

Carolyn Williams
Planning Policy Manager
Preston City Council
Town Hall
Lancaster Road
Preston
PR1 2RL

25th November 2026

Dear Carolyn

As both a developing Registered Provider and committed partner to Preston City Council, I wanted to provide you with an up-date of our regeneration plans within the Stoneygate area of the city.

As you will be aware, our plans for this part of the city are extensive and extend to not only include the acquisition of land for the provision of new housing but also include the re-development and re-provision of housing on our existing sites. Through this approach, investment and work we aim to significantly re-shape the Stoneygate area of the city to provide an affordable, sustainable and vibrant urban community.

Former Horrocks Mill Site - We have initially focussed our attention and investment into the opportunity to acquire the Former Horrocks Mill site - a large urban brownfield site located immediately next to our existing Avenham estate. To expediate this acquisition we were successful in securing an outline consent on 22nd March 2024 (APP 06/2023/0818) and completed and exchanged on the land in the same month.

Since then, we have been refining our plans and approach towards the delivery of this site and as well as undertaking further ground investigation works, have also been concentrating our attention to more detailed matters around final designs and unit mix. Throughout this process as well as engaging with officers at Preston City Council, we have also been working closely with representatives from Homes England and continue to do so in order to align funding opportunities through the new Social and Affordable Housing Programme (SAHP).

Avenham Tower Blocks – Forming part of our wider commitment to the area, we recognised the need to invest in our current accommodation offer - including the Avenham Tower Blocks. However, and following an extensive assessment of the physical condition of these blocks, Onward took the very difficult decision to rehouse the residents and demolish these tower blocks.

All former residents were rehoused (December 2024) with the demolition contract then awarded in summer 2025. On-site works are progressing well with all three tower blocks scheduled to be demolished by November 2026 with this contract also including provision for the remediation of the site in readiness for construction.

Current Position - To date, the level of financial commitment towards these two developments alone from Onward is significant. Subsequent additional time and resource has further been devoted towards the preparation of materials to support both a Reserved Matters application for Horrocks Mill and pre application submission for the replacement scheme on the Avenham Tower Blocks site.

Whilst originally we had intended on progressing the Horrocks Mill Reserved Matters application to submission by this point, we have, as a consequence of the need to expedite the rehousing and demolition process for the adjacent Avenham Tower Blocks, needed to re-order our plans. This slight change also reflects the delay in the announcement and bid round for the next SAHP.

In this regards the bid prospectus for the SAHP was released 8th November 2025 with submission due back to Homes England by February 2026. Subject to detail and consideration, settlement announcements for all Registered Providers is expected by late Spring 2026.

Next Steps - Both the Horrocks Mill and replacement Avenham Tower Blocks schemes will form part of the SAHP bid submission for Onward with this programme placing an added emphasis upon early programme delivery. Accordingly, our aim will be secure Reserved Matters approval for Horrocks Mill scheme by or before 2029/30 with completions then falling over the following 4 years.

Demolition works on the Avenham Tower blocks means that we will have a cleared and remediated site by the end of 2026. Our aim will be to secure a new full planning approval for a replacement scheme as soon as practicable and no later than 2028/29 with completions then falling over the subsequent 2 years. Whilst subject to final design works, indicatively such a replacement scheme is anticipated to deliver over 150 new homes for local people.

Onward has an excellent recent track record of delivery against its contracted targets with Homes England. We are an existing Strategic Partner of Homes England and anticipate remaining so for the next 10-year Social and Affordable Housing Programme period. Preston is and remains one of Onward's key communities and as such we remain committed to not only improving the quality standard and condition of our existing homes, but also to grow and supplement our existing communities through new development opportunities.

I trust this outlines our current position and future intentions regarding the opportunities at Stoneygate, and please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further detail.

Yours sincerely

David Tonks

David Tonks
Head of Regeneration and Strategy
Onward Homes

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