

Building Sustainability

Issue 39 December 2020



Group sets ambitious target to increase housing sales

Larkfleet Group, with sites across the Eastern region, has set itself the target of more than doubling its sales in the next financial year, amidst the start of a new era under CEO, John Anderson.

The ambition to triple the size of the business over the next five years is part of the Group's plans to develop and expand into a premier, customer-focused nationwide home builder.

The plans have also seen the launch of new branding, websites and the announcement of a fresh partnership with an affordable housing scheme, Home Reach.

Speaking about the new vision for the Group – which owns the award-winning Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes – CEO John Anderson said: "I am proud to be leading the Larkfleet team at this exciting time, I'm passionate about the new strategic plans we're unveiling. Part of developing and growing a business is setting markers and goals that you can work towards and that will define your success.

"I'm pleased to say that we've already seen positive steps towards the Group's ambitions, with reservations for houses in July and August this year up by 103% and 95% respectively, compared with last year's figures. This is despite the impact COVID-19 has had on the housebuilding industry and wider national and global economy."

Larkfleet Group's partnership with Home Reach will give house buyers the opportunity to buy a percentage of a Larkfleet or Allison home – and then pay a low monthly rent on the part they don't own; making it easier for them to get on the housing ladder:

"COVID-19 has had an unprecedented impact on our nation's economy and now, more than ever, those people who want to get on the housing ladder might need a helping hand. Partnering with Home Reach, we believe, is a sign of our intent to be that helping hand – making home ownership a reality, not a dream, for people, couples and families across the country."

Anderson's appointment as CEO comes as Karl Hick, founder of the Larkfleet Group, stepped up into a chairman role, focusing on the company's sustainable energy and construction innovation divisions.

The Group, along with Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes, has since undergone a rebrand – with new websites to accompany them.



Anderson concluded: "Karl Hick has built an excellent company in Larkfleet Group, one that has an excellent reputation for achieving an engaged workforce, with core values, and a culture of employee and customer wellbeing. We have our eyes on emerging markets in sustainable energy and housebuilding innovation – and I look forward to working closely with him as we expand and develop the business.

"Our new branding and websites are another marker of our intent – especially in an increasingly digital world – to be customer-focused and accessible to those looking to buy their first, or next home."

Article from Professional Housebuilder and Property Developer

Launching our Graduate Programme

We welcomed both Alfie Hick (son of Chairman Karl Hick) and James Winfield to Larkfleet Group. The two are starting on a 4 year Graduate Programme, which will finish with them receiving a Masters Degree. The first two years will see them spend time in every department, helping them to see what particular field they want to spend the remaining years in. We wish them both luck and look forward to seeing more of them.

It's the inaugural year of our new Graduate Programme during which we plan to take degree students and help them gain experience and give them a foundation in the Construction industry, whilst studying for a Masters Degree.



Larkfleet Homes digitally launches show home at Abbey Park, Thorney

The show home, which is part of the 91 home Abbey Park development, is the first to be launched digitally by Larkfleet Homes in the wake of COVID-19.

The Abbey Park development consists of 91 homes, 27 of which are affordable. There are 15 unique styles of home available, ranging from 2 to 5 bedrooms – and including bungalows. The site also incorporates green spaces and a children's play area.

Following the impacts of COVID-19, a video tour of the Abbey Park show home has been published in place of an in-person event – and following government guidelines, sales teams will continue to hold one-to-one appointments, available in person or via phone or video call.

Speaking about the launch of the show home, Samantha Hart, Sales & Marketing Director at Larkfleet Homes, said: **"We're really excited to be digitally launching our first show home with this video tour – and opening up this wonderful development in Thorney to prospective buyers."**

"Our Abbey Park development is our second in Thorney, alongside Thorney Meadows, and gives a great balance of village life with close proximity to Peterborough city centre and all it has to offer. That makes this area an ideal location for a family home, a new homebuyer, or someone looking to downsize.

"While COVID-19 has made this a strange year for everyone, our sales teams are still on hand to help anyone thinking of moving home – and thanks to our commitment to making housing accessible and affordable, we have a number of initiatives available to those interested; from part-exchange to help to buy."



To view the video tour and discover more about Larkfleet Homes' Abbey Park development go to <https://larkfleethomes.co.uk/development/abbey-park/>

Family values at The Larkfleet Group

Karl Hick, founder and co-owner with wife Helen, of the Larkfleet Group has moved position within the company and is now the Chairman.

Family has always been at the heart of the Larkfleet Group, but on a more personal level, this has taken on a greater focus as Karl and Helen welcome a number of family members into the team.

Alfie Hick, son of Karl, will be joining the company's new Graduate Programme, in which he will spend the next four years gaining experience across the business's many functions and departments and will complete a Masters Degree.

Helen Hick, Managing Director and Group HR Director's daughter Claire, who, having been at the company for a number of years, has taken on the role of Quality Manager.

Tommy Sweeney, Claire's son, is currently undertaking a course in Forklift Driving making him the third generation of the family to work with the company.

With the increased presence of the Hick family at Larkfleet Group, the company is looking forward to a new generation maintaining the family involvement.

Not forgetting the family dog Hugo, who is also the company's mascot.



Approval granted for Larkfleet Homes development in Sawtry

Larkfleet Homes is delighted to have received the go-ahead for a housing development in Sawtry, Cambridgeshire, which carefully considers the area's existing and future needs.

Under the plans, a new neighbourhood of up to 340 homes will be built on a site off Glotton Road, Sawtry, to include 40% affordable housing.

David Morris, Larkfleet Group's Land Director said: "The development will provide significant investment to the Sawtry area and also make a long-term contribution to local education through providing land and a funding contribution for a new primary school.

"We have been working closely with Cambridgeshire County Council's education department and Huntingdonshire District Council's planning department to ensure the site delivered not only much needed housing, but also a school site, which could be commissioned and operational within the next few years.

The scheme also features a high level of green infrastructure and landscaping, including trees and hedgerows, a new wetland habitat, a community orchard, allotment land, informal open space and a play area."

The planning application was approved by the Huntingdonshire District Council Development Management Committee on 16 November 2020.



Larkfleet Group contribute to Bourne community book pledge

Larkfleet Group made a £200 contribution to the book drive in support of Elsea Park Primary School in Bourne.

The book drive was led by local resident, Leigh Marlow, whose son, Jude, attends Elsea Park Primary School and is an avid reader. As an independent Usbourne book organiser, when news came that Elsea Park was expanding to create more classrooms and welcome more children to the school, Leigh set up a community book pledge in support.

In total, over £1,100 worth of schoolbooks was raised for local children to enjoy. Speaking about the pledge, Leigh said: "As I'm passionate about books and engaging children to read and enjoy books, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to get the community to join together and get some brilliant books in to the hands of our local school children."

Speaking about the Group's donation, Larkfleet Group Founder & Chairman, Karl Hick, said: "We're very happy to have contributed to this book pledge in support of a local school. At Larkfleet, this kind of giving back to the community is a crucial part of our work – and I'd like to congratulate Leigh on a successful book drive. I hope that the children enjoy their new books in the years to come."

Appointments and promotions

Larkfleet Group has appointed former Keir Living Director, Rob Crossland, as its new Construction Director, while the Group's Senior Land Manager, David Morris, has been promoted to Land Director.

Rob joins Larkfleet Group from Keir Living, a housing arm of the Keir Group, having spent 11 years there. In his role at Larkfleet Group, Rob will be responsible for leading the construction team in safety, quality and customer satisfaction, and ensuring developments are built to time and budget.

Speaking about his appointment, Rob Crossland said: "It's great to be joining Larkfleet Group, a growing business with ambitions to become a national housebuilder. I'll do everything I can to help the team get there, working closely with colleagues and stakeholders alike to bring some of the lessons I've learnt to the table from over 20 years in the construction industry."

Meanwhile, David Morris, Larkfleet Group's Senior Land Manager has been promoted to Land Director. In his role he will oversee the Group's land portfolio, working with both internal and external stakeholders to bring forward sites – as well as source and coordinate new land opportunities.

Speaking about his promotion, David said: "I'm very proud to be taking on this new role at Larkfleet Group. Having been at the company for a number of years, I'm excited by the plans and goals we've set ourselves and look forward to working in close collaboration with the management team to lead the Larkfleet Group towards continued success."

Speaking about Rob's appointment and the promotion of David Morris, John Anderson said: "We're really looking forward to having Rob join the team. Having worked with him in my previous position at Keir Group, I know we're getting a brilliant Construction Director, who will help the Larkfleet Group take significant steps towards our targets in the coming years.

"David's promotion is recognition of his expertise as a Land Director and I know he will play a crucial role in the development of the Larkfleet Group and our companies – Allison Homes and Larkfleet Homes – as we seek to build on the progress we've made in 2020, despite the impacts of COVID-19."



David Morris and Rob Crossland

Larkfleet Group recognised in The Parliamentary Review

The Parliamentary Review is an entirely apolitical publication, as demonstrated by the fact that its two co-chairmen, Lord Blunkett and Lord Pickles, once sat on different sides of the House of Commons and now do so in the Lords. The organisations who write for The Review are – for the most part – apolitical themselves, although some are unapologetically forthright with their views of certain political parties or individuals. This makes for a fascinating series of articles to suit your tastes and challenge your convictions.

Success for organisations of any size does not always come easily, and The Parliamentary Review is indispensable for anyone who seeks to make a difference in their sector. It highlights significant developments and concerns for leaders up and down the country.

Lord Pickles, co-chairman of The Review, has stated that now more than ever it is "critical that we forge new channels of communication and reinforce existing ones" and this article from Larkfleet Group is a great way of delivering that.

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove says "this year's Parliamentary review comes at a momentous time for parliament, as we collectively determine the destiny of the United Kingdom."



CEO stresses importance of keeping construction industry open

As the country enters into another national lockdown, John Anderson, CEO of the Larkfleet Group, discusses the support on offer for the construction industry and the importance of keeping the sector up and running during the pandemic.



As Covid-19 cases continue to rise across England, the government has imposed a second national lockdown. This time, the government has chosen to allow the construction industry to continue working, stating: "This is essential to keeping the country operating and supporting vital sectors and employers".

Housing Secretary, The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, added: "I can confirm that the housing market will remain open throughout this period as will construction sites, building the homes and sustaining the jobs we desperately need."

John Anderson, CEO of the Larkfleet Group, praises this decision, stating: "Keeping the construction and housing industry open during the lockdown is essential. The economy has been hit hard by the pandemic, but the housing market can help recovery as for every £1 spent on house building, £5 of economic benefit is generated."

"There is also still a clear requirement for housing and the reservations for houses at Larkfleet are up 103% and 95% in July and August respectively from last year, showing the high demand for homes. In fact, our organisation is experiencing rapid growth this year despite the pandemic. In the next few months alone, we have three developments launching in Thorney, Oakham and Wittering and have seen lots of interest especially given the Stamp Duty holiday imposed by the government. We also continue to work closely with Homes England as a key partner in our ambitions to grow as a sustainable multi-tenure home builder."

Building is a key priority for the government who announced their 'build, build, build' plan to reform the planning system and make it easier to build better homes earlier this year. John said: "It's important we keep up the momentum. As part of this plan, the government is launching an affordable homes programme and the Home Building Fund is also offering access to finance for smaller developers. We are actually one of the first companies in the UK to secure permission for two 'entry-level' sites at Hackleton and Morton where 100% of houses will be affordable. Support like this and work on site needs to continue throughout the year to ensure the national housing quota is reached."

Co-owner and Chairman of The Larkfleet Group, Karl Hick, recently featured in the Parliamentary Review, discussing the Group's expansion plans.

John also highlighted the benefits of continuing work for employees. He said: "The industry can sufficiently safeguard employees as scientific research found that outside work is significantly safer, and much of the work can be completed whilst social distancing."

"By keeping our employees safe in work, it not only supports their income and families but also their mental health. Working on a building site has become the deadliest profession in the UK with more than one worker a day taking their own life and we are passionate about doing everything we can to protect our employees and are glad to see the government doing the same."

"It is also welcome to see the government has changed the criteria for testing, meaning our construction workers can now easily access a test if they show symptoms, ensuring we can look protect our workforce."

John praised the array of government support on offer for the second lockdown, stating: "The nationwide extension of the furlough scheme which covers 80% of salaries for hours not worked, will no doubt help many people in the industry. Alongside this, they are extending the application deadline for loan guarantee schemes which will help support activity in the sector and the mortgage payment and stamp duty holidays will help our customers and encourage buyers."

However, it is not all smooth sailing. The industry remains faced with the challenges of limited workforces due to isolation rules as well as supply delays. John said: "It is imperative that not just building continues, but that the whole industry remains operating. This includes our office staff and suppliers to ensure we have the materials, expertise and resources that we need to build and repair our homes and services."

John added: "While we will continue to face tough times ahead, our ethos remains to build a sustainable future for our communities so with the government's assistance facilitating the resurgence of the industry, we will remain open and continue offering much-needed jobs and homes to the public, as well as stability for the economy and research into greener technology for the future."

"Thank you to our customers, our team and all our key partners and stakeholders for your support during these challenging times."

New Group branding

The Larkfleet Group and its companies, Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes, have all undergone a rebrand recently – to reflect the business' renewed ambitions and goals in the coming years. The Larkfleet Group logo features two joined up 'H's to symbolise the Hick family – while a modern, clean approach has been adopted across all companies. New livery and stationery will all follow the new theme, which matches modernity with tradition.



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