



Economic



Our approach

“By building lasting partnerships and leveraging our investments, we aim to create a positive economic impact for our local communities, both during development and in use.”

We promote innovation and entrepreneurship, investing in the areas where we work. We are continuously seeking opportunities to help local people into construction and upskill the existing workforce. We run work experience schemes with local schools and recruit apprentices and trainees from within our communities. We consider the longer-term economic impacts of our developments and advocate that all procurement decisions prioritise local businesses. Supporting local business puts money back into the local economy, driving prosperity for local people.

Within 100 miles of London, there is a shortage of quality homes from across all tenures and operating at the Master Developer scale provides the opportunity to help meet those needs. Although each site has a different composition, all sites will generate space for businesses to develop whether they be servicing the residential need like cafés or shops or standalone enterprises requiring incubator or much larger space. We understand the need for an effective mix of uses and work to ensure that these uses are mutually beneficial.

To support our approach within this capital, we consider the following objectives describe what we do and ensure we create lasting partnerships and increase economic value across our developments:

Harness local identity and entrepreneurship

The Master Developer role enables us to work with partners to shape the vision for a new community right at the start of the planning process. Through this process at Alconbury Weald, we identified that there was a shortage of office space for small and start-up companies and responded to this local need by building an award-winning incubator before anything else, which is now home to eight companies with 220 employees. This year we opened a second incubator, with both buildings providing flexible and inspiring space to help grow local companies. We have seen companies move from Incubator 1 to the larger space in Incubator 2, demonstrating how our approach to support a range of companies and organisations has helped them expand further on site. Cambridgeshire County Council's decision to move from its costly six-acre Shire Hall site in central Cambridge, to a smaller, more flexible purpose-built building alongside the Incubators at Alconbury, which will open in December 2020, further establishes Alconbury's civic/business hub status.

CASE STUDY

Anglian Water – co-operative relationships leading to wider savings

At Alconbury, initial discussions with Anglian Water identified the need to provide extensive off site works to deliver a suitable supply of clean water to the site. During the course of these discussions, we collectively identified an alternative and innovative approach to reinforce Anglian Water's wider existing network of clean water distribution by running a new strategic reinforcement main through our land from Huntingdon rather than along the existing adopted highway of Ermine Street through the Stukeleys, which saved the excavation of over 4km of public highway with the commensurate disruption that would have caused to both transport and general movement over a nine-month period. Undertaking the design and construction of the works in this manner not only positively corrected the potential environmental impact of the scheme but also contributed positively to the financial viability of the strategy for the overall development.



Sample metrics at Alconbury KP1:

100%

of directly procured contracts over £1 million from within a 25-mile radius

2,740m²

of flexible incubator floorspace provided to date, for up to 350 people to work for small and start-up businesses

£10.8m

committed through S106 for education and transport facilities

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career fairs have taken place to date, with over 500 students visiting per fair

Focus on long-term employment

Our developments actively seek to leverage our investment to create a positive economic impact, both during development and once in use. We have a dedicated full-time in-house lead who supports skills development across our sites and is actively engaged with a range of organisations such as EDGE, the local jobs and skills partnership which we helped establish, and iMET, the on-site advanced training centre at Alconbury for which we donated the land. iMET continues to build its unique role in delivering business-led courses and high level technical apprenticeships across the local area, focusing on advanced manufacturing and the built environment. With 16 apprentices enrolled across civil engineering, composites and digital courses, iMET will be expanding next year with the launch of mechatronics and machinist courses. Our business engagement and regular industry events continue to draw target sectors to Alconbury Weald and alongside EDGE ensures that skills remain a core part of the economic development strategy for the wider area. Furthermore, the Alconbury Weald Construction Training Hub, funded by a grant from the Construction Skills Fund and also run through EDGE, directly supports local people and target groups into construction training jobs. The project works with five of our housebuilder partners and contractors to engage local training partners, charities and organisations supporting people returning to work, as well as local schools and colleges. 225 learners have commenced training to date, with 136 learners now employment ready and seeking jobs.

We are also working alongside the West Midlands Combined Authority on a hub as part of the Houlton project.

Promote economic opportunities and social inclusion

The diverse range of housing, in terms of size, type and tenure across our sites, generates a range of opportunities for people getting on the housing ladder, moving up it or downsizing. We work with our housebuilders and affordable housing providers to ensure that the opportunities for government support, such as Help to Buy, are properly harnessed. Our planning contributions, however, include not only investment in affordable housing but also community facilities, transport infrastructure, schools and green spaces. During 2019, we contributed £15.5 million through our S106 planning obligations used for education and transport facilities.

Buy from the local community

As a Master Developer, it is our policy to procure services from the local economy first. To date, 100 per cent of contracts under our control have been located within a 25-mile radius of each site. This is monitored by our procurement team and it is part of our ethos to put money back into the local economy to help it thrive. We are also delighted that the cafés operating on site at Alconbury, Houlton, Priors Hall and Middlebeck are all run by local businesses which are starting up or expanding their operations and also make exceedingly good cakes.

CASE STUDY

Giving apprentices the EDGE

2019 has been another great year for the EDGE Jobs & Skills Brokerage which via local partnership has yet again demonstrated its drive to deliver Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) to local job seekers, support local businesses with their recruitment needs and raise career aspirations amongst local school and college students.

EDGE has now delivered IAG to over 774 local job seekers, many of whom have gone onto employment, volunteering or training and education as a result of our interventions. Furthermore, in terms of local schools and educational establishments, EDGE has been able to widen its programmes beyond Alconbury to incorporate both Wintringham and Waterbeach this year supporting and delivering meaningful engagements to over 700 students across seven secondary schools as well as driving the regional apprenticeship agenda by hosting Cambridge County Council's annual apprenticeship celebration at Alconbury Weald in March.

With the return of the EDGE Annual Careers Fair at Alconbury Weald in December, for students from seven local schools, hosting over 500 students for the day, EDGE is at the heart of helping all ages broaden their employment horizons.

