

Handford Homes Limited

Grafton House, Russell Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2DE



Mr Carlos Hone
Planning Operations Manager
Ipswich Borough Council
Grafton House
Russell Road
Ipswich IP1 2DE

Dear Carlos,

I understand that the Inspectors for the Ipswich Local Plan Examination have asked for further information about the ability of Handford Homes to deliver Ipswich Borough Council's housebuilding programme. As Handford Homes' Managing Director I am entirely confident in our ability to deliver on behalf of our client, having set up the Company to do just that. I set out below the arrangements in place to ensure delivery.

Handford Homes - background

Handford Homes was incorporated in July 2017 (following an Ipswich Borough Council (IBC) decision at its June 2017 Executive meeting) to deliver the Council's commitment to "1000 homes in a decade".

The Board has planning, finance, legal, housing and construction expertise and is supported by a professional team of accountants, Chartered Surveyors, Chartered Builders, project and programme managers. For each scheme a team of experts (planners, architects, cost consultants, ecologists etc) is appointed and the Company's appointed solicitors is Mills & Reeve LLP.

Handford Homes is one of several companies incorporated by Ipswich Borough Council in the last five years. Handford Homes' operating model is lean but flexible. It relies on the professional services arm of its sister company, IPSERV to provide its human resources, rather than directly employing staff – this means that Handford Homes has access to a range of expertise that it might not otherwise have "in house" as it is shared with other companies such as the Council's Commercial Property company, Ipswich Borough Assets. For example, the Property Director and team of Development Managers have both housing and commercial development expertise and work across both companies as needed.

Site acquisition

The Property Director and Development Managers work with Ipswich Borough Council's in-house Property Services and Housing teams to identify and assess the viability of sites suitable for residential development. Development appraisals are completed to support the Council's acquisition business cases and decision making. This ensures that the Council does not acquire sites which are undeliverable. Site acquisitions by Ipswich Borough Council are generally considered by its Executive or achieved using delegated powers given to officers for such

purposes. Once a site has been acquired a new schedule is added to the Development Agreement between Ipswich Borough Council and Handford Homes. The site remains in the ownership of Ipswich Borough Council throughout.

Pipeline development

The Development Managers then work with the Council's Housing and Property Services teams and the appointed design team (which includes members of the IPSEV / Handford Homes Housing Delivery Team) for the scheme to progress the development to RIBA Stage 3.

The Property Director and Head of Housing Delivery keep capacity to deliver under constant review ensuring that there is sufficient development / construction expertise to programme manage each scheme through both the development and construction phases. Where additional resource is required in order to achieve the programme a decision is made as to whether this is a temporary or longer term need and resources allocated / recruited according to need.

Construction phase

The Head of Housing Delivery is responsible for RIBA stages 4-6 and has a team of Programme and Project Managers with construction expertise. This team lead the procurement of building contractors (complying with the Public Contract Regulations 2015) and the management of the construction contract, through to hand over of completed homes to the client. They will lead on negotiation and completion of Section Agreements, discharge of planning conditions etc.

Funding

The Development Agreement between Ipswich Borough Council and Handford Homes sets out the funding arrangements. Effectively the Council funds each stage of development on receipt of an invoice from Handford Homes. Handford Homes issues its invoice on receipt of verified invoices from the contractors.

Ipswich Borough Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan sets out the capital programme for the Housing Revenue Account and is updated at least once a year. Ipswich Borough Council uses its Right to Buy receipts as a contribution to some schemes and has applied for Homes England grant for other schemes. This helps to reduce the cost to the Council, making its capital funds stretch further and enabling more homes to be delivered. Construction inflation and other impacts (such as supply chain issues caused by either the pandemic or Brexit) are closely monitored by Handford Homes and reported to the Council to enable robust financial planning.

Monitoring

A range of regular monitoring arrangements are in place:

- By the client (IBC) – reports to the Council's Executive on progress with the programme overall plus specific reports where decisions are required such as deciding to seek Homes England funding. Monthly meetings between client officers and Handford Homes regarding progress on all active schemes.
- By the Handford Homes Managing Director – monthly on all schemes and the company's management accounts
- By the Handford Homes Board – at least quarterly. The board meets in between its quarterly meetings to award contracts, sign off schemes to submit to the Planning Authority etc

Delivery to date

Since incorporation 2.5 years ago, Handford Homes has:

- Managed the delivery of 60 homes at the former Tooks Bakery site. Prior to the pandemic impacting on construction the scheme was just six weeks behind schedule with irrecoverable delays being largely caused by weather impacts.
- Supported the Council to acquire sites on Hawke Road and Fore Hamlet (and assessed a range of other sites for viability that have not been acquired) and is now preparing schemes for these sites.
- Submitted a planning application for Ravenswood UVW
- Achieved planning consent and begun construction on a range of small sites
- Begun work on the remainder of the sites in the Ipswich Borough Council pipeline
- Supported its sister company, Ipswich Borough Assets with proposals for the development of 150 units at the former BT offices at Bibb Way.
- Incorporated a subsidiary, Handford Lettings to manage market rent properties on sites developed by Handford Homes.

We have everything in place to deliver the 396 homes currently in Handford Homes pipeline as well as supporting Ipswich Borough Assets to deliver a further 150. These 546 homes will provide vital housing for Ipswich over the next five years.

I trust this information provides the clarity that you and the Inspectors require at this stage. Please do let me know if you require anything further



Helen Pluck
Managing Director
Handford Homes