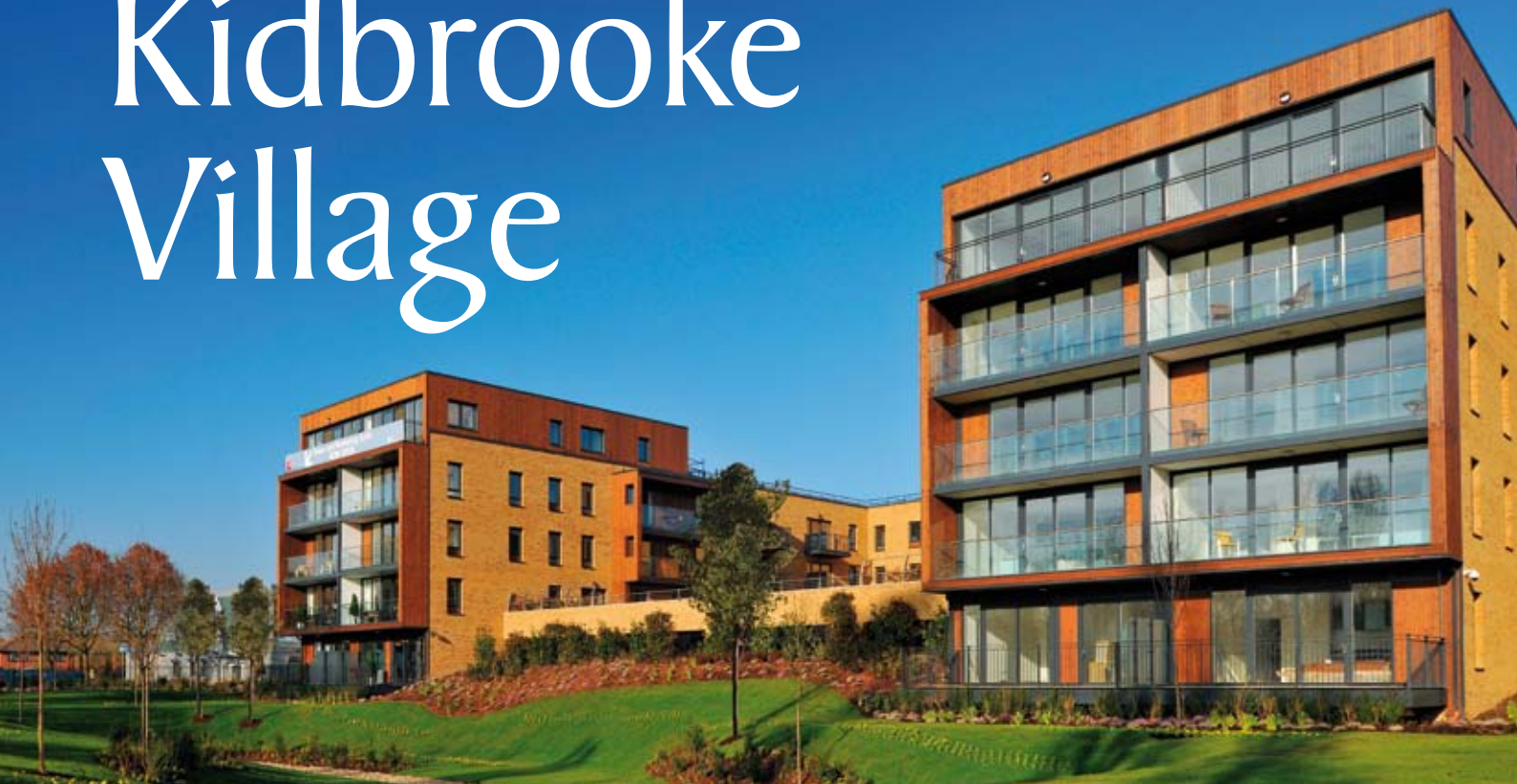


A place in the making

# Kidbrooke Village



Turn left out of Kidbrooke station and follow the road round towards Sutcliffe Park. For anyone that knew the Ferrier Estate, it is a strange experience. The concrete blocks have gone. The sense of empty isolation has vanished. In its place is the hum of construction.

Across the road are new modern apartment blocks – large windows, balconies and smart red brick – set in immaculate landscaping with lush grass, scarlet geraniums and other brightly coloured bedding plants. It feels almost manicured.

This is Kidbrooke Village, one of the most ambitious regeneration schemes in Europe. The masterplan will cost £1bn to deliver and transform 109 hectares of deprived south-east London, an area little smaller than Hyde Park, into a stunning modern community.

Over a period of 20 years, 4000 new homes will be delivered. But the result will be more than just housing – this is a place in the making. There will be a complete mix of tenures and facilities, carefully matching the needs of families, renters, first time buyers and older people to youth, school and health facilities, shops, offices and a new train station. Thirty five hectares of parkland and playing fields will run through the centre, creating an extraordinary place where people can live comfortably and sustainably together.

- 4,000 homes by 2028: already over 500 are complete, including 344 affordable, and another 300 started on site.
- Over 2,500 jobs created so far in construction; 34 apprenticeships; and 57 permanent local jobs.
- £36m invested in infrastructure so far, out of a projected total of £143m, helping to reclaim 11.3 hectares of brownfield land to date and create 35 hectares of parkland and sports pitches.
- 170 new, award-winning homes specifically designed as senior living for older people.
- A village centre, with retail, community, health and commercial facilities beside the new train station.





## Site plan with phases

Numbers refer to phases of the development

### Key:

- A** Sutcliffe Park
- B** Kidbrooke Station
- C** Village Square
- D** Senior Living
- E** Pedestrian and Cycle Links to Blackheath
- F** 'One Space' Village Hall
- G** New Park, Wetlands and Sports Pitches
- H** A2 Road – Links to O2 & Central London



## The story so far

But what does the creation of Kidbrooke Village tell you about the process of regeneration and renewal? Could the ideas and approach taken here inform the way we create new places nationwide?

The Ferrier Estate was built between 1968 and 1972. At the time, it was an award-winning development. Families paid a rent premium to move in. But by the 1980s it had become one of the most economically deprived areas in the country. Bad design and an enclosed inward-facing layout isolated it from neighbouring areas and all 1,906 of its homes were single tenure. It had become a poorly integrated community rife with social problems. The fact that only 164 homes were snapped up under the right-to-buy attests to this unpopularity.

In 2001, the Royal Borough of Greenwich consulted on its redevelopment, going out to tender in 2003. Berkeley was selected in early 2006, with the deal signed in 2007 to create a partnership between Berkeley, Greenwich Council and the HCA.

The masterplan for the scheme was designed by the architectural practice Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands. It received planning permission in March 2009. Demolition of some of the existing buildings on the Ferrier Estate began shortly after, so that construction of the first two phases could get started. Building of the first tranche of homes got underway in September 2009 thanks to £43 million of kick start funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. The HCA also provided another £65m grant for affordable homes.

By October 2012, 344 affordable homes had been built, the majority of which are occupied by residents from the Ferrier Estate. Altogether 2,517 new homes, together with over 170,000 square foot of commercial and community space, have now received detailed planning in the first four phases. Of this amount, over 800 homes are completed or in construction.

## So what makes Kidbrooke different?

### 1. Placemaking

#### Kidbrooke Village has:

- A clear sense of identity, through investment in excellent landscaping, clear and uniform architectural design, and planning for a thriving new commercial centre.
- A well-considered and widely consulted masterplan, allowing density to more than double while still only building on 35% of the site.
- Good transport links, both to other busy local centres and 15 minutes into London. Unlike some other suburban schemes, this is not located at the end of a railway line.
- Green infrastructure, with a new spine running down the centre with additional green areas or “fingers” coming into the streets to provide play areas, cooler spaces, and a sense of calm.
- A complete mixture of housing types and tenures, including self-contained apartments for older people in the heart of the development.

Kidbrooke has many of the key ingredients of an English suburb. But what really marks this development out is the investment in high quality landscaping. The value of the scheme is created by the spaces between buildings – not just by the buildings themselves.

Careful design has also enabled the density to be more than doubled while still only building on 35% of the land. This makes the scheme much higher density than the classic English suburb. Hampstead Garden suburb, for example, is 10–20 dwellings per hectare. Kidbrooke is around 40 if you include the park and 130 dwellings per hectare if you don't.

The masterplan proposes four distinct neighbourhoods, with links to surrounding communities. But there will still be uniformity and an overall feel that gives this place its own identity, characterised by high quality design and beautiful landscaping.





The predominant building material is brick, typically used in the suburbs, rather than rendered façades, a choice for more inner City developments. The designers specified a limited pallet of materials and planting for the landscape. Again this is intended to create an overarching identity and ensure that, like a classic Victorian or 1930s suburb, Kidbrooke Village does not become an architectural zoo.

There is a balanced mixture of housing – so that roughly a third will be affordable; a third for private sale; and about a third private rent. The good transport links, including bus links and rail services, which take about 15 minutes to London Bridge, make the area attractive to younger or more transient professionals who want to rent for shorter periods.

But this is certainly not designed to be a dormitory for the City. The centres of Blackheath and Eltham, Canary Wharf and Greenwich are close by, while the shops and commercial spaces in the new central hub will provide local employment and fuel growth.

In a radical departure from other British developments, the central hub takes a leaf out of practices in mainland Europe and provides 170 new homes specifically designed for senior living. The idea is that the older residents can live closer to amenities and are therefore better able to remain active. At the same time, because they are at home more during the day, they bring more life and spirit to the centre during working hours.

‘Kidbrooke Village has many of the key ingredients of an English suburb. The value of the scheme is created by the spaces between buildings.’

## 2. Partnership

### Kidbrooke Village has:

- An open relationship between the different partners – Berkeley; the Royal Borough of Greenwich; and the GLA
- Continuity of personnel through the key stages of the development
- Regular meetings as well as design and energy review panels enshrined in section 106 agreements
- A communications group across all the partners to debate and coordinate messages and promotion of the scheme

With a scheme of this size and complexity, it is essential that all those involved are pulling in the same direction. As you’d expect, the financial arrangements are underpinned by legal contracts. But relationships around the table are also underscored by a remarkable degree of openness, trust and understanding of each other’s needs.

All the partners engage in problem solving together. For example, Berkeley re-phased the scheme early on to bring forward more affordable housing at the request of the Royal Borough of Greenwich. This allowed Ferrier families to be re-housed in the new homes as soon as possible. There is also a clear intention for all the partners to be realistic and stay on message, driven by the communications group.

The result is a build rate of 800 over 3 years – almost double the normal delivery of 150 homes per annum on most housing developments.

Community involvement has been taken forward through a programme of workshops, seminars, engagement with school children, health providers and the police. In addition, alongside the overall partnership board, there



are separate panels covering design review and energy, set out in the section 106 agreements. This provides a degree of continuity of purpose and personnel rarely found in many other regeneration programmes.

### 3. Infrastructure

The major challenge to the development of Kidbrooke Village is the initial work and spend required to remove the old Ferrier Estate. This involves stripping the buildings of asbestos and any other hazardous materials, demolition of 1,900 existing homes, digging out basement car parks, the removal of foundations, disconnection of services and utilities and groundworks to allow future construction.

In total, the regeneration programme will require £143m of infrastructure investments. These include:

- £28m on site preparation
- £23m on sustainability and combined heat & power
- £18m on roads & highways
- £9m on soft landscaping
- £8m on utilities & diversions

It is often these infrastructure costs that prevent large pieces of land from being redeveloped, despite the acute shortage of housing. In that context, Kidbrooke Village is an example of how complex and large brownfield regeneration projects can actually be delivered.

The majority of the site preparation work is required during the early years of this kind of regeneration, not least to establish a decisive break with the past. At Kidbrooke, everyone recognised the need for infrastructure investment and the HCA team (now part of the GLA) made an initial grant of £43m. This allowed the project to progress fast and has meant that by summer 2013, only a year after the departure of the last resident, all of the estate will have been demolished and made ready for redevelopment.



However, looking ahead, the scope for additional grants from either national or London government is significantly reduced and future work on roads, landscaping and heating networks is still essential. So if the public sector cannot make these investments, something else has to give.

At Kidbrooke, negotiations have centred round future overage. Berkeley has agreed to take the initial risk and invest upfront in future infrastructure while the public sector partners have chosen to limit their future returns and allow the developer to take an increased margin in the medium term.

In effect, Greenwich Council and the GLA have revised their estimates of future returns at the end of the scheme, and Berkeley will now take the risk of forward funding the scheme in return for a greater share of the subsequent profit.





## How to create a sustainable place

Kidbrooke Village is being built to high levels of energy efficiency – code level 3 homes for the first phase, and higher code level 4 for phases three and four. There will be an energy centre in the middle and extensive use of renewables. But it is no cheer leader for eco-bling.

The contrast with Hammarby, on the edge of Stockholm, is instructive. Kidbrooke and Hammarby have a similar scale and feel but there are key differences. Hammarby is more advanced ecologically, with a centralised waste and recycling facility built into the housing. Waste is then automatically recycled to generate energy on site.

Kidbrooke, by comparison, focuses on helping you lead a healthy lifestyle. It has higher quality design and landscaping, and higher quality interiors. The masterplan makes efficient use of space, developing only 35% of the available land and leaving a 'spine' of parkland. This supports outdoor activities: a running track at Sutcliffe Park, new sports pitches, ecology and wildlife and SUDS drainage swales. In this respect the emphasis on communal land and gardens, rather than larger individual gardens, makes it more similar to the award-winning housing scheme Accordia in Cambridge.

Landscaped corridors form the principle cycle and pedestrian routes that extend into the established neighbourhoods of Eltham and Blackheath. The new park includes ecology and wetland zones. And in a further move to underscore a peaceful green environment, the road running through the development is being resurfaced and calmed, so that it too has the feel of, say, the road running through Richmond Park in west London, and an expectation that drivers will respond accordingly.

The idea of social sustainability is also embedded in the programme. A redundant youth centre has been brought back into use, refurbished by contractors working on site. This creates a great new space for local groups to meet, and in particular, young people and their families. The nearby schools of Wingfield and Holy Family are also frequently involved through poster competitions, a contribution to events, and a children's safety week.

Berkeley itself is an active part of the emerging community, meeting regularly with local businesses and interest groups. The use of local skills is promoted through a partnership with Greenwich Local Labour and Business, and all phases of development are signed up to the Considerate Contractors Scheme.











## One step ahead

**K**idbrooke Village is a bold development – audacious even. As you walk around the area today, that leap of faith taken by Berkeley, the GLA and the Royal Borough of Greenwich is quickly taking shape. The old Ferrier Estate is morphing into a very different kind of place.

This development exemplifies many of the core ingredients of successful place-making: vision, tenacity, collaboration and design. Regeneration is not an easy proposition in any economic climate. But don't imagine Kidbrooke is unique, despite its scale. There are many places in need of renewal and the ideas and attitude which drive development on this site offer practical inspiration for anyone contending with similar challenges, anywhere.

The key lessons are:

We can deliver growth in jobs and homes and create great places.

Partnerships unlock delivery.

Infrastructure needs public investment or a fresh approach to profit sharing.