

## SOCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT 2025

### Our Social Mission

Our social mission is to enable community-supported, high quality and sustainable development to be delivered and to engage successfully with local communities along the way.

### Our Social Objectives

We strive to achieve our social mission by:

- Providing professional planning advice and support to local communities via their town and parish councils or neighbourhood forums
- Pricing our services to community clients at a significant discount to the market so they are affordable
- Helping our community clients to plan for development that will deliver new homes to meet local needs and timely supporting infrastructure in a way that will have a net positive sustainability impact

### Measuring Our Social Impact

We measure each year how well we are achieving our social impact through the following key impact indicators:

- The number of community-led projects we support
- The financial value (£) of the in-kind support we provide to community clients
- The % of plans and projects that are independently verified as having a net positive social, economic and environmental impact
- The number of new homes that are either allocated in plans we support or are approved by planning applications and orders we submit

#### 2025 Impact Data

46 community-led projects supported (42 in 2024)  
£58,000 in-kind support provided (£125,000 in 2024)  
6,090 homes planned/proposed (2,000 in 2024)  
2.5 days training delivered for local councils (N/A 2024)

## Narrative

The year marked a step change in our project portfolio with a significant ongoing shift from neighbourhood planning to other planning work for town and parish councils. Together with the closure of the Government's neighbourhood plan support programme in March, the effect has been to reduce the total financial value of our in-kind support for the sector. It now represents about 10% of our fee income, which is a more sustainable business position than in years gone by when it was more than one third.

However, this change has not undermined the ability for local council clients to want to plan to meet local housing needs. We launched our Settlement Spatial Plan product in the spring to offer those clients another means of planning for the future of their towns and villages. It has been very successful in those parts of the country where there remains uncertainty over future spatial and housing policy.

As a result, our projects planned for over 6,000 homes between them. Not all are adopted policy yet, as per previous years (to make sure we don't double count) and we will see if this is an outlier or part of a longer term trend.

Our overall number of projects increased as more local councils wanted our help to make representations on emerging Local Plans and major planning applications. Of those applications that were objected to as they were in conflict with a made neighbourhood plan, all six were dismissed at appeal, with our help in making the local council case.

In past years we have attempted to report the sustainability impact of our projects, but this has proven too difficult to audit and report in a meaningful way. We therefore no longer report that metric.

We have replaced it with a new metric relating to the time we invest in providing training and other learning opportunities for local councils to enable them to participate effectively in the planning system. As we only cover our costs and we do not run this as a profitable revenue stream we consider this also contributes to our social mission.

We have also refined our social objectives by removing the objective relating to enabling landowners and developers to deliver sustainable development projects. Since 2022 the number of projects for this type of client has declined as our business strategy pivoted to focus on developing the market and products for local councils.