

Community Led Housing Forum

Agenda

Thursday 29th November 2018 6pm – 8.30pm
Committee Room 1, Chichester District Council.

Attendees: Cllr Jane Kilby (CDC & Chair), Holly Nicol (CDC), James Brigden (CDC), Bryn Jones (CDC), Tracey Flitcroft (CDC), Hannah Chivers (CDC), Nat Belderson (SDNP), Amy Loaring (CDC), Paul Mellings (Midhurst), Adrian Moore (Midhurst), Peter Gibbon (Midhurst), Frank Campbell (Westbourne), Piers Mason (Westbourne), Elena McCloskey (Rogate), Mairie Rennie (Rogate), Gerald McCloskey (Rogate), Councillor Richard Plowman (Dears Almshouse), Megan Whittle (CCDT), Paul Bagshaw (Haslemere), Cllr John Elliot (Singleton)

Apologies: Dave Chapman (Triformis Ltd), Dave Ahlquist (Locality), Gordon McAra (Midhurst), Cllr Elizabeth Hamilton (CDC), Karen Hillhouse (Hastoe)

1. Welcomes, apologies and introductions (Chair)

Cllr JK introduced the main topics of discussion for the evening and invited introductions of members around the room.

2. Update National CLH Policy and CDC Grant Framework (James Brigden)

Changes to the NPPF was published in July 2018. Entry level exception sites were introduced but **JB** stressed that they must meet the requirements set out by CDC and they don't apply in AONB's and the SDNP.

Groups were advised that they would need to be a registered provider (RP) to deliver affordable rent. **HN** stated that this would apply if the groups wanted to deliver affordable rented tenures. Other tenures such as shared ownership, discounted market sale and other forms of low cost home ownership are deliverable without being an RP. Rogate and Midhurst CLTs questioned the possibility of residents "staircasing" (i.e. buying out) their property. **HN** responded with outlining the restrictions placed on the "right to acquire" in rural designated areas. **JB** introduced the concept of delivering "affordable private rent" through a build to rent scheme. This would avoid the need for the CLT to become a RP.

The CDC local plan review is going out to consultation on 13 December 2018. **HN** stressed that affordable housing requirements set out in the presentation applied to market sites and not rural exception sites. **NB** provided an update on the South Downs local plan. An affordable housing contribution of 50% will need to be provided on sites delivering a net increase of 11 or more, with onsite contributions down to 4 units. This is expected to be adopted mid-2019. Examination hearings of the key policies are currently undergoing scrutiny.

JB elaborated on the funding components delivered by CDC. There is no time limit on CDC fund but are operated on a first come first served basis. Groups could apply directly to Homes England for additional top up funds but would need to have robust evidence to support it. **RP**

asked whether Dears Almshouse would be able to access this funding. **HN** responded that they were most likely not eligible for capital funding but could apply for additional funding from CDC commuted sums. CDC is working on a short term development loan to support groups. **FC** and **PM** asked for further clarification about the loan and what the interest rates would be on the development loan. **HN** advised that a report was being taken to cabinet in February 2019 and would be able to provide an update on the exact matters following the meeting.

Action - JB to include other available funding schemes in next CLH newsletter and circulate presentations to all groups with the minutes.

3. Group updates (all groups)

Midhurst:

AM outlined the steps Midhurst CLT had taken and said that they had been established as a CLT since June 2017. The CLT has been in discussions with 12 land owners, mostly within the parish and have two specific sites which they want to progress forward with in 2019. They are exploring options around a potential 30 unit scheme but acknowledge that this may take a long time to deliver. **AM** expressed his thanks to **HN**, **JB** and **NB** for their continued help in supporting the CLT.

Singleton:

Singleton is working with East Dean in forming a CLT. CDC conducted a housing needs survey on behalf of both parish council's which identified the hidden need within both parishes. **JE** outlined that people who are living within the parish are being displaced as far down as Selsey due to the unaffordability of homes. The survey identified a need for smaller accommodation for households to downsize and provide suitable accommodation for first time buyers. Singleton is working with the Goodwood estate on identifying suitable sites. **JE** explained that land would be given on the provision that 5 properties would be reserved for key workers approaching retirement within the estate. The neighbouring parishes of Graffham and East Lavington have expressed an interest in learning more about affordable housing.

Haslemere CLT:

PB detailed the groups progress and intentions of working across the Surrey and Chichester boundaries. The majority of their work is predominantly being done in Surrey. They are experiencing legal problems in the acquisition of land.

Rogate:

A housing needs survey was completed by **HN** in 2017. Rogate have joined with Stedham and Trotton parishes to form a steering group. The steering group are working with Sussex Community Housing Hub; a department within AiRS to assist them in delivering housing. A meeting on the 30 November 2018 was being held to discuss the terms of reference. Problems have occurred with land identification and the group have found that they are unable to purchase land at higher prices. Stedham's representative outlined that their regulation 16 neighbourhood plan has been given authority from SDNP. Consultation on the plan will commence from the 30 November 2018.

CCDT:

MW described CCDT's progress so far, and that 2 properties have been identified which they want to progress forward. Feasibility studies have been undertaken and they have been closely working with CDC to deliver these schemes. They intend to house at risk care leavers. Working with CDC to potentially use the development loan to support construction of the units.

Westbourne:

Westbourne first met in July as a steering group. As of the 13th November, the group has formed as a CLT constituted as a community benefit society. Whilst exploring other community asset projects within the parish, their initial focus is on delivering a housing development. They are exploring the option of a 10 unit scheme and have commissioned CDC Housing Delivery Team to undertake a housing needs survey. A joint report by CDC Estates and Housing Delivery teams is being taken to CDC cabinet in January 2019 around the sale of land to Westbourne. A development brief has been drafted and will be assessed on the 3 December 2018. Following approval of the brief, the CLT is looking to select an architect.

Dears Charity:

RP stated that the charity is quite advanced in the planning stage. He described that they were in need of support throughout the planning stage as expenses do stack up. **RP** also advised that building regulations have incurred extra costs. Dears have hired a quantity surveyor to help throughout the tendering process which has befitted their negotiation powers with builders. 80% of their new development is being funded by the sale of another property, but there is a slight shortfall for which they are seeking additional funding. **RP** advised that it may be worthwhile to get opinions from other trusts for the development process. The group was meeting the following week to press go on the scheme. Construction of the units is expected to take 38 weeks which will double the provision of housing delivered and provide sustainable development near to the city centre.

4. Wickham Community Land Trust (Geoff Phillpotts)

GP presentation will be circulated alongside the minutes.

Wickham CLT's first development was Houghton Gardens; a rural exception site delivering a mix of affordable rent and shared ownership units, benefitting from nearby community facilities. The group was founded through a local distaste with housing association allocations. They worked with the local council's rural housing enabler to complete housing needs survey and achieved a high response rate.

GP specified the importance of the National CLT Network meetings and how they can help newly forming CLTs. They worked with Hyde Housing to negotiate the disposal of land. They adopted a very conservative business plan which enabled them to withstand financial setbacks such as the recession. They are formed as a RP but acknowledged that when they formed there were fewer barriers to what there is now. Problems arose with the allocations process. Wickham CLT has adopted a local connection allocation and a rural exception cascade from the local councils adopted allocations policy. They don't have many voids and have noted that their largest turnover is 1 bedroom flats which appeal to newly forming households and people who have recently separated. The overall feedback from residents is good and they are looking into the

acquisition of 20 units from a 200 mixed development site being bought forward by Homes England.

RP asked about 3 best lessons the CLT had learnt from the process. **GP** responded with the importance of financial modelling, the overall professionalism of the group and how well that came across to housing associations and the local authority, and being persistent in delivering the groups vision.

PM asked about financial modelling and whether they would be prepared to share. **GP** reiterated that most of their documents are held on their website (<https://www.wickhamclt.org.uk/>) but would circulate the financial modelling to **JB and HN** for the group's usage.

Action – GP to send financial model to JB and HN.

5. Allocating your homes - A discussion on current and future policy (Holly Nicol / James Brigden)

EM asked whether the parish council can have a say in allocating a person to a home. **HN** responded that current homes delivered within a parish are allocated through the Councils Housing Register which categorises household's priority need. **BJ** supported this by providing rough numbers of who is on the housing register.

Questions arose around what is meant by a section 106 agreement. **HN** and **TF** explained that this is a legal undertaking outlining the planning obligations relating to affordable housing and community infrastructure levy (CIL) contributions amongst some other obligations. **RP** asked whether a CLT could access CIL as a funding mechanism. **TF** responded that a parish council can access but would explore the option of a CLT being able to access CIL.

Notable Points from the discussion exercise:

- Targeting the right demographic – establish the housing need early in the process through a housing needs survey/assessment
- Increase membership of the group – this will facilitate people getting interested in the project and potential tenants/purchasers
- Key workers
- Downsizing accommodation – provide smaller homes for the elderly to downsize into and for first time buyers to access the housing market.
- Ensure competent practices within the group –this will show the local authority, local community that you are a serious organisation which will build up trust.
- What is the point if the local authority is going to fill it?
- Set the rules for allocating a home early.
- Agree terms with the local authority.
- Implement a cascade system – this will allow for homes which are not filled to be let/sold to people in adjacent parishes fulfilling the larger scaled local need.

HN, JB and JK thanked the groups for their input and stated that this information would feed into the CDC allocations review in 2019.

Action:

JB to send round allocations policy

TF to see if CLTs could access CIL funding to support and whether a PC could access behalf of the CLT.

6. Questions and answers.

When will the revised allocations policy be adopted? **JK** advised that this has to be finished before 2020 alongside the housing strategy review. **HN** added that the housing strategy will go out to consultation which the groups can get involved in.

RP reiterated that a flexible approach should be maintained by the CLTs to account for differing circumstances and that the Dears Almshouse adopts a discretionary approach when dealing with its allocations.

Will there be a common approach to allocations between SDNP and CDC? **NB** and **HN** will provide an update on this matter when further information following the South Downs local plan is adopted.

PM was unsure on how to bring a contentious topic like housing to the community. **AM** provided an update on how they set out their objectives within a public consultation and how this would benefit the community. This facilitated a mailing list in which the group can provide key updates on progress through email.

Action – HN and **NB** to provide an update on a common approach to allocations

7. Items for future meetings

The following items were raised for future meetings:

- Update on Local Plans from CDC and SDNP from planning officers.
- Funding and finance of schemes

It was put to the forum that shorter workshop style meetings be more beneficial. The consensus from the forum showed that this approach would be preferred. Forums would be still be undertaken twice a year but would be intermitted by the workshop. The first workshop will focus on funding and financial modelling of a CLT.

Action - HN will enquire about the possibility of getting a Homes England representative to inform the groups on the process of becoming a registered provider.

Provisional next meeting date:

Workshop – March – date TBC

Forum – 30 May 2019