

OX Place

Homes for living Homes for life

Oxford needs homes. It's more than a campaign.
It's a statement of fact.

oxplace.co.uk



OX Place Homes for Oxford

Helen Horne
Managing Director, OX Place

“I’m extremely proud of the OX Place story so far and excited for what comes next. Over the coming decade, we will design and build 2,000 homes.”

Introduction from Helen Horne

Managing Director, OX Place

Oxford needs homes. It's more than a campaign. It's a statement of fact. As one of the most expensive places to live outside of London, we know that too many people who have grown up here have to move away to be able to afford their own homes. For too long, even so called "affordable housing" has been out of reach for too many.

In 2016, Oxford City Council established its own housing company to address the availability of quality, genuinely affordable homes in the City.

OX Place, formerly known as Oxford City Housing Ltd., is a private company, owned by Oxford City Council and responsible for building the homes local people need. Our profits are invested back into the city, into building more homes for people who need them and to provide essential services.



We build homes you can buy a percentage of, known as shared ownership homes. This scheme gives people the chance to get on to the property ladder by buying a share of a home and renting the rest. With shared ownership you can buy more shares of your home in future. Sometimes you will be able to own it outright.

And we build council-owned rented homes for those who need a safe, high-quality, affordable rental home in the city.

I'm extremely proud of the OX Place story so far and excited for what comes next. Over the coming decade, we will design and build over 2,000 homes, creating new communities and extending existing ones.

OX Place



Press play and hear
Helen's introduction

“We’re using renewable energy technology where we can to try and keep energy costs to a minimum.”

Sarah Knight, Head Of Development

Introduction from Kerry Kyriacou

Chair, OX Place

For homes to be available for the people of Oxford, they need to be future-proof. That means building homes to the highest building standards to making sure they don't lose precious heat. We're using renewable energy technology where we can to keep energy costs to a minimum.

Not only do these energy standards support low-cost living, they also support Oxford City Council's 2040 Net Zero Carbon ambitions.

We're extremely proud to be at the forefront of efficient, sustainable housing development in the UK. Our homes are sustainable by design. From the materials we use and the communities we create, to the economy we support and the families we house, everyone in Oxford can be proud to be part of OX place.



Press play and hear
Kerry's introduction



OX Place

Our values

Our values at OX Place are important to our business and our people and they inform the way we behave and make decisions. Our values are:

Excellence

Performing to the highest professional standards to improve the built environment and local communities by providing high quality, low-carbon homes. We use new ideas and innovations to balance the long term needs of our customers.

Integrity

Promoting an ethical, fair and inclusive approach to work in a mutually supportive, “no blame” culture where we speak up against unfairness, discrimination and dishonesty.

Accountability

Taking personal responsibility for our work and decisions, treating others as we wish to be treated and engaging with others with respect and courtesy.

Customer-focused

Communicating clearly to providing reliable, high-quality service as we understand, anticipate and meet the needs of the people we serve.

Positive culture

Taking collective responsibility and encouraging diversity and inclusivity to make working for OX Place an enjoyable and positive experience for all.



Excellence

We always seek to perform to the highest professional standards

We proactively seek improvement in our, and the company's, performance

We take pride in our work

We work as a team in a joined-up manner and are responsive and adaptable to change

We seek to enhance the built environment by providing high quality, low-carbon housing which is valued by and appropriate to the communities it serves

We seek to be innovative and resourceful – balancing the long term needs of our customers with implementing new ideas and innovations

Integrity

We are honest, lawful and fair in all our dealings

We promote a mutually supportive “no blame” culture

We speak up against unfairness, discrimination and dishonesty

We promote an ethical, fair, and inclusive approach to work and our working practices

Accountability

We take personal responsibility for our work and decisions

We are clear about what is expected of us and what we expect from others

We treat others in the way we would wish to be treated

We engage with our customers, colleagues and stakeholders with respect and courtesy

Customer-focused

We seek to understand, anticipate and meet the needs of our customers and stakeholders

We build constructive relationships with all our customers and stakeholders

We provide our customers and stakeholders with reliable, high-quality service

We are approachable, and seek to be the trusted resource of first-choice

We communicate clearly and regularly with our customers and stakeholders

Positive-culture

We promote a culture of collective responsibility for the company's work

We do not seek to undermine colleagues, and respect and acknowledge others' achievements

We seek to make the company stronger through encouraging diversity and inclusivity

We seek to make working for the company an enjoyable and positive experience for all

Development

Our approach

OX Place doesn't just develop and build properties. We build homes for life. Homes that you and your family can feel proud of.

It's no secret that Oxford has limited space available for development. Most of the space within the city boundaries is already taken, but we are working to bring forward more complicated brownfield sites.

Our ambition for Oxford is to make it a Net Zero City. It's a commitment that Oxford City Council made in 2018 and one it is not only deeply committed to, but is making great strides towards achieving.

It's no small task and needs all of us to work together to make it a reality. One of the ways we can do this is by creating homes and communities close to where people work, with good public transport and safe routes for walking and cycling.

The available land within the Oxford City boundary has already been allocated in the Oxford Local Plan. This plan sets out where homes can be built within the city to meet the future housing needs of Oxford people. We want to make sure those sites become OX Places, with high quality, genuinely affordable homes for local people.

OX Place doesn't just build houses. We build homes for life. Homes that you and your family live in and can feel proud of.



Press play and watch our advert for The Curve



Achieving our development ambitions

We aim to build more than 2,000 new homes for rent and sale in and around Oxford over the coming decade. These will include more than 1,100 council owned homes that will provide people who need a home with the genuinely affordable homes to rent our city needs.

In the last year, we have built 128 homes. Homes that now have people living in them. We've got around 200 homes with planning consent, which will be available for people to live in over the next few years.

These will include a mix of shared ownership and council rented homes.



Homes for Oxford people

The key to our developments is creating genuinely affordable homes for people who are otherwise priced out of Oxford, either to buy or to rent.

At Rose Hill, we have created 25 shared ownership homes and 18 council rented properties, which are now home to a mix of families including single parent households and single buyers.

At Cannon Court, we have created 12 homes for shared ownership and 14 homes for council rent, for couples and families. The same development, centred around a communal garden, is creating a new community within an established and attractive area of Oxford.

And this is just the beginning. Over the coming years we will be continuing in the creation of 2,000 genuinely affordable homes for people who need them most.



What our Customers say

Sophie* is a single mum to two girls. Her financial circumstances made living in Oxford financially out of reach. Sophie and her girls moved into a two bedroom apartment at The Oval, Rose Hill and said:

“Buying a home at The Oval through the shared ownership scheme has allowed me to provide a secure base for my girls in what was a tricky time.”



What our customers say

Paula* needed a home for herself and her son in Oxford. Paula had first tried to buy a home in Oxford in 1989, when she was a young teacher in the city. She kept the dream of living in Oxford alive for three decades before making it a reality by buying a shared ownership home at The Oval, Rose Hill.

Paula said:

“I am so overwhelmed with the high quality build, visionary design, charm and convenience of my flat, the fantastic attention to detail in everything, the friendliness of my neighbours and the truly special, diverse and fascinating character of Rose Hill in this unique part of Oxford.

My son and I are now gradually getting the flat ready. He can't believe that with full-fibre, he should be able to get even higher internet speeds here!

Words just aren't enough, really - but thank you again for helping us towards achieving a home in Oxford at last.”

A developer for Oxford

Because of the way we're set up, we don't work like traditional property developers. We're owned by Oxford City Council and want the best for our city and its people. We are invested in the future and will be around for many years to come to see the communities that we build, grow and thrive.

We need to make a profit – part of the purpose of OX Place is to generate funding for frontline services and develop further high-quality, genuinely affordable homes in the city.

We focus on improving brownfield sites. It isn't easy, but it protects our green belt. Because of the way we are set up, we can invest in high quality building materials and renewable energy and still provide homes that are genuinely affordable.

We're turning the national housebuilding narrative on its head. Elsewhere, we keep hearing that high quality, affordable homes aren't possible. At OX Place, we're proving that they are not only possible, but a reality for a growing number of people in Oxford.



Communities

Our approach

Strong communities are at the heart of a successful city. It is only by working together that we can achieve our shared goal of making Oxford a Net Zero city a reality. We all have a contribution to make and at OX Place, we're starting with the homes and the neighbourhoods we create.

Lots of people have a natural negative reaction to new development in their neighbourhood. They associate building in available space with losing something, rather than gaining something. And it's not an unreasonable reaction. For a long time, that's exactly what people could expect with traditional housing developers.

But that's where OX Place is different. Because we're invested in the city, we're invested in every development, every community and every neighbourhood.

Whether we're building 13 homes or 300, we want to make sure we add value. Not just by creating homes, but by investing in the resources that build communities.





Community energy

Community energy puts people at the heart of the energy system. It brings them together to generate energy across a number of properties that is then shared by the people who live in them.

Rose Hill Housing Rooftop solar – with the Low Carbon Hub

Ashhurst Way is an OX Place development in Rose Hill. The new block of 18 flats, built in 2021, has 107 solar panels, generating more than 35,000 kwh of clean energy every year. With the average flat using just under 3,000 kwh of electricity each year, the solar panels make a huge contribution to the energy needs of the homes and the people and families that live in them.

OX Place funded the panels as part of the development and then sold them on to the Low Carbon Hub as part of their community based financing arrangement. The clean electricity generated by the panels goes into Oxford City Council's supply to power communal areas such as hallway lighting. The rest is sold to the national grid to fund more community action on climate change.

At the same time, another block of flats was built at The Oval in Rose Hill with solar panels installed on the roof. Low Carbon Hub has a management agreement in place with Oxford City Council to maintain these panels, but they aren't community owned. The plan is to roll this out to another development, Cannon Court in Cutteslowe, shortly.

An innovation hot spot

The build

This ground breaking project resulted in the development of two new business models across the two sites. Working together with the Low Carbon Hub to maximise the solar panels, OX Place managed to decrease the emissions to an overall 62% from 2013 Building Regulations standards.

Energy innovation

The apartments are part of Project LEO's Smart and Fair Neighbourhood trials, looking at how a smart, locally balanced energy system can have benefits for all. In the Rose Hill flats the Low Carbon Hub is testing an innovative way for residents to benefit from the solar PV on the roof of their flats, without directly owning the panels themselves or directly receiving the energy they generate. This 'solar saver' offer is testing whether residents could save money on their energy bills by shifting their energy use to match times of peak generation – when the sun's shining!



Sustainability



Our approach

England's homes produce more carbon emissions every year than is produced by all of the country's cars. Building new homes in an area with Net Zero ambitions means thinking differently about house building.

We're creating genuinely sustainable, genuinely affordable homes for current and future generations.

Now this bit is complicated, but stay with us: Current house building regulations have minimum standards for the carbon impact of a new home. These regulations are about to get tougher, with new standards published in 2022.

At OX Place, we have been ahead of the eco-curve, already building to exemplar low carbon standards, with the aim of achieving an improvement of 40% to the 2022 Building Regulations. These are among the toughest building standards across a whole local authority area anywhere in the country. We're driving forward sustainable development at scale in a way that people can be really proud of.



Fabric first

So what does it mean? Well, in modern housebuilding language, it means we take a "fabric first" approach to designing and building our new homes. This means using high performing materials and adapting the principles of air tightness and ventilation to reduce the energy needed to heat and cool the home.

It means making sure each home loses as little heat as possible through windows, doors, the roof and even the walls. It means thinking about which way the homes face at the planning stage, to make the most of the natural daylight and the heat from the sun.

Off-site manufacture

We know Oxford is tight on space. So that means the developments we're working on are, by nature, tight for space with little room for the construction process. Having a lot of building vehicles on site makes it noisy and disruptive for local residents and risks damaging the air quality, which is what we want to move away from.

Traditional building materials, like bricks, cement and concrete are also very energy-intensive to produce. We're looking at reducing our use of these materials and manufacturing new homes offsite and bringing in high-quality, pre-fabricated units which will be lower carbon, faster to build, lower waste, and less disruptive to local communities.

Sustainable development framework

Our commitment to genuinely sustainable development is reinforced by the introduction of our Sustainable Development Framework.

It puts an eco-friendly approach at the heart of new developments and identifies construction partners who share our ambitions. It also commits us to building homes that are more environmentally friendly to build – using modern methods of construction and materials and more efficient to run.

Making our own energy

Traditionally, gas has been a cheaper form of energy for homes than electricity, but with a global move away from gas as a fossil fuel, using electricity to heat our homes has become a real must.

All our homes have their own energy generation. We're investing in solar panels and air source heat pumps to provide electricity, heating and hot water. Not only does this mean our homes are genuinely affordable to buy, but we are aiming for them to be more affordable to run with lower energy bills due to the fabric first approach and renewable energy.

Case study

Zero carbon bungalows

We have a development of eight bungalows at Marston and Headington. These bungalows are a pilot, a real opportunity to see how far we can push the boundaries of carbon reduction in new homes.

Each of the bungalows is built offsite, using sustainable materials, such as wood, where possible. Each one is tested for air tightness to make sure they aren't leaking precious heat, so the energy that's used stays in the property.

Each bungalow also has solar panels for electricity and an air source heat pump for heating and hot water.

The bungalows have been a perfect testing ground for our energy quality assurance service. Working in the same way as building control, our energy quality assessors visit the site regularly to make sure that what is on paper is becoming a reality in situ. They check every energy-related aspect of the build, making sure every element is built and finished exactly as described, reducing the likelihood of issues for residents.

We're continuing to work with the residents in these properties to better understand how people live in them and use energy.



The team at

OX Place



Press play and watch
our team video.

Kerry Kyriacou

Chair, OX Place

Kerry is a qualified architect who has worked in housing for almost three decades. He has had responsibility for assets, sustainability, commercial portfolios, facilities and build-to-rent. He's group director of development and assets in his day job, as well as being the Chair of OX Place.

Kerry says: "Here in Oxford we're doing something really special. We're working creatively to drive up housing standards for those who most need our help. We're transforming attitudes to and expectations of social housing, building incredibly high quality homes for the very people who will benefit most from properties that use less energy.

"I'm really excited to be a part of this transformation in Oxford and look forward to seeing our work ripple out across the rest of the country."



Helen Horne

Managing Director, OX Place

Helen has worked in many sectors, including retail, education, offices and healthcare, but has a passion for housing. Helen started her career as a Quantity Surveyor and over the last twenty years her professional career has predominantly been that of Employer's Agent. Working as a Consultant has allowed Helen to deliver schemes under various structures, operating models, and financial profiles, of both private sector businesses, charitable organisations, registered providers and local authorities.

Helen says: "Home is about more than where we go at the end of our day. It's an extension of who we are. Where we choose to live is part of our identity. For too long people from Oxford have been priced out of living here and we're taking a completely different approach to housing for the people of our city.

"Oxford is known around the world as a place of excellence and the work we're doing at OX Place supports and extends the city's reputation. The OX Place team is dedicated to developing the highest quality, most sustainable homes available at prices local people can afford, whether to rent from the Council or buy through shared ownership."





Senior Management Team

Michelle Chidgey

Head of Sales & Marketing, OX Place

As Head Of Sales & Marketing, Michelle's priority is making sure our homes are genuinely affordable for the people who need them. She's a passionate believer in the power of shared ownership to help people take their first step on the housing ladder.

Sarah Knight

Head of Development, OX Place

At OX Place, our Head Of Development, Sarah, makes sure we achieve our aims in every development: building more homes; providing a financial return and driving net zero. She has a laser focus on making sure we are adding value with every home we build.

David Watt

Strategic Finance Manager, OX Place

Without the money, the homes don't get built. David is our Strategic Finance Manager, making sure every OX Place development creates financial value that helps fund frontline services in Oxford, while remaining genuinely affordable for the people who live there.



Board Members

Rosemary Farrar

Non-Executive Director

Rosemary is passionate about the provision of good quality affordable housing and good customer service and is an experienced qualified Chartered Accountant with more than 35 years of senior management and Non-Executive Board experience which has largely been in the housing sector.

Jane Winfield

Board Member

Jane is currently the Head of Corporate Assets at Oxford City Council after spending many years in the private sector specialising in commercial property investment and development funding. She also sits on the Boards of Ox WED LLP (a joint venture between the Council and Nuffield college) and BOLLP (a JV between OCC and Grosvenor).

Stephen Gabriel

Executive Director,
Communities and People

As Executive Director for Communities and People, Stephen brings his vast experience of housing to help OX Place build high-quality, genuinely affordable homes. He's a committed board member for many other housing providers, bringing incredibly useful expertise.

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We do homes for all. Whether you want to rent, buy outright, or get a foot on the property ladder through shared ownership, we have a home for you.

