



Politicians and businesses plan sustainable future

Speakers at the Larkfleet conference 'More than bricks and mortar'.
From left to right – Ashley Dunseath, Fionnuala Lennon, Karl Hick, Matthew Lee.



More than 100 politicians, business leaders and construction industry professionals from across the Midlands and East of England met at a conference in Stamford to discuss ways to develop 'sustainable communities'.

The event – titled 'More than bricks and mortar' – was hosted by The Larkfleet Group of Companies which includes housebuilders Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes.

Speakers at the event included Larkfleet CEO Karl Hick; Matthew Lee, leader of South Kesteven District Council; Fionnuala Lennon from the government agency Homes England; and Ashley Dunseath from design consultancy LDA Design.

In a series of presentations and discussion sessions the conference looked at the challenge of building the large numbers of homes that the government says are needed to tackle the housing crisis.

The government has set a target of building 300,000 new homes every year to provide enough homes to meet demand and prevent prices continuing to spiral out of the reach of many families. That is around 50 per cent more than were built last year.



Karl Hick told the conference: "Housing is more than a numbers game. Building and developing is not just about housing, but about creating communities in which people want to live. That is what Larkfleet is committed to do."

Councillor Matthew Lee said: "We cannot simply leave it to the private sector to build the number of houses we need."

"Local councils and other public and private sector organisations need to work in partnership to create truly sustainable communities. There is more to creating a sustainable community than building houses and providing a mini-supermarket and a doctors' surgery."

"We need to work with local small and medium sized builders to deliver more homes. Alongside that, we need to provide jobs, social facilities, arts and culture – all the things that make a real community."

Fionnuala Lennon talked about the contribution that the government's plan for new 'garden towns and villages' could make to meeting housing needs through the creation of new, planned, communities. And Ashley Dunseath showed how the integration of landscape design into developments could improve the natural and built environment as well as improve people's health and well-being.

Specific issues tackled during the discussion sessions included future transport needs (will people in future want or need their own cars – and space to park them?), the prevention of flooding and the challenges of integrating services such as health, social care, education and power supply into future plans.

Karl Hick concluded: "These are complex issues and there are no easy answers – but I hope this event has helped to move things forward."

Happy birthday Larkfleet!

This year is our 20th anniversary – and we plan to celebrate.

Larkfleet Limited, the first business in what is now The Larkfleet Group of Companies, was registered at Companies House on 2nd March 1998.

We shall shortly be kicking off a year of events and activities to mark our 20 years in business. Watch the website and blog – and the next issue of Building Sustainability – for details.





Larkfleet Group starts the year with land deals worth £35 million

Larkfleet Group has kicked off the New Year with a series of deals to buy land for 189 new homes with a total development value of £35 million.

It has bought new housing sites across Lincolnshire in Horncastle, Baston, Nettleham and Boston.

These follow a series of deals during 2017 that saw the company buy sites with a total development value of £70 million in Whittlesey (Cambridgeshire), Corby (Northamptonshire), Collingham (Nottinghamshire) and Colsterworth, Weston and Horncastle (all in Lincolnshire) for a total of 399 houses.

Karl Hick, chief executive of Larkfleet Homes, said: "We are operating across a wider area and building more houses on more sites than we have ever done before.

"The new land purchases with which we are starting this year will open up new opportunities for building reasonably-priced, high quality homes in mostly rural locations where we can help local people get onto the housing ladder.



"We will be starting work on all of these sites within weeks and we are actively looking for additional sites on which we can start building later in the year or in 2019."

Larkfleet primarily builds timber-framed housing under the Larkfleet Homes brand and traditional brick-and-block built housing under the Allison Homes brand. Most of its development is in the East Midlands and East of England but it is working nationwide, from Scotland to the South West of England.

New homes being built by Larkfleet Homes. New land deals mean more sites will be developed in 2018.

Larkfleet Homes strengthens communities with its Community Fund

The Larkfleet Homes Community Fund has donated nearly £50,000 to community groups and ventures across the country which support the Larkfleet Homes vision of integrating new developments into the community.

The fund, intended for community groups which focus on activities that enhance or develop local communities, has welcomed applications from groups that promote the environment, support residents or bring communities together. Grants of up to £10,000 were awarded to each of seven projects that have a positive impact within the area.

The fund, which was recently relaunched, is designed to support charities or voluntary agencies which are based within ten miles (16 km) of any housing development by Larkfleet Homes or Allison Homes, both part of The Larkfleet Group of Companies which is based in Bourne, Lincolnshire.

Applicants were invited to send their proposals which were then reviewed by a judging panel. The panel is managed by the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation which administers the fund.

The successful groups were awarded money for a range of projects:

- **Thorney Parish Council**, for a zip-wire, trampolines, outdoor gym and swings for the older children of Thorney.
- **Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust**, for wood-working equipment for retiree volunteers to produce signage for interpretation and education.
- **Donington Parish Council**, to provide a garden shed and equipment for herb and wild flower beds.
- **Families First Peterborough CIC**, to continue an arts and crafts workshop for young people and adults who

are leaving care homes to make their own way in the community.

- **Sawtry and District Bowling Club**, to provide ramps which will improve access to the club's facilities.
- **Moulton Chapel Youth & Community Centre**, to build a playground including inclusive play equipment for children of all abilities.
- **Somerset Sight Limited**, to reduce isolation and loneliness by providing six additional outings for 12 sight-impaired adults.

Karl Hick, chief executive of Larkfleet Homes, said: "It's really important to us that when we build new homes for people, we actually develop communities. Being able to support the fantastic charities and volunteer groups in the areas we are working in is vital. These groups are very often the backbone of the community and the support which the winners of this round of funding offer to the people who use their services is immeasurable.

"Thank you to everyone who contacted us about the fund. We really look forward to hearing over the coming months how the donation has helped your group."

Karen Leader of Sawtry and District Bowling Club said: "As a club we're really passionate about bringing together a wide range of different people from our community. It

helps reduce isolation for some and encourages people to take part in physical activity which is fantastic.

"By successfully being granted money from the Larkfleet Homes Community Fund, we'll be able to make our club even more inclusive by improving access to the bowling green and club house. People of all abilities will be able to take part. We are so grateful, and I know it will help make people happier, healthier and feel more connected for years to come."

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation manages The Larkfleet Homes Community Fund on Larkfleet's behalf. Any community or voluntary group wishing to find out more about the fund can visit www.tiny.cc/larkfleet-fund, telephone 01223 410535 or email info@cambscf.org.uk.

Eye Church of England Primary School, in the village of Eye, Peterborough, received £5,000 from the Larkfleet Homes Community Fund in 2017 to help refurbish its swimming pool. The photo shows from left to right Larkfleet's director of planning Mark Mann, Eye C of E Primary School head teacher Jason Webster and PE teacher Mr D Lawlor with pupils at the school – and the cheque from the fund.





Allison Homes opens new show home in Pinchbeck, Spalding

Allison Homes has officially opened a new show home at its brand-new Pinchbeck Fields development near Spalding.

The opening was marked by a ribbon cutting ceremony performed by Allison Homes CEO Karl Hick in front of an invited VIP audience. Following the ribbon cutting, a group of specially invited guests joined in the opening celebrations and shared some light refreshments.

The show house will give prospective buyers the opportunity to experience a 'real life' version of their potential new home. It includes features such as family rooms, open plan living areas, luxury dining, bathrooms and spacious bedrooms.

Pinchbeck Fields is an exciting new development of 2, 3, 4 and 5-bedroom houses on the edge of the Lincolnshire village of Pinchbeck, combining the charm of rural living with all the amenities that the bustling market town of Spalding has to offer.

The official opening gave local councillors, estate agents, solicitors, mortgage advisors and other individuals involved in house building a chance to see for themselves the quality and finish of Allison Homes' newest development.

Karl Hick said: "This new Allison Homes development at Pinchbeck Fields demonstrates our commitment to deliver developments in rural areas which cater for a full range of housing needs.

"The quality of the traditional build is testament to the esteem in which the Allison Homes brand is held and we are committed to carrying that forward in partnership with local stakeholders who I would like to thank for their continued support.

"New homes in Pinchbeck Fields will enable first time buyers to join the housing market while growing families are catered for with 3, 4 and 5-bedroom homes on offer.

"We are committed to working with local authorities and local communities in our 'core areas' of Lincolnshire, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland.

"We continue to deliver high quality homes that meet the urgent need for new housing



Karl Hick cutting the ribbon at the official opening of Allison Homes' latest show home at Pinchbeck Fields, Spalding.

that will enable people in these areas to 'get a foot on the property ladder' or move on up to larger properties."

Pinchbeck Fields is located just to the north of Spalding, close to some of the best schools in Lincolnshire. There are rural trails, traditional pubs and restaurants and tranquil waterways right on the doorstep.

Residents can enjoy the rural lifestyle and the arts, entertainment and shopping facilities of Spalding. There are also excellent transport links to Bourne, Boston, Kings Lynn, Peterborough and Stamford.

The new show home at Pinchbeck Fields, Spalding, is currently open Thursday to Monday between 10:00am and 5:00pm.





Larkfleet starts work on Oakham retirement homes and dementia care unit



Larkfleet Homes has started construction work on a 'continuing care retirement community' (CCRC) in Oakham, Rutland. It will provide 62 one and two-bedroom homes for 'independent living', 54 properties for 'assisted living' for people with particular care needs and a 60-bed specialist care home for people with dementia.

The CCRC is part of Larkfleet's Oakham Heights development – a major urban expansion of Oakham being built on land between the Oakham bypass and Barleythorpe Road.

Larkfleet is starting on the essential infrastructure work – the installation of roads and services – at Oakham that will permit construction of homes to commence later this year.

The independent living retirement village will be developed under Larkfleet's award-winning 'The Croft' brand.

Larkfleet's first development under The Croft brand at Bourne won a Silver Award in the keenly-contested Best Retirement Development category in the prestigious WhatHouse? Awards

in 2014. The following year The Croft at Baston was shortlisted in the same award and was named runner-up in the HouseBuilder Awards for best retirement housing.

In total, more than 800 high quality homes – including 'affordable' homes for local people – will eventually be constructed in several phases at Oakham Heights as part of a development programme running until around 2027.

In addition to new housing, the plans include offices, parks and open spaces, children's play areas, allotments and a new local centre. The plans also include a new hotel with an adjoining pub/restaurant, enhancements to the ecology of Barleythorpe Brook which runs through the site and improved transport links with new cycle, footpath and bus routes. The plans also include planting a substantial number of new trees.

Integral parts of the development will be a new permanent enhanced and enlarged home for the Rutland County Show and new improved facilities for the town's football, rugby and other clubs.

The Oakham Heights CCRC will provide a much-needed facility for the aging population of Rutland. It will also create around 90 jobs for local people.

New initiative from Larkfleet Homes to help tackle housing crisis

Lincolnshire-based builder and developer Larkfleet Homes has established Swift, a 'registered provider' of affordable housing. It will take homes on Larkfleet sites that are allocated for 'social housing' and manage them directly, finding tenants, collecting rents and maintaining the properties.

Karl Hick, CEO of Larkfleet Homes, said: "On many new housing developments we provide social housing – homes for rent to people on lower incomes or for sale through a number of different schemes to people who need help to get onto the 'housing ladder'.

"This social housing is usually provided through a housing association which buys the properties from us and then rents or sells them.



Social housing built by Larkfleet Homes. In future homes such as this could be owned and rented out by Swift, a new registered provider of social housing.

"Unfortunately, it is becoming increasingly difficult for housing associations to obtain the funds they need to buy new homes. We have therefore set up Swift which has access to private sector funding to take on this role directly."

Swift is regulated by government agency Homes England as a 'registered provider'. This means that it has had to pass strict tests to demonstrate its financial strength and its commitment to effective and responsible management and governance.

The majority of Swift's directors are independent of Larkfleet. They include Mick Leggett, former chief executive of housing association Cross Keys Homes; Chris Collier, former senior partner at accountancy firm Rawlinsons; and Paul Simmons, a former senior banker at Barclays.

Initially Swift will focus on providing affordable homes for rent but it could in future also offer homes for sale under 'shared equity' schemes – like many housing associations – where people buy part of the home with a mortgage and rent the rest until they can afford to purchase it.

Not all social housing provision on Larkfleet sites will be through Swift. The company also plans to continue working with other housing associations where they are able to take on new homes.

Karl Hick added: "We value the partnerships we have developed with several housing associations over the years and we are not aiming to compete with them. Swift will provide us with an additional option for ensuring we can provide much-needed housing for rent and assisted purchase."