

Case Study - Hillreed Homes

Company Background

Hillreed Homes is a medium sized new homes developer based in Kent. It is a privately owned company which was founded in 1975 in Maidstone. By drawing on the experience gained in the past 27 years the company has become a market leader with a distinctive range of homes which are in harmony with the local vernacular. Good design and quality of construction are its hallmarks along with its flexible approach to all aspects of its industry. It is this special quality that has allowed Hillreed Homes to achieve success in today's climate of change.

Sustainability Initiatives

Hillreed Homes use 'meeting the needs of today without the compromising the ability for future generations to meet their own needs' as its definition of sustainability.

It is the company's aim, wherever it develops, to bring new life and vitality to an area with homes that not only meet the practical needs of its customers but that harmonise with the local environment and are a sound investment for the future. Hillreed Homes recognises that development is not just about building aesthetically pleasing homes but creating a sense of place.

Throughout the company there is a strong commitment to employing an imaginative response to location, design and environment. It also believes that providing the foundations from which a community can grow and flourish is essential to safe, secure and sustainable futures. It is very often the work behind the scenes that can be the difference between the success or failure of community integration, development and progress.

Hillreed Homes has an enthusiasm and commitment to environmental issues in the widest sense. It believes that innovation is good not for its own sake but because it can deliver added value. The company treats each new scheme as an opportunity to reassess its product range, environmental performance and sustainability. By taking this approach of continual reassessment and evaluation it can get the balance right and it is this distinctive offer that has contributed to Hillreed's success and marks it out as different.

Hillreed Homes does not believe in promoting untried or quirky products. It takes more of a menu driven approach and only commits to what it can deliver. Some of its latest initiatives are very simple but realistic, initiatives to which customers can easily relate.



Hillreed Homes staff at Head Office, Maidstone

Key Achievements

- Integrated recycling bins in kitchens.
- Recycled PVC water butts in gardens.
- Increased levels of roof insulation in properties.
- Innovative designs to encourage traffic calming.
- Incorporation of cycle paths in designs.
- Good on-site waste management and recycling to reduce waste streams.
- Building homes using sustainable construction materials where possible.
- Using locally sourced raw materials.
- Improving biodiversity.
- Offering purchaser options that minimise environmental impact.
- Raising employee and customer awareness as a key part of environmental policy.

Resource Efficiency

Hillreed Homes ensures good on-site waste management and recycling to reduce waste streams. The company builds its homes where possible using sustainable construction materials.

Hillreed is currently consulting with REMADE with regard to waste minimisation, recycling and reuse of materials.

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Energy Efficiency

The homes developed by Hillreed save water by using low flush toilets and all have showers. Customers are encouraged to use low energy light bulbs.

As part of Hillreed Homes environmental policy it tries to raise employee and customer awareness by providing important energy saving, water reduction and recycling tips via newsletter and completion packs.

Hillreed offers a range of purchaser options that minimise environmental impact.

Social Responsibility

Hillreed Homes has a strong policy towards social investment and it takes each scheme on its merits employing such initiatives as:

- Taking an active hands-on role liaising with as many local groups in an area as possible, which quickly helps to build an understanding of any fears or prejudices towards the development. Hillreed believes that an active role helps far more than just financial sponsorship.
- The company seeks out local representatives who are willing to come on a journey with Hillreed, forging links between existing communities and any new influx of social groups.
- Considering, educating and encouraging community engagement from day one at all levels from its staff through to its customers.
- Setting up Community Associations. These meet regularly and take responsibility for their own environment and infrastructure as well as the wider environment.
- Producing regular newsletters to keep new residents informed and up to date with all the latest on-site developments as well as the wider community.
- Developing community art projects. The company has carried out a number of community art projects and have found them to be extremely successful in helping to bring communities together. It opens up public areas for everyone to appreciate and encourages ownership. One such example is the 'Seed of Hope' at its Orchard Edge, Iwade development.



Unveiling of 'Seed of Hope' community art with sculptor, Will Glanfield, and local school children



Keymer four bedroom detached home

Supply Chain Management

Hillreed Homes buys from suppliers with sound environmental policies and it uses as many locally sourced materials as possible. This reduces the amount of traffic on the road as well as supporting local industry.

The company uses as many environmentally friendly products as possible and is continually looking at new products in the market place.

Transport

As part of Hillreed Homes' overall approach to sustainable development it considers and implements where possible:

- Encouragement to reduce dependency on the car and reduce speed limits through an innovative approach to design and layout.
- Incorporation of cycle paths and provision of road surfaces that are safe for combined traffic use to encourage cycling.
- Residents are made aware of and are encouraged through Residents Associations to use 'green' transport.
- Cycle racks are planned for the new development in Ashford.
- Staff are encouraged to use more energy efficient cars and some are considering LPG vehicles.

Planned Initiatives

Hillreed Homes is currently looking at new products and is researching the use of renewable energy in its new development in Kent.

Awards

- Winner of Kent Environment Business of the Year award for its 'outstanding contribution to the environment'.



Sustainable Business Awards for the South East 2003

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