



Springfield Meadows

One Planet Peer Review 2019

Project information

Project Name	Springfield Meadow
Project Type	Housing development
Developer	Ssassy property
Project contact	Russell Govan – Director, Sassy
Brief Description	<p>The site is in the Oxfordshire Village of Southmoor, close to the A420 that links Oxford and Swindon.</p> <p>The development proposal offers 16 plots for custom build options of 2, 3, 4 and 5 bed homes. There are 9 affordable homes, which are being designed and delivered to the same standards. The homes will front on to shared spaces that will include a wildflower meadow, orchard and pond.</p>
One Planet Integrator	Lewis Knight (Bioregional)
Peer Reviewer	Ben Gill (Bioregional)
Date of review	July 2019
Performance	Global Leader

Peer-Review Summary

Springfield Meadow's One Planet Action Plan has been awarded global leadership in implementing One Planet Living.

Highlights:

- The construction system will deliver highly energy efficient and healthy buildings using local labour and with an approximately 90% reduction in embodied carbon compared to a standard home in the UK. This will save in the region of 250 tonnes CO₂eq across the site
- All buildings will be zero carbon through elimination of the use of natural gas, onsite photovoltaics and initial connection to green power. This is being driven by the developer and is not a planning requirement
- The site is rural but with excellent bus connections, and the developer is putting in a huge range of services and incentives to enable homeowners to live without their own car – including a year's free bus pass and electric car share
- The developer is engaging with future tenants to provide a community that meets their needs and will establish a management company and incorporate the One Planet Action Plan into its initial remit. The company will then be handed over to residents
- 35% tenure blind affordable housing

Rational for decision

Reviewing this project has been a challenging task as so much of the project is exemplary, and yet many of the houses will have a double garage. Through conversation with the team and review of the detail of the project I am convinced that the developer is both doing everything it can on this particular site and pushing for wider change.

The garages are a requirement of the planning permission, and there is little room to challenge this, but the developer is compensating by:

- Offering free bus passes for one year, for a connection every 20 minutes to Oxford or Swindon
- Working to create a car club by providing two electric vehicles themselves and identifying a resident who can contribute a third vehicle
- Offering communal electric bikes and cycle repair station.



This also needs to be set in the context of the benefits the development brings:


- Close to zero carbon construction system
- Zero carbon operations – because the developers think it is the right approach not because of planning requirements
- Commitment to community and biodiversity.

From a simple carbon balance the carbon saving through the construction system is equivalent to about 20 years of the average UK household's vehicle-related carbon emissions.

Additionally Ssassy property are showing true leadership in the fight against climate change. The company is using Small Self-Administered Pensions, to fund its projects – or to put it more simply, the Directors are putting their money where their mouths are.

Outcome of Peer-Review

<p>Project Sponsor: Russell Govan – Ssassy Director</p> 	<p>I believe that Springfield Meadows is a global exemplar as it provides a wide range of residents with homes that are carbon neutral in construction and net zero energy in use, with an intelligent home system that will measure performance and provide valuable insight and information to the developer, contractor and residents.</p> <p>The community will be formed around a series of nature-rich shared spaces with ongoing monitoring, communication and events organised by the local Wildlife Trust, along with the provision of electric car and bike pools, and potential for the sharing of tools and other resources.</p> <p>Over thirty years' experience in HR proved to me how vital a sense of community is for people's well-being in the workplace – and this must be even more the case in their homelife. That is why the opportunity to really impact the culture and well-being of people at Springfield Meadows gets me so enthusiastic.</p>
<p>Project One Planet Integrator: Lewis Knight</p> 	<p>It has been incredibly rewarding working with Russell, Ian and Clive and the wider team at Ssassy Property and Greencore Construction over the past 12 months. The Springfield Meadows development site, despite its rural location is aiming to create a zero-carbon and low environmental impact housing schemes.</p> <p>As with previous Greencore Construction projects, the houses use an offsite, hempcrete build system and utilise local labour to create low-impact, high-performance and incredibly low energy homes. The development team has committed to net-zero carbon using a combination of PV panels and Air Source Heat Pumps and maximising biodiversity through the creation of orchards, wildflower meadows and building integrated wildlife features. The development is ideally located close to a frequent bus service to Oxford City Centre and the team have recognised that this is key strategy for reducing private car usage. Free bus passes will be provided to residents as well as investment in and promotion of a local car club.</p> <p>Naturally, there are areas that could be improved, notably around really encouraging and curating a culture of community, sustainability and resourcefulness among the residents and confirming the exact measure that will reduce residents reliance on private cars and towards more active transport solutions. However, the developer has shown a real commitment to sustainability and the One Planet Living framework. We are all really looking forward to watching the development build out and see how the residents are encouraged to live their own One Planet Living lifestyles.</p>

<p>Peer Reviewer: Benjamin Gill</p> 	<p>My initial reaction to reviewing Springfield Meadows was that it was strong from a building point of view, but from a community and sustainable lifestyles perspective there was more that could be done and many of the actions were vague. But the financing model necessitates this flexibility and the Directors have shown a complete commitment to making this an exemplar with career track records to back this up.</p> <p>When Ssassy delivers on its plans for Springfield Meadows, it will be near zero carbon in construction and operation, biodiversity positive, community focused with a range of sustainable transport options in a rural location. There is much work to be done in achieving this vision, and it will be important to deliver all aspects of the Action Plan but particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following through all sustainable transport commitments • Maximising resident engagement during the establishment of the community management company • Delivering the recommendations of the Wildlife Trust. <p>Given the commitment of the team, I am confident that they will deliver in these areas – and I look forward to following the progress in future progress reports.</p>
<p>Bioregional</p>	<p>We concur with the One Planet Living Integrator and peer reviewer that Kings Farm has effectively addressed all One Planet Living principles and is awarded recognition as a Global Leader 2019</p>

Peer Review

Scope and impact

Review	Overall review			
	Comment	Highlights	Opportunities	Rating 1-5
Impact	Small development and all major issues addressed - there has been real effort to address sustainable transport given the planning restrictions	Detailed consideration given to all aspects of building construction; embodied energy, energy efficiency and healthy materials	Further positive promotion of sustainable living - healthy eating, sharing economy etc	4
Ambition	Building design elements are highly ambitious	90% reduction in embodied energy. Targeting net zero carbon	Could embed rainwater harvesting more, e.g. for toilets or wider irrigation	4

	The approach to creating community - with shared surfaces, communal spaces and a management company should create a strong sense of community	Commitment to resident engagement in development of the community space and management company	Centralising car parking would create more shared space, enhance community and potentially reduce car use	
Transformation	This is a project being driven by local entrepreneurs, staking their own pensions on creating zero carbon communities	Construction system is developed by a partner company. Exemplary engagement with stakeholders	Engage with planning authorities to overcome barriers to sustainable rural communities - e.g. parking requirements	5
Reference	Track record and commitment of key directors is impressive	Leadership recognition strongly supported by range of partners		5

Action Plan

Implementation	Overall review			
	Comment	Highlights	Opportunities	Rating 1-5
Health and Happiness	Well addressed at the building level with a strong plan for community development	Healthy construction materials and building operation	The scale and low density of the site allows further community facilities	4
Equity and Local Economy	The construction system provides local employment opportunities and there is a high level of tenure blind affordable housing	Local materials and construction system	Promote fair trade in operation	4
		35% affordable houses - tenure blind		
Culture and Community	Strong development on operational actions and support for the wider community, there may have been further opportunities to incorporate local culture into the design	Community management company and measures proposed to create a culture of sustainability	Look to connect to and reflect local culture and heritage	3
Land and Nature	While the site is greenfield it is not of high biodiversity value and new habitats will be created	Proposals include pond, wildflower meadow and orchard	Ensure additional proposals are fully implemented	4
		Engagement with local Wildlife Trust underway		

Sustainable Water	Clear strategy to minimise water use	Increased stormwater run-off facilities	Could rainwater harvesting be used internally?	4
Local and Sustainable Food	Promotes food growing and local food, can also embrace sustainable food agenda	Growing spaces; gardens, community orchard and herb garden	Ensure that Community Handbook includes information on sustainable diets	4
		Providing growing advice	Ideally provide prepared growing beds	
Travel and Transport	Planning permission dictated garages, accepting the existing private car paradigm. But the project is embracing all opportunities to provide alternatives to private fossil fuel powered vehicles	Commitment to providing car share facilities (2 electric cars) and other share vehicles (electric bikes)	Without the planning restrictions eliminating garages with parking at the exterior of the site would provide community and transport benefits	3
		Support for public transport use	Encourage and incentivise residents to buy electric vehicles	
Materials and products	The construction system should deliver a 90% reduction in embodied carbon - a saving over about 250 tonnes CO ₂ eq across the site, sharing initiatives can be implemented in operation.	Low carbon construction material	Maximise initiatives to promote goods sharing in operation	5
		Healthy construction system and material		
Zero Waste	Clear plans to minimise waste and maximise value of recyclables	Construction system minimises waste	Ensure resident engagement to maximise use of recycling facilities and reduce waste	4
Zero carbon energy	Developer making a clear commitment to enabling zero carbon buildings that is best practice for a development of this size	All buildings have no gas and include significant amount of PV and initially use green electricity for any remaining power	Clarify PV capacity and likely energy balance and work with residents to maintain green power contracts	4