

Chichester District Council's Community Led Housing Forum

Minutes

Monday 2nd July 2018 6pm – 8.30pm
The Old Library, Knockhundred Row, Midhurst. GU29 9DQ.

Attendees: Councillor Jane Kilby-Chair (JK) , Holly Nicol (HN), James Brigden (JB), Bryn Jones (BJ), Tracey Flitcroft (TF), Nat Belderson (NB), Dave Chapman (DC), Karen Hillhouse (KH), Dave Ahlquist (DA), Catherine Kirkham (CK), David Coote (DC), Richard Hitchcock (RH), Mairi Rennie (MR), Elizabeth Brown (EB), Simon Ward (SW), Gerard McCloskey (GM), Neil Ryder (NR), Peter Drummond (PD), Carol Osmaston (CO), Nigel Carter (NC), Paul Bagshaw (PB), Dwynwen Stepien (DS), Harry Thuiler (HT)

Apologies: Linda Grange (LG)

6.00pm – 6.05pm **Welcomes, apologies and introductions (Chair)**

Cllr JK as CDC Portfolio Holder for Housing welcomed everyone to the second community led housing forum.

6.05pm – 6.30pm **Group updates (all groups)**

Midhurst:

DC advised the CLT found was up and running and they were steadily progressing towards delivering affordable housing: They have set themselves up as a Company Limited by Guarantee; a company bank account is set up and their website has been launched. The CLT have undergone numerous site searches around Midhurst and adjacent parishes. Basic plans have been drawn up regarding one site which they are hopeful will come to fruition by the end of 2018. A lot of support has been received from the local community through public consultations regarding affordable housing within the parish.

Westbourne:

RH advised that a steering group has been established and their inaugural meeting was held on 3 July 2018. The parish neighbourhood plan is currently undergoing examination, but has been identified as not being fully compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework. There is a public perception identified by the working group that Westbourne is an affluent “ghetto” specifically for larger market housing. The site which they have shown significant interest in is currently owned by CDC. This was a potential site that they wanted to include in their neighbourhood plan but was rejected in favour of another site.

Rogate:

MR advised that the Rogate Neighbourhood Plan was in its final stages. The CLT accepted that they are still a fledgling group. They are aware that a sensitive approach towards affordable housing needed to be taken within the parish. Rogate are looking to incorporate residents and parish councillors from Trotton with Chithurst parish. A housing needs survey was recently completed in 2017 by CDC housing delivery team on behalf of the parish council which will be used to identify the local housing need and inform the CLT accordingly. They are currently at the stage of setting up their governance. They feel they are a committed group who will deliver affordable housing. Their next objectives are to approach landowners to identify potential parcels of land for affordable housing.

Wisborough green:

PD advised that Wisborough Green is currently at the early stages of forming a CLT. There are currently two developments going through CDC's planning process. Their main focus is to acquire and take management of the section 106 affordable homes on these sites. They view shared ownership as unaffordable and would lean more towards the delivery of affordable rented units. They were one of the first neighbourhood plans to be adopted within the district in 2015. Looking to the future, they want to develop through rural exception sites.

Cllr JK opened progress updates to the CLTs from outside of the district.

Emsworth:

HT on behalf of Emsworth CLT advised that Emsworth currently have a neighbourhood plan in draft and progressing forward on that matter. They are in possible site discussions with Victorian Cottage Hospital land owners. They have identified some potential barriers with housing providers in delivering on these types of sites. Havant Borough Council holds the funding for Emsworth CLT.

Haslemere:

PB on behalf of Haslemere CLT provided an update on their progress. Haslemere are situated on the Surrey West Sussex northern border and currently involved in forming a partnership with some of the northern parishes in Chichester District to progress towards affordable housing. They have shown particular interest in working with Linchmere parish. The majority of the problems they are encountering centre around the access to the sites. They do have project ideas both within Haslemere and Linchmere. They also find that even though they are identified as a charity or non-profit organisation, landowners are reluctant to sell land off at reduced prices. The representative did state that progress is positively moving forward.

6.30pm – 7.00pm **Scheme feasibility (Karen Hillhouse - Hastoe)**

KH introduced herself as the Regional Head of Development. Her presentation on scheme feasibility is attached. The notes below are following KH's presentation.

Hastoe are seeing less benevolent land owners willing to gift land to groups or sell to them for a significantly reduced price.

KH, TF and **NB** gave a more in depth definition on what a rural exception site is. These are sites usually specified for communities with an identified housing need and usually involve development on the edge or outside of the settlement policy area. CDC and SDNP have specific policies for

exception sites which ensure they are for local people in perpetuity and deliver 100% affordable housing.

Hastoe works extensively throughout the planning process to carry out their due diligence. This involves undertaking infrastructure and ecological surveys to warrant planning permission. This is an expensive process; **KH** referenced one site costed around £80,000 which will deliver 12 units. She stressed that this may worsen with Brexit, as build costs will increase. There is always the need to reassess scheme viability.

Hastoe are currently working with 10 CLTs. Within Chichester District, they are working with an Affordable Housing Working Group to deliver an affordable scheme built to Passivhaus standards, which are extremely energy efficient. These are air tight buildings which through their design and construction allow reduced running costs further improving their affordability areas with higher energy running costs. **KH** advised that Hastoe deal with a lot of objectors. CLTs should expect similar encounters and must always be ready for any objectors.

KH advised the forum of their Southwold Community Land Trust partnership which is seeking to deliver affordable housing on the old Southwold hospital site.

7.00pm – 7.30pm **Tea Break / Networking**

7.30pm – 8.00pm **Governance (Dave Ahlquist – Locality)**

DA introduced himself to the groups as the Development Manager at Locality. He has a background in delivering community led support. The presentation is attached.

Locality is able to bring in external organisations to work with community engagement and provide support on neighbourhood plans, and the formation of CLTs. They also work with the National Community Land trust Network and co-operative groups. Locality membership was an item which Dave supported as it allowed for interaction with other CLTs from around the country and the ability to access the full scope of support available from the organisation and its partners. They also offer an additional two services known as lifeboat and lighthouse. Lifeboat is emergency assistance for groups whereas lighthouse is more preventative and stops the groups getting into these bad situations.

Questions and Answers:

Emsworth – **HT** from Emsworth CLT questioned **DC** regarding the common legal structures and noted that companies limited by guarantee are the most common form for a charitable organisation. **DC** stated that form follows function. The organisation in question needed to identify what they wanted to deliver and the organisation structure will evolve from there. Accountants and lawyers are able to give pro-bono work on advising on these matters.

Wisborough green – The CLT members raised questions about the meanings of profit and non-profit organisations in which **KH** and **DC** answered. They stated that not for profit organisations do not distribute their profits to shareholders, which is instead re-circulated into other projects. Hastoe would be an example of a non-profit organisation.

8.00pm – 8.20pm **Site identification support and update on CLH framework spend (Holly Nicol)**

HN advised that there are several pots of money which the groups are able to access from multiple sources.

CDC is able to offer outside of the general community led housing grants, commuted sum money. South Downs National Park collect their own commuted sums, which were applicable can be utilised in delivering affordable housing. There is also the ability to access funds from the Affordable Homes Programme. CDC is currently looking into setting up a revolving loan fund to act as a start up loan fund for community led housing groups.

The district council received £1.39 million from the government's first tranche of the CLH fund to support community groups. The following grant has been approved for CDC CLH groups:

- Early stage support - up to £2000 per group
- Initial Support Grant – up to £10,000 per group
- Technical and Feasibility costs – up to £30,000 per group
- Land Costs – up to £10,000 per unit

To date £186,000 has been allocated/spent. In addition to the grants available there is potential for further staffing resources to support CLTs through the CLH funds which would be additional to **JB's** new role as Community Led Housing Officer. CDC has an agreement in place with Locality for them to support community groups within the district and grow our internal capacity. This is coupled with the current support offered from the development management and planning policy teams at CDC and SDNP, as well as support from CDC's housing delivery team.

CDC has also launched their new community led housing website where information on CLT support and funding can be found. Alternatively, the community led housing officer can be contacted to give a full breakdown of what the council can offer in supporting these groups.

Central government announced the prospectus for the next tranche of £60million of community led housing funding. This is for infrastructure costs and revenue funding. The capital funding prospectus is to follow.

Questions and Answers-

A question was raised about the composition of a CLT and how it has been identified that there is too close a link with the Parish and Town Council i.e. most of the CLT members are parish councillors. **DC** from Midhurst responded that their chair of the CLT is not a member of the town council purposefully to keep that separation, but did note that the idea for a CLT stemmed from the town council. He also added that there is a diverse mix of members on the CLT who are not councillors but the CLT was affirmed by the Town Council. Rogate CLT raised the concern that without councillors, the CLTs would struggle to get started but recognised that throughout their development they would need to diversify their makeup.

RH of Westbourne CLT raised the concern that the primary aim of the CLTs within the district was to deliver affordable housing. Westbourne CLT is looking to deliver community assets in combination with affordable housing. **DC** responded to Westbourne CLTs statement and stressed the need for local solutions for management of assets. The CLTs would need to work with the parish councils in this instance for asset management.

8.20pm – 8.25pm Items for future meetings

The following items were identified by members of the Chichester District CLTs with some input from the external CLTs about what they would like to cover in future forums. These are listed below:

- There was a proposal to do scheme visits to see other CLTs potential sites
- Success and Failure stories of CLTs
- Increasing/diversifying the CLT composition – the need to recruit the right people.
- Allocation schemes

8.25pm – 8.30pm AOB

Emsworth and Haslemere CLTs were invited to the next meeting. The date, time and location are to be specified at a later date.

There are online resources available for increasing membership of CLTs through Locality and the National Community Land Trust Network.

DA promoted the use of the National CLT networks online health website.

8.30pm Close Meeting

Provisional next meeting date:

- Thursday 29th November 2018