Case Study – Meridian Waterside, Southampton

Meridian Waterside is a key priority site in Southampton City Council’s major regeneration programme. The most recent use for the site was as the former Meridian TV studios. It has a waterside location fronting the River Itchen and the design required careful planning with extensive consultation with the city council. The plans for the development include infrastructure works that contribute to part of a new flood defence system the city is building along the waterfront. The development will deliver 351 homes and retail space.

It is the first site on which we will self-deliver the residential and commercial units on the development. Previously, we would have worked with a principal contractor, who would take on the responsibility of construction for the entire project. We are taking on the role of managing the construction on this site, which has meant recruiting people with sound expertise in this area, developing policies and procedures and establishing a supply chain of subcontractors. The team of Inland Homes employees on site consists of a project manager, who oversees a site manager, a technical manager and a site surveyor. We are building up a capability to self-deliver on other sites too.

Self-delivery allows Inland Homes to have more control over projects. This means that we can forecast more accurately when completions will take place and be more reactive to the market environment. The overall project will be more cost-effective as we are removing a principal contractor’s profit margin and overheads from the cost of the construction. A disadvantage of self-
delivery is that Inland Homes is taking on the risk that would have previously been passed onto the principal contractor. To manage this, we have allowed in an element of contingency in the budget for potential risks.

Self-delivery means there is more joined-up thinking within the business. We can ensure that the approach to construction reflects the needs of our sales and marketing team. The recruitment of people with experienced construction expertise means that the designs developed as part of the planning process will be challenged from a construction perspective, which makes sure that the development works both aesthetically and practically. With the build team now in-house, the sales team are also better supported. It is far easier for the sales team to liaise with an internal construction team on various minute details relating to developments under construction than with a principal contractor.

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351 homes and retail space
Inland’s clear strategy has delivered growth and a number of outstanding projects over the last year. We have maintained existing relationships and developed new ones, and refined our housebuilding capabilities so that we continue to compete with other housebuilders. However, we have still retained the essence of what makes us unique.