Building **sustainable homes and communities**

Through our focus on design and placemaking and our investment in community infrastructure and affordable housing, we aim to create thriving communities where customers want to live and can enjoy a good quality of life.

**Affordable housing**

Around 23% of completions were designated affordable housing

23%

**Investing in infrastructure**

We contributed £455 million to local communities via planning obligations

£455m
Building sustainable homes and communities

Focusing on design and placemaking

Good design and placemaking and our investment in community infrastructure help us to create thriving communities where customers want to live and can enjoy a good quality of life.

Creating good places to live

Our customer research shows a clear relationship between good placemaking (how we design our developments) and long term customer satisfaction. Strengthening our approach to placemaking is part of our commitment to become a customer-centric homebuilder.

During 2018, we have focused on further developing our people’s placemaking skills and sharing best practice across the business.

Our placemaking standards

Our placemaking criteria are based on the Building for Life framework, other external best practice standards and recommendations from an external urban design specialist. They are integrated into our internal guidance documents including Our Approach to Placemaking, Our Approach to Sustainable Development, Our Approach to Planning, Preparing a Design and Access Statement, Our Guide to Green Infrastructure and Building for Life 12 guidance.

Our regional businesses use our self-assessment process to review design proposals against our placemaking standards. This provides a green, amber or red score showing where improvements need to be made.

We have an Urban Designer and a Director of Design who work with our teams on placemaking. During 2018 we appointed a Design Lead in each of our regional businesses to champion good design at the local level. In 2019, we will publish our placemaking compendium with practical solutions and examples.

During 2018, we ran our first internal placemaking design competition, aimed at promoting best practice design across the business. See page 21 for more information.

We work with external partners on design and placemaking including the RIBA (the Royal Institute of British Architects), Design for Homes, the Home Builders Federation, BOB-MK (a design network that works across Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes) and the Urban Design Group.

Training, workshops and design surgeries

Our Design Academy e-learning is helping to improve understanding of placemaking. It covers the core principles of urban design and how to create sustainable communities where people want to live.

225 people from our design teams and senior management have completed the training so far.

During 2018, we ran a series of layout design review workshops. These bring together teams from different business units to share ideas and review design proposals.

We have launched design surgeries, for our Urban Designer to review existing and planned developments and identify opportunities to strengthen placemaking before we apply for planning permission.

We held two design conferences during the year to engage and inspire our regional planning and design teams. These covered topics such as design, parking, townscape structuring components, urban design concepts and vision and streetscapes. Participants had the opportunity to learn from best practice in our own business, to see leading placemaking examples from other companies and to hear from external speakers including the Chief Executive of Design for Homes who authored Building for Life. Our third conference will take place in 2019.

A springboard to home ownership

Many people have to wait years to buy their own home and saving up for a deposit whilst renting is often a major obstacle. In fact, it’s estimated that around 1 million potential buyers could afford a mortgage but can’t get a deposit together.

We’re exploring new ways to help a number of these people to get on the property ladder more quickly. During 2018, we launched Springboard, our pilot rent to buy scheme. This enables first-time buyers to rent a property from us for up to five years with no rental deposit. Between years two and five, they have the option to purchase the property at a 5% discount – enabling them to have the home they want more quickly and save money.

We are piloting Springboard at our Kilnwood Vale development in Faygate, West Sussex, with 14 new one, two and three-bedroom properties. The initiative proved very popular with customers, with all units now rented and the majority within the first few days of release.

As well as widening our customer base, Springboard will enable us to gain valuable feedback on our service and satisfaction with our homes. We are monitoring the success of the programme with the potential to roll it out to more of our sites around the UK.

Ryan Hook and Samantha Goddard Hook are renting one of our Springboard homes at Kilnwood Vale. They were previously renting a house in Crawley from a private landlord and had been without hot water for over three months.

“Three storey property gives us the family space we have craved as our children get older.”
Building sustainable homes and communities continued

Health and wellbeing

Good placemaking and urban design can have a positive influence on the health and wellbeing of future residents. For example, by planning our developments to encourage walking and cycling, and by integrating nature and green spaces, we can help residents adopt healthier lifestyles. Inside our homes we consider factors such as noise levels, light levels and air quality.

We are involved in three pilot projects as part of the Healthy New Town initiative which brings together the NHS, homebuilders, local government, universities, technology companies and other stakeholders to plan and build healthier places.

This includes our Whitehill and Bordon development which 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 of the scheme will be a health hub. This will bring together GP surgeries with other health and wellbeing services such as physiotherapy, fitness, occupational health and social care, with the aim of providing an integrated service for the local community. A series of sporting and active lifestyle events have been launched, including a parkrun (a 5 km run held each Saturday), a healthy eating programme for local children, and the Golden Mile scheme which encourages children to walk a mile a day.

Access to green space and nature can improve wellbeing. In 2018 we published ‘A Guide to Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity’ to help our teams integrate quality green and blue infrastructure and landscape design on our sites.

Heritage

Historic buildings and other unique local features can help us create attractive developments with a distinctive character. Where possible, we aim to protect local heritage and incorporate it into our development plans. For example, at our Quedgeley, Kingsway development, Taylor Wimpey Bristol will be restoring the moat associated with a listed manor farm building and restocking the historic orchard with over 70 Old Gloucestershire pear and apple trees. At our Pennington Wharf development in Wigan, we have celebrated the town’s mining history with a new art installation honouring miners who lost their lives in the local pit.

Contributing to infrastructure and community networks

Results from our customer research show that feeling part of a community is a top priority for our customers and we are exploring new ways we can help foster this on our sites.

We invest in infrastructure and facilities that benefit our customers and the surrounding community, and help ensure the long term success of our developments. The majority of this contribution is made through our planning agreement obligations, known as Section 106 agreements in England and Wales, and Section 75 agreements in Scotland, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments. These are negotiated with local authorities and reflect local needs, council policy and feedback gained through community engagement.

Our planning contributions include investment in affordable housing, community and leisure facilities, transport infrastructure, educational funding, jobs for local people and public art and green spaces.

During 2018, we contributed £455 million to local communities via planning obligations (2017: £413 million).

Installing infrastructure at an early stage can help in the successful development of a new community. It can also increase sales by making new developments more desirable to prospective buyers and benefit the existing local community. We are looking at how we can increase early delivery of community infrastructure to maximise its positive impact. For example, at Whitehill and Bordon we developed and opened new green spaces, a skate park, play area and sports pavilion before any customers moved in.

Our customer research has highlighted the importance of fostering a strong sense of community on our schemes and promoting the development of local networks. On some schemes this includes establishing a Community Development Trust to provide long term stewardship of the development and its public spaces after construction finishes.

At our Leybourne Chase site in Kent, for example, we have funded a community development worker to help set up the Community Development Trust and foster connections between residents and community organisations. This has included organising events and activities at the new community centre, and supporting the formation of community groups, including a youth club and parents’ group.

At our Howe Barracks site, in Canterbury, we have established the Community Development Trust to an early stage, before any new houses have been built. The Trust will work to foster a sense of community as construction work progresses and to run the new community centre which will be created in one of the retained buildings on the site.

Affordable homes for more people

There is a shortage of affordable housing for sale and rent in the UK. With our new strategy, we want to play our part in tackling this, creating quality homes for a greater number and wider range of people. Our approach includes:

– Building houses and apartments to suit a wide range of budgets
– Working with local authorities and housing associations to integrate social housing on our developments
– Exploring new initiatives that can improve affordability

In 2018 we completed 14,933 new homes in the UK, including joint ventures (2017: 14,541), with prices starting from under £70,000.

34% of our sales were to first time buyers (2017: 41%). Second time buyers accounted for 31% of sales (2017: 39%) and investors around 5% (2017: 3%). Around 30% of sales used the Government’s Help to Buy scheme (2017: 43%), of which approximately 77% were to first time buyers (2017: 77%). We welcome the Government’s announcement within the Autumn Budget to introduce tapering measures to the Help to Buy scheme as the Equity Loan Scheme transitions to a close in 2023. Help to Buy has been popular with our customers and has supported them in getting onto and moving up the housing ladder, however, we believe that the changes announced are appropriate and are in the best long term interests of the housing market and homemakers.

23%

of completions were designated affordable housing

The majority of our developments include affordable social housing (homes made available at below market rates) which are negotiated as part of our planning obligations. In 2018, around 23% of our completions were designated affordable housing (2017: 19%).

Apartments can be more affordable and help us provide more homes on our developments. In 2018, 12% of completions were apartments (2017: 16%).

During 2018, we trialled our first rent to buy scheme, Springboard, at our Kilnwood Vale development in West Sussex, see page 18.
Building sustainable homes and communities continued

Designing high-quality homes
We have a range of standard house types used for most of the homes we build. These high-quality, energy-efficient homes are also straightforward, cost-effective and safe to build. They can be adapted externally to reflect local character and scheme design. We aim to further increase the use of our standard house types as this helps us to improve quality and efficiency.

We are working with architects to update our standard house types and will launch our new range in 2019. These will build on the findings from our Project 2020 prototype homes and customer research, providing opportunities for more open-plan living, greater natural light and improved storage.

Most of our new standard house types will offer improved accessibility, in line with the optional requirements in Building Regulations Part M. This means they can be adapted more easily for people with disabilities. Most will also comply with the Nationally Described Space Standard meaning more space for living and storage.

Energy and resource efficient homes
Our house types include a range of sustainable design features from highly 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 in our homes are at least A rated for energy efficiency.

We give our customers details on how to use and maintain the environmental features in their homes in our ‘From House to Home’ manual. This also includes advice on sustainable living, from energy efficiency tips, recycling and growing your own vegetables, to getting to know the neighbours and supporting local shops and services.

In some developments we integrate additional energy efficiency measures, reflecting local authority priorities. These can include systems for mechanical ventilation with heat recovery, wastewater heat recovery and flue gas heat recovery. We may also integrate low carbon and renewable technologies, such as photovoltaic panels and charging points for electric vehicles.

It is important that our finished homes achieve the energy efficiency standards specified in our designs. We have made changes to our door thresholds and window installations to simplify the process and ensure a quality installation. We are also integrating off-site construction technologies 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.

All new 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, reflecting local authority priorities, such as rainwater harvesting.

In a modern, airtight home it is important that ventilation systems are installed and used correctly to ensure good internal air quality and prevent condensation. We have introduced a new ducting product for our ventilation systems that is easier to install and provides more consistent performance.

Researching the homes of the future
Social, demographic, economic and environmental trends will all have an impact on our future business and the types of homes our customers need.

We invest in research and innovation to help us to meet changing customer requirements; to improve the quality and sustainability of our homes; to improve efficiency; and to deal with challenges such as the skills shortage. We appointed our first Research and Development Manager in 2018 to coordinate our research efforts.

During 2019, as part of our new strategy, we will be focusing on identifying new products and processes that can help us improve build quality. This will include, for example, trialling products that are easier to install and reduce the potential for mistakes during construction.

We also carried out customer research in 2018, see page 29.

Our Project 2020 prototype homes
During 2018, we began construction work on our prototype homes using the winning entry from our design competition with the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA).

We have built prototypes on three of our developments in different parts of the UK. We have used the process to test a number of sustainable build technologies, including off-site construction techniques such as timber frame and cross-laminated panels with wood fibre insulation. We are also trialling Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery systems to assess their impact on energy efficiency and internal air quality and heat storage systems. The prototypes we are building in Scotland feature a range of resource efficiency measures and we aim for them to achieve a Scottish Building Standards Gold label for sustainability.

During 2019, we will be reviewing the findings from the prototype build process and gathering feedback from the first occupants of the new homes to assess how the designs work in practice. This will include assessing the advantages and disadvantages of using new construction techniques, testing air quality and energy efficiency and assessing whether expected benefits such as increased levels of natural light have been achieved.

We are also trialling a modular house, the SIG I, in our Oxford business to assess whether it can help us to deliver quality and energy-efficient homes while also reducing build times.

Fire safety review
Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, we conducted a detailed review into all legacy and current buildings with Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding and 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 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 year end, replacement works had been completed on one development and were underway on another. Since the year end we have started work on a further development.

Targets/plans
- Publish our placemaking compendium and run our second placemaking competition
- Increase the number of schemes that achieve a green score on our placemaking self-assessment
- Assess the findings from our Project 2020 prototype builds
- Launch our new house type range
- Trial a number of community projects within our developments
What makes a development a good place to live?

We want all our people to understand the importance of good urban design in creating great places to live for our customers. To promote best practice and inspire our teams, we ran our first internal design competition in 2018.

We asked for schemes which have been submitted for planning permission in the last two years and got a great response with almost 60 entries submitted. Each entry was judged against the Building for Life criteria – a recognised tool for measuring good design.

The winners were announced at our Managing Directors’ conference to further raise awareness. The three winning designs were:

**West Road, Sawbridgeworth, Taylor Wimpey North Thames**
Centred around a green community space, this 135 home development will be an attractive new neighbourhood, well linked to the rest of Sawbridgeworth. The design takes advantage of the site’s context, providing views out to the countryside, with gardens backing on to the school.

**Chobham Manor Phase 3, Stratford, Taylor Wimpey East London**
This new residential quarter is built along a green promenade linking through to the Olympic Park. The design is contemporary but the townscape structure reflects the traditional vernacular and development patterns of Victorian and Georgian London. A mixed-use hub will provide a focal point for the community to meet, shop and socialise.

**Roeshot Hill, Christchurch, Taylor Wimpey Central and South West Strategic Land**
This development will use green space, trees and squares to connect different parts of a linear site, providing recreation areas and creating attractive views from the 875 new homes.