

CEO Forum Roundtable

Beyond Brexit: building homes for your communities

Hosted by United Living
Location Sheffield
Event Date 24 April 2019

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How will the extensions to Brexit impact on the supply of housing when the long term reality is that more homes are needed to benefit local communities?

Encouraging the delivery of affordable housing in quality communities has been a core purpose of The Housing Forum which is the cross sector forum for the entire housing supply chain.

Introduction

Jo Jamieson opened the discussion with United Living's perspective.

As a dedicated national housing contractor, United Living specialise in maintenance and new build, with over 7,500 properties maintained and over 1,000 new homes delivered in 2018.

United Living have an offer tailored to suit the needs of local authorities and housing associations and have just launched a new PRS arm, United City Living. Their priorities are:

- a focus on quality of delivery to ensure every home is up to the best standard
- community investment - being the best neighbours and engaging positively in local communities
- quality of the workforce
- value for money

Brexit uncertainty is affecting activity in crucial areas such as housing and homelessness but what is within our control is to increase the right quality of housing supply.



Areas where we can succeed include local authorities and housing associations as developers particularly in cross subsidising harder sites, investment led or land led partnerships, increasing use of offsite manufacture and delivering quality both in building and in ensuring the correct maintenance regime.

The view from Homes England

Amanda Keeton set out Homes England's (HE) key message of active engagement with every sector of the housing market.

HE are active in land interventions by investing through funding programmes and also by de-risking sites to unlock land. HE will support the private sector in areas of market failure but will not compete on land purchase with the private sector.

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Their approach is to look at individual sites and see what is needed, applying a “toolkit” range of intervention and investment.

HE’s strategic plan covers unlocking sites, supporting smaller house building businesses, encouraging housing associations to leverage private finance and encouraging PRS and MMC as part of the strategic solution.

The Accelerated Construction Programme in which HE take a risk share is working well in boosting an increased pace of market sales.

Also available is the Local Authority Construction Grant to unlock stalled local authority sites (typically through supporting interventions such as road access, flood prevention or utilities issues).

A £200m grant is available until by 2020 and must be spent by March 2021.

Discussion

- A positive outcome is that HE have advanced momentum to achieve funding for housing and accelerated construction.
- Interventions are needed in industrial areas both to bring forward large scale sites and relatively smaller city centre sites in poor condition.
- Councils with strong Housing Revenue Accounts could fund Accelerated Construction Programmes but it can be difficult to fund through the General Account - which is a restriction.
- Better education and understanding of the benefits of MMC for decision makers and Board members is needed
- There is a case for a different method of contracting, procurement and payment for MMC.

The Sheffield City Region profile

Tony Stacey outlined the Sheffield City Region profile; there is no shortage of land and 68,000 plots have been identified but most are non-viable as they stand.

Performance in the region has been better than the UK average with an increase in new homes to 6,410 in 2018 compared with 6,142 the year before. Locally, housing associations will self-fund individual housing schemes; there is less scope to cross subsidise rented housing schemes from sales receipts.

Syha’s recent PRS scheme at Dunn Works has been funded through a sale and lease back financial arrangement but generally, housing associations will not follow this model and if more schemes like this are to succeed, then an alternative funding model for housing association PRS will have to be found.

Doncaster’s building programme

In Doncaster, the council have adopted an annual target of 920 homes, and delivered 1100 homes p.a. over the past four years, far exceeding the government figure of 585. **Scott Cardwell** explained how this had been achieved.

Direct engagement with the market and strategic road building to open up sites has brought forward the Unity Project at Junction 5 with 41 ha offering employment and 2000 homes, the airport site with 2-3,000 homes and potentially 100 acres within half a mile of Doncaster station. In an area where margins are tight, help is needed on affordability - 20% has been achieved with intervention from HE.

Sites are assembled from HRA sources but not all are a perfect fit so HE have assisted with the acquisition and disposal of some sites. Housing Needs survey results confirm the need for Doncaster’s £50m building programme.

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Attending

HOSTS

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Joanne Jamieson | Managing Director for the North and Midlands United Living |
| Mick Holling | Operations Manager United Living |
| Richard Madeley | Land Development Director United Living |
| Helen Francis | Business Development Director United Living |
| Shelagh Grant | Chief Executive The Housing Forum |

GUESTS

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|------------------|--|
| Paul Common | Chief Executive Arches Housing |
| Robert Cogings | Head of Housing Derbyshire Dales District Council |
| Scott Cardwell | Assistant Director of Development Doncaster Council |
| Sue Rugg | Regional Director Faithful + Gould |
| Amanda Keeton | Senior Specialist - Accelerated Delivery Homes England |
| Steve Hepworth | Chief Executive Ongo |
| Gareth Swarbrick | Chief Executive Rochdale Boroughwide Housing |
| Jane Davies | Head of Strategic Housing & Development Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council |
| Tony Stacey | Chief Executive South Yorkshire Housing Association |
| John Bruton | Finance Director Stonewater |
| Digby Morgan | Partner Trowers & Hamlins LLP |
| Tom Stannard | Corporate Director, Regeneration & Economic Growth Wakefield District Council |
| Andy Wallhead | Investment Director Wakefield & District Council |
| Robin Machell | Director & Visiting Professor West + Machell Architects Leeds University |

Membership

The Housing Forum is the only cross-sector membership network that represents the entire housing supply chain on behalf of the housing industry.

With a membership of 150 like-minded organisations and businesses from across the public and private sector, The Housing Forum champions collaboration and innovation in construction to improve productivity, design and build quality.

How to join

We'd love to talk to you about the benefits of membership to your organisation.

Contact:

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For more information visit:
www.housingforum.org.uk

