



UNLOCKING DELIVERY OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF NEW TOWNS

A BUUK blueprint for Government

FOREWORD: TAKING AN 'INFRASTRUCTURE-READY' APPROACH TO NEW TOWNS DELIVERY

We can speed up delivery of the Government's New Towns programme with a strategic approach to utilities and net zero infrastructure in these communities.

Delivering major strategic housing sites is complex and high risk. Housing developers need certainty and the right frameworks to allow them to build quickly and at the lowest cost.

Utilities delivery is widely recognised as one of the key barriers to delivery. Achieving low carbon, energy efficient homes at this scale has never been attempted, and electricity grid constraints may delay delivery.

Successfully delivering the Government's New Towns programme will rely on the right approach to development, starting with the way that core utilities are procured and deployed. Fundamentally, this Blueprint sets out a ready-to-implement plan for how to prepare land that is ready to build on, removing blockers and barriers with a simpler approach.

The 'infrastructure ready' model that we're recommending means planning and delivering utilities at the outset. It means thinking about infrastructure on a site-wide basis, maximising the opportunity for innovative technologies – such as new heat solutions – that can be delivered more cost effectively at scale.

This will reduce risk, both for government and housing developers. It will make Master Developers – and the sub-plot developers they work with – more willing to take on New Town projects, allowing new homes to be built quicker and cheaper. It will require less subsidy from central government to address emerging challenges and mean public bodies like Homes England will have fewer challenges to manage.

The government's New Towns programme is a compelling vision for building stronger, greener communities in the places where we need them most, driving economic growth across the UK. But we need to ensure this isn't undermined by delivery challenges. That is why we have produced this blueprint – setting out how the programme can be delivered as quickly as possible and to the highest standard and best value for money, creating impact in this parliament.

With more than three decades of experience, BUUK is the UK's leading independent multi-utility provider. We have a unique, tried-and-tested model for investing in and delivering critical utility infrastructure, without Government subsidy, to enable similar, large-scale developments.

We're already delivering the vision we've set out here: we've got a track record of unlocking strategic developments from Ebbsfleet to Kings Cross and we're deploying innovative technologies, like our award-winning Community Heat Hub, across the country.

BUUK owns and operates utility networks on tens of thousands of sites constructed during the last thirty years, serving millions of homes and businesses. Operating in a competitive market, we are sharply incentivised to successfully deliver high quality networks, on-time and at a competitive price..

We have welcomed the opportunity to work with the Government's New Towns Taskforce and others as we have developed this thinking and are ready to play our part in delivering it.



Keith Hutton
Group Regulation Director,
BUUK Infrastructure

Our blueprint provides practical advice and recommendations to solving the key challenges Government will face in building New Towns:

1. Increase UK housing stock
2. Speed up house delivery process
3. Create long-lasting communities that people are proud to live in
4. Build low-carbon, energy efficient homes without impacting on the grid
5. Reduce the costs of house building and delivery

Below we set out the different utilities procurement models available to government and how our recommended approach – an ‘infrastructure-ready’ model – can address these challenges, avoid risks during development and ensure they deliver on the Government’s ambition at pace.

CONTENTS

- 1. Foreword 2
- 2. Taking the right approach to delivery – key considerations 4
- 3. Our vision for New Towns
 - Speeding up delivery 6
 - Maximising net zero innovation 10
 - Enabling flexibility of technology choice 14
 - Delivering for communities and consumers 16
- 4. Our recommendations 18

Model Further detail on these models is set out on pages 6 and 7.	Increase Housing stock across the UK	Speed up housing delivery process	Create long-lasting communities that people are proud to live in	Build low-carbon, energy efficient homes	Reduce the cost of house building and delivery
Our recommended model: Infrastructure Ready approach – strategic approach to site-wide utilities, with connections to this led by each parcel developer.	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Single utility provider – full site utilities development for every home by one utility provider.	↑	↗	↑	↗	↗
Uncoordinated delivery approach – no strategic coordination, led by each parcel developer.	↗	—	↗	↗	—
Private utilities networks – developments are connected to localised, unregulated electricity grids.	↗	↑	↗	↑	↗

↑ Fully resolves problem ↗ Partially resolves problem — No impact

BARRIERS TO DELIVERY AND HOW WE'RE SOLVING THEM

The deployment of utilities is consistently highlighted by housebuilders as the most common cause of delays in developing new housing sites.

With Government eager to accelerate progress on New Towns to help meet its housing targets, getting the utility foundations of these developments right will be key to their delivery.

Government and industry face significant barriers to build new homes – including New Towns: we have proven solutions – through an ‘infrastructure ready’ model to address these:

Fundamentally, this is about adopting an ‘infrastructure ready’ model for New Towns deployment, which means planning and delivering utilities strategically, at the outset, on a site-wide basis.

What’s the challenge government faces?	Why does this matter?	How does our ‘Infrastructure Ready’ model solve this?
Barriers to increase the housing stock across the UK	New Towns will play a significant role in creating new communities, building on the government’s commitment to deliver 1.5 million new homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ By mitigating risks, our model will mean that New Towns across the country can become a reality. ➤ It will mean they can be delivered on time and budget, and that the overall programme can be a success.
Speed up housing delivery process	Houses are not being built quickly enough, with government having few levers to accelerate this.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Removing site risk and complexity means developers can build faster and are less likely to face delays required to resolve utility challenges. ➤ Addressing utilities at the outset means houses can be released for sale as soon as they are built – developers can build as fast as they want once the infrastructure is in place.
Create long-lasting communities that people are proud to live in	New Towns need to be more than just a collection of homes – this is about placemaking: real communities in the places where people want to live and which are essential to driving economic growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Putting in utilities at the outset means the required social and community infrastructure – health centres, schools, shopping areas, community centres – can be planned in from the outset, and easily built ready for when residents to move in. ➤ Competitive networks have a track record of driving higher customer service, quicker connections and value for money for consumers, which contributes to a positive customer experience.

What's the challenge government faces?	Why does this matter?	How does our 'Infrastructure Ready' model solve this?
<p>Build low-carbon, energy efficient homes</p>	<p>New Towns should be pioneers for new, low carbon technologies, building future-proofed homes that support the government's new zero ambitions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The most efficient, lowest carbon solutions – such as BUUK's Community Heat Hub – can best be delivered at scale. ➤ Individual parcel developers do not need to focus on procuring these solutions, safe in the knowledge that the best solution has been installed across the new town. ➤ Integrating utilities together – such as heat and electricity – allows utility providers to offset peak grid demand against stored heat capacity, delivering a sustainable system by lowering grid reinforcement costs and reducing grid congestion.
<p>Reduce the cost of house building and delivery</p>	<p>Creating a sustainable house building process, both to deliver affordable homes and maintain a thriving, dynamic housing market. At a time of spending constraint, government's ability to financially support the New Towns programme is limited.</p> <p>That means allowing homes to be built at the best possible value.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Delivering at scale reduces the cost of new infrastructure, making it cheaper to build and connect each home. ➤ One single provider delivering across the site will also drive efficiencies and provide best value. ➤ Competitive networks drive efficiency and offer strong value for money.

We are ready to play a major role in substantially increasing the number of new, high-quality homes being constructed, including through New Towns.

Putting utilities delivery at the heart of the New Towns programme will help overcome these challenges and ensure the Government's objectives can be met.

Four guiding principles – underpinned by an 'infrastructure-ready' approach – will help achieve this:

- 1. Speeding up delivery** – remove delivery risks by taking a strategic approach to utilities deployment and considering their deployment on a site-wide basis.
- 2. Maximising net zero innovation** – select and deploy the best new, low carbon heating technologies, integrated as part of the electricity infrastructure, planned from the outset to improve coordination and consumer outcomes.

- 3. Enabling flexibility of technology choice** – consumers have the ability and choice to pick and mix the technologies that are applied to their homes, reflecting their personal circumstances and focusing on solutions that will not be obsolete or restrictive in future.

- 4. Delivering for communities and consumers** – developments that communities are proud to live in through sustainable, resilient, and socially enriching placemaking.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1: SPEEDING UP DELIVERY

The independent utilities sector is uniquely well-placed to support New Towns delivery. BUUK provides all the utility infrastructure to enable large scale developments, like New Towns.

BUUK operates across seven different regulated utilities and can bring forward best practice from the different sectors in which we operate. We also work on a competitive basis, and are incentivised to deliver the right outcomes for all parties – predominantly enhanced consumer outcomes.

Selecting the right model is key to ensuring projects are delivered on time and cost-effectively and provide for the communities that will ultimately be living in them. There are four broad models for delivering the utility foundations of new developments. Below, we’ve provided some detail on these models and the key pros and cons of each approach.

Model	How it works	Example of where this has been delivered	Benefits of this approach
<p>Our recommended model: Infrastructure Ready approach – strategic approach to site-wide utilities, with connections to this led by each parcel developer.</p>	<p>A master developer has a contract with a multi-utility provider to deliver the critical utility infrastructure and grid connections.</p> <p>Parcel developers build out their utility network installation - all seamlessly adopted by the asset owner.</p>	<p>Brent Cross Town; Kings Cross</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Competition at point of supplier selection. ➤ Efficient development and value for money. ➤ Integrated heat and electricity approach. ➤ Accurate assessments of grid demand. ➤ Clarity of responsibilities between developers and utility providers. ➤ Confidence for parcel developers that utility networks are FHS compliant.

Alternative approaches

Model	How it works	Example of where this has been delivered	Pros	Cons
<p>Single utility provider – full site utilities development for every home by one utility provider.</p>	<p>A master developer appoints a single utility provider for all parcels and properties within the development.</p>	<p>Ebbsfleet; Kingston Park, Newcastle; Priors Hall, Corby</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Economies of scale reduces cost and improves efficiency. » Utility developers can pass on savings due to guaranteed work. » Easier coordination of large-scale projects. » Clarity of responsibilities between developers and utility providers. » Confidence for parcel developers that utilities to site are FHS compliant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Slower procurement leads to cost uncertainty » Less flexibility for parcel developers in choosing installers. » Uncertainty around long-term project costs.
<p>Uncoordinated delivery approach – no strategic coordination, led by each parcel developer.</p>	<p>Developers for individual parcels are responsible for their individual utility connections.</p>	<p>Traditional approach to development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Allows for competition at the point of supplier selection. » More flexibility for individual developers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lacks economies of scale, increasing costs and limiting scope for innovation. » Potentially inconsistent infrastructure quality. » Can create additional bureaucracy and increased regulatory hurdles.
<p>Private utilities networks – developments are connected to localised, unregulated electricity grids.</p>	<p>Developments are connected to localised electricity grids, linked by an unregulated private wire to a privately-owned plant producing electricity for that development.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Energy independence and integration of local renewable power sources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Limited regulatory oversight can put customers at risk. » Locks homeowners out of the emerging smart energy market. » Provides no new grid capacity benefits that can't be delivered through other technologies.

Our recommended approach

In our advice, New Towns will benefit most from an ‘Infrastructure Ready’ approach that ensures site development is agile and delivered at pace – this was the approach taken for Brent Cross Town, which is covered in more detail on page 9. A ‘Single Utility Provider’ development – whereby one utility infrastructure provider connects every home in a development – could also be considered, recognising there are some drawbacks to this approach. Both approaches ensure a competitive process, efficient development and high value for money – whilst ensuring the best community-level low carbon solutions can be integrated into site planning from the outset.

- The key to high quality deployment of critical utility infrastructure that underpins and enables housebuilding at pace and scale is early appointment of a utility partner. This ensures an integrated heat and electricity design, minimising grid constraint and ensuring a reliable grid connection, without the need for costly grid reinforcement down the line.
- Selecting a utility asset owner early will also enable the key infrastructure that is needed to get sites off the ground quickly. This includes a grid connection, offsite works to connect site to the grid, the primary plant, substation and site heat hub, as well as spinal utility networks laid to each development plot. Parcel developers will then benefit from being able to “plug and play”, extending the main network to their parcels and homes as they are connected.

- The model enables deployment at volume, with multiple parcels building out at the same time. Parcel developers have cost-certainty and are in control of their delivery. They are also free from worrying about individual heat solutions and securing grid capacity – this is all done at the site level.
- The asset owner also brings investment to help fund the initial enabling utility infrastructure and avoid the need for public subsidy. This will help viability of new sites, with cashflow supported by subsequent parcel develops through connection charges.
- The ‘enabling key sites’ model allows upfront investment from a master developer and infrastructure provider to enable site initiation and then receive repayment on a per plot basis when houses are completed.

As well as our recommendation for a strategic approach to utility deployment, we also recommend:

1. Utilities providers, and independent networks in particular, should play a key advisory and delivery function in developing New Towns.
2. New Towns should adopt a site-level procurement model to improve coordination, reduce costs, and avoid delivery delays.
3. All sector regulators should ensure that regulation in their markets sufficiently enables competition to unlock housing growth including the New Towns programme and other strategic sites. Specifically:
 - Ofwat should reform and streamline the system for issuing NAV licences, moving to a licensing model that enables NAVs to compete
 - Ofgem and DESNZ should ensure that the design of heat network regulation maintains a dynamic market driven by private sector innovation



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: BRENT CROSS TOWN – AN ENABLING KEY SITES EXAMPLE

The Brent Cross Town programme is one of the most ambitious regeneration projects in Europe – and the largest ever undertaken by Barnet Council. As a flagship growth initiative for the Mayor of London, the development aims to transform an underused industrial area into a thriving, sustainable urban district.

Strategic involvement from day one

A key reason for the success of Brent Cross Town lies in the strategic approach taken to infrastructure delivery. BUUK and its group companies – Power On, GTC, Metropolitan, ENC, and IWNL – were involved from the outset, working closely with the master developers to shape and guide the utility strategy.

This early engagement ensured that critical infrastructure decisions were made holistically, allowing for an integrated multi-utility solution that aligns with the project's long-term sustainability, delivery, and operational goals. Being embedded from the beginning meant we could design for the future – anticipating challenges, maximising efficiencies, and ensuring delivery aligned with the masterplan vision.

Infrastructure to enable regeneration at scale

Spanning 10 million square feet, Brent Cross Town will deliver:

- » **6,700 new homes** across private sale, rental, and affordable tenures
- » **Grade A commercial space** and civic infrastructure
- » **Europe's largest all-electric energy centre**, supporting a net zero carbon target by 2030

BUUK is responsible for the design, delivery, and adoption of all major utilities – electricity, water, gas, and waste – providing a single, joined-up solution that supports the entire lifecycle of the project, from construction to customer service.



A future-ready, integrated model

BUUK's strategic, multi-utility model delivers more than infrastructure – it enables place-making. Early involvement allowed for:

- » Smart integration of sustainable technologies (e.g. low-carbon heat, smart metering)
- » Cost and delivery efficiencies through co-designed networks
- » Long-term resilience, with consumer protection and customer satisfaction built into the system from the start

“We partnered with BUUK on Brent Cross Town due to their breadth of delivery experience. This engagement has been key to ensure all utility matters are fully understood and integrated into our development from day one. Throughout, BUUK has demonstrated great pragmatism and an even greater understanding of what is important to a property developer on such a large-scale regeneration project.”

Related Argent, developer of Brent Cross Town

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2: MAXIMISING NET ZERO INNOVATION

As we head towards our net zero by 2050 commitment, gas usage for heating homes is in sharp decline. Driven by the aims of the Future Homes Standard, finding reliable, cost-effective alternatives to gas is now a top priority for UK developers.

BUUK is focused on developing alternative low carbon technologies that will replace gas. These technologies, which are already being installed in developments across the country are supporting decarbonisation efforts now, aligning with Future Home Standard requirements, whilst maximising convenience and minimising costs to consumers and developers.

We have a range of innovative, but proven, technologies at our disposal and many are already operational in developments across the country. These innovations, like our award-winning Community Heat Hub and our ground source heat pump solution, will be key to developing new future-proofed, decarbonised homes.

How can New Towns benefit from net zero innovations?

It is crucial that New Towns embrace innovations like low carbon heat networks and integrated energy solutions. These are delivering major benefits for consumers, developers and wider society. They should be factored in early to strategic site-level assessments to ensure the best-fit technologies are deployed for each development.



What are the benefits of low carbon community-level technologies

For consumers

- › Low-carbon heat solutions can significantly reduce household bills, by around 30% when smart controls are included.
- › Residents benefit from reliable, resilient systems with low maintenance, backed by long-term warranties and responsive customer service.
- › Our consumers highly value these technologies –consistently giving them strong ratings in Net Promoter type scoring.

For developers

- › Factoring in integrated heat and energy systems at master-planning stage enables streamlined delivery of utilities, and avoids costly retrofits.
- › Solutions like networked ground source heat pumps remove the need for large-scale substations or reinforcements—keeping build costs lower.

- › Efficient palletised delivery and simple installation processes improve on-site logistics and programme timelines.
- › Fully compliant with Future Homes Standards and Part O, reducing risk and improving planning outcomes.

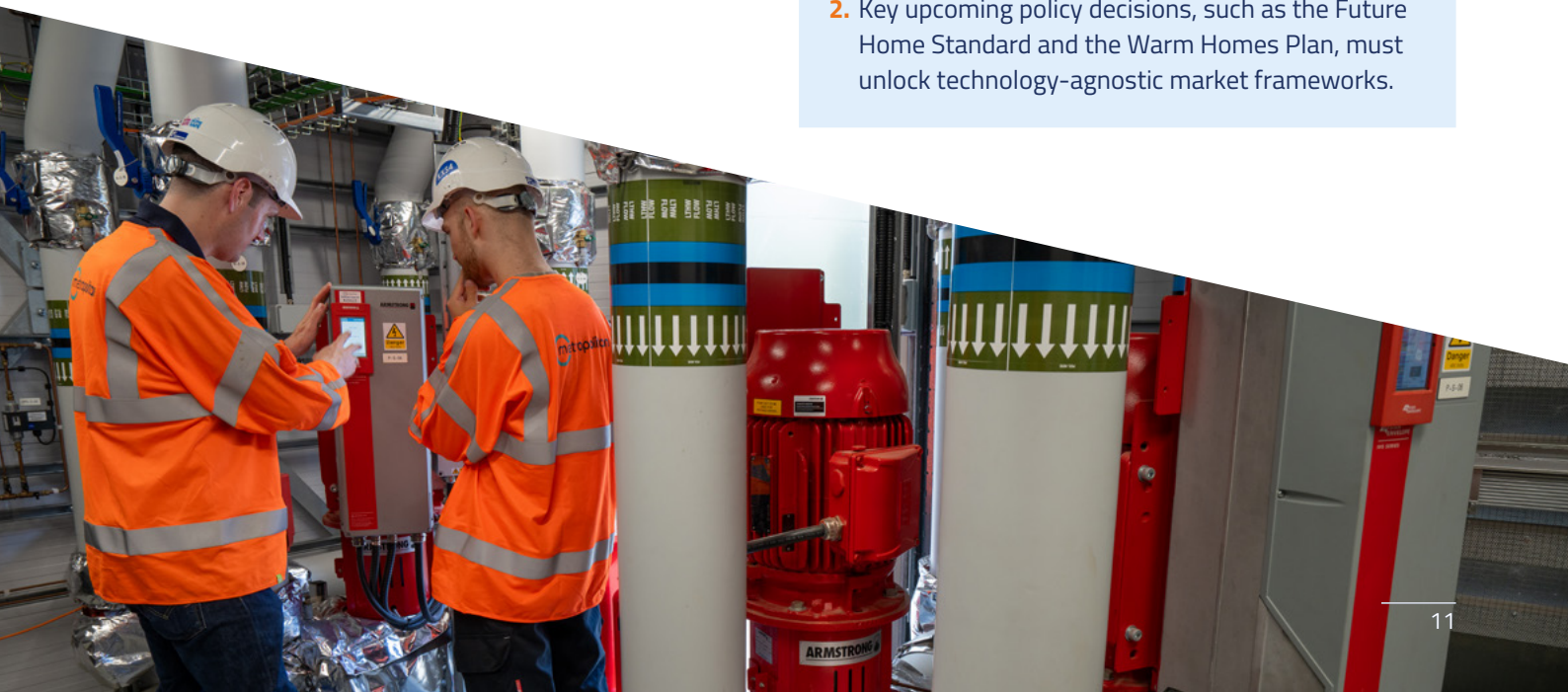
For grid and wider society

- › Low-carbon technologies with communal thermal stores can reduce **peak grid demand by up to 40%**.
- › Ground and air source heat pump systems can cut the carbon required to heat homes by 75–80%.
- › At scale, carbon savings are substantial—for example, the Chilton Woods development is expected to save **820 tonnes of CO₂ per year**, the equivalent of:
 - › Removing **488 cars** from the road annually
 - › **41,000 trees** growing for a year
 - › Preventing the emissions from **1,700 passengers** flying from London to New York

Alongside community-level infrastructure, and the shared benefits for decarbonisation and reducing consumer bills, households will also have the option to invest in additional low carbon technologies, like solar PV to access even greater benefits.

Our recommendations to ensure the most innovative low carbon solutions are deployed:

1. New Towns should take advantage of the most innovative heat decarbonisation technologies, unlocked by a strategic site-level approach to utilities.
2. Key upcoming policy decisions, such as the Future Home Standard and the Warm Homes Plan, must unlock technology-agnostic market frameworks.



What do our technologies look like?

TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT – OUR NETWORKED GROUND SOURCE HEAT PUMPS WITH SMART TECHNOLOGY

GTC, a BUUK group business, is delivering future-ready, low-carbon infrastructure with our networked ground source heat pump (GSHP) solution – developed in partnership with leading heat pump manufacturer Kensa. This system provides heating, hot water, and optional cooling across residential developments, offering a smart and scalable alternative to traditional gas or air source systems.

What is a GSHP?

- Installed underground, with a compact indoor unit often tucked under the stairs or near the hot water tank, GSHPs offer a discreet and efficient solution for homeowners—and a space-saving, simple-to-install option for developers.
- They overcome the seasonal inefficiencies of air source systems, maintaining consistent performance even in the coldest months.

Benefits for developers:

- Cost-effective: Lower capital costs than air source heat pumps, with no need for substation upgrades.
- Future-proofed: Fully meets the Future Homes Standard with carbon savings of 75–80% from day one.

Benefits for homeowners:

- Up to five times more efficient than gas, and 30% more efficient than individual air source heat pumps.
- Smart savings: Energy bills can be cut by up to 30% with the included smart thermostat.
- Always on: Unlike air systems, performance doesn't drop in winter.
- Low maintenance: All parts and servicing are covered.
- Smart features: Remote control, learning capabilities, and app integration come as standard.

With immediate Heat Trust registration and Ofgem regulation from 2026, it's a "fit-and-forget" system backed by UK manufacturing, lifetime guarantees, and domestic customer support.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT – OUR COMMUNITY HEAT HUB, SUDBURY

Our Westland Heath development is a prime example of how integrated infrastructure can help make progress towards shared goals like decarbonising buildings, at pace. GTC, part of BUUK, is providing multi-utilities, including a zero-carbon 'Community Heat Hub' that will supply 950 homes and a new local school, at their Westland Heath development.

How does it work?

- » The Hub draws on large air-source heat pumps to generate low carbon heat, delivering a carbon reduction of between 75-80%, helping in the journey towards net zero.
- » Additionally, the Hub contains large thermal stores that facilitate the storage of energy as heat when electricity prices are low, such as overnight. This allows the Hub to provide heat during peak times in the morning for up to two hours without running any of the heat pumps or electric boilers.
- » This flexible operation reduces the cost of generating heat which keeps heat bills lower for homeowners when compared to an individual ASHP.

This integration of heat and electricity addresses the challenge of grid capacity constraint as new homes move to using green electricity. The Community Heat Hub, which is an efficient and sustainable heat network solution, can be utilised across low-density, new-build housing, and mixed-use developments.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3: ENABLING FLEXIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY CHOICE

Every home in a New Town should come with a built-in smart technology framework, or smart baseline, as standard—ensuring every resident benefits from low-carbon, future-ready infrastructure from day one.

But beyond this baseline, consumers should also have the power to add on the technologies that work best for them, whether that's rooftop solar, battery storage, EV charging or beyond.

This essentially provides the foundational infrastructure, with further optionality for consumer-led upgrades. A standardised smart foundation ensures every home is efficient, connected and grid-ready, with built-in flexibility for consumers to tailor their experience and drive further efficiency and long-term savings. Open protocol technologies should be required that do not go obsolete or tie consumers into particular solutions or providers.

What does the smart baseline include?

At a minimum, every home should be delivered with:

- » **Smart meters and intelligent controls** – giving residents real-time insight and control over their energy use
- » **Demand-side response-ready infrastructure** – enabling homes to automatically reduce energy use at peak times, lowering bills and supporting grid stability
- » **Future Homes Standard-compliant heating** – using technologies like our networked ground source heat pumps or community heat hubs
- » **Connectivity-ready infrastructure** – ensuring digital integration across home systems and appliances
- » **EV-ready charging point** – with the infrastructure installed to allow easy activation when needed

These features are enabled by the 'smart thermostat' which BUUK installs into homes, which lowers bills and enhances comfort. This approach ensures that every home is not only efficient and low carbon from day one, but also capable of responding to future energy challenges and innovations.

Add-on options for consumers

Achieving a '100% smart home' setup can drive significant carbon reductions – but comes with a steep upfront cost. It's therefore important to offer homeowners choice. Beyond the baseline, residents can opt into a range of add-ons to further lower bills, reduce carbon, or enhance home value:

- » **Rooftop solar panels** – to generate clean electricity on-site
- » **Home battery storage** – to store excess solar or cheap overnight energy
- » **Smart appliances and home management systems** – including thermostats, sensors, and automation
- » **EV chargers** – fully activated and integrated with home energy systems

These can be installed through modular packages at the point of sale or retrofitted through **property-linked finance or energy-as-a-service models**, spreading the cost and removing the barrier of upfront investment.

Why this model works

- » **Lower costs for all:** A shared baseline ensures economies of scale in procurement and installation, and ongoing savings for consumers.
- » **Flexibility for consumers:** Households can personalise their home based on their budget and preferences, with open protocol solutions which do not lock consumers into particularly technologies or providers.
- » **Grid integration:** A coordinated, grid-aware approach ensures the entire development supports local capacity and decarbonisation goals.
- » **Future-proofed homes:** Infrastructure is designed to support upcoming technologies and regulatory standards, with New Towns having the potential to be 'sandboxes' for future innovation, allowing different combinations of technologies to be tested, at the will of the consumer.

TECHNOLOGY SPOTLIGHT: OUR SMART HOMES PRODUCT

Full-spec smart homes can cut emissions by up to 90% but this can add over £10,000 to upfront costs. Our approach is to give every home a smart-ready foundation – and let consumers choose how far they go. With this baseline as standard a typical three bed semi-detached home would already be significantly reducing their bills.

Our smart home offering is built around **intelligent, low-carbon living**. It integrates:

- » Smart meters and controls to track and optimize energy use
- » Flexible grid-ready devices to enable participation in demand-side response
- » Optional integration with rooftop solar and battery storage
- » Compatibility with our Community Heat Hubs to ensure seamless home heating and hot water delivery
- » Support for electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and future-proofed systems

Our recommendations for enabling flexibility of technology choice include:

1. All New Towns should adopt a minimum smart infrastructure baseline – including smart meters, demand-side response capability, EV charging infrastructure, and Future Homes Standard-compliant heating – to ensure all homes are efficient, low-carbon, and digitally ready from the outset.
2. Procurement and planning frameworks should require smart-ready homes - mandating the core infrastructure needed to support consumer choice and future technological upgrades, ensuring developments are adaptable as innovation evolves and avoiding obsolescence.
3. Government should support flexible, modular upgrade models – such as energy-as-a-service and property-linked finance – to allow homeowners to invest in rooftop solar, battery storage, and other enhancements over time without prohibitive upfront costs.

Together, this infrastructure not only lowers bills but positions homes as active participants in a smarter, green energy grid.



GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4: DELIVERING FOR COMMUNITIES AND CONSUMERS

By embedding critical infrastructure and community benefit from the outset, developments can create places that are sustainable, resilient, and socially enriching. While individual homes will be future-ready and smart (as outlined in Guiding Principle 3), this principle is about the broader experience.

Delivering for communities and consumers means embedding the infrastructure that shapes people's day-to-day experience: warmth, affordability, connectivity, green space, and local pride. Utilities aren't just about pipes and cables – they're the enablers of comfort, wellbeing, and long-term value.

By taking the right approach, new developments can deliver:

- » **High quality, comfortable homes** underpinned by high quality utility networks
- » **Communities that residents are proud to live in**
- » **Lower bills for consumers** by using the latest smart home technologies

High quality, comfortable homes

Delivering comfortable, resilient homes starts with getting the infrastructure right. Providers with multi-utility expertise—like BUUK—can design and deliver fully integrated systems across heat, power, water, and telecoms. This joined-up approach reduces maintenance, enhances comfort, and ensures homes are ready for modern living from day one.

Our Community Heat Hubs provide reliable, low-carbon heat that's simpler to manage and more affordable than individual Heat Pump systems. Meanwhile, resilient broadband and digital infrastructure keep residents connected—supporting everything from remote work to digital services and community engagement.

What does this mean in practice?

1. High quality, comfortable living environments

By planning infrastructure holistically, New Towns can deliver consistent, reliable utilities across heat, power, water, and telecoms—enhancing comfort and reducing maintenance issues for residents. Multi-utility networks reduce disruption, improve aesthetics, and ensure homes are modern and resilient from day one.

2. Stronger communities through shared spaces and amenities

We work alongside developers to integrate green spaces, walkable routes, nature play areas, and biodiversity enhancements near our Community Heat Hubs. These shared assets improve wellbeing, support community identity, and help developments meet Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) targets.

3. Local engagement and education

We invest in school partnerships, sustainability workshops, and curriculum-linked education programmes to connect young people and communities with the technologies powering their homes. Our volunteering and sponsorship schemes also support local groups and events aligned with wellbeing and environmental goals.

4. Economic and social value

Through initiatives like our Heat Hub Bonus, residents directly benefit from the flexibility revenue generated by communal systems—turning innovation into visible, tangible rewards. These schemes help to build trust in new technologies and encourage behaviour that supports a smarter, more flexible energy system.

Our community benefit offer

Beyond lower bills for consumers driven by innovative technologies, we want to create communities people are proud to live in. New Towns must embed long-term investment in local wellbeing, nature, and engagement. BUUK's approach provides a model – but all developments should adopt a similar ethos, backed by visible benefits and real, ongoing community value. This model, which should be developed in partnership with the community, should centre around:

1. **Wellbeing and Environment** – through green spaces, biodiversity initiatives, and physical wellness infrastructure
2. **Engagement and Education** – through school programmes, volunteering, and community sponsorships
3. **Reward and Recognition** – through the Heat Hub Bonus and transparent communication around climate impact

Our recommendations for delivering exemplary developments include:

1. Infrastructure delivery should be designed with long-term community wellbeing in mind – integrating green space, digital connectivity, and low-carbon heat from the outset to foster comfort, pride, and social cohesion.
2. Planning policy should incentivise developments that offer visible, long-term social value – beyond basic compliance, including biodiversity net gain, climate education, and community co-design principles.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations are interspersed through the report, but we have listed them here in full for reference.

In our advice, New Towns will benefit most from an 'enabling key sites' model that ensures site development is agile and delivered at pace. A full site development could also be considered, recognising there are some drawbacks from this approach. Both approaches ensure a competitive process, efficient development and high value for money – whilst ensuring the best community-level low carbon solutions can be integrated into site planning from the outset.

SPEEDING UP DELIVERY

1. Utilities providers, and independent networks in particular, should play a key advisory and delivery function in developing New Towns.
2. New Towns should adopt a site-level procurement model to improve coordination, reduce costs, and avoid delivery delays.
3. All sector regulators should ensure that regulation in their markets sufficiently enables competition to unlock housing growth including the New Towns programme and other strategic sites. Specifically:
 - Ofwat should reform and streamline the system for issuing NAV licences, moving to a licensing model that enables NAVs to compete
 - Ofgem and DESNZ should ensure that the design of heat network regulation maintains a dynamic market driven by private sector innovation

MAXIMISING NET ZERO INNOVATION

4. New Towns should take advantage of the most innovative heat decarbonisation technologies, unlocked by a strategic site-level approach to utilities.
5. Key upcoming policy decisions, such as the Future Home Standard and the Warm Homes Plan, must unlock technology-agnostic market frameworks.

ENABLING FLEXIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY CHOICE

6. All New Towns should adopt a minimum smart infrastructure baseline – including smart meters, demand-side response capability, EV charging infrastructure, and Future Homes Standard-compliant heating – to ensure all homes are efficient, low-carbon, and digitally ready from the outset.
7. Procurement and planning frameworks should require smart-ready homes – mandating the core infrastructure needed to support consumer choice and future technological upgrades, ensuring developments are adaptable as innovation evolves and avoiding obsolescence.
8. Government should support flexible, modular upgrade models – such as energy-as-a-service and property-linked finance – to allow homeowners to invest in rooftop solar, battery storage, and other enhancements over time without prohibitive upfront costs.

DELIVERING FOR COMMUNITIES AND CONSUMERS

9. Infrastructure delivery should be designed with long-term community wellbeing in mind – integrating green space, digital connectivity, and low-carbon heat from the outset to foster comfort, pride, and social cohesion.
10. Planning policy should incentivise developments that offer visible, long-term social value – beyond basic compliance, including biodiversity net gain, climate education, and community co-design principles.

WORKING TOGETHER

BUUK has a strong track record of experience delivering strategic sites and developments of a similar scale to the New Towns ambition.

We are well-placed to support Government on the delivery of its New Towns ambition, through strong relationships with leading developers, our commitment to net zero and innovation on heat decarbonisation, and focus on high quality outcomes that deliver for consumers.

We look forward to supporting the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the work of its New Towns Taskforce, to advise on the optimal approach to the development of New Towns. BUUK is also keen to work closely with the Department as a key strategic delivery partner.



About BUUK

BUUK is the UK's leading multi-utility provider, and alongside the wider independent utility sector, we play a major role in delivering new homes and speeding up progress towards home decarbonisation. BUUK has enabled the construction of more than 500,000 new homes since 2019, and we serve over two million homes and businesses across the UK.

Contact

enquiries@bu-uk.co.uk
01359 240363

BUUK Infrastructure
Synergy House
Woolpit Business Park
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk
IP30 9UP

