

Housing Minister sees housing innovation in action



The Accord Group recently welcomed the Housing and Planning Minister to their timber frame homes factory to witness first-hand the benefits of offsite manufacturing.

Gavin Barwell MP toured the Accord Group's **LoCaL Homes** factory in Beechdale, Walsall and heard more about how the homes built by the Accord Group are better quality, insulated and can be delivered at a lower cost than traditional house-building. The innovative manufacture and construction process – all carried out in-house by the Accord Group – also addresses the skills shortage risks in the building trade and creates training and employment opportunities for local people.

Alan Yates, Executive Director of Regeneration for the Accord Group, said: *“The Minister’s visit was a great opportunity for us to show Government how we can help increase the supply of quality new homes and address the housing crisis. Our award-winning homes position us as a leader in this sector – we continue to drive down the cost of new homes.”*

Situated in Beechdale, LoCaL Homes is the off-site manufacturing arm of Midlands based Accord Group. LoCaL Homes (which stands for Low Carbon Living) offers closed timber panelised housing products forming part of its affordable, low carbon housing solution.

The factory opened in 2011, has created over 20 local jobs and made history by being the first timber factory opened by a housing association.

The Minister was also able to visit the £5m million flagship Innovation Way development, comprising of 40 high quality affordable homes for local people, all designed and manufactured at LoCaL Homes, just across the road from the development.

Gavin Barwell said:

“It is great to see that these fabulous homes were built using low carbon timber frames. Innovation Way is absolutely the right name for this development.”

“Using innovative approaches like offsite construction provides a huge opportunity to increase housing supply. The houses manufactured in the LoCal Homes factory are incredibly energy efficient and the build time is very short, making for very affordable housing.

“We need to see more innovation like this emulated across the sector.”

Innovation Way was part funded by the Homes and Communities Agency who contributed just over Â£880,000 in grant towards the development.

The Minister’s visit comes in a week when Lord Richard Best, Chair of the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications, said at the Accord Group Annual General meeting that that the Group “will go from strength to strength and it is important that you do so”.

Phase 2 of the Beechdale Innovation Way development will be released this Autumn and the site, to be completed early 2017, will see a further 80 new homes.
