

Sustainable transport

In 2017, around 50% of our UK completions were within 500m of a public transport node and around 63% within 1,000m. We invest in roads, public and community transport, walkways and cycle paths as part of our obligations within the planning system (see page 17).

We encourage 'walkability' on our sites through investment in community infrastructure and by planning mixed use developments where residents have easy access to local shops, schools and facilities. Some of our schemes also include sustainable transport initiatives like car clubs and electric charging points.

Mitigating flood risk

We take the risk of flooding on our developments extremely seriously and identify potential flood risk as part of our site selection process. We use the Environment Agency's flood mapping tools and take account of their input during our planning consultations. We use measures such as sustainable drainage systems (SDS) that absorb rainfall and water run-off in ponds and swales to mitigate flood risk. We do not buy land unless we can mitigate any flood risk. We have a senior internal working group which oversees our approach.

Climate change is predicted to increase the risk of flooding in some areas. All of our sites are already subject to the appropriate level of Flood Risk Assessment. In addition, in 2016 we reviewed the Environment Agency's updated climate change projections at 47 of our sites across England to gain a detailed understanding of what this might mean for us in terms of risk to development area and flood mitigation costs. We found that in general this did not increase the level of flood risk to our business. During 2017 we have updated our land-buying processes to reflect the new climate change allowances. We also held a series of training webinars on flood risk for all our technical teams as well as colleagues in our land and planning departments.

Engaging with the local community

Every one of our sites has a tailored planning and community engagement strategy. We go beyond regulatory requirements, engaging with communities from early in the planning process and throughout development. We strive to use the local community's feedback to inform our design proposals.

We seek views from a wide range of stakeholders who have an interest in our schemes, from neighbouring residents and property owners to local authorities, businesses, schools and other groups. We aim to be open and transparent about how we work, providing a clear point of contact and making it easy for our stakeholders to share their views with us.

Our planning teams are trained on our approach to community engagement, and we share best practice through internal conferences, email updates and Yammer, our internal social media network. We use our Community Engagement toolkit to develop the right approach for each site. In 2017 we updated the Building Our Reputation toolkit that provides further guidance and practical tools to help our employees communicate honestly and openly with our customers and other stakeholder communities.

We use a range of methods to engage with local people, including meetings, exhibitions, workshops, newsletters and information boards. We publish information on all proposed developments on our website so anyone can see what we are planning in their area.

We have been trialling the use of social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, to help us engage local stakeholders at three of our schemes. The trials showed that social media can be a useful tool for us to help capture and respond to feedback and to reach a wider target audience. We will be piloting use of social media at further sites during 2018.



Community engagement at Acorn Grove

Community engagement and feedback from local stakeholders help us to create good places to live that meet the needs of residents and the wider community.

In Fishbourne, West Sussex we worked with local authorities and the community over several years to secure planning permission and develop the plans for our Acorn Grove scheme. This led to the site being included in the Fishbourne Neighbourhood Plan, which identifies the community's preferred areas for new housing development.

Our proposed site layout was subject to extensive consultation, which resulted in the plan being updated to reflect the feedback received from local stakeholders. The final scheme includes 30% affordable housing as well as publicly accessible open space, ecological improvements and a development layout designed to encourage residents to walk or cycle to the train station and local schools.

30%
affordable housing