

Miller claim top partnership prize

Scooping the Best Partnership with a Client or Housebuilder accolade at the LABC National Built in Quality Awards, the working relationship between Miller Homes' North East division and Sunderland City Council is an excellent example of the effectiveness of an economically advantageous partnership

Miller Homes' North East division has been involved in a formal working partnership with Sunderland City Council's Building Control department since 2003, and have worked together on private residential

housing projects covering all areas of the North East of England including Stockton, Shiremoor, Blyth, Gateshead, and – of course – Sunderland. Sunderland Building Control are keen supporters of the Partner Authority Scheme which is a nationally approved scheme introduced by LABC.

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The work carried out with Miller Homes North East Ltd is an excellent example of the way the Partnership Scheme should work. Now entering the fifth year of this successful working relationship, the Building Control team at the council has worked with Miller at the development stage of 27 housing schemes to date – delivering a total of 1748 housing units over this period.

It must be stressed that partnerships of this kind are not entered into lightly by Sunderland City Council, and Miller Homes North East is one of only 14 commercial partnerships that they are involved with at present. Indeed, the agreement with Miller Homes North East was the very first commercial partnership with a major homebuilder undertaken by the council.

With both parties keen to deliver what they promise, great relationships with staff within both organisations have cascaded down from director level and now cover all levels of both companies.

The Sidings development in South Hylton, Sunderland, was one of the developments the teams worked on together. Whilst working on the Building Regulation application process for this development in 2006, both Miller Homes and the council's Building Control team set about dealing with the technical challenges of this brownfield site.

The relationship at site level between the organisations was excellent, with build quality and attention to detail being vital and remaining both parties' overall goal.

The success of work





◀ undertaken here was rewarded when the development won the 'Best Housing Project' award at Sunderland City Council's Building Control Quality Awards (BCQA) in 2006, and has been further strengthened by winning the 'Best Partnership' award at the BCQA in 2008.

The work of the council's

Building Control department is held in high esteem by Miller Homes North East and vice versa. Consequently, the council regularly gives technical talks to the Miller team, keeping them abreast of relevant legislative changes. Working in an advisory capacity, these talks have built mutual respect and faith in the knowledge of both parties.

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Miller is also an active supporter of council initiatives and events, and members of the Miller team regularly attend the council's Customer Forums which take place every six months and are led by the Building Control department.

Furthermore, the strong rapport established between Miller Homes North East and staff from the council's Building Control department has led to social activities being organised, further strengthening the trusted working relationship now in place.

As a thriving example of a local authority working in unity with a major homebuilder towards the same, mutually beneficial goal, the relationship between Miller Homes North East and Sunderland City Council's Building Control department continues to develop to mutual benefit and ultimately to the benefit of homeowners in Sunderland and across the North East.

