

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission 21 February 2019



Report of: Colin Molton, Strategic Director - Growth and Regeneration

Title: Update on Bristol Housing Festival

Ward: City-wide

Officers

Presenting Report: Abigail Stratford - Head of Housing Delivery
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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Scrutiny Commission on ongoing work in relation to

- The Bristol Housing Festival
- The council's emerging approach to 'Offsite Manufacture Housing' and 'Modern Methods of Construction' (OSM & MMC)
- The first two innovation projects we are taking forward under the banner of the Bristol Housing Festival.

2.0 What is the Bristol Housing Festival ?

The Bristol Housing Festival is a planned 5 year programme of activities, launched in October 2018 with the 'expo' event at the harbourside. Jez Sweetland is the Project Lead.

The Festival will include conference and exhibition events, and delivery of new housing and building communities on sites across the city. The spirit of the Festival is about trying new approaches, learning what works, and engaging people in thinking differently, fostering innovation in four areas:

New Types of Housing - Offsite Manufacture & Modern Methods of Construction. *This will include both longer term housing developments, and exploring opportunities for 'meanwhile' uses of sites using temporary and/or moveable structures.*

New Communities. *The Festival will showcase different types of community including co-housing, inter-generational and 'mixed' communities; and looking at how best to support flourishing communities that are diverse, sustainable and integrated.*

New Technology. *Using these new communities as a test bed for various smart city technology and new technology platforms. Examples could include exploring how technology can enable new solutions within the planning process and other city governance.*

New Models of Governance and Investment. *Creating a platform for organisations and communities to collaborate in tackling challenges faced by cities worldwide, share learning and develop new outputs, models and solutions.*

For more information please see bristolhousingfestival.org.uk & Twitter @BristolHF

2.1 Structure and Governance of the Bristol Housing Festival

The key partners in the Bristol Housing Festival are Bristol City Council, The Shaftesbury Partnership and Bristol and Bath Regional Capital.

A Governing Board will be established to oversee the delivery of Bristol Housing Festival, consisting of representatives from the Council, The Shaftesbury Partnership, Bristol and Bath Regional Capital CIC, Housing Associations and an independent Chair.

The wider consortium will include private sector, charity/social enterprise and public sector partners - including businesses, charities, faith groups, Housing Associations, health services, and universities.

The Bristol Housing Festival Governing Board, and the council's Growth and Regeneration Board will approve the final selection of projects and delivery partners. All land disposal decisions (for example, where the council leases a site to delivery partners for a short or medium term Housing Festival development) will go through the relevant Bristol City Council approvals process, and be subject to Council legal approval re. public contract regulations, state aid rules and other legal requirements.

3.0 Our Emerging Approach to 'Offsite Manufacture Housing' and 'Modern Methods of Construction' (OSM & MMC)

One of the key strands of the Bristol Housing Festival is showcasing and learning from the innovative types of houses and apartments that can be delivered through 'Offsite Manufacture' and 'Modern Methods of Construction', and understanding what role this type of innovation can play in the wider overall strategy to meet the city's housing needs.

The terms 'Offsite Manufacture' and 'Modern Methods of Construction' refer to a range of innovative construction techniques where individual building components, or in many cases whole three-dimensional building 'modules' are manufactured indoors in factory conditions, and then transported to site and assembled to form finished buildings.

On-site ground works and utilities works are completed in parallel while the housing units are being built in the factory, reducing the end-to-end project delivery time and the level of disruption due to construction work.

This type of approach to construction is widely used in the UK to build hotels, hospitals and schools, and has been successfully applied to the construction of housing in Scandinavia and Germany, but has yet to be widely applied to the housing sector in the UK.

The potential benefits of offsite manufacture housing have led to an increasing interest in OSM & MMC as a way to deliver additional homes to meet the estimated 300,000 new homes the country needs annually. These benefits include faster pace of delivery of finished homes, and in many cases a level of quality and environmental sustainability better than what's achieved by some new house building using traditional methods. Increasingly the use of OSM & MMC construction techniques in housing developments in Bristol is a condition of grant funding available from Homes England.

The terms 'Offsite Manufacture' and 'Modern Methods of Construction' cover a wide spectrum of different types of housing, from modular apartment units which might have a relatively short lifespan (e.g. converted shipping container units intended as short-term, transitional accommodation), through to some examples of high quality, high sustainability homes which are designed for an 80 to 100 year life span, accredited by quality assurance organisations (e.g. NHBC, BOPAS), and mortgageable.

For more information about our emerging approach to OSM & MMC please see Appendix 2.

4.0 First Two Housing Festival Projects in 2019

The first two projects being taken forward under the banner of the Bristol Housing Festival are 'ZedPods' and 'LaunchPad'.

4.1 Proposed ZEDPods Housing on Chalks Road Car Park, St George

ZedPods are high-quality, affordable low carbon homes for keyworkers, young people and others, on a raised steel deck above car park spaces (which continue to be in use); with very high energy efficiency, solar PV, and electric car charging points.

The proposed development at Chalks Road in St George is a collaboration between ZedPods, YMCA and other partners to develop 11 affordable housing units above a car park - which will continue to be in use with no loss of the existing car parking spaces - on a 30 year lease.

We are working with the prospective developers of the scheme to develop the project approach for what is a new and innovative model for delivering affordable housing, and capture learning which will benefit future Housing Festival 'innovation projects' which may follow a similar path and encounter similar issues.

These 1 and 2 bedroom apartments will be for rent to a mixed community including potentially young people in temporary accommodation and at risk of homelessness, and other people in need of affordable, good quality homes (e.g. key workers).

We anticipate that the council's enabling contribution to the scheme will potentially be granting a 30 year lease to use the 'air rights' above the car park at no cost to the developers, and also an affordable housing grant contribution per unit (subject to an application for grant meeting the funding criteria).

A request for pre-application planning advice has been submitted by the developers, and a public consultation event to discuss the proposals and get feedback from the community in St George will take place in the next few weeks.

4.2 Proposed LaunchPad Development at Alexandra Park Car Park, Fishponds

LaunchPad is a collaboration between United Communities housing association, 1625 Independent People and University of Bristol Students Union.

A planning application has been submitted for development comprising 31 modular studio apartments on a former car park site (in this case the car park has been declared surplus and will be taken out of use), on a 5 to 10 year lease.

15 units will be at social rent levels for young people nominated by 1625 Independent People (Care leavers & Key Workers), 16 at affordable rent for University of Bristol students.

We anticipate that the council's enabling contribution to the scheme will potentially be granting a 5 to 10 year lease to use the car park land at no cost to the developers, and also a grant contribution per unit to support delivery of the affordable housing (subject to an application for grant meeting the funding criteria).

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 Further Information about Initial Projects (ZedPods and LaunchPad), and draft Planning Practice Note

For more information about the ZedPods and LaunchPad projects, including images of the proposed developments, please see Appendix 1.

Appendix 1 also provides some additional information about a new Planning Practice Note, currently being drafted and which will be shared for feedback, which will outline how the Planning Process will respond to Housing Festival projects.

Appendix 2 Our Approach to ‘Off-site Manufacture Housing’ and ‘Modern Methods of Construction’ (OSM & MMC)