

Storey Homes Response to Members Questions:

- What type of partnerships with housing associations and local authorities are you involved in which deliver affordable housing?

Story Homes have existing partnership with Home Group on 2nr. sites in the Northeast region and work closely with a number of RSL/Housing Associations on our development sites where affordable housing is provided, across tenures such as Affordable Rent, Shared Ownership, First Homes and Discount Market Sale (although the latter are typically retained by Story Homes). In relation to LA involvement, one of the current sites in our portfolio the affordable housing provision has been retained by Northumberland County Council and something we believe has worked well.

- Do you think there are ways the Council can work with private developers to increase the supply of affordable housing? If so, can you give us examples of what would encourage you to work with Councils like SBC?

Majority/if not all developers will provide a policy compliant affordable housing scheme, however the tenures and restrictions around such provision would be something that we could suggest warrants further discussion as on occasions these can be quite restrictive and some Registered Providers may withdraw interest or look to vary s106 Agreements etc which can cause delays, additional costs and challenges within the contractual arrangements and ultimately delivery.

- The committee understands that some private lead development sites may become stalled. From your experience of the industry what are the reasons that developments get stalled or do not go ahead once planning permission has been granted?

All of Story Homes' sites which have achieved planning permission are commenced, however aware that some sites do become stalled through contractual issues, land valuation, viability challenges, market demand and supply chain issues. Viability is under huge pressure not just by affordable housing policy requirements, but also all other S106 requirements/financial contributions etc, furthermore the conflict between development management teams – planners to LLFA to Landscape etc can put viability under pressure because of approach to SUDs design/POS which ultimately reduces developable area and can put allocated sites at risk of being stalled or undeveloped at all.

The impact of Nutrient Neutrality has equally caused extensive delays due to the lack of options in the Region other than the NE Credit scheme which isn't always successful – Story site in SBC area for example was unsuccessful 3 times on applying. The introduction of BNG is also likely to cause developments to stall due to viability challenges, supply of mitigation land and the maintenance obligations which is something RP's will need to be understanding of along the journey given the potential increase to the current service charges for maintained areas and the rules regarding the appearance of open space particularly now.

- What are the challenges for delivering the number/types of affordable housing set out in SBC Local Plan?

Some are referenced above such as viability challenges faced on sites, however it is also worth noting that we have noticed a significant reduction in RP engagement/interest in Affordable Housing opportunity tenders as some have 'filled their books' so to speak or are developing their own sites with separate contractors, acquired developer stock plots which have been flipped to affordable tenure, availability of government funding, utilising existing funds/revenue to focus on modernisation/repairs/renovation with existing stock and issues with viability.

