

Community-led Housing

What is Community-led Housing?

Community-led housing projects are led by community groups who are determined to make sure that new homes are built in their local area * to meet local housing needs in an affordable way; that can be held in perpetuity for the continued use of future generations. They are usually available to rent and cannot be purchased on the open market.

Projects are often developed by, or in partnership with, a local community organisation who set up a Community Land Trust and the local community organisation acquires the land, builds, owns and manages the dwellings. A community can alternatively partner with a Registered Provider/Housing Association who will take on some/all of the responsibility for them.

There are many different ways that you can deliver a Community-led Housing scheme. There is no one-size-fits-all, so you can tailor your scheme around your communities needs and the skills of those you have available to help you.

Community-led Housing is frontloaded with public consultation, input from local people who know what is needed to help their location thrive for future decades.

Community-led Housing is an achievable dream because there is currently a large amount of funding available to help to deliver these types of homes.

What isn't Community-led Housing?

It isn't one of the large housebuilders buying land and bringing forward dwellings to a corporate standard without public consultation or any inclusion of local needs in the equation.

What is the idea behind the Community-led Housing movement?

Broadly speaking, people under 40 are finding it increasingly difficult to access housing that they can afford, both to rent and buy, in the places they would like to live. Many places in Suffolk have become too expensive for people to live who earn an average income, even jointly. This means that often people are moving out of the locations where their families are available to support them, the places they went to school and where they work. This can have a big impact on our villages.

Additionally a high number of second home's are owned across both districts and this has removed many of the small and first time buyer dwellings from the market place.

Also, we are finding that older people, who are long established in a community, are struggling to access age appropriate housing for their future life.

In Mid Suffolk & Babergh Community-led Housing is all about rural locations and local people, it is about keeping our villages thriving. Local services such as keeping the village schools open with local children and keeping local people available to run the shops, garages, pubs and local businesses, like hairdressers and cafes, which are a life-line to so many. In most parishes there is a community nurse, local childcare providers & carers in the community to locally help others in need.

We are hoping to be able to help maintain and develop the amazing hidden network of neighbours and community volunteers who are out there in our districts; supporting each other daily for no pay or wide recognition.

Excellent services that are quietly available in our communities, but the employees are not earning high salaries to buy or rent a premium.

Affordability ratio in rural areas are very high, in some places in Suffolk up to x 10 (2014 figures) a local average wage; compared to a national average of 6.96%.

Through Community-led Housing we are seeking to provide properties that are held in perpetuity for all generations, not subject to discounted right to buy and can be reused and recycled by local people in housing need for generations.

Live/Work = excellent lifestyle as you are close to home to have the advantages of no long commute.

It is about keeping families together to supply support networks across generations. Grandparents looking after grandchildren, children looking after parents, families being available to support each other.

Long term good health and mental well-being are linked to good homes and having a good support network available. Wider NHS support networks are reduced presently, so people rely so closely on families and neighbours to support them through ill health, minor or major crisis. Being locked out, looking after a key, getting some shopping or help after an operation or illness. All of these little things go towards making a community that thrives and survives. These deeds demonstrate to our children what community is, so that can then be replicated in future generations.

How can we do this?

The CHF is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to access funding to deliver community-led housing that galvanises local support and is driven by the commitment and energy of individuals it will benefit. Government has committed a second phase of funding of £163 million between now and Summer 2020 to bring

forward this movement and allow 'normal' people the opportunity to deliver local needs, affordable dwellings in their community that remain in perpetuity.

Babergh and Mid Suffolk received a combined £415,000 from the first tranche of the Community Housing Fund to help to drive this movement in our area and we are seeking to invest this money directly in our communities by supporting local people directly to investigate and bring forward Community-led Housing schemes.

I am committed to working directly with community based groups so we can develop this aspiration locally to deliver affordable homes that are needed by local people.

Usually we begin the process by examining the housing need locally and building a suitable model from there.

*All schemes are subject to Babergh and Mid Suffolk Planning Policy.

Funding remains available from Babergh and Mid Suffolk directly. We have agreement from Cabinet that the funding be split 35% Capital Funding and 65% Revenue Funding. This can be subject to some flexibility depending on the scheme and circumstances.

Babergh DC received £189,000 and Mid Suffolk £225,00 from the original tranche. My post has been funded from the scheme and we have already allocated some funding to communities directly.

The Application Process:

In order to apply for a grant, groups must have had an initial introductory meeting with the Elizabeth Ling, Community Housing Enabling Officer at Babergh and Mid Suffolk. This meeting will help to explain what community-led housing is, the terms of the grant fund and how to apply. Applications will be considered by a panel made up of representatives from Babergh or Mid Suffolk District Councils on a 4 - 6 weekly basis.

Contact:

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Further Reading:

National CLT Website, Lavenham CLT Website, East Bergholt CLT Website, Babergh & Mid Suffolk Website, NPPF (Revised Version - 2018) Appendix 2 for definition of Affordable Housing, Wrigley's Law Website.

FAQS:

Who are Homes England?

Homes England (formerly The Homes and Communities Agency or HCA) is the national housing and regeneration agency for England. It is the regulator of social housing providers and works with local partners to create new affordable homes and thriving neighbourhoods.

homesengland.gov.uk

How do you define Affordable Housing?

Affordable Housing is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF (revised version July 2018).

Annex 2: Glossary

Affordable housing: housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

a) **Affordable housing for rent:** meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).

b) **Starter homes:** is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.

c) **Discounted market sales housing:** is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.

d) **Other affordable routes to home ownership:** is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.