

## Larkfleet announces coast-to-coast expansion

**Larkfleet Group has announced the establishment of two new subsidiaries which will extend its operations across England, from Cornwall in the west to Norfolk in the east.**

Larkfleet Homes South West Ltd will develop primarily in Devon, Cornwall and parts of Somerset where a number of sites have been identified. Larkfleet Homes Suffolk and Norfolk Ltd will develop homes in England's eastern-most counties – an option for a 1,000-home site is expected to be signed shortly.

The group builds both for the open market and for social landlords, delivering homes ranging from apartments and two-bedroom 'starter homes' through to luxury executive houses. It has particular expertise in creating 'retirement living' communities for those aged over 55.

Its current projects and developments range from single plots to urban extensions of more than 1,000 homes, together with mixed-use and commercial

developments ranging from 3 to 30 acres in size. It has an established and growing land bank valued at £56.5 million.

Larkfleet Group CEO Karl Hick said: "We have a strong record in creating high quality homes and communities while also generating good returns on investments, solid future cash flows and value.

**"We specialise in building high-quality, energy-efficient housing..."**

"We specialise in building high-quality, energy-efficient housing and continually invest in research and the development of innovative new sustainable building designs, materials and construction methods.

"We believe the time is now right for a substantial increase in our operations to take advantage of current market conditions.

"As with our existing Larkfleet Homes and Allison Homes operations, however, our business model is based on local companies with strong local management teams who know their geographical area of operation well and can provide a real focus on

quality to meet customers' requirements.

"Larkfleet Homes South West Ltd and Larkfleet Homes Suffolk and Norfolk Ltd will provide that local focus while extending the group's operations from the furthest west you can travel in England to the furthest east."



## Larkfleet CEO wins two awards at Institute of Directors Awards

Fourteen East Midlands directors from Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire were named as leaders in their business fields at the Institute of Directors' (IoD) East Midlands Director of the Year Awards 2015, held on Tuesday 16 June.

Heading the awards were four category winners from Lincolnshire, two from Derbyshire and one each from Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire.

Karl Hick, CEO of Larkfleet Group construction company, was named overall East Midlands Director of the Year and also won the Large Company category.



**The judges said the following of Karl:**

**"A property business within a group experiencing serious financial problems was acquired in the early 1990's, and transformed, in 8 years, from zero turnover to £22m. It was subsequently sold for a very significant sum. This led to involvement in the waste sector and a return to the property sector.**

- The current group now includes a sustainable house builder, a major developer of sustainable energy projects, an investor in sustainability focused research & development projects and a provider of energy efficiency improvements for new and existing buildings. Group turnover is almost £140m.
- To ensure that the business stays ahead of its competitors, this director set up a R&D team to lead the development of new technologies in housing, waste and energy, wind and solar power. Some of the research has the potential to revolutionise the future of the construction industry.

- This director has always had a 'hands on' management style but, as the business grew, recognised the need to develop an excellent management team to help lead the business forward. There is also a strong track record of investing in people, including apprentices and more recently graduate trainees to recruit train and retain future senior management talent.
- This director has demonstrated a commitment to providing work experience opportunities for young people, employing local people, placing contracts with local suppliers and supporting local schools.
- There is a very strong emphasis on environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility.
- Individual companies within the group are: Larkfleet Homes, Allison Homes, Kestrel Timber Frame, Lark Energy, Deepings Building & Plumbing Supplies and Falcon Waste. A total of 150 people are employed."



## Lark Energy re-organises to give focus

Lark Energy has re-organised into four separate divisions to enable a better focus on meeting the needs of different clients. We were originally established to supply site-wide energy solutions for large housing and mixed-use developments. We now supply our expertise to a wide range of clients, offering both renewable – particularly solar and biomass – and conventional energy technologies.

We obtain funding and design, build, construct and maintain commercial and utility scale energy projects for clients ranging from SMEs to blue chip corporate clients and global investors.

As well as supporting new-build housing and commercial developments we can assist with retrofitting solar PV for social and public sector housing landlords. We also help the owners or tenants of large commercial buildings with roof top PV, biomass and other energy technologies.

We have a particularly strong track record in the development of large solar farms where we work with local communities and landowners to bring forward superior schemes with excellent prospects for obtaining planning consent.

High quality engineering is at the heart of what we do. All of our schemes – solar, other renewable and conventional – optimise performance using state-of-the-art energy technology.

Our senior management team has extensive experience in the industry. We

work to the highest quality standards and health and safety management.

We manage each project either independently from within one of the divisions or with an integrated team spanning two or more of them according to the needs of the client.



### Lark Energy Commercial –

Plans, funds and installs commercial scale roof-top PV systems.

### Lark Energy Construction –

Works with funding partners to provide self-funded and externally funded projects, builds solar farms and biomass plants and fits PV to social housing.

### Lark Energy Development –

Works with landowners to develop renewable energy projects, providing self-funded and externally-funded solutions.

### Lark Energy Services –

Operates and maintains energy plants, including solar farms.

## New home building in Peterborough highest in 25 years

**Over 1,300 homes have been built in the city of Peterborough over the past year – the highest figure in more than 25 years.**

There was a net gain of 1,342 homes in Peterborough, an increase of 55 per cent on the previous 12 months.

Of the homes built, 507 properties, or four in ten were affordable housing. This is a significant increase from 143 affordable homes built in 2013/14.

Councillor Peter Hiller, cabinet member for growth, planning, housing and economic development, said: "There is huge demand for housing in Peterborough. We are the UK's second fastest growing city with a thriving economy, creating thousands of new jobs every year. We need to build more homes to keep up with demand. Over the past 12

months we have seen housing developers start and expand projects across the city.

"We understand there needs to be more high quality homes that residents can afford and so the sharp increase in the number of affordable properties built is very pleasing.

"The high levels of house building need to continue and we are confident this will be achieved through developments like the former hospital site and the continuing expansion of Hampton."

Local house builders like Larkfleet Homes have been instrumental in the growth in new homes around Peterborough. Larkfleet has a number of developments including Hempsted Park in Peterborough, Parson's Prospect in Eye and Whittlesey Green in Whittlesey.

## Over 55s drive market for semis

Recent research from the Legal and General insurance company identified 5.3 million under-occupied homes in the UK and notes that there are 3.3 million over 55s looking to downsize.

Paul Stanworth, managing director of Legal & General Capital, said: "The Last Time Buyer market is an overlooked sector of the residential market. Given its scale and the receptiveness of this demographic to the possibilities of downsizing, it presents a powerful tool for addressing the housing supply issues this country faces.

"By failing to target this key demographic with good value, purpose-built housing for those aged 55+, Government and industry alike are missing an important trick."

The UK suffers from a chronic under supply of age-specific housing. Demos, among others, has noted that only 2 per cent of the UK's housing stock is retirement property, housing just one per cent of the 14 million Britons in their 60s (compared with around 17 per cent living in retirement accommodation in the US). All too often, this leads to older people living in homes that do not suit their needs, with moves often forced by circumstance rather than being a positive choice.

Larkfleet Homes are addressing this problem. As well as semi-detached homes in a number of its developments Larkfleet also has age-specific developments at The Croft in Bourne for example which are specifically designed for the over 55s.

The number of 'last time buyers' looking to downsize could explain the recent uplift in the market for semi-detached properties.

According to Land Registry figures the price of semi-detached properties rose faster than any other property type in England to the end of April.

The value of semis rose 5.6 per cent against 5.4 per cent for flats and 5.1 for detached houses.

The average value of a property was £179,817 nationally. Outside London the Eastern region led the way where prices jumped 7.8 per cent.

