

LEVEL
INNOVATION IN HOUSING & PLANNING

Corporate Capability Statement



This document represents an overview of the capabilities, services and track record of Level Limited.

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Who are Levvel ?

Levvel are a UK based, specialist affordable housing consultancy. We provide the expert evidence and advocacy that enables our clients to conceive and establish viable, inclusive and sustainable affordable housing for local communities across the globe.

We have broad experience in developing and managing housing for low and middle income households and ensuring that a range of housing products are provided to satisfy housing need and demand across the whole housing continuum.

We advise private and public sector clients on delivery models for affordable housing planning and housing policy, carry out detailed financial modelling, organisational development, training and development management for clients in Europe, North America, Asia and the Middle East.

In addition to our substantial planning, development and project management backgrounds, Levvel have founded and advised on property management and public and privately funded affordable rented housing companies as well as consulting to other groups and assisting them to successfully establish housing companies.

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Stuart Woodward

Managing Director of Level

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Stuart holds an honours degree in Surveying and is a Chartered Surveyor with considerable experience of affordable housing development at a local and strategic level. Formerly Assistant Director of Development at a major housing association, Stuart was responsible for initiating, co-ordinating and managing delivery of a significant development programme through a wide range of urban regeneration and development projects.

Since forming Level in 1998, Stuart has focussed the team's efforts on innovative private sector methods of efficiently and effectively delivering a full range of affordable housing products. In addition, Stuart has sought to utilise the team's unique skills mix and experience in seeking consistency and transparency in national, regional and local housing and planning policy. In the last five years, Stuart has overseen the affordable housing negotiations for the delivery of over 40,000 affordable homes throughout the UK, including some of the largest regeneration schemes in Europe. He has also coordinated the response to the Governments ECO Town initiatives on behalf of three major developers.

Internationally, Stuart has worked on a project to deliver a world class housing strategy for a major city in the Middle East, establishing a housing and affordable housing policy in this rapidly growing economy. Stuart has spoken at international conferences in the Middle East, North America, Asia and Europe. Level were invited to be the RICS India's International Knowledge Partner at their Affordable Housing Conference in Delhi, '*Practical Solutions for Delivery of Affordable Housing*' which led to a paper of recommendations for the implementation of affordable housing programmes across India, which was presented to Government. Stuart was also invited to attend a Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN workshop on '*Implementing Responsible Governance of Tenure*'. The aim of the workshop was to develop voluntary guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land and other natural resources, and Stuart presented information on international affordable housing programmes.

- Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors
- Associate membership of the Association of Building Engineers
- BSc (Hons) Building Surveying – Reading University 1989-92



Levell is a leading multi-disciplinary UK-based housing consultancy, specialising in the planning and delivery of low to middle income housing since 1998. We have been responsible for the planning and delivery of over 40,000 affordable housing homes across the UK and are now sharing our knowledge and expertise with other countries.

Levell has extensive experience in housing research and economic viability assessments including district-wide viability studies and assessments of the deliverability of housing and planning policy. We have an excellent reputation in delivering outcomes that are innovative and robust and are currently advising on high profile developments that will provide enduring housing communities.

For over a decade we have led planning negotiations on some of the largest regeneration projects in Europe and are now utilising our knowledge of international best practice to:

- Analyse housing needs and market demand
- Housing finance
- Housing product design – affordability matching
- Formulate workable planning policies, including integrating existing policies
- Establish enduring housing strategies
- Assess housing viability and funding

Levell continually strive to do things better by challenging the status quo to bring about original and mutually advantageous solutions for housing authority, landowner and developer alike.

We help governments and developers at national regional and local level to deliver sale and rental housing programmes. Our associated housing company Kindle Homes www.kindlehomes.co.uk directly provides and manages privately funded affordable housing.

Levell is unique in that we focus on practical solutions. We think differently and find innovative solutions to maximise the delivery of housing. From a housing, planning and project management perspective, we ensure our clients can provide the balanced communities they seek.

We negotiate and help deliver both affordable and market housing on behalf of both the public and private sectors. We have wide experience of the development of both large scale strategic housing and mixed use developments and also smaller scale individual housing schemes, employing consultants with a range of academic and professional qualifications in land use planning, business management, building surveying, architecture, social policy and housing management, development and finance.



Levell has the benefit of staff who are chartered members and fellows of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Chartered Institute of Housing. Current and completed projects range in size from small retirement apartment blocks to some of the largest housing and regeneration developments in Europe, including Stratford (Olympic) City (4,500 homes), Brent Cross (8,000 homes) and Ebbsfleet (12,000 homes).

Increasingly, the public sector is turning to Levvel for advice. Over the past two years, we have undertaken 18 large scale projects to assess the impact of current and a range of potential future, economic conditions on the delivery of housing. These are used to inform strategic policy decisions regarding the delivery of market and affordable housing taking on board community and significant infrastructure requirements.

Our experience in developing policy and putting it into practice is a key skill set we offer our clients. We add real and immediate value to all of the projects in which we are involved. As such we have made representations at local and regional level on emerging housing and planning policy issues. These have helped to shape local, regional and national policy.

On the delivery side, we analyse the viability of projects, identify suitable affordable tenures and match these to the identified housing need, bring together alternative public and private funding streams.

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Advise on international housing programmes and relevance to Saudi Arabia

Level were employed by a leading developer to advise on international housing programmes and analyse the relevance of government interventions in the Saudi Arabian housing market.



Level were selected out of 16 international consultancies to analyse the available market data and consider the implications of a mass house building programme in Saudi Arabia. In particular, market segment analysis was conducted to determine appropriate housing products to satisfy housing need in the low to middle income groups.

Reorientation of the business plan to capitalise on the opportunities within the new programme and to mitigate risks associated with the new funding streams to provide the basis for a substantial PPP initiative.

May 2011

Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council

Affordable housing programmes and policy development



In 2009/10, Levvel in partnership with Canadian company Terra Housing Consultants developed a comprehensive middle income housing strategy for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. The project involved analyses of housing need and an international benchmarking exercise on best practice in delivery of low to middle income housing. Recommendations were then made to establish a government led housing programme, supported by a new planning policy framework.

The Middle Income Housing Strategy was the necessary response to address the need for affordable housing, targeted for expatriate workers, to attract and maintain an experienced expatriate workforce, in the longer term.

The Urban Planning Council selected Levvel and Terra as the Housing Specialist bringing a broad range of experience across both developed and developing countries, to identify and analyse housing strategies and to assist in the implementation of the preferred strategies.

We carried out a detailed market analysis to determine the extent and nature of housing need for middle income households who cannot access market housing. The analysis provided an evidence base to assist in determining the type of middle income housing required after taking into account existing housing projects.

In order to produce a world class and sustainable Middle Income Housing Strategy, a broad range of policy and intervention strategies were examined in the context of the Abu Dhabi political, commercial and financial framework and measured against the strategic objectives of Plan Abu Dhabi 2030.

Following a risk analysis, a Report was then submitted by Levvel/Terra detailing the alternative housing strategies that could be considered, accounting for the range of subsidy mechanisms that have been utilised throughout the world, and identifying best practice options suitable to Abu Dhabi.

The study recommendations were then taken forward into new affordable housing policy and practice within Abu Dhabi in July 2010.

The London Plan

Strategic Plan development - affordable housing

The London Plan is the UK's first Regional Spatial Strategy. It provides a suite of overarching policies on the London economy, transport, infrastructure and housing needs with the objectives of leading with exemplar policy and maintaining London's status as a "World City" It sets the benchmarks for delivery of affordable housing across the 32 London Borough's identifying the amount, type and tenure of affordable housing required for existing and newly arising housing need.



Level's detailed representations on behalf of the house-building industry assisted in shaping the policies within the Draft London Plan and provided practical advice in the drafting of the Supporting Supplementary Planning guidance. As a result of the London Plan being formally adopted as the Regional Strategic Strategy, the London Mayor has overseen a significant increase in the supply of affordable housing across the whole of London, taking advantage of increasing site values and incorporating a range of privately and publicly funded affordable housing products.

Manchester City Council Viability Study and Policy Advice

Regeneration strategy, viability study, policy advice and strategic site assessment

Manchester City Council invited tenders in December 2008 with the aim of assessing the viability of the policies contained within the Councils "Providing for Housing Choice" Local Development Document. The project brief also included an analysis of mechanisms to maximise the community benefit accruing from Council owned land, development of a template s106 agreement relating to affordable housing and the provision of a toolkit for development control purposes.

Level was successfully awarded the project, because of the company's experience in negotiating complex S106 agreements and its ability to link viability assessments to effective delivery mechanisms within the planning agreement.

The study was undertaken between March and November 2009. A wide ranging site selection process combined with numerous variables relating to affordable housing percentage and tenure and s106 contribution level meant that Level had to carry out over 500 financial appraisals. Each appraisal generated information on the economic viability of the assessment scheme to 2027.

The findings supported the Council's position with regard to affordable housing. Furthermore, the work carried out in assessing Council owned schemes facilitated innovative ways to ensure stalled developments progress and that the community benefits from this. The s106 template and Development Control Toolkit were developed in tandem with the Council's legal department and completed in early 2010.

Manchester City Council subsequently engaged Level on a project to support the SHLAA report with viability evidence that will enable them to demonstrate the housing trajectory to 2027. Firstly, an assessment of the relative viability of 15 specific strategic sites was carried out to infer at which point in the housing market cycle these schemes may become "viable". Secondly, all sites contained in the SHLAA long list of capacity sites were grouped into the classifications contained within the initial viability report to provide detail on delivery rates per year and to allow the Council to time development correctly.

Brent Cross - Cricklewood Regeneration Area

Policy response, community design and viability assessment

With a total cost of £4.5 billion the redevelopment of the area around the Brent Cross Shopping centre in Barnet is one of London's largest ever regeneration schemes.

The plan for a new town centre based around Brent Cross and Cricklewood will create 27,000 jobs, 7,500 new homes, 3 schools, new health facilities, high quality parks and open spaces and the investment of more than £400 million pounds in new transport infrastructure.

The proposal was jointly made by Hammerson and Standard Life, the owners of the Brent Cross shopping centre and Multiplex, a major international developer coordinating the complex land assembly required to deliver the development. Level was retained as the affordable housing advisor for the entire development.

Level's instructions were:

- To review local and national policy and to identify a range and mix of affordable housing which would meet the needs of local people and bridge the gap between the limited stock of social rented housing available locally and the open market and to estimate the receipt to the developer of such housing.
- To provide a financial framework for balancing the need for affordable housing against the other objectives for the regeneration.
- To provide an overall housing strategy, setting out the approach to housing and affordable housing in particular.
- To set out the principles for the relocation and re-housing of residents in the c.200 homes currently on the site.

Ebbsfleet, Kent

Community master planning, housing needs analysis and housing affordability gap analysis

From 2004 to 2010, Levvel were instructed by Land Securities in planning negotiations to deliver up to 30% affordable housing in a strategic scheme to provide over 15,000 homes in the Kent Thameside.

The key objective achieved was to ensure complex phased multi partner delivery of affordable housing was achieved within a workable and understandable S106 agreement framework. The Agreement secured certainty of the extent of the financial commitment required by the developer whilst retaining flexibility to reflect changing circumstances in relation to funding and housing need.

The Levvel team undertook a full review of the Council's affordable housing policies at the local and sub regional level, set within the context of existing and emerging national guidance and initiatives. The review ensured our client was fully informed about the Council's housing priorities and resources, before planning negotiations commenced. It also formed the basis of a Briefing Paper which provided the Council with evidence of the extent and nature of intermediate affordable housing need, enabling a more rounded and robust affordable housing policy. Heads of Terms of the proposed S106 Agreement were then negotiated and incorporated into an innovative cascade mechanism to overcome the uncertainties of future grant funding for affordable housing.

Levvel's review of policy and analysis of the housing market enabled planning negotiations to be successfully concluded. The Council resolved to approve up to 25% affordable housing providing a range and mix of housing types and tenures together with a further sum to be invested providing the equivalent of 5% affordable housing within the adjoining housing areas.

Levvel were then instructed to produce a high level strategy for engagement with RSL's over the duration of the project, which considered the options available to Land Securities to maximise the return on affordable housing, (either as an investment or as a capital receipt). This incorporated a review of the two S106 agreements for Ebbsfleet and Eastern Quarry to devise a management system which processes and monitors the delivery of affordable housing across the two District boundaries.

India RICS Conference November 2010

Advising government on affordable housing programmes

Level were named as the International Knowledge Partner by the RICS India, for their housing seminar, 'Practical Solutions for Delivery of Affordable Housing'. The seminar took place in New Delhi on 30th November 2010.

The conference was supported by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, responsible for providing innovative and creative solutions on affordable housing programmes.

This conference helped the audience to understand a range of issues including:

- The role of the planning policy framework in India in building affordable housing and in particular, State Slum-free Plan of Action.
- Implementation of the RAY Guidelines.
- Inclusionary Planning in Master Plans.
- Financing mechanisms - the use of land value capture, cross subsidy of market housing and government grants.
- Access to finance for EWS/LIG households (rental and ownership).
- Land Assembly difficulties on State and privately owned land.
- How the lessons learned from existing direct Government build programmes can assist in improving the roles between public and private sectors.
- Identifying land for new settlements and slum redevelopment, whilst maintaining vibrant and sustainable economic communities.
- Effective management and operation of affordable housing programmes including household identification, allocation and nomination processes.

Stuart Woodward, Managing Director for Level advised on, and chaired a workshop on the topic of 'Planning Policy and Housing Strategies', with references to international examples of successful and unsuccessful housing policies. The final panel discussion was televised by respected Indian business television channel NDTV Profit.

UN Food and Agriculture Organization Workshop March 2011

Advisory to voluntary guidelines to urban land development

Stuart Woodward, Managing Director of Level was invited to attend a Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations workshop at their headquarters in Rome. The three day workshop took place on 28 February to 2 March 2011.

The aim of the workshop, titled '*Implementing Responsible Governance of Tenure*' was to develop voluntary guidelines on responsible governance of tenure of land and other natural resources. Other invited attendees were from the biofuel industry, finance organisations as well as other housing specialists, including developers and professional bodies.

Stuart was invited to present the affordable housing perspective with examples illustrating how vital good land tenure is in creating a stable housing market, which in turn creates a stable economy.

Levvel advised at Saudi Arabia Social Housing Development Summit

Stuart Woodward, Managing Director of Levvel spoke at the Social Housing Development Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in October 2011.

In March 2011 the Saudi Arabian government announced additional funding of \$67 billion to construct residential housing, on top of previous funding already committed through the budget. Numerous social housing issues have already been identified, particularly the challenge of entering into the Saudi social housing market generating profitable margins.

The Social Housing Development Summit showed attendees how these obstacles will be addressed over the coming decade and put attending delegates at the forefront of shaping the social housing industry in Saudi Arabia.

Stuart spoke at the conference on the topic 'Analysing the key role of the government in supplying social housing', using international case studies which illustrated housing programmes which have succeeded and some which have not. In addition, he spoke at the round up session at the end of the conference where he emphasised the economical benefits of developing a mature affordable housing market within the existing housing market to ensure there is good access to housing for all income groups.

The Levvel team wish to continue helping the government and developers and contractors in Saudi Arabia in delivering successful affordable housing programmes.

Affordable Housing Workshop Programme for Developers and Housebuilders in the Middle East



Level has successfully completed an affordable housing workshop with a leading Saudi Arabia developer and are promoting this service to other housebuilders and developers, offering the opportunity to also benefit from our unique specialist housing services.

The objective of Level's bespoke affordable housing workshop is to expand the developer's understanding of the emerging

market sector of affordable housing and to examine the risks and opportunities provided by the Saudi government's intention to invest in 500,000 homes. The outcome of the workshop is to ensure the developer's business plan objectives and investor aspirations are achieved through the development of low to middle income housing.

In particular, when seeking support from government programmes, Level can help the developer consider the nature of housing demand in Saudi and match this with housing products to occupiers at an affordable price (purchase or rent). Level's experience from working with governments in the Middle East is that detailed questions will need answering as to the planning, development, construction and operation of affordable housing.

The workshops highlight all of the relevant factors that need to be addressed and the possible implications of the existing planning system, land ownership arrangements and legal structures.

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