Council Investment Board on 15th December 2014. This will be further developed through the budget setting process leading to the meeting of Council in February 2015. The Prospectus will demonstrate why Plymouth is an attractive place to invest, will clearly articulate the capital investment priorities (infrastructure and development opportunities) of the city, show the extent of the city’s commitment to the priorities, and seek (financial and other) investment from partners and prospective partners / investors.</p>	

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<p>We will use the Neighbourhood Plans process in conjunction with local communities to identify sites for homes to meet local needs.</p>	<p>Officers continue to support groups in Barne Barton, Whiteleigh and Devonport who are being proactive in identifying housing and employment sites in their local area through the Neighbourhood Planning process. There have also been discussions with ward councillors in Plympton on suitable sites for the Plymouth Plan.</p>	
<p>We will appoint a Relationship Manager for each Registered Provider and large developers to encourage further investments in Plymouth and work more closely with local communities.</p>	<p>Relationship Managers have been identified for each registered provider, larger developers and other relevant organisations.</p> <p>One-to-One meetings commenced in April 2014.</p>	
<p>We will support the “Yes to Homes” campaign and proactively make the case for additional accelerated housing to meet Plymouth’s needs.</p>	<p>The “Yes to Homes” Campaign was considered under a Motion on Notice at the Full Council meeting on 25th November 2013 and agreed unanimously. The Plymouth Housing Development Partnership has signed up to the “Yes to Homes” campaign.</p>	
<p>We will seek a step change in housing investment by developing partnership, joint venture and new funding models with the Plymouth Housing Development Partnership.</p>	<p>The enhanced role expected of the Plymouth Housing Development Partnership was discussed at meetings held on 5th December 2013, 7th March 2014 and 27th June 2014. This resulted in a detailed Action Plan programme being prepared and agreed which is now being implemented. This includes priorities to engage with local communities in making the case for housing for those in housing needs and supporting delivery of new homes and jobs.</p>	

Conclusion

Very good progress has been made with regard to the delivery of the 16 initiatives that make up the Plan for Homes, with their continuing implementation helping achieve ambitious new homes aspirations. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Co-operatives, Housing and Community Safety receive a monthly monitoring report on progress with each of the initiatives and specific sites or issues are discussed regularly at Portfolio Holder One-to-One meetings.

Paul Barnard

Assistant Director for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Department

10th December 2014