

Social Housing Estate Regeneration Coventry City Council

"Regeneration of large social housing estates is a complex and challenging task that requires input and support from a variety of stakeholders over an extended period. It is only through harnessing the contribution and insight from all stakeholders that it is possible to deliver an outcome that can be supported by stakeholders and a successful scheme can be realised."

Bob Stubbs
Government & Infrastructure Advisory Director
Grant Thornton

Whitefriars Housing Association had acquired a 2,500 dwelling estate to the north of Coventry through a stock transfer from Coventry City Council. The estate was built in the 1960s and was primarily social housing with some homes purchased by tenants under right to buy provisions.

The estate was considered to be failing by the Council and Whitefriars and a New Deal for Communities (NDC) initiative had been established to address the social, economic and physical issues relating to the estate and surrounding area. The NDC, working with all stakeholders including the community, commissioned a master plan that led to a consensus that the optimum solution was the demolition of most of the existing estate and the development of a mixed tenure community.

Although the stakeholders had a shared vision they had not identified the process for the delivery or financing of the proposed scheme. Grant Thornton were engaged by the three public sector stakeholders to act as lead consultant and take the project through to implementation.

We developed a strategic delivery and financing plan that demonstrated that it would be possible to develop the estate as envisaged in the masterplan over a 15 year period without the need for public sector funding. The key to the approach was to harness the land value created from owner occupied housing developed at a higher density than the existing estate to cross fund new social rent homes.

Following the agreement of a strategic business model we led the procurement of a preferred developer who would work with the stakeholders over the full development period to realise the scheme. We then worked with the preferred developer and stakeholders to agree a detailed development agreement which would bind the parties together in a form of a joint venture.

The first phase of the scheme is now on site. It has had to be modified to reflect the economic downturn since 2008 but has secured financial support from the HCA which was facilitated through further analysis and structuring undertaken by Grant Thornton.

Key benefits

- **Project leadership** - providing a clear sense of direction and bringing an insight and challenge across numerous technical disciplines.
- **Coordination** - we engaged and managed a multi disciplinary team on behalf of the client and ensured consistent and coherent advice was provided. The client was not required to interpret a wide range of advice as this was synthesised for the client by Grant Thornton.
- **Partnership working** - we became embedded into the client team and worked on a seamless basis with the client in-house team.
- **Knowledge transfer** - we provided structured and unstructured knowledge transfer to both the client teams and community stakeholders that ensured that stakeholders could engage at key stages in the process.
- **Commercial insight** - our role required us to lead the commercial negotiations with the preferred developer and understand the parameters within which a commercial deal could be struck. This on occasions required modifications to stakeholders' and the preferred developer's ambitions which were not aligned with commercial reality or community aspirations.

Further information

For further information, please visit our website www.grant-thornton.co.uk, or contact:

Bob Stubbs
Director, Government & Infrastructure Advisory
T +44 (0)20 7728 2629
E bob.stubbs@uk.gt.com