

## 8. Bloor Homes Limited and Central Bedfordshire Council – working together during local plan preparation

Early and productive joint working between Bloor Homes and Central Bedfordshire at plan preparation brought forward the delivery of nearly 100 houses and significant adjoining amenity land.

Bloor Homes worked with the council to successfully promote a 21 acre site on the edge of the market town of Shefford in Central Bedfordshire through the Council's Core Strategy Site Allocations Plan. This early proactive engagement at plan making stage set up a positive process for the community and the developers to both benefit from the development of this site of nearly 100 houses.

The council and Bloor Homes agreed a Planning Performance Agreement to cover the process of developing a Development Brief alongside preparatory work for a Full Planning Application. This created certainty and confidence for the developer about timescales.

The council and developers both engaged the town council as they worked up the development brief for the site and jointly attended a public exhibition during the public consultation process. The brief was adopted as Supplementary Planning Document in 2012 and two days later, a full planning application for the scheme was submitted.

The application was for 95 dwellings, 33 per cent affordable housing (an agreed reduction of 2 per cent because Bloor agreed to include 6 bungalows within the affordable housing provision), a nature reserve, pedestrian/cycle bridge linking the site to the open space land linking with the town council's Millennium Green, together with a new roundabout.

The early efforts to engage with the community on the development brief paid off with full support from Town Council and minimum local opposition when the application was considered. This meant that the development could be considered under delegated authority. A permission with a signed Section 106 Agreement was issued five months after submission and in accordance with the agreed timetable set under the PPA. The development is now (as at January 2014) 50 per cent built and the much-needed affordable housing element is contracted to a local Registered Provider.

“Central Bedfordshire Council are strong advocates of partnership approaches to positive planning. The site at Stanford Road, Shefford was one of the first schemes in the district to use a Planning Performance Agreement and we have successfully replicated the approach on a large number of other schemes with various landowners and developers. Key to the process is engagement with the local community and the Shefford site is a case-in-point where the Town Council were fully supportive of the proposals”

Councillor Nigel Young, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities - Strategic Planning and Economic Development, Central Bedfordshire Council



Case Study 8: Bloor Homes Limited and Central Bedfordshire Council

