



respond

Review 2010

Vision into

Reality



respond

Respond is a partnership of housing associations working together to improve the quality and choice of affordable housing in London and the South East. Respond's prime focus is on the development and regeneration of a range of affordable homes on brownfield land, remodelling of existing estates and the creation of vibrant, thriving and sustainable communities.

The members

of Respond are:

- Paragon Community Housing Group
- Elmbridge Housing Trust*
- Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust*
- Maidstone Housing Trust
- Mount Green Housing Association
- Surrey Community Development Trust

* Elmbridge Housing Trust and Richmond upon Thames Housing Trust are members of Paragon Community Housing Group

The strategic goals

of Respond are to:

- Demonstrate that it is possible for a partnership of independent housing associations to pool their resources in a highly effective and efficient manner.
- Retain close working relationships with our local authority partners, neighbourhoods and other stakeholders whilst accruing the benefits of a larger partnership.
- Ensure a close and effective working relationship with the Homes and Communities Agency and Tenant Services Authority and to meet and exceed development targets where possible.
- Deliver measurable economies of scale and efficiency through joint working and procurement practices. This includes fostering close working relationships with developers, contractors, consultants and the supply chain.
- Share expertise, best practice and add value across the partnership to enable members to deliver exemplary developments that incorporate the best in terms of environmental sustainability, design quality, construction and management.
- To work towards the measurable continuous improvement of the way we work by the implementation of our 2012 Construction Commitments Action Plan.





Success Through Partnerships

Partnerships are fundamental to our success and Respond can demonstrate an excellent track record of partnership working with a range of organisations in London and the South East. We recognise the importance of delivering on commitments made to our local authority partners and the vital role they play in establishing vibrant and sustainable communities. Respond member housing associations are particularly proud of their strong links with the communities in which they serve and of their exemplary track record of delivery.

Respond is one of the Homes and Community Agency's designated Investment Partners and has secured over £100m in grant funding to provide in excess of 2,000 new affordable homes across the region since 2003.

We are operating in challenging economic times which makes the role of providing much needed affordable housing solutions more crucial than ever. Respond Programme Director David Robinson said, "The delivery of affordable housing is about quality, efficiency, innovation and value for money. Moving forward under the Respond banner allows our members to work collectively to meet these challenges head on."

The members of Respond have the expertise and financial capacity to deliver a wide range of affordable housing developments. This year Respond members have secured planning permissions on a diverse variety of sites from a rural scheme providing 3 units to a new neighbourhood of 350 units. A growing pipeline of development sites will provide a further 700 units over the next three years.

Respond Procurement Framework

Respond members have ambitious growth plans over the next few years and it is essential that the best contractors and consultants are selected to help provide new homes and communities across London and the South East. Following a European Union compliant selection process Respond has selected a panel of contractors, architects and employers agents for frameworks that will run until 2013. David Robinson, Respond Programme Director said "We wish to work with organisations that share our commitment to delivering homes and communities of the highest standards in the most efficient and effective manner possible. It's early days however we are delighted at the efficiencies that the Frameworks have already delivered."

Vision into Reality

Park Wood residents are Planning for Real



Respond member Maidstone Housing Trust has an exemplary track record in estate regeneration and brownfield redevelopments. The ideas and concerns of residents on their estates is fundamental to the way schemes are designed and progressed. The approach taken at Park Wood, Maidstone is typical. MHT along with Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council and other partners recruited and trained volunteers from among Park Wood residents to steer and deliver a project to explore future options for their neighbourhood. This exercise, known as Planning for Real, is about residents of all ages being able to give their views and make the changes they want to see happen. One of the residents, 21-year-old Katy Dingwall, decided to volunteer so that she could see changes in her area. She said: "This project is something different. We will be taking our ideas on a roadshow and we're hoping something gets done. This approach is different to questionnaires."

Residents were able to have their say on the future of Park Wood by putting issues and ideas onto the huge 3D model of Park Wood built by pupils from the local Bell Wood Community Primary School. The five month project will lead to a five year neighbourhood action plan, with the potential for volunteers to undertake ongoing voluntary work in their community.

Another example of MHT's collaborative approach is demonstrated by the programme of brownfield sites being regenerated in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council and the HCA. The latest success in this programme was the granting of planning permission to build 130 new affordable homes on brownfield land close to Maidstone town centre. The development of 47 flats and 48 houses on the former council depot in Armstrong Road will commence in 2010. A further 12 flats and 23 houses on the old Park and Ride site off Enterprise Road will begin construction later in 2010. All of the homes incorporate high levels of sustainability and will be built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level Four as a minimum.

New for Old in Ashtead



Respond members have an outstanding track record in replacing outdated and redundant stock with new affordable housing of the highest quality. Typical of this is the recently completed Mount Green HA development at Howard Close, Ashtead. The new development replaces a former sheltered housing scheme at the site where accommodation did not meet modern standards. Nick Ronald, Mount Green's Chief Executive recalls his first visit to Howard Close, before it was acquired by Mount Green, on a dark, wet, autumn day. "It was clear the properties were in much need of improvement and the facilities provided were poor by today's standards."

One of the challenges was to ensure that the new development footprint remained the same as the previous scheme. This was achieved by providing 35 timber-framed, mixed tenure homes within seven blocks. Work began on the £4.4 million development in November 2008 and was finished in January 2010. The 35 one- and two-bedroom smart, energy-efficient apartments include ten homes for shared ownership and 25 properties for affordable rent. The success of this project exemplifies the benefits of a close partnership with Mole Valley District Council and the Homes and Communities Agency who provided grant funding for the scheme.

The High Sheriff of Surrey, Lady Elizabeth Toulson, opened Howard Close at an event in January 2010. Guests at the opening included Claire Safa, who is looking forward to moving into one of the new homes. Nick Ronald, chief executive of Mount Green Housing Association, said: "It was an honour to welcome the High Sheriff and Councillor Tim Hall, the chairman of Mole Valley District Council, to the opening event where we had some excellent feedback from stakeholders who took the opportunity to look round the new homes."

Brownfield Regeneration in Walton



The need for affordable homes is such that Respond members must be creative in identifying opportunities for new developments. Respond member Elmsbridge Housing Trust is in the process of transforming the site of a vacant office block in Walton on Thames. Nelson House will provide a high quality mixed tenure scheme of 56 one and two bedroom flats.

Chris Whelan, Group Development Director said "We are delighted to be providing homes of such high quality. The site is immediately adjacent to Walton on Thames railway station providing a highly sustainable location. The exemplary standard of design and specification is something to be proud of. We believe that this scheme will become a local landmark over time and with a commanding view from its roof top gardens, sets new standards in affordable housing."

As with much of Responds activities, this project was made possible through a close working partnership with Elmsbridge Borough Council and the Homes and Communities Agency who provided grant funding for this project.

More than Bricks and Mortar

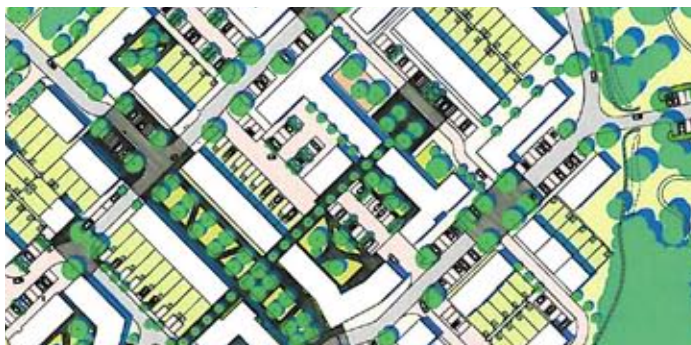


Supported housing specialist and Respond member, Surrey Community Development Trust has had a busy year completing two building projects in Wallington and Redhill, adding extra flats within projects for people with mental health issues. SCDT also purchased, improved and opened three houses, two of which are used for people with learning disabilities in Guildford, the other for young people in Woking. These were part funded with grants from the Homes and Communities Agency.

SCDT has close working relationships with a range of charities and trusts in the area and was able to raise over £140,000 in donations to assist in the funding of a new development of 8 flats at Kingston Road in Staines. The scheme, part funded by the HCA, will provide self contained flats for people with mental health issues.

Paul Mitchell, Chief Executive of SCDT said "We at SCDT are very grateful that we have been able to help in the significant progress of hundreds of people in the last year. They are much more independent and involved in their communities and have more self-esteem and confidence to tackle the future."

Visions for the Future



A New Highly Sustainable Neighbourhood

Our vision of the future is embodied in our plans to create a new, mixed tenure neighbourhood in Addlestone. The Franklands Drive development incorporates exemplary urban design and homes that will achieve very high thermal standards. The pedestrian friendly layout incorporates homezones, sustainable urban drainage, play areas, a cycle network and extensive open space. A site specific green travel co-ordinator will provide sustainable travel plans for each resident.

Respond member Elmbridge Housing Trust is delighted to have secured the detailed planning consent for the creation of the Franklands Drive development. The neighbourhood will comprise 350 houses and flats including homes for New Build Homebuy and Social Rent. This scheme has been designed to achieve the CABE Building for Life Standards and construction is due to start on the first phase of this development in March 2010. The homes have been designed to be highly thermally efficient and will meet at least Level Four of the Code for Sustainable Homes. In addition, at least 10% of the energy requirements for this development will be generated on site from renewable sources. All of the units meet the requirements of the Lifetime Homes Standard. EHT are grateful to the support of Runnymede BC and the Homes and Communities Agency in progressing this exciting opportunity. It is anticipated that the first homes will be completed in November 2011 with the overall scheme being completed in the autumn of 2013.

Richmond Eco Projects

Respond is committed to reducing carbon emissions and enhancing the environmental sustainability of the new homes we provide.

We aim to exceed minimum standards wherever possible and are currently delivering a range of schemes that achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level Four and Five. We believe it is important to invest in innovation and research to improve standards. Respond member Richmond upon Thames Housing Trust is working with Kingston University in partnership with the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to deliver a range of highly innovative eco-homes on council owned sites. We are delighted that the HCA are providing grant funding to assist in the delivery of this exciting project.

Growing Programme

Respond has continued to deliver a significant programme of new homes across the region during the year. There have been many successes including securing planning permissions on a range of urban, rural and brownfield sites to ensure a continuing flow of affordable homes being provided into the future. Respond continues to enjoy an excellent working relationship with our local authority partners and the Homes Communities Agency. Additional grant funding of £11m has been secured so far this year to provide 142 homes. Further bids are currently lodged with the HCA for schemes which will produce an addition 161 homes across London and the South East. This funding is in addition to the current programme under the HCA National Affordable Housing Programme 2008-11.

New Homes for Older People

Maidstone Housing Trust has commenced the construction of 5 two-bedroom bungalows designed for older people in Woodside Road, Mangravel. In addition the former bowling green site in Park Wood will provide 18 two and three bedroom bungalows for older people. Both schemes will be finished in January 2011.



SCDT at the Houses of Parliament

SCDT invited 130 guests to join them for a charity reception at the House of Commons. Attended by no less than 5 mayors and other dignitaries, the event raised over £15,000 for the Kingston Rd scheme in Staines.



Mount Green Kickstart at Rosebery School

HCA Kick Start grant funding is being used to progress the development of affordable homes at the former Rosebery School in Epsom & Ewell. The development is being built in partnership with Crest Homes and will provide 28 homes for rent and New Build HomeBuy.



Paragon gets Best Company Award

Paragon is delighted to have achieved the Best Companies Award. The scheme, which is sponsored by the Sunday Times is based on an independently accredited survey. It acknowledges excellence in working practices and has only been awarded to 20 other housing associations nationally.



Bats Get a New Home

Mount Green's latest regeneration scheme at Howard Close includes homes for bats as well as people. A purpose built bat barn has been constructed and subdued external lighting incorporated to allow bats to roost in peace.

Sutton Framework for SCDT

SCDT is delighted to have been appointed to the London Borough of Sutton Framework for services for the homeless and people with mental health issues. This follows on from the success of winning a tender for similar services in Wokingham.



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