

Accord aims to become first housing association in UK to build plastic free houses



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A leading West Midlands housing association is aiming to become the first in the UK to build virtually plastic free houses in its attempts to reduce the amount of plastic used during construction.

Accord Housing Association has announced that it will build 12 homes minimising the use of plastic during the construction process. This means the organisation will use alternatives when it comes to fitting the kitchens, bathrooms and windows, as well as reducing the amount of plastic used in building materials.

Accord believes this will be the first project of its kind in the UK, where a housing association is looking to minimise the use of plastic in house-building.

The houses will be built by Accord's offsite manufacturing facility LoCaL Homes, which uses the latest modern methods of construction to manufacture high quality, super energy efficient houses.

Carl Taylor, Assistant Director of New Businesses at Accord said: "We believe this type of development hasn't been done at scale before – there have been a few one off attempts, but nobody has really looked at how we could produce mainstream houses with all the amenities without using plastic.

"We particularly want to remove the plastic from the kitchens and the bathrooms, because even though a house can last for a hundred years or more, the average kitchen and bathroom is changed every few years and we are keen to avoid generating plastic waste." This trans-European project will enable us to work with our European partners to identify plastic free building products. We haven't yet got a plastic free solution to the electrics for instance, but we will be challenging people in the building products manufacturing industry to help us find solutions."

The project is part of the CHARM partnership (Circular Housing Asset Renovation & Management) funded by Interreg European Funding. It is part of a partnership which is made up of representatives from four countries; Belgium,

France, the Netherlands and the UK. Each country has been given a different project to lead on, which aims to promote a circular economy in the housing construction sector.

Alan Yates, Deputy Chief Executive at Accord added: "Accord continues to lead the way in innovation as we prepare to build these virtually plastic free homes. We are delighted to be leading on this project in the UK and have started design work which will finish in January 2020 and we will then start the development work in 2020.

"Our closed timber framed houses have allowed us to build on low carbon housing development and we have developed technology to build low carbon houses " now it is about taking that technology a step forward to reduce the use of materials that are not good for the environment both during manufacture and construction and for years to come. This project will change how we manufacture our homes for ever.

"We are increasingly hearing about how single-use plastic waste is having an impact on the world's environment: from build-up in the oceans, to land fill and we hope that by building houses with a new range of plastic-free components we can play our part to minimise the impact on the environment."

The building sector is responsible for more than 60% of resource use in Europe, with more than 30-50% of material use taking place in the housing construction sector.

Plastic is usually non-biodegradable and therefore can remain as waste in the environment for a very long time " it may pose risks to people's health, as well as the environment, and it can be difficult to reuse and/or recycle. It is estimated that ten per cent of all plastic ends up in the ocean.

- *Picture shows what the homes could look like*
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