

Homes England reaffirms commitment to the north east by relocating to Newcastle office

Government housing agency Homes England has signed a deal with Newcastle City Council to lease office space in the city centre's new building, The Lumen.

The agency currently has a north east base in Gateshead, with the relocation to Newcastle expected to take place later this year.

With several live development sites in the region, Homes England is committed to investing in the area. Schemes include the East Quayside development, which will see almost 300 build-to-rent apartments on the banks of the River Tyne, and Newburn Riverside, where the agency is preparing to submit an outline planning application for up to 1,250 homes later this year.

Homes England is also working in partnership with Newcastle City Council and Places for People Igloo on the continued development of the Ouseburn scheme, where work is currently on site for the next phase of 28 new homes at Lower Steenberg Yard.

The Lumen is located at the heart of Newcastle Helix, a unique partnership between Newcastle City Council, Legal & General and Newcastle University. The 24-acre development brings together industry leaders, businesses and top researchers into an internationally renowned innovation cluster. It is an exemplar of sustainable urban development which combines prestigious commercial and residential space with first-class research and education facilities. Newcastle Helix comprises £350 million of capital development and aims to host 4,000 jobs, 500,000 square foot of office space and more than 500 homes once complete.

Homes England's new 19,316 square foot office space will have capacity for up to 300 staff and demonstrates the agency's commitment to be a significant employer in the north east region and contributing to the government's levelling-up agenda. Fit-out works are due to complete in the Autumn, creating an agile and collaborative office space designed for the future. Homes England has been represented in negotiations by property agent Avison Young.

Simon Dudley, Interim Chair of Homes England, said:

With this move, we are reaffirming our commitment to employing the majority of our colleagues outside of London and locating ourselves in the heart of regions which are key to us delivering our mission of getting more homes built where they're most needed.

While moving back to an office-based work life may still be some time away, we are taking a long-term view and remain committed to

investing in the north east region and being a significant employer here. Moving to this larger, more collaborative office space will allow the agency to grow and ramp up our work in the north east.

Councillor Ged Bell, Cabinet Member for Employment and Culture at Newcastle City Council, said:

The Lumen has marked a huge milestone in the Newcastle Helix story, and we are thrilled that Homes England will be moving in later this year. Not only is Newcastle Helix a place for business, it's a place for innovation and new ways of living.

By being based in Newcastle Helix, Homes England will be able to benefit from being co-located with business, academics and local experts – supporting them to accelerate the delivery of much-needed new homes. With grade A office space, cutting edge facilities, shared working spaces and flexible floor plates The Lumen is a place where companies can collaborate and be part of a vision that looks to improve lives, now and in the future.

Tony Wordsworth, Director of Offices at Avison Young, said:

The Lumen building brings forward a significant contribution to the dwindling supply of Grade A office stock in Newcastle's city centre. The Lumen is a sustainable building with excellent transport links and will meet Homes England's requirements for a high-specification, accessible office space from which to operate in the north east.

This letting shows there is a strong level of latent demand for high-quality city centre offices, which bodes well for other schemes in the development pipeline.

Gordon Aitchison, Director of Investment and Development at LGIM Real Assets, said:

The Lumen is an exceptional space, providing opportunity for collaboration with leading academics, researchers and business people. I am sure the site will be a fantastic new base for Homes England, helping to drive economic, social and housing growth in the north of England.