

Assessing the social impact of build-to-rent developments on residents and local communities

A research proposal

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The Quality of Life Foundation is teaming up with the BPF and the UKAA to collaborate on research that will assess the social impact on residents and the local community across a number of build-to-rent developments. The build-to-rent sector has the potential capacity to deliver as many as 2 million homes¹ across the UK and has already demonstrated a more customer-centric approach than many others in residential real estate. This new research will:

- build the evidence base around the social impact of living in and around build-to-rent developments on residents and local communities;
- underline the social value of build-to-rent by providing a baseline for social value through outcomes defined by the Government's Green Book and understood through the Quality of Life Framework;
- provide better understanding of residents' lived experience, deepening trust with BTR communities and the local community;
- and provide evidence to influence policy for local and national government, as well as insights useful to development, stewardship and sales.

We are looking for six build-to-rent leaders to spearhead this research, for which they will receive insight into their own developments, as well as recognition as leaders in this space.

Methodology

- Desktop assessment, including socio-economic data, spatial data (amount of green space and local amenities) set against the Quality of Life Framework
- Site visits
- Digital and face-to-face engagement with residents, the local community and local stakeholders;
- Workshop to discuss overall results and broader recommendations
- Quality of Life report for BTR sector
- Policy report (from BPF)
- Health-and-wellbeing leadership panel (with UKAA)

¹ Savills

Cost

- £15K + £1.5 expenses + vat per developer.

The detailed version

The context

We are in a cost-of-living crisis, where lack of affordability threatens to undermine people's health and wellbeing. With squeezed local authority budgets, there is increased social responsibility on those who profit from developments, and a growing need to demonstrate the impact of their projects. And as the political landscape shifts, it is vital that the BTR sector can point to independent evidence to demonstrate the sector's contribution to the housing sector.

Why build-to-rent?

Success for the build-to-rent sector relies on a long-term vision for a place and its people. But despite a wealth of data from developers and their partners, we believe there is an opportunity for an in-depth, independent analysis of the social impact and social value outcomes of build-to-rent sector projects to support the benefits and mitigate the risks of developments. This is particularly important when talking to local authorities and the communities they serve, and in the shifting political landscape described above.

The methodology

Stage 1: Background research and baseline analysis

Inception meeting with all participants

We will organise an inception meeting with participating BTR developers and operators to understand priorities and agree methodology, programme and milestones. We use the Quality of Life Framework to organise conversations with residents, as a tracker for data, and to inform design and stewardship decisions. For this survey, we will use certain core questions we have developed, but add to them questions that are specific to creating a social value baseline for the BTR sector. At this stage we will also ensure that we have access to all the data and information we need to complete the work.

Focused desktop assessment

We will undertake a desktop review of selected sites, looking at the site and surrounding area and picking out distinctive qualities of each place relating to the Framework themes. We will do a quick review of the planning and delivery history of the site, provided this information is either easily available online or that you are able to provide us with it. Where appropriate, we will review existing HomeViews reports on the selected site(s).

Stage 2: Engagement preparation and delivery

Site visits

We will undertake individual site visits to better understand your site, focusing on the aspects of the place we have agreed to focus on in the engagement. This will help us to have better conversations with residents.

Engagement plan

We will develop and agree on an engagement plan for each site. This will include standardised questions that we plan to ask all residents and the local community.

Engagement

We will undertake an engagement process, which will include on-site survey data collection with residents and local people who use the site

Output: Engagement Summary Notes

We will write a brief note for each site detailing our findings. This will not be a comprehensive record of all the work, but a note setting out our main findings.

[Output (optional): Quality of Life Report

We will produce an interpretive Quality of Life report for individual sites covering the assessments undertaken, the engagement activities and findings, and recommendations for improvements to the existing site and future developments. Please note, this is in addition to the overall report and would cost an additional **£5,125.]**

Stage 4: Industry recommendations

Industry workshop

We will convene a working group of participant BTR developers and operators to discuss the overall results and develop a broader set of recommendations for both development and stewardship.

Final Output: Industry report

We will produce a final report bringing together an overall Quality of Life summary and recommendations for the BTR sector that demonstrates the value of BTR developments in delivering on health and wellbeing.

The Benefits

1. Influence policy

Using the data and analysis from the review, participants will be invited to work with others on recommendations in the sector. The BPF will showcase to local and central government the social impact of BTR in delivering for people, place, and wellbeing. The data gathered will also provide the sector with a baseline for social value that can be used to measure the success of BTR projects going forward.

2. Demonstrate leadership

The research helps you take the lead, demonstrating and deepening the social impact of what you do. Your involvement in the project will be acknowledged in the final report, and your teams involved in the process of assessment, including a combined workshop with the other organisations to look at recommendations for improving health and wellbeing outcomes in the BTR sector.

3. Improve understanding

The Quality of Life Framework acts as a structure for a conversation with residents and the local community, a data tracker to measure success and the creation of social value, and a design guide to aid future development. Ongoing analysis can be

used to improve your product delivery and the nuance of shifting trends in the market.

4. Provide more certainty at pre-planning

The Quality of Life Foundation is a charity committed to improving housing delivery throughout the development life-cycle. With the evidence we gather, we will be able to act as a critical friend at pre-planning on future Build-to-Rent developments - a social impact design review. We will ensure future schemes focus on long-term outcomes for residents and communities, and will work with developers to supplement planning submissions.

A growing evidence base

This project is part of a growing evidence base that we have been working on with residents, developers, housing associations, universities, local and national government, to raise people's quality of life across the housing industry. It includes literature reviews, qualitative and quantitative studies, policy reviews and roundtable reports, and details the effects of homes and neighbourhoods on people's quality of life.

Costs per developer *(all excl. VAT)*

In this section, we list a breakdown of the project costs for each development site assessed. These costs are calculated **per participating developer**. Any project costs shared between developers for this project have been denoted in the orange line items in the table below.

Work stage	Description	Total fee
Inception meeting	<i>A kick-off meeting to establish key contacts at each site and map out project</i>	£375
Survey design workshop	<i>One workshop to outline key questions to include for surveys, as well as including social value metrics into the evaluation approach</i>	£650
Online project meetings	<i>Bi-weekly project meetings throughout the project</i>	£1,000
Desktop research	<i>Research to establish the local context</i>	£1,500
Scoping visit	<i>Visit to site to establish local context and meet site leads</i>	£1,850
Developing survey questions	<i>Developing and finalising the list of survey questions to be used for this project</i>	£725
Preparing engagement materials	<i>Preparing communications, flyers, posters and other digital materials to promote the survey</i>	£500
Survey period	<i>Launch of a digital online survey (lasts for 3 months)</i>	£2,700
2 x days of face-to-face engagement	<i>2 face-to-face engagement visits to capture feedback from local community</i>	£1,900
Continuous analysis	<i>Reviewing and updating statistics on survey uptake and refining approach to improve uptake</i>	£1,000
Reporting and analysis	<i>Reviewing and analysing feedback to produce a final industry report with recommendations</i>	£2,750
	Project cost (per site)	£14,950
	Expenses	£1,500
	Total project fee	£16,450

Output (optional): Site-specific Quality of Life Report

Work stage	Description	Total fee
Site-specific report	<i>Reviewing and analysing site-specific feedback to produce an interpretive report for a specific site for more in-depth analysis, recommendations and use in corporate impact reporting.</i>	£5,125

WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT US

“To create and sustain healthy, happy, and successful places for us, our children, and grandchildren it is imperative that each corner of the real estate sector takes its wider obligations seriously.” **Melanie Leech, British Property Federation**

"As Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council, I recognise the important role that local authorities have in working with residents and communities, developers and housing associations to affect change in how homes and neighbourhoods are created and cared for. I would thoroughly recommend anyone getting involved in the Foundation's work, either through their research or services, and look forward to seeing the organisation take an ever more prominent role in the years to come."
Deborah Cadman OBE, Chief Executive Birmingham City Council

“I am so pleased the Quality of Life Foundation have launched their framework. Those who use it will be better able not just to “build units” but to create beautiful homes and places in which the heart can soar and the body feel secure.” **Nicholas Boys-Smith, Create Streets, Office for Place**

Contact

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