

Agenda item 5

Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB) – Approval of the Hertfordshire Off Site Manufacturing/ Modern Methods of Construction Guide

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1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report updates on progress with supporting housing delivery in Hertfordshire specifically measures to increase the use of Off-Site Manufacturing/ Modern Methods of Construction (OSM/ MMC). The Growth Board has produced a guide for local planning authorities and developers and seeks the agreement of the Board for formal publication.

2 OSM/ MMC Guidance Documents and Factsheets

- 2.1 The Local Enterprise Partnership and Growth Board has been supporting a variety of initiatives aimed at increasing smart construction and use of OSM/MMC to assist increased housing delivery in Hertfordshire. One of the outputs of this work has been to develop a local guide intended to provide information to partners involved in housing delivery and to 'myth-bust' misconceptions about the use of this construction technology. The document consists of overall guidance, guidance for clients and ten associated factsheets. They are attached at Appendix 1.

3 Development Of Guidance/ OSM In Hertfordshire

- 3.1 OSM/ MMC guidance and factsheets have been developed by the Hertfordshire OSM Consortium guided by the Hertfordshire Growth Board and Hertfordshire LEP. The Group have met quarterly since inception and have worked collaboratively to produce these documents. The documents have also been discussed with Hertfordshire Planning Group and Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Property Partnership to seek input.
- 3.2 The importance of OSM/ MMC to the supply of housing in the county cannot be underestimated. Central Government have set out that 25% of all new development should utilise OSM/MMC to help reduce carbon emissions, provide sustainable flexible homes, deliver stock more quickly than conventional methods, and can help better develop sites with access issues. Currently in Hertfordshire there are several schemes in development specifically using OSM/MMC in Stevenage, Dacorum and Watford.
- 3.3 The use of OSM/ MMC can give a significantly positive contribution to the growth and housing acceleration agendas, driving green credentials in construction, assuring high quality dwellings, with higher sustainability standards delivering lower cost in use to residents.

- 3.4 West Herts College have commenced an apprenticeship scheme for OSM/MMC construction skills with 10 students due to start in September 2022. A purpose-built example of OSM/MMC has been installed in their reception area by Donaldson Timber Structures, formerly Stuart Milne Timber Systems who are sponsoring this skills training. Whilst not open to the public to view it is recognised that this is a large step towards delivering OSM/ MMC within Hertfordshire. Herts IQ, our Enterprise zone and Hertfordshire LEP are actively seeking to secure a Hertfordshire based OSM/ MMC provider.
- 3.5 To keep track of levels of development that are utilising OSM/MMC across Hertfordshire, the annual monitoring exercise carried out by Hertfordshire County Council will capture this and provide tangible reports which can be used to revise the documents and factsheets on an annual basis. The ongoing promotion of OSM/MMC will continue through the Hertfordshire Growth Board including workshops with local authorities and developer partners through Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Delivery Board.
- 3.6 The guidance and factsheets are intended to be dynamic documents that will be updated on a regular basis.

4 OSM/ MMC benefits

- 4.1 Utilising OSM/ MMC has multiple benefits. Whilst the costings are different to traditional build in that they are predominantly up-front, the speed of construction cannot be underestimated. OSM/ MMC gives quicker completions-typically 30%50% - leading to a faster return on investment. They provide a consistency of build quality across developments, lower defect issues to resolve, and give a significantly higher thermal performance reducing running costs for the occupier.
- 4.2 OSM/ MMC is a more sustainable form of construction. 50% of waste in the UK comes from construction. Using OSM/ MMC site waste can be virtually eliminated to less than 1%, any waste that does arise can be controlled and recycled. There are less deliveries to site, and workers on site reducing carbon emissions, reduced disruption to the locality and less dust/ noise arising from the development.
- 4.3 This method of construction is utilised across the world very successfully. There are numerous developments ongoing in England. It requires a break in tradition and educating finance, procurement and delivery teams but it is not an impossible task. The benefits are clear, and to enable Hertfordshire to deliver the homes it needs this technology will need to be embraced. Officers also want to encourage this technology to develop as part of the clean construction sector in the County.

5 Implications

- 5.1 There are no adverse legal, financial, equalities, environmental, sustainability or other implications arising from this report and its recommendations which support the ongoing work and priorities of the Growth Board.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Board approves the guidance and factsheets in Appendix 1 for formal publication on the HGB website and by partners and supports the ongoing work to increase familiarisation and use of this construction technology in Hertfordshire.