



Fingerpost & Parr Area Action Plan

Using housing growth to fuel sustained
neighbourhood regeneration

2022 - 2025

Introduction

Working as a strategic partner of St Helens Council for 20 years, Torus, formerly Helena Partnerships, have been committed to building and maintaining thousands of affordable homes across the region and that dedication is still as strong as it was.

Investing over £30 million in a series of affordable housing developments since 2015 in Fingerpost and Parr. Torus has worked tirelessly to transform and regenerate these communities, resulting in the completion of a number of modern, future-proofed and affordable housing schemes, including:

- 1 Park Road / Recreation Street
- 2 Hollybank Street
- 3 Park Road (Phase 2)
- 4 Chancery Lane
- 5 Foundry Wharf



Building for St Helens

Torus, in its current form, was established in January 2020, and since then, Torus has explored several other development sites. Working closely with key stakeholders to understand the unique housing market of Fingerpost and Parr in more detail and to create unique housing solutions that actually meet the need of local residents has been central to Torus' approach to developing in the areas.

From data available from the Under One Roof Team, it is clear that there is significant need for a mix of 1-bedroom flats and 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom homes for Affordable Rent in Fingerpost and Parr.

Table of Demand; Parr and Fingerpost April 2021-March 2022 (Under One Roof statistics)

PARR	Maximum					
Minimum	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed+	Total
1 bed	4	1210	62			1276
2 bed		65	578	20		663
3 bed			228	28	11	267
4 bed				16	86	102
5 bed+					4	4
Total	4	1275	868	64	101	2312

FINGERPOST	Maximum					
Minimum	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	5 bed+	Total
1 bed	7	1914	114			2035
2 bed		77	734	26		837
3 bed			272	33	16	321
4 bed				17	94	111
5 bed+					4	4
Total	7	1991	1120	76	114	3308

In partnership with St Helens Council – and in line with the need to cater for changing, resilient communities – Torus will look to diversify tenures, where possible, across the Area Action Plan area. By creating new tenure options for the local community (such as Rent to Buy and Shared Ownership) as well as delivering more proven rental properties, Torus will make a sizeable contribution to the delivery of the St Helens Housing Strategy 2022-27.

Fingerpost & Parr Development Areas

About this plan; Making a Difference through Scale

Torus has worked with St Helens Council and architect, Halsall Lloyd Partnerships, to develop an initial, 'mini' masterplan for the Fingerpost and Parr areas. The principal aim of this Area Action Plan is to use housing growth as a catalyst for wider regeneration.

In order to make a sustainable, lasting impact on both Fingerpost and Parr, Torus has identified the following three sites for development:

- 6 **Somerset Street** in Parr, WA9 1QQ
- 7 **Parr Mount Court** in Fingerpost, WA9 1AU
- 8 **Sussex Grove** in Parr, WA9 1QH

This represents our commitment to unlocking development sites in St Helens and scaling up the regeneration of disused land to create futureproofed, modern communities that future residents and the wider St Helens community can benefit from. Each site offers the opportunity to make a real difference to Fingerpost and Parr and the scale and size of each development will improve the social, as well as built and visual environment.



Creating a more Sustainable St Helens

With sustainability and futureproofing integral to all Torus' developments, work with sustainability experts from the Energy Council has been ongoing. Supporting and advising the team on a myriad of new building technologies, designed specifically to reduce carbon usage and fuel poverty. This has highlighted the importance of a "fabric-first" approach to new social housing developments.

The "fabric first" approach to building design maximises the performance of components and materials in the building fabric e.g. increased thermal insulation, before consideration of mechanical and electrical service systems. Torus is also engaging with a number of companies that provide differing Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) to offer a "fabric first" construction method with low carbon technology, which will encourage a faster speed of site delivery.

All three development schemes would be in-line with the legislative reform of the new 2022 Building Regulations and the 2025 Future Homes Standard. This would assist Torus to model new technologies and create safe, warm and efficient new homes for our residents.

Torus's ambition would be to develop a net zero carbon housing solution using MMC principles and new technology at the third phase at Sussex Grove. We believe this could be the first net zero carbon housing development in St Helens.

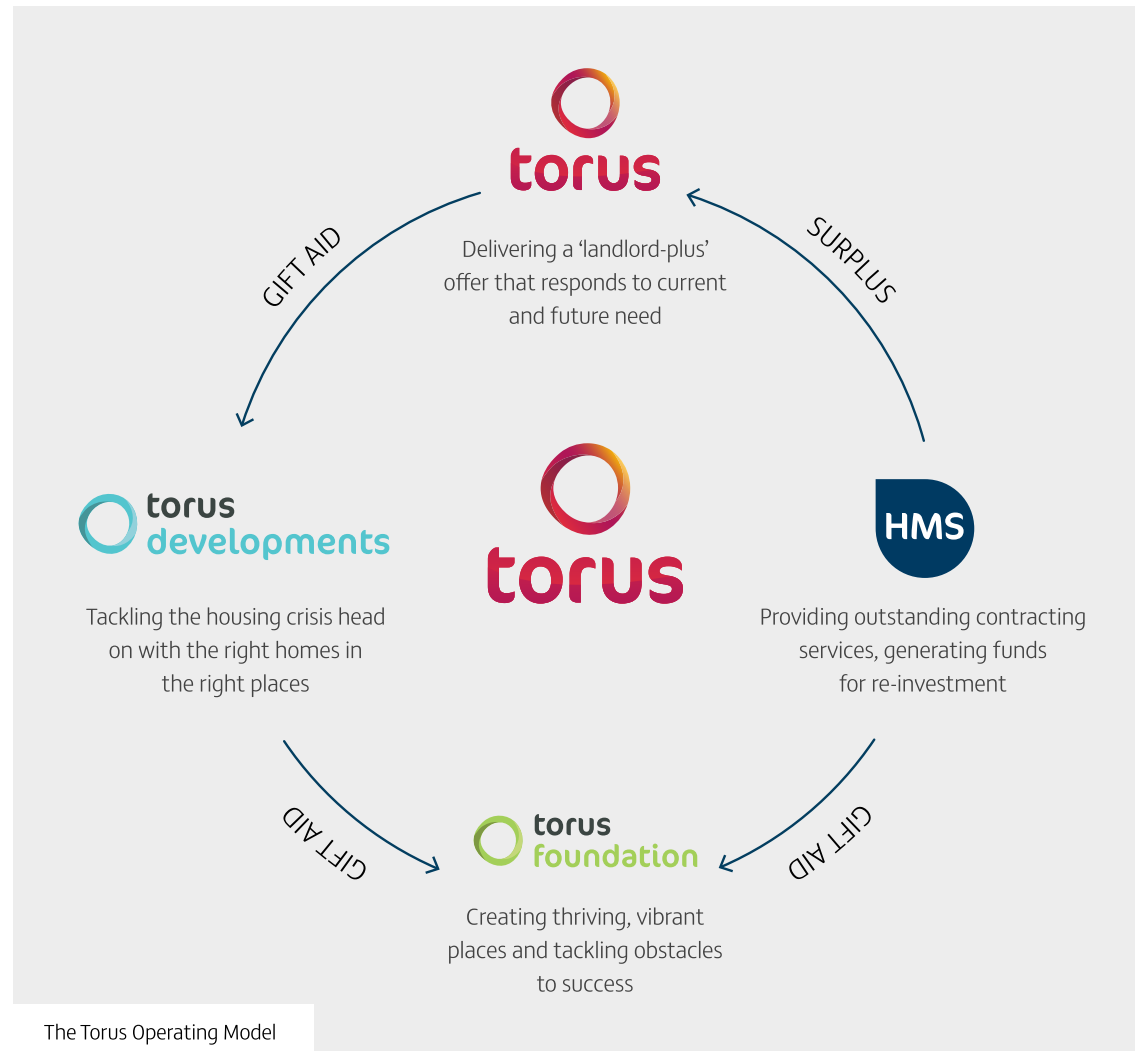


Homes built in factories and assembled on site

The Torus Model

Torus is designed to unlock sustainable regeneration of areas above and beyond that of simply building new homes and its Operational Model allows for the St Helens pound to stay in the local area and benefit the health, wellbeing and prospects of those who call St Helens home.

Torus value this opportunity to work with St Helens Council in the regeneration of Fingerpost and Parr and alongside the social value these developments will bring, we believe we can add further value in design, construction, tenure mix, social value and employment opportunities through our in-house entities.



Torus Foundation More than a home

The charitable arm of Torus, Torus Foundation partners with local communities to build better futures together by investing 100% of the Group's commercial profits into projects and services that bring people together and change lives.

Torus Foundation will provide significant added value to the development of schemes and are committed to providing unique, tailored, sustained local interventions to people who need them. Essential to the creation of thriving communities, Torus Foundation would provide support to Torus residents and the wider community that will improve their lives.

Generating employment and training opportunities, providing health and wellbeing services and helping people with their finances and to get online, Torus Foundation unlocks potential in the community and works with partners and communities to help people in the local area reach their full potential.

For example, Torus Foundation have a Community Investment Fund for local groups focusing on four key areas of health and wellbeing, employment, digital inclusion and money matters.

Recent Torus Foundation projects focussed within the Parr/Fingerpost communities include:

- **Parr Murals project** in conjunction with Heart of Glass
- **COP26 video** with young residents of Parr discussing climate change presented by Steve Rotherham on behalf of Liverpool City Region
- **Parr Zine project** – working with young girls/women in Parr on a magazine again in conjunction with Heart of Glass
- **St Helens Wellbeing** – Parr community “Healthy Neighbours” project – to support and encourage neighbourhood volunteers in health and wellbeing objectives including food poverty, loneliness, obesity, physical inactivity and mental health



Young people's Health & Wellbeing session

In 2021, Torus Foundation supported a total of 206 local residents from Fingerpost and Parr into employment opportunities. This included 58 new job roles (economic value of £1.2m), 43 training courses, 6 qualifications and a number of volunteering, work placements and trials.

Torus Foundation also engaged with 480 local residents in Fingerpost and Parr as part of their digital inclusion project, 382 local resident engagements under the Health and Wellbeing agenda, and support for 135 local residents with welfare and benefit advice.

Torus Foundation will be engaged from the outset with St Helens Council over initiatives to continue improving Fingerpost & Parr. Torus Foundation's main areas of focus within communities are:



Health & Wellbeing

Providing activities that support good health and wellbeing



Employment & Skills

Supporting people into jobs and training opportunities



Young people

Providing a safe environment and activities



Money Matters

Assisting people with money and benefits



Go Digital

Helping people to get online



Mural project in Parr

HMS The construction specialist

HMS are Torus' construction company, with an award-winning project portfolio it's commitment to transforming places and improving lives sees HMS generate profits for Torus Foundation. Over the years, this dedication to social investment has seen HMS reinvest £20 million into building thriving communities.

Offering multiple trade apprenticeships and delivering numerous training programmes across St Helens, including its Women in Construction and Try a Trade schemes, HMS truly embeds itself into the communities it works in. Alongside these schemes, HMS is dedicated to employing local tradespeople and working with and bolstering the local supply chain, ensuring money is reinvested back into the areas it is building in.

HMS are currently working on four construction sites for Torus in St Helens, with a value totalling over £20 million, at Gillars Green, Springfield, Newton Community Hospital and Railway Street in Earlestown.

Across the three sites our construction expenditure will be in excess of £15 - £20 million with employment opportunities for over 120 construction workers. HMS will work with the local supply chain to ensure materials are procured from across the Liverpool City Region and ensure apprenticeship and training opportunities are prioritised to St Helens residents.

Above and beyond our internal commitment to the communities of Fingerpost and Parr, HMS will work closely with the St Helens Together teams to pioneer a collaborative approach to overcoming local challenges experienced in Fingerpost and Parr. This cohesive approach to community support and targeting local need will ensure services are offered exactly where they're needed as we believe cross-sector partnership is vital to galvanising the creation of thriving communities.



HMS use latest innovations



HMS Apprentice cohort 2022



Regular Women in Construction events



Partnering with St Helens RFC



Complete renovation of Champions Court

Leading the way in St Helens

Our sustainability objectives for the Area Action Plan are to create low energy homes (as part of the fuel poverty agenda) and to enhance our knowledge base at Somerset Street and Parr Mount Court. We would then develop a net zero carbon housing solution using MMC principles at the third phase at Sussex Grove. We believe this would be the first net zero carbon housing development in St Helens.

1) Somerset Street

The site comprises two rows of cleared land on either side of Somerset Street in Parr. The site is in Torus' ownership, except for a small plot of land to the south-east of the site in St Helens Council ownership which was not included in the original stock transfer.

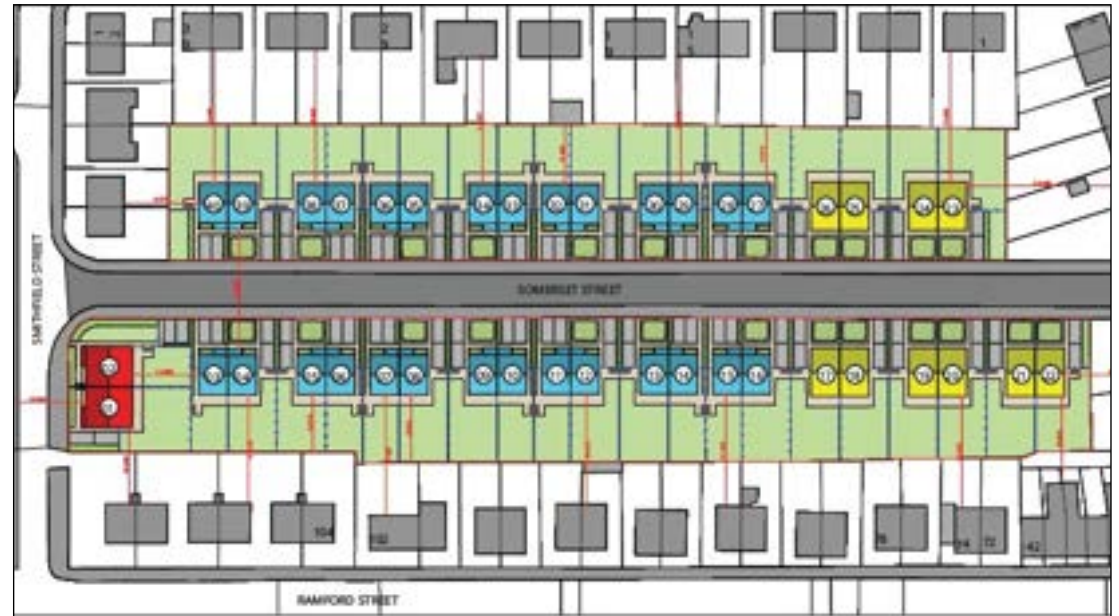
The site has been in a poor environmental state for some time with a significant level of fly tipping, anti-social behaviour, and regular visits by Merseyside Fire Service. It is agreed by stakeholders that the site would benefit from being brought forward for housing development.

Homes would be built using traditional methods and utilising Torus' standard house types which will be compliant to the new 2022 Building Regulations (31% carbon improvements) which links to Torus' emerging sustainability agenda.

In consultation with our Sales Team, as part of tenure diversification, we are committed to offer some intermediate housing under the Rent to Buy tenure.

Rent to Buy is defined as a housing product where your home is rented (Affordable Rent) for up to 5 years and during this period, you can purchase the home on a Shared Ownership basis. This enables first time buyers and those with a small deposit to gain access to the property market. Through the success of Somerset Street, Torus may develop a Shared Ownership offer at the Sussex Grove site.

Our Assets team would also look to deliver an environmental improvement programme to Torus' homes adjoining Somerset Street to provide an aesthetic uplift to the area.



A design has been created by our architects (HLP) which creates a 40-home development (pictured) which includes:

- **28 x 2-bed 4-person**
semi-detached houses of 72 sqm
- **10 x 3-bed 5-person**
semi-detached houses of 85 sqm
- **2 x 2-bed 3-person**
bungalows of 62 sqm

Time-scales for delivery

- **Planning Submission**
Summer 22
- **Planning Determination**
Autumn/Winter 22
- **Start on site**
Spring 23

2) Parr Mount Court

Parr Mount Court, Fingerpost, is a former Torus-owned Extra Care Scheme which was decommissioned on opening Foundry Wharf on Atlas Street in 2021. All residents have now been decanted and demolition works of the previous development has been completed. The site is entirely within Torus' ownership.

The Under One Roof and Lettings Teams have confirmed that there is a significant demand for larger properties as well as 1-bedroom apartments in this area, especially with its site location adjacent to a main arterial route and its proximity to St Helens town centre.

The scheme will be designed to meet the Future Homes Standard (estimated at 70% more efficient than 2021 levels). Torus would again take a "fabric first approach" as well as embed some low carbon technology into the scheme. Torus are exploring a partnership with Knauf, to utilise their new insulation products as a test environment.

As part of our design development, we are potentially looking at introducing terraces rather than semi-detached houses to improve the thermal insulation linking with the Future Homes Standard objective. As part of the tenure diversification element of this project, we would be looking to introduce a number of homes for Rent to Buy at Parr Mount Court alongside homes for Affordable Rent.

Torus have also been working with stakeholders to look at how existing residents next to the Parr Mount Court site can benefit from the development through a targeted investment programme. The attached plan shows a new road (to the west of the development site referenced as "New Road") allowing existing homes on South John Street to have direct road access and potential in-curtilage parking spaces and front garden improvements. This would create an enhanced defensible space for neighbouring residents, subject to consultation.



Current drawings for the site include a development of 31 homes, comprising:

- **10 x 2-bed 4-person**
semi-detached houses of 72 sqm
- **10 x 3-bed 5-person**
semi-detached houses of 85 sqm
- **7 x 4-bed 6-person**
town house of 99 sqm
- **4 x 1-bed 2-person**
apartments of 48 sqm

Time-scales for delivery

- **Planning Submission**
Autumn 22
- **Planning Determination**
Winter 22/Spring 23
- **Start on site**
Summer 23

3) Sussex Grove

Located in close proximity to Somerset Street, Sussex Grove is in the ownership of St Helens Council. Torus intend to deliver Sussex Grove using MMC (Modern Methods of Construction).

The MMC site would also include enhanced low carbon technologies to go beyond the 2025 Future Homes Standard, including:

- Increased “fabric first” insulation technology
- Air Source Heat Pump
- Mechanical Heat Recovery system
- PV (photo voltaic cell) array to roofs
- Electric Vehicle charging stations

Our ambition would be to create the very first net zero carbon housing development in St Helens with minimal heating requirements to support our residents with fuel poverty and energy insecurity issues.

Torus are currently engaged with a number of MMC providers nationally and locally, including OSCO Homes in Manchester and Starship Homes, based on the Wirral. Torus have two current MMC schemes with OSCO Homes in St Helens (Pennine Close and Egerton Street) whilst Torus are currently developing eight bungalows with Starship in Wallasey, Merseyside.

Torus would work in partnership with St Helens Council on the transfer of land at Sussex Grove at a nominal land value to enable Torus and St Helens Council to work together on this ground-breaking net zero housing development. Torus would assess a Shared Ownership tenure mix following the redevelopment of the Somerset Street scheme.



Fig 1.

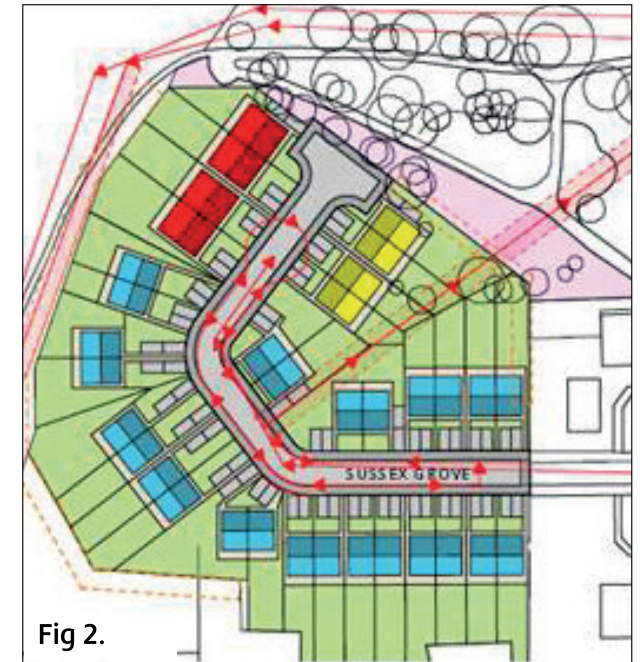


Fig 2.

Torus are currently developing the tenure mix for Sussex Grove in consultation with stakeholders and St Helens Council. There are two tenure mix options highlighted within the report.

Fig 1.
A bungalow (shown in red) dominated scheme - 2 bed 3 person bungalows at 62 sqm

Fig 2.
A house (shown in blue and yellow) dominated scheme - 3 bed 5 person houses at 85 sqm

Time-scales for delivery

→ **Planning Submission**
Autumn/Winter 22

→ **Planning Determination**
Spring/Summer 23

→ **Start on site**
Summer 23

House Type Examples



Links to St Helens Borough Housing Strategy 2022-27

The Area Action Plan proposals will also link and support St Helens Council as part of the borough's Housing Strategy 2022-27 including work under the five themes of:

- **Towards Carbon Net Zero** – to deliver exemplar schemes in partnership with Registered Providers during 2023
- **Improving Health and Wellbeing** – to prioritise bungalows and larger homes for those in need
- **Delivering Regeneration and Growth** – to assist authority's target of 486 new homes per year, including 117 homes for affordable rent
- **Creating Communities** – to work with Torus' and other local residents on a consultation exercise via our Tenant Voice resident forum. To work with key stakeholders in Fingerpost and Parr alongside our charitable arm, Torus Foundation to support a thriving and sustainable local community
- **Supported and Specialist Housing** - to prioritise the construction of bungalows and larger family homes for those in need.



Example of Starship MMC installation at New Ferry, Wirral

Summary

In summary, the Area Action plan highlights three new build development schemes that link to St Helens Housing Strategy and promote a partnership arrangement between Torus and St Helens Council:

Somerset Street will be a traditional built development with compliance to 2022 Building Regulations (30% more efficient) as a base line scheme

Parr Mount Court will be a traditional built development to meet the Future Homes Standards in advance of 2025 (70% more efficient) utilising low carbon technologies

Sussex Grove will utilise Modern Methods of Construction and be built beyond the 2025 Future Homes Standard to create St Helens and Torus' very first net zero carbon housing development

In conjunction with Torus Foundation and HMS, we can achieve real social value in Fingerpost and Parr whilst developing low carbon technologies that will bring safe, warm and efficient new homes to offset fuel poverty issues in our communities.

All the schemes will offer a multitude of benefits to St Helens and the people who live here, including:

- Creating the very first net zero carbon housing scheme in St Helens
- Regenerating disused land, and reducing environmental issues (fly tipping)
- Supporting people with rising energy costs and assisting with fuel poverty through creating more sustainable homes
- Increasing training and employment opportunities for local people
- Actively meeting local demand and bolstering the affordable housing offer in St Helens
- Generating benefits for the built environment, as well as creating tangible social benefits to the community

This pioneering partnership will lead the way in the creation of truly sustainable, affordable housing developments across St Helens and establish both the borough and Torus as leaders in creating healthy, sustainable, thriving communities that live well, for years to come.



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