



Development Policy			
Last Reviewed	March 2023	Next Review	May 2026
Responsible Officer	Director of New Homes and Commercial		

**Policy Statement:** Freebridge aims to support and contribute to the meeting of housing needs, create mixed, sustainable communities and provide good quality housing, whilst complying with our regulatory and legal responsibilities.

Freebridge shall seek to provide and/or develop additional affordable housing in King's Lynn, West Norfolk and identified surrounding areas.

We recognise that people will have different needs, and we will therefore take this into account when appraising and designing developments.

#### **Policy Detail:**

##### **New Build Homes**

##### **We shall:**

Seek out and consider opportunities as they arise using a standard approach regardless of size or location within the Borough. This approach considers the demand, sustainability, ability to provide a good service, programme capacity and wider context of the opportunity in supporting regeneration of existing Freebridge homes,

Each scheme will be progressed following a Gateway approval process, seeking appropriate approval and monitoring spend within those approvals throughout the duration of the delivery of the scheme.

Ensure that due diligence is carried out before entering into a transparent and defined legal and/or partnership agreements appropriate to the risk and scale of the development.

Ensure that each new scheme a separate risk map and that each scheme has an agreed exit strategy.

Fulfil the Development Strategy by identifying and progressing schemes which seek to provide the highest standards for customers (both residents and internal) within the required financial hurdle rates. These schemes will seek to provide range of housing suitable for the locality and wider needs of the borough, complimenting existing stock and meeting new needs.

Ensure the Design & Technical Brief reflects prevailing regulatory and legal responsibilities as well as Freebridge's aspirations to delivery high quality homes that are efficient to live in and maintain.

Health and Safety – As part of the development of new homes as the “Client”, we will under the current legislation ensure that all relevant projects comply with the following requirements. We will

- i) Ensure that a suitably qualified and experienced Principal Designer is appointed for both pre and post design activities. This includes ensuring compliance with all requirements of the Buildings Act, Building Regulations and any other appropriate legislation.
- ii) Appoint a CDM consultant to review plans and carry out regular site inspections as appropriate to the activity taking place on site and provide records and evidence of visits.
- iii) Escalate any significant failures of Health and Safety by our contractors to Leadership Team and if appropriate Development Committee.

## **Research and Evaluation**

### **We shall:**

- Consider 'Alternative housing strategies' that may include non-traditional forms of construction, tenancy arrangements, procurement and financial arrangements.
- Ensure that all alternative housing approaches are thoroughly researched and evaluated before commencement, including;
  - How does it align (or conflict) with current business plans, strategies and values.
  - Does it meet a short or long-term housing need and is this supported by clear evidence.
  - Will the scheme be delivered and managed by Freebridge or on behalf of a partner.
  - Housing Management should be fully involved in assessing the impact on the quality of service delivery.
  - A project lead will be identified.
  - A timetabled, resourced project plan will be required.
  - Identification of Pilot projects in order to identify and manage potential risks.
- Review the performance of alternative housing activities on a scheme-by-scheme basis through existing performance and financial management processes.
- Ensure that Freebridge has the necessary skills and experience to deliver any alternative housing scheme.
- Ensure that due diligence is carried out before entering into a transparent and defined legal and/or partnership agreements including;

- Ensuring that the potential partner has a sufficient level of financial and other resources to deliver their responsibilities.
  - Where potential partners' reliance is on Government funding, directly or indirectly, attention will be given to the security of the income stream.
  - Evaluation of the organisations cultural fit with Freebridge.
  - A legal agreement that is appropriate to the scale and risk of the scheme.
- Ensure that each new scheme a separate risk map and financial monitoring is maintained; and
  - Ensure each scheme has an agreed exit strategy.
  - We shall endeavour to provide low energy homes that where possible and practical meet Future Homes standards and reduce energy cost to our customers.

The level of detail required will depend upon the scale and complexity of the proposal and the level of risk involved.