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RAISING DESIGN STANDARDS: INVOLVING RESIDENTS

One of Quantum's key priorities is striving to raise the design standards of new homes.

An audit by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment found that the design standards in the east midlands were rated the worst in the country. Only 3% of schemes were assessed as very good, while 55% of schemes were classified as poor and unworthy of planning permission.

Quantum has worked with the Housing Corporation and Opun (the Architecture and Built Environment Centre for the region), on their pilot initiative to improve the design of new affordable housing scheme, looking at quality of life factors as well.

Recommendations from the initiative have included:

- better surveillance over play areas
- better vehicular and pedestrian circulation within the site
- improved natural lighting and ventilation
- improved design of bike and bin stores
- improved security measures, and
- incorporation of public art.



Quantum has also worked with the Local Sustainable Design Forum in the east midlands which works collaboratively with private developers and RSLs to raise standards.



Channels for customer input into design have been created through a Resident Design Forum, where completed schemes are assessed by the people who live in them.



Jim Patman, Development Director at EMH, said: "With our Quantum partners, we have had the chance to visit and review completed schemes with residents, talk to them about what aspects work and what don't, and use this information to inform future designs."

"As residents receive further training, they will be able to contribute their opinions on more specific aspects of the design of schemes and how we can jointly learn and improve moving forward."

Resident Focus Groups and Resident Satisfaction Surveys are also undertaken to enhance design briefs.

One scheme that will benefit from this approach is Kirkby Road, Barwell, in Leicestershire, which is being led by EMH.

The scheme will be made up of 24 flats and houses and is currently going through the design panel process.

THE LEAD PARTNERS

All the lead partners of the Quantum Consortium have achieved a 'four green lights' rating in their Housing Corporation Assessments.

The housing management services of EMH and Futures Housing Group were recently inspected and were given a 'two stars' good rating by the Audit Commission. Derwent Living will be inspected in 2009 and is aiming for two stars or higher.



East Midlands Housing, which recently celebrated its 60th anniversary, provides over 7,700 quality affordable homes for rent and shared ownership throughout the east midlands, and is developing around 250 new homes each year.

They include homes specially designed for the elderly, families, couples, single people and other individuals requiring additional support.

EMH has a strong reputation for partnership working and delivery. The organisation cares for its residents and the communities they live in, and seeks to ensure access to services is available to all members of the diverse communities it serves.

The association is the Homebuy agent for Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, providing a 'one stop shop' for government-sponsored home ownership products.

The EMH group includes Midlands Rural Housing, Foundation Housing Association and East Midlands (2000) Limited.



Well known for its diversity, Derwent Living is one of the six top regional housing associations, and is ranked 12th in the league table of top 50 developers.

The Derby-based association has a mixed tenure portfolio of around 8,500 homes throughout Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Yorkshire.

Derwent Living was founded in 1964 to sponsor co-ownership houses and flats for people unable to afford the cost of a mortgage. It developed several hundred co-ownership homes over the following ten years, and registered with the Housing Corporation in 1974.

In the early 1990s, Derwent Living developed and managed special needs schemes for frail elderly people and vulnerable women with children.

It also diversified into other activities such as private market rented schemes, student accommodation, and management on behalf of other housing providers.



Futures Housing Group is a new group providing homes and neighbourhood services across the midlands.

This regional organisation comprises four companies including Amber Valley Housing and Daventry & District Housing. Currently, the group manages 8,600 homes in Derbyshire and Northamptonshire.

The group was formed to provide residents with high quality, safe and secure homes and local neighbourhood services.

Economies of scale, sharing best practice and combining skills and experience across the group combine to create brighter vibrant communities and effective neighbourhoods for residents.



BEATING TARGETS: Jim Patman of EMH, Martin Sherman of Futures Housing and Paul Casey of Derwent Living

QUANTUM CELEBRATES A YEAR OF GROWTH!

The Quantum Consortium is celebrating a year of extraordinary growth in both the number of homes it has built and in the scale, resources and geographical reach of the partnership itself.

During the past year Quantum completed 819 homes, 101% of the target set by the Housing Corporation with a further 327 homes on site, a whopping 448% of its target.

As well as impressive development performance, the consortium is celebrating a record take-up of cash from the Housing Corporation of nearly £15 million.

It has been a busy year which saw the consortium welcome Paul Casey, Development Director, and Peter McCormack, Chief Executive, both newly-appointed at Quantum member Derwent Living, in Derby.

Quantum has been further enhanced with the addition of Futures Housing Group, which was created through a merger of existing Quantum member Amber Valley Housing, and Daventry and District Housing.

Futures Housing Group manages 8,600 homes in Derbyshire and Northamptonshire, and with Quantum, is keen to develop more affordable homes for social rent and shared ownership.

Finally, Wellingborough Homes is the latest housing association to sign-up to Quantum membership.

The newly-formed organisation, created at the end of last year from a stock transfer of 4,500 homes from the Borough Council of Wellingborough, will be able to access the expertise and know-how of the Quantum Consortium to help it build new affordable homes.

The Quantum members now collectively manage 30,000 homes across the midlands and beyond, and work with 33 local authorities.

- Lead partner members:
- EMH
 - Derwent Living
 - Futures Housing Group

- Partner members:
- Advance HA
 - Foundation HA
 - Rockingham Forest HA
 - Wellingborough Homes



WORKING TOGETHER: The Quantum members sign the new agreement.

LOOKING AHEAD: OBJECTIVES FOR 2008-9

- We will deliver the Housing Corporation programme targets to draw down £13.3 million in Social Housing Grant to help build 348 homes
- We will pursue new grant funding through the regular market engagement process with the Housing Corporation
- We will work with residents and partners to raise design standards
- We will strive to find the most energy efficient technology for our customers



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ABOUT QUANTUM

The Quantum Consortium was launched to:

- identify, secure and deliver affordable housing schemes, efficiently and cost-effectively
- meet all programme delivery targets
- achieve procurement efficiencies
- ensure investment priorities meet the requirements of the Regional Housing Strategy, local authorities and other stakeholders
- follow the principles of good development, outlined in the Sustainable Communities Plan
- achieve customer satisfaction by promoting tenant involvement
- share skills, knowledge and best practice

Each Quantum Consortium lead member has a reputation as a market leader in its own specialist field:

- EMH as a leading low-cost home ownership providers in the east midlands
- Derwent Living as a provider of affordable homes, city living solutions and student accommodation

- Futures Housing Group as a new group which provides affordable homes and neighbourhood services across the midlands

A total allocation of almost £34m of government money, drawn down through the Housing Corporation, means that the Quantum Consortium is developing over 1,000 affordable homes at sites worth more than £114m in Leicestershire, Derbyshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Buckinghamshire, Staffordshire, South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

Quantum secured the funding as a preferred investment partner of the Housing Corporation. The consortium's allocation represents 20% of the entire Housing Corporation allocation for the east midlands region.

Now Quantum is one of just 108 partnerships across the country, selected to deliver the Housing Corporation's affordable housing programme until 2011.



CASE STUDIES

Rutland Street, Kettering

The 29 homes being built at Rutland Street in Kettering are part of a design and build package agreed with Westleigh Developments.

Costing £2.5 million, the homes are being built on the site of The Queen Eleanor Ltd clothes factory. The owners of buildings on the land wanted to move premises and approached Quantum-member EMH about the sale and re-development of the site.

Working with Westleigh Developments, the properties are expected to be completed by late January 2009.

Of the homes, 17 will be rented and 12 will be sold through the Housing Corporation's New Build HomeBuy scheme.

Providing a wide selection of choice for customers, the properties are made up of three two-bedroom homes and one three-bedroom house, ten two-bedroom flats and three one-bedroom flats.



Jim Patman of EMH

Nestlé site, Ashbourne

On the site of a former Nestlé factory, in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, Quantum has worked with developers Cedar House Investments to build 33 affordable homes for rent and shared ownership, through the Housing Corporation's New Build HomeBuy scheme.

The 36-acre site on the western edge of Ashbourne is bordered by the A515 Clifton Road, the A52 and Mayfield Road. With Derwent Living leading the project, Quantum has developed 26 two-bedroom apartments and seven three-bedroom homes.



Paul Casey of Derwent Living

The homes, which were developed through a Section 106 agreement, and has achieved an Eco-Homes rating of Very Good, were completed in April.

An adjoining 15-acre area of unused open space will be enhanced with sports pitches, tennis courts and a picnic area for community use.

Northern Road, Heanor

This scheme, on Northern Road in Heanor, is made up of six two and three bedroom family homes for rent and was developed in partnership with Lovell, architects Hassall Lloyd and agents Walker Cotter.

By working in close partnership, Quantum was able to meet the real challenge of the topography and the homes were finished ahead of schedule, surpassing all expectations.

The £0.5million scheme, which was led by Futures Housing Group, has made a huge difference to the street scene, which was previously a garage and forecourt. It was funded by Quantum, with the Housing Corporation contributing £172,000 of Social Housing Grant to the build cost.

Futures Housing Group encompasses Amber Valley Housing, which was formed from a stock transfer from Amber Valley Borough Council in 2005. The land which was built on at Northern Road was part of the original stock transfer.



Martin Sherman of Futures Housing



PERFORMANCE 2007-08

- Homes completed: 819
101% performance against target
- Grant take-up: £14.427m
105% performance against target
- Starts on site: 327
448% performance against target

WHERE WE WORK



If you interested in working with Quantum, contact us via the details on the back page or visit www.quantumconsortium.co.uk

WORKING WITH US

Quantum believes that working in close partnership with house builders and developers is crucial to achieving our goal of providing quality, affordable homes for our customers.

As registered social landlords we can help fulfill Section 106 agreements and ensure developers meet their commitments.

We benefit from shared knowledge on the latest construction techniques, enabling us to deliver homes effectively and efficiently.

For fellow registered social landlords we offer the skills, expertise and know-how to enhance your development programme.

If you are an affordable homes developer and are interested in joining the Quantum Consortium, or a house builder who would like an informal discussion about the benefits of working with us, call any of the numbers on the back page.

"Lovell has worked with Quantum and its members extensively and I've found they share the same ethos as Lovell - that is that they work in the true spirit of partnership, based on building close relationships. We have successfully delivered some difficult and challenging projects as a partnership and I have always found that I'm able to have frank, honest and candid conversations with all the members."
Steve Hale, Regional Director of Lovell

"Members of the Quantum Consortium have played a vital role in helping deliver the Council's affordable housing targets which, in turn has helped to create sustained and balanced communities."
Jeremy Dickinson, Housing Strategy Officer at Amber Valley Borough Council

"As an organisation created through the transfer of housing stock, our priority is delivering on the service improvement promises we made to tenants. But we must have one eye on the future, and in order for Wellingborough Homes to grow we need to ensure that we build new homes. Through working with the Quantum Consortium we will be able to access the experience, skills and opportunities needed to be able to ensure the growth of our organisation."
Dave Willis, Chief Executive of Wellingborough Homes

"The Council recognises Quantum is a key developer partner in Leicester and welcomes its contribution to helping those in housing need in the city."
Julia Keeling, Head of Housing Development, Leicester City Council

"The members of Quantum have consistently proved to be valued partners of the District Council in driving forward our vision to increase the supply of affordable housing and create sustainable and balanced communities. We have always found it possible to have forthright and open discussions with them and their desire to deliver affordable housing, even on more challenging projects, is greatly appreciated."
Ruth Robinson, Affordable Housing Enabling Officer, North West Leicestershire District Council