

# Building sustainable communities

Our customers want to buy a great home in a thriving community – somewhere they feel safe, supported and enriched. We are focusing on placemaking and design and investing in affordable homes, infrastructure and research and development to help us create great places to live.



## Affordable homes

**23%**

of homes across the UK designated affordable

## Community infrastructure

**£447m**

Contributed to local communities via planning obligations

## Placemaking

We held our second internal placemaking competition to encourage and celebrate best practice on our developments

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# Building sustainable communities

Our approach starts with placemaking – ensuring the design and layout of our sites promotes social, environmental and economic sustainability. We are exploring how we can help new communities become established more quickly on our developments, and investing in research and development so we can keep improving our homes.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- 23% of our homes were designated affordable
- Trained our teams on urban design principles and held our second placemaking competition
- Launched a pilot to explore how we can accelerate the creation of communities on our developments
- Researched new energy-efficient technology and completed the build of our Project 2020 prototype homes
- Worked with leading architects to design our new standard house type range

## A focus on placemaking

Our placemaking standards are based on best practice such as the Building for Life 12 framework. We have an Urban Designer and a Director of Design who work with our teams on placemaking. We have appointed a Design Lead in each of our regional businesses and strategic land teams to champion good design at the local level.

We communicate our standards and support our teams to apply them, in a number of ways:

- **Guidance documents:** Our standards are summarised in our guidance documents such as Our Approach to Placemaking, Our Approach to Sustainable Development, Our Guide to Green Infrastructure and Building for Life 12 guidance.
- **Our placemaking compendium:** We have published the first sections of our placemaking compendium, Building Blocks of Place. This includes practical advice and examples to help our businesses apply our approach. Modules released so far cover plotting, parking and perimeter block structures.
- **Our self-assessment process:** Used by our regional businesses to review design proposals against our placemaking standards. It is based on Building for Life and our internal standards and provides a green, amber or red score showing where improvements may need to be made.
- **Design Academy training:** Our e-learning on the core principles of urban design and how to create sustainable communities. 265 people from our design teams and senior management have completed the training to date.

- **Design surgeries and workshops:** Run by our Urban Designer, these review existing and planned developments and identify opportunities to strengthen placemaking before we apply for planning permission.
- **Conferences and awareness raising:** We held two conferences for our Design Leads to hear from external speakers and visit exemplar schemes. During 2019, we also engaged our Sales Directors, Technical Directors, Land Buyers and strategic land teams through workshops and conference sessions on placemaking.
- **External partnerships:** We work with many organisations on placemaking, including the Academy of Urbanism, BOB-MK (a design network for Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes), Design for Homes, Home Builders Federation, Homes England, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), and the Urban Design Group.

## Design competition

We ran our internal design competition for the second time during 2019, seeking examples of best practice placemaking from across the business. The competition helps to raise the profile of placemaking and to recognise colleagues for their efforts. Entries are reviewed by senior managers.

Four of our schemes were shortlisted at the national Housing Design Awards, which promote excellence, innovation and sustainability in housing scheme design.



## UN SDG: Goal 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities

### Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

We aim for the homes and communities we build in towns and cities across the UK to align to UN SDG Goal 11. We are strengthening our approach to placemaking to help us plan and build inclusive, healthy and sustainable communities. Access to affordable housing remains a major challenge for many people and we want to play our part in addressing this. We also support this goal through our work on sustainable transport, home energy efficiency, R&D, managing flood risk, and investing in green spaces and community infrastructure.

 More information on page 69



## What is placemaking?

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of our developments. When we design our schemes, we consider many factors that will help to create attractive, successful and healthy communities for the long term. Our internal placemaking standards are based on best practice requirements as defined by Building for Life 12, the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.

### Key features of good placemaking include:

- Schemes that are well connected and integrated into their surroundings
- Layouts that are responsive to the context of the site, including topography, landscape, and existing buildings
- Distinctive character and good architectural quality
- Well defined streets and spaces with plenty of visual markers
- Good walkable neighbourhoods that prioritise pedestrians and cyclists
- Attractive public and green spaces
- An interconnected network of green spaces and parks
- Easy access to community facilities, such as shops, schools and workplaces
- Well-designed homes and a mix of housing to suit local requirements
- Good provision for cycle and bin storage





### Infrastructure and facilities

We invest in infrastructure and facilities that help make our developments great places to live over the long term. This includes affordable housing, green spaces, community and leisure facilities, transport infrastructure, educational funding, jobs for local people and public art.

The majority of our contributions are made through our planning agreement obligations (Section 106 agreements in England and Wales, Section 75 agreements in Scotland, and Community Infrastructure Levy payments). These are negotiated with local authorities and reflect local needs, council policy and feedback gained through community engagement. During 2019, we contributed £447 million to local communities via planning obligations (2018: £455 million).

Increasingly, we aim to install infrastructure at an early stage. This can help in the successful development of a new community, increase sales by making new developments more desirable to prospective buyers and provide new facilities to benefit existing residents.

Our Guide to Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity and Home for Nature toolkits help our teams integrate quality green spaces and landscaping on our sites and encourage biodiversity. Read more on page 37.

### Health and wellbeing

The design and layout of our developments can have an impact on the health and wellbeing of future residents. We aim to encourage walking and cycling and to enable residents to adopt healthier lifestyles by integrating nature and green spaces, as well as access to leisure facilities. Inside our homes we consider factors such as noise, natural light, air quality and preventing overheating.

We were involved in the Healthy New Town initiative which brought together the NHS, homebuilders, local government, universities, technology companies and other stakeholders to plan and build healthier places.

We are partnering with other housebuilders to co-fund a PhD at Birmingham University exploring future regulatory requirements and opportunities to enhance health and wellbeing in new homes.

### Heritage

We aim to integrate historic buildings and other unique local features into our developments – this enhances local character and contributes to good placemaking. Recent examples include our Howe Barracks site where three original buildings: the gymnasium, the chapel and the small arms trainer, will be handed over to a management trust for community use.



### Prioritising wellbeing at Whitehill and Bordon

Our Whitehill and Bordon development is being designed to encourage active lifestyles and to be accessible for elderly residents and those with disabilities or dementia.

One of the central features will be an integrated health hub bringing together GP surgeries with services such as physiotherapy, fitness and social care. A seven mile 'green loop' and 'green grid' will enable residents to walk and cycle to their homes, workplaces and leisure facilities on attractive paths.

New green spaces, a natural play area, sports pavilion, skate park and community garden were all opened before any customers moved into their new homes. A series of sporting and active lifestyle events have also been launched, including a parkrun, roller hockey and cricket matches, a healthy eating programme for local children, and Golden Mile which encourages children to walk a mile a day.

The site participated in the NHS Healthy New Town programme, which included research into local health needs and identified challenges such as above average levels of childhood obesity and social isolation.



**300+**

people take part in parkrun and junior parkrun each week



**70+**

local people completed the Couch to 5k



**1,000**

people attended a Spring into Health festival, now an annual event run by the Community Trust

## Connected communities

When moving into a new home, people want to quickly feel part of a thriving local community. This was a clear finding from our customer research. However, it can take time for social networks to establish on new developments. What's more, the way we live, work and shop today often means fewer day-to-day opportunities to interact with the people who live nearby.

We're exploring how we can accelerate the development of new communities on our schemes, so that our customers feel connected and have a strong sense of community from an early stage.

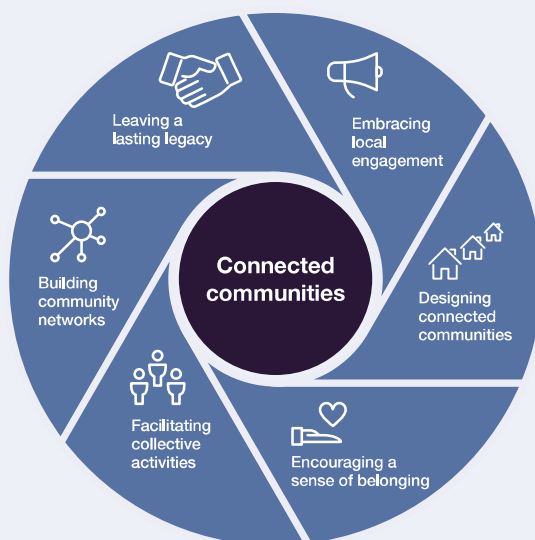
In 2019, we launched our Community Communication Plan. This toolkit will help our land, planning and sales and marketing teams organise activities and events that foster relationships between the new and existing

community, and that make it easier for new residents to set down roots. It also emphasises the importance of providing good information for customers on the facilities, services, and activities happening in their area. The toolkit covers the whole process from buying land to when we leave a development and will help us take a consistent approach across our sites.

We've also launched two pilot projects, to test the impact of different approaches to fostering community connections. The trials will be taking place at our sites in Pennington Wharf, Manchester, and Queens Court, Troon during 2020 and we'll be assessing the results using customer research and other data.

We set up Community Development Trusts on some sites to provide long term stewardship of the development and this can help to foster connections among residents and community groups.

**Our approach to connected communities is focused on six areas where we can have most impact. These incorporate our work on placemaking:**



## Affordable homes

A lack of affordable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing people and communities across the UK. Not enough homes have been built in the last 40 years, resulting in rising house prices and rents and younger generations waiting longer to get on the housing ladder.

We want to play our part in tackling this housing crisis, creating quality homes for a greater number and wider range of people and exploring new initiatives to improve affordability and encourage homeownership. Our approach includes:

- Building houses and apartments to suit a wide range of budgets
- Exploring new initiatives that can improve affordability
- Working with local authorities and registered provider partners (housing associations) to integrate high-quality social housing on our developments

In 2019 we completed 15,719 new homes in the UK, including joint ventures (2018: 14,933), with prices starting from under £70,000. 34% of our sales were to first time buyers (2018: 34%). Second time buyers accounted for 34% of sales (2018: 31%) and investors around 5% (2018: c.5%). Around 34% of sales used the Government's Help to Buy scheme (2018: 36%), of which approximately 76% were to first time buyers (2018: 77%).

As we look ahead, we see the removal of Help to Buy as a continued risk, but having had visibility of, and time to plan for the changes we consider it as one that can be managed.

**15,719**  
new homes completed  
across the UK

**23%**  
of completions  
designated affordable

**34%**  
of sales to first  
time buyers

We are trialling new ways to support more people to buy their own home through our Springboard initiative at our Kilnwood Vale development in West Sussex. This includes a mixture of 14 houses and apartments in our pilot rent to buy scheme and is enabling us to consider both the responses of first time buyers and families.

We are also participating in Home Reach, a government-backed shared ownership scheme. This allows customers to buy up to 50-75% of a new home with a 5% deposit and pay a low monthly rent on the remaining share.

Apartments can be more affordable and help us provide more homes on our developments. In 2019, 11% of completions were apartments (2018: 12%).

### Contributing to social housing

The majority of our developments include affordable social housing (homes made available at below market rates including social rent, affordable rent, low-cost home ownership and discount market sale tenures) which are negotiated as part of planning obligations. In 2019, around 23% of our completions were designated affordable (2018: 23%). Over the last decade, we have delivered over 24,950 units of affordable social housing.

As a customer-focused business, we want to make sure that the affordable homes we build meet the needs of future residents, contribute to sustainable communities and provide value to our social housing partners. We have appointed a new Partnerships Director, to further develop our approach.

## Our new house types

Our standard house types provide our customers with high-quality, energy-efficient homes that are cost-effective and safe to build. They can be adapted externally to reflect local character and scheme design and are used for the majority of our homes.

We worked with architects to update our standard house type range during 2019. We drew on findings from our Project 2020 prototype homes and research into how our customers live (or want to live), the design features they value and the aspects of our previous range that could be improved.

Our new homes will incorporate more open plan living, higher ceilings, more natural light and improved storage.

To help us improve build consistency and quality, we also reduced the number of standard house types, improved the specification and production information we provide to our teams, and standardised many of the components we use.

Most of our new standard house types will offer improved accessibility, in line with the optional requirements in Building Regulations Part M (4)2. This means they can be adapted more easily for people with disabilities.

This year, we will focus on testing the new range ahead of a full roll out to the business.

**c.90%**

of our new house types will comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard meaning more space for living and storage.

## Energy and resource-efficient homes

Our house types include sustainable design features from energy-efficient walls and windows, to insulated loft spaces. This reduces running costs for our customers and helps cut carbon emissions.

Inside our homes we use energy-efficient fixtures and fittings, including 100% low energy light fittings and LED recessed downlights. All appliances that we offer as standard options are at least A rated for energy efficiency. In some developments we integrate additional measures, reflecting local authority priorities such as mechanical ventilation with heat recovery and photovoltaic (PV) panels.

All Taylor Wimpey homes have water meters fitted, as well as low flow taps and showers, and dual flush toilets. Some developments include additional water saving features, such as water butts.

Our focus on build quality helps ensure that our finished homes achieve the specified energy efficiency standards and that ventilation systems are installed correctly to provide good internal air quality. We are integrating off site construction techniques which can improve the performance of finished homes. For example, we use off site pre-insulated panelised systems for the top storey of our 'room in the roof' house types.

## Fire safety

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017, we conducted a detailed review of all relevant legacy and current buildings with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding and also worked with building owners, management companies, and the Fire Service to implement Government advice on interim mitigation measures, where applicable. Whilst each situation is different, and this is an exceptionally complex issue, we have in a number of cases, having regard to all of the relevant facts and circumstances, agreed to support our customers both financially and practically with the removal and

replacement of ACM, even though the buildings concerned met the requirements of building regulations at the time construction was formally approved. We took this decision for buildings we constructed recently because we believe that it is morally right not because it is legally required. At the 2019 year end, replacement works had been completed on three developments and were underway on another. Since the year end, we have commenced work on a further three developments.

## Researching the homes of the future

We invest in research and development (R&D) to help us meet changing customer needs, prepare for regulation, improve efficiency and respond to social, demographic, economic and environmental trends. Our R&D Manager coordinates our research efforts.

### Cutting energy and carbon

During 2019 we began researching and trialling products that can further improve the energy performance and reduce the carbon footprint of our homes without adding significant cost or making the build process more complex. Products we are testing include waste water heat recovery systems, thermal energy stores and PV panels. We carried out research with customers to understand their views on smart heating controls.

### Our Project 2020 homes

We built our Project 2020 prototype homes during 2019 and gathered feedback from the first occupants. These were developed from the winning entry to our design competition with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and built on developments in Oxfordshire, Manchester and West Scotland. We used the process to test sustainable build technologies, including cross-laminated panels with wood fibre insulation and energy efficiency solutions, see case study on page 36.

We found the sustainable build technologies improved energy efficiency performance, but some increased build costs compared with more traditional techniques. The contemporary design proved popular and customers appreciated the large windows, natural light and integrated storage solutions. The ability to adapt the internal layout was also valued. These findings have informed the development of our new standard house types.

We built 14 modular houses, known as the I-House, as part of a trial in our Oxfordshire business unit, testing off site construction techniques.

## Targets and plans

- Test our new standard house type range ahead of a full roll out and develop a range of standard apartments
- Complete our connected community trials at two sites and assess the findings
- Run our third internal design competition with a focus on sustainability and update our Design Academy training
- Increase the number of schemes rated green on our placemaking self assessment
- Develop a more energy efficient build specification to improve performance for customers and comply with updated building regulations