

**Highbury Housing Group: December 5<sup>th</sup> 2022**

**Community Led Housing – why it matters and how it can be scaled up**

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to make a strategic case for Community Led Housing to be part of mainstream housing policy in England. We examine what is meant by CLH, how it has evolved, and the challenges facing it. We examine the current pipeline of CLH in England, the barriers and opportunities for expansion of the sector, and we make recommendations (page 12) for policy makers and the Highbury Group.

The paper has three Annexes; Annex 1 Stephen Hill's Notes on CLH; Annex 2 Nicholas Falk's paper on Co-operatives; Annex 3 Tom Chance, CEO of the Community Land Trust Network, presentation to Chelmsford Council for the CLH in their Garden Village.

We believe that the CLH has been a marginalised sector within the housing policy debate for too long, in spite of the fact that the CLH sector addresses directly demands for housing that are not being adequately met by the market or by the public sector.

The purpose of CLH is to exercise democratic control over living conditions and life choices. It often entails taking land and buildings out of the speculative market to be held in common by the community or groups of residents. Once held in common, there is scope to develop a range of associated facilities that reflect local needs, and are available to the wider community.

CLH in all its forms (Community Land Trusts, Community Development Trusts, Co-operatives, and Cohousing) is not new. It arises from a long tradition of co-operative housing and enterprise driven by the energy of communities and trades unions. It is more common and accepted as a necessary part of mainstream housing policymaking in many European countries and it is more strongly recognized in Scotland and Wales; but not in England. However, CLH is asserting itself again in England because of the broken nature of the housing market, Right to Buy, and the massive underfunding of social housing. The housing crisis demands we look for new ways forward: CLH has the potential to make a difference if it is given the right political and financial support.

## **The Political challenge: A Conversation**

By way of introducing why this is important, Stephen Hill has suggested that it would be helpful for us 'professionals' to consider a (polemical) proposition that would represent the perspective of communities. This is set out in the form of a short conversation between a curious questioner and answers drawn from the collective voices of community housing groups and

their advisers (as heard over many years), on the theme of... ***Why do politicians and public officials never wonder why communities are prepared to give up years of voluntary time and effort to provide the kind of housing that their communities need and could reasonably have expected public policy and mainstream providers to build for them?***

Q. Yes, well, why **do** you spend so much time? Why don't you just take what's available from developers, private landlords or housing associations/councils?

A. Oh, you mean the people who haven't been building enough homes in the places, for the communities that need them? Developers whose homes are so good that over 70% of potential homeowners would rather not buy one if they had a choice? Homes that are nearly all obsolete before we move in, and will need retrofitting to meet ZC by 2050? Homes that are built on flood plains and will be regularly under water in the future? Homes that are not affordable to most people on a normal income? Landlords that don't do the repairs, to make more money out of us, or are more interested in developing more homes, or fixing problems with the ones they already built...not very well? I think the answer is really quite obvious, isn't it?

Q. That's a bit harsh. I mean they can't do everything, can they?

A. Yes, we absolutely agree with that. They can't do it all, so why can't they find it in themselves to work with communities, with citizens...these homes are intended for us after all...in the places where we can add value and do things that they can't...or won't. We can source land from local people. We can campaign for more homes near us. We regularly get unanimous approvals at planning committees for our projects. We could help them work out what each place, each community, really needs. There isn't enough public or private money to waste on new homes that are not fit for purpose.

Q. But surely government has to take responsibility for deciding housing priority needs?

A. At the moment, housing policy pretends that the types of affordable housing that government should support, as designed in Whitehall, will work everywhere. Well, our experience is different. Been to 'priced out' Cornwall or Pembrokeshire recently? Or overheated Bristol or Oxford? Or 'left behind' places in Liverpool, Manchester or Hull? Some very particular places need something particular to that place, without which that community cannot and will not thrive. National and even local government simply doesn't have that level of fine grained information...we do or can find out, probably more easily than they can. The fact that such housing doesn't fit with the way housebuilders, councils and housing associations work...maybe too small to bother with, too different to their standard forms of production, more expensive than standard products...is not a good reason for not building them....unless government actually says 'we are not going to help **you**'. But they'd never do that, of course,

though the effect of the current system is the same: we are the 'left behind'. No one is going to help us unless we do it ourselves.

Q. But if public money is short, isn't it reasonable that government should prioritise the best value housing projects?

A. Yes, but what you mean, or rather what government means by that is just the lowest cost per unit. There is no way that we can compete on cost per unit. We need access to the equity capital needed to get projects going to the point that we can borrow from conventional lenders. We are no different to SME, self and custom build housebuilders in that respect. We also have not had the benefit enjoyed by most housing associations of finances grounded in 15 years of nearly 100% grant to build a balance sheet of income earning assets. We don't need that...we often only build the one scheme that our community needs, and which no one else will build. Also if the housing is to be genuinely affordable to a particular place, in the particular economic geography of that place, that may well mean that production and grant costs are higher. That can't be imagined away. There is a price for genuine affordability. It's obviously an opportunity cost...but we've shown that there also real money paybacks for supporting our projects. So if government really isn't going to help its citizens in those places, then it has to come clean and tell them.

Q. Oh, I don't think we need go as far as that. Hmm...so I can now see that community led housing could really bring something different to the table. So why do you find it so difficult to make your projects happen?

A. That's a big question (and you'll find some of the answers in the helpful paper below), but we've always felt that political culture lies at the heart of the challenges we face. Money, access to land, valuation of public land, are all technically fixable...there are perfectly good ways of sorting those challenges, as can be seen all over mainland Europe...providing there is the political will, which there is...Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, and now even France. Even here, we can see what a difference is made when city leaders in places like Liverpool, Leeds and Bristol, for example, adopt policies that are pro-actively supportive of CLH. But generally, we would say that if a fraction of the time, effort and even money spent by national and local government, (and the Olympic Delivery Agency, now LLDC), trying **not** to do CLH were used to try and unlock those barriers, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

Q. Really? Can you elaborate?

A. Well, here are some of the standard 'reasons' for politicians and public officials being unwilling or reluctant to support CLH:

*We're not allowed to...It would break State Aid rules...It's complicated and takes too long...It's too difficult and adds risk...People will ask for unreasonable things...We will lose control of the project...More land given to CLH would result in less housing being delivered of other types and tenures (What does that actually mean???)...We have to focus on those schemes that deliver new homes more simply, quickly and cheaply...etc, etc*

Speaking personally, I've been involved in managing housing developments of all kinds, over 40 years, and must have been terribly unlucky or just not very competent to have missed out on all those simple, quick and cheap projects. But the point is that these are universal characteristics of any housing development. They all take a long time, are uniquely difficult, risky, complicated &c...that is our uniquely British problem, and despite best efforts, no one has cracked it yet.

And before you ask me another question...I could go on, as you might have gathered, about, you know, democracy, citizen autonomy, proper devolution etc...but let's just settle for saying we can't actually afford to go on building what we know will be socially and environmentally unsustainable places, however beautiful they might look. CLH, self and custom build housing are pretty well the only examples of the demand side shaping the supply side, both the 'what' and the 'how' of the housing that citizens and communities actually need and want. We have been building Environment, Social and Governance (ESG)<sup>i</sup> 'compliant' housing and places for generations. That's why we exist. Nice to see everyone now wanting to do the same. We are the voice of the demand side. Perhaps it would be polite and even smart to listen to us, and build us properly into the supply side? And then of course, there's the whole business of who cares for these beautiful new places...but perhaps you'll cover that in your paper.

### **Current perceptions of the role of CLH in housing policy**

There is considerable ignorance and lack of knowledge among decision makers about CLH. It has been orthodoxy in Government in regard CLH as less good value for money than affordable housing provided by housing associations – but no compelling and rounded body of evidence has been provided to back up this assertion.

CLH developers need to be understood as undercapitalized developers usually with little or no equity to invest in upfront costs, similar, in fact, to many small housebuilders and self-builders, whose access to early stage bank borrowing was effectively ended as a result of the GFC. Compared with other providers, they come into being only to produce social and community benefits for a particular place/community, however small the settlement. Government does not explicitly value or measure such benefits in relation to any of its housing investment programmes.

Most CLH developers have historically only developed the one scheme to meet the needs of their community. That is changing with district or citywide operations becoming more common,

either directly through an individual CLT or coop, (not cohousing) eg London CLT, Calder Valley CLT , Redditch Coop Homes or via the collective activities of CLH groups of all kinds, supported and curated by CLH (sub-regional or city-based) Hubs and secondary cooperatives like North West Housing Services. The hubs and secondaries have enabled CLH to make a much greater and more visible contribution to local housing supply, which has been recognised and supported by local politicians, particularly in cities like Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, Bristol, and to a more limited extent in London.

Nevertheless, CLH remains a seemingly niche sector in terms of political interest and thus government funding, despite high profile successes in England, for example – Granby4Streets and Homebaked CLTs in Liverpool, LILAC Cohousing in Leeds, St Clement’s Hospital (London CLT) and Coin Street Community Builders in London; Marmalade Lane in Cambridge, and Lancaster Cohousing (and its spinoff CLT and Halton Seniors, in partnership with the district and county councils – cohousing for people with dementia). In many places, CLH groups are able to advocate for and succeed in developing more housing to meet local needs and demand, where there has previously been strong resistance to any new housing. Stretham and Wilburton CLT in the Cambridge Sub-Region is an exemplar which led East Cambs DC to adopt an SPD for CLH which has unlocked resistance to new homes in many villages across the district; leading ultimately to the CLT leading development of the 500 home Kennett Garden Village.

CLH is closely related to self and custom build, which Government now includes with CLH under the label ‘self-commissioned housing’. The Graven Hill development area in Bicester was inspired by places like Almere in the Netherlands, as a large scale expansion area on the edge of an existing town. However, it was initially enabled by two small scale community self-build projects for homeless ex-servicemen. The visibility of the sites, on main road locations, aroused local interest in self-build, and prompted Cherwell District to imagine a citizen developed town expansion area that would command public support locally...which it has.

This position contrasts with CLH in other countries where it is a mainstream housing sector attracting national and local government support e.g. Denmark (prominent cohousing movement), and the Netherlands (cohousing for seniors), Germany (self-build and coops across the country, notably in Karlsruhe, Tübingen, Berlin and Vauban), Switzerland (Mers als Wohnen, and Kraftwerk), Belgium (CLT Brussels), and CLTs in many states from Georgia to Vermont in the USA, increasingly as owners of ‘planning gain’ affordable housing requirements. In these countries, CLH is a strategically important sector, usually with roots deep in social, cooperative and political movements addressing a wide range of needs from civil rights, refugee resettlement, community resilience to climate instability, intergenerational living and ageing, women’s rights, local employment particularly women’s ability to enter the labour market, LGBTQ+ rights, through to mental and physical health and wellbeing. These are all aspects of

new housing supply that challenge mainstream housing providers. A notable and recent exception is the leadership of Housing 21 to develop a ten project cohousing programme across Birmingham, over the next decade, for elders from a range of ethnic minority backgrounds.

### **What is CLH?**

CLH is not a new sector – it has a long history in land and community movements across the globe – but in the UK it has received a significant impetus in the last 20 years in part because the mainstream housebuilders market is ‘broken’, and because the social sector has been severely reduced by austerity measures and Right to Buy.

- CLH is all forms of social/affordable rent and intermediate housing built (or renovated) by Community Development Trusts, Community Land Trusts, Co-operatives, Cohousing Groups, Self-Help (retrofit) and collective self-builders. Tenure and affordability is decided by the community proposing the project on the basis of local need (not by centrally designed products). CLH meets a range of different housing needs – from social and specialised housing, to genuinely affordable housing for many who do not meet the increasingly narrow eligibility criteria for social housing, or for key workers and others that are not catered for by mainstream market housing or housing associations. They are particularly significant in parts of the country where housing markets are distorted by the influx of free capital available for second and rental holiday homes, as well as speculative investment.
- CLH are genuinely affordable to rent and buy so that communities are not displaced, young people can have security, elderly residents can downsize, and village shops and schools remain open. Because prices are protected in perpetuity, and land is held in common, future generations will benefit from them too. CLH escapes the Right to Buy and Right to Acquire as long as it developed by a CLT registered as a social housing provider, housing associations developing on long leases from a CLH body, or coops which are exempt from these Rights by virtue of being able to grant only contractual tenancies to their members/residents.
- CLH homes are designed by local people. They are built with the needs of communities and neighbours in mind, not for profit. They usually aim for higher environmental standards than volume built market or housing association housing, and build on the potential of communities living together more sustainably.

CLH produces other quantifiable wellbeing outcomes, as reported by Capital Economics.

(<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/resource/housing-community-community> )

including greater social cohesion and a reduction in loneliness

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-led-housing-and-loneliness>),

and a significant proportion of groups take on or develop a wider range of assets to support

community wealth-building (<https://cles.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Community-led-development-a-roadmap-for-asset-ownership-FINAL.pdf>) such as commercial and retail space, community centres, public open spaces and farmland to sustain their communities.

### **How is CLH defined?**

There is currently no formal legal CLH definition, but the following wording was adopted as an administrative three part definition for the purpose of defining organisations/projects that could receive support through the Community Housing Fund 2016-20:

- 1. Meaningful community engagement and consent occurs throughout the development process. The community does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the process, or build the homes themselves, though some may do*
- 2. The local community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes and in a manner of their choosing, and this may be done through a mutually supported arrangement with a Registered Provider that owns the freehold or leasehold for the property*
- 3. The benefits to the local area and/or specified community must be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.*

It was drafted to capture the main characteristics of CLTs, cohousing, cooperative and Self-Help projects. It also aimed to cover the range of approaches from DIY citizen-initiated projects, like most CLTs and cohousing communities, through to the curated coop projects promoted by a housing association, which then recruits the first generation of coop members, as favoured in the Welsh Government's recent coop housing programme. It is not perfect, and the legal protection of area/community benefits 'in perpetuity', although a desirable outcome, cannot always be achieved unless as a charge registered on the title of land, which may also be an obligation arising from a s.106 planning agreement.

Discussions have been held with DLUHC and the Law Commission in recent years about a single standard definition in relation to CLH exemptions from the government's leasehold reforms and future proposals for the introduction of commonhold to replace current leasehold/freehold arrangements. In the event, the different CLH types have continued to work with their own definitions, providing more bespoke details under the overarching CHF definition.

Some notes on the definition and characteristics of each of the main types are set out in more detail in Annex 1, which also includes a longer section on CLTs which illustrates the context in which CLTs have grown, and which touch on Highbury Group interests in modes of land assembly, housing production, placemaking and long term stewardship of new housing supply.

## Who builds community led housing?

- Local activist groups who acquire or are donated often small plots of land or individual buildings; or who acquire large estates through Community Right to Buy in Scotland
- Community organisations who build CLH as part of community regeneration or neighbourhood plans or through planning approaches such as Rural Exception Sites
- Community organisations working in partnership with developers and housing associations, sometimes as part of planning gain agreements e.g. Queen Camel CLT in Somerset, and Marmalade Lane Cohousing in Cambridge.

For these reasons, CLH often begins its life as intensive voluntary effort requiring major personal and community commitment. It is cost effective because of this level of upfront and sustained commitment. This is both an advantage of CLH, but it also makes CLH vulnerable and risky - and why it needs strategic support which could also open up other routes to integrating CLH into mainstream delivery models.

## Data on CLH

The Government said in its Community Housing Fund (CHF) prospectus that the sector produced 400 new units per annum in England before the CHF became into effect.

More comprehensive analysis has been undertaken by Community Led Housing and the CLT Network who have compiled the most reliable figures, most recently for 2020/21.

[www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Delivering-the-Community-Led-Housing-Pipeline-in-England\\_Final-Copy.pdf](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Delivering-the-Community-Led-Housing-Pipeline-in-England_Final-Copy.pdf). This survey estimates that there are 659 CLH projects in the 20/21 pipeline in England, of which 48% are CLTs – the most common CLH vehicle.

Of the 11,818 units in the pipeline:

- 55% at Affordable Rent
- 19% Social Rent
- 8% Market Sale,
- 8% Market rent
- 8% Shared ownership

In other words, there is a mix of tenures in CLH projects; mainly rental tenures, often a mix on one site. There are many myths about who CLH is for; one of the most inaccurate (and unevicenced) is that 'it is middle class housing'. Even if that was a useful criticism, it is noticeable that CLH advocates and practitioners in the USA have recognised that, at least since the GFC, the housing affordability crisis is just as real for the 'threatened middle classes' as it is



for the most needy in society: and thus a serious threat to the health of any national economy. Many CLH schemes include as a matter of community policy a percentage of social housing; or draw only from the local housing waiting lists. For affordable CLH projects, there is often a local letting or sales agreement to ensure that homes are occupied by people who need them and need to be in that location. This agreement may also be registered as a charge on the title of the land, if also part of a s.106 agreement. Some schemes are solely for social or non-market rent housing e.g. Coin Street Community Builders; or Crofts Court by Oxford Community Land Trust.

### **Finance for CLH**

CLH projects require three types of funding:

- Equity/Start Up Finance - Up front revenue grants for feasibility, technical studies, and pre-development work. For CLH bodies doing more than one project, there should be some scope for recycling grant from one project to another.
- Project Finance - Capital funding for land purchase and construction obtained through grant and market loans
- Revenue Finance - To repay loans and for management and maintenance of completed projects i.e. a rental stream.

Government established a Community Housing Fund in 2016 worth £163M for projects outside London, but this fund, administered by Homes England was closed in 20/21. The GLA had a separate fund which runs until March 2023. The programme was overseen by a joint government, community sector and Homes England Steering Group, which, amongst other things, managed to clear up many confusions about the application of State Aid rules by local authorities and Homes England, and monitor the development of the national coverage of CLH Hubs.

CLH projects must now seek funding from the mainstream Levelling Up Home Building Fund or the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme. There is no longer specific Government funding support for the CLH sector, though lobbying is still going on of both the Government and Opposition for a continuation of the fund. With Government invested a significant amount in the original Community Housing Fund to strengthen the delivery infrastructure for CLH, but that Fund is now being expired leaving no appropriate source of project finance to support a strong and stable pipeline. The CLH/CLT report states that the pipeline needs £40m revenue and £2.5bn capital to achieve full delivery.

## **What are the barriers to scaling up CLH?**

- Taking land out of the market to be held in common is the key issue. In some rural areas, local landowners have been very generous in offering land at low cost for the benefit of their community. But mostly, it is very difficult for essentially voluntary groups to find, assess or purchase land at an affordable cost– sites available are often those left behind by mainstream developers, as being too small and awkward, and requiring high infrastructure costs. In urban areas, realistically public land is the main source of land for CLH projects, but the ‘best consideration’ v ‘less than best consideration’ rules continue to frustrate a sensible flow of land from public bodies, (as illustrated in Stephen Hill and other’s campaign papers to DLUHC and seen by the Group earlier in the year.)
- As with custom and self-build, the planning system and land enablers have not (yet) created many opportunities for CLH on larger sites.
- Stretched community capacity – years of commitment, shortage of expertise (although the CLH sector has been developing skills and support and the CLF fund to set up Community Hubs to initiate CLH). Many projects rely on skilled voluntary capacity. Expertise from legal, to valuation, and design is extremely expensive to buy in. This is unsatisfactory and unrealistic for many projects, and is why upfront funding to buy in expertise is critical and urgent. Without this, it is difficult to scale up the sector or sustain projects over the long term required.
- High cost of finance for land purchase and development which often requires exceptional fund raising including Community Share Offers
- Uneven local political and national support requiring extensive lobbying and political networking, exacerbated by frequent changes of administration, not just at national government. Support from local government is absolutely crucial. The absence of a commonly adopted cross-party political narrative for politicians and communities working together to achieve what neither can do on their own is striking.

## **What are the opportunities?**

There is substantial demand for CLH from individuals and community organisations, self-builders, CLTs and cohousing, and now co-living groups.

The Co-living market is expanding rapidly, driven largely by private equity investors, developing large scale complexes of micro-apartments combined with the on-selling of a wide range of charged-for services and facilities; essentially a significant subsection of the boom in the Build to Rent market, often promoted as being at more affordable rents. These attract a significant amount of criticism about the small size of the accommodation. As yet unpublished doctoral research has identified some surprising trends about the poor mental health of people living in these larger developments. However, there is also growth in much smaller scale co-living

developments initiated and/or self-managed by residents, typified by the activities of Conscious Co-Living (<https://www.consciouscoliving.com/>) which places great emphasis on the physical and mental health and well-being of residents, and more sustainable ways of living. Their recent research (<https://www.consciouscoliving.com/phd-sustainability/>) examines the experience of CLH generally to support sustainable development and the more sustainable lifestyles that are only possible through the kind of social organisation that exists naturally in CLH.

The public appetite for living more sustainably is a major gap in the market, not addressed by the volume market sector or council/housing association housing. Demand and awareness has increased rapidly over the last 20 years. Developer CITU's Climate Change Quarter in Leeds City Centre and the proposed redevelopment of the Phoenix Quarter in Lewes, by developer Human Nature, as a 'sharing neighbourhood' are possibly the first signs of change. Both incorporate elaborate flood defences, and physical and social measures to support climate change resilience, with explicit roles for CLTs and cohousing communities built into them.

There are many housing sites that lie undeveloped or sit in land banks or are of little interest to mainstream builders. The government's plans to ensure that all land optioned to developers will have the options registered on title will enable more proactive identification of this underused resource. Local authorities are desperate to provide affordable housing and could use CPO powers to acquire underused land in partnership with CLH bodies. The sustainable development objectives of CLH will be one way of helping councils activate CPOs, which can only be justified if explicitly promoting the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community, (s. 99 Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

There is significant innovation and determination in the CLH sector to produce good housing, contribute to tackling the housing crisis, and make well designed places in which they play an important long term 'people and place' stewardship and governance role. There is thus an opportunity to 'inject' CLH processes, and ownership and governance structures, into mainstream market processes to achieve the kind of placemaking outcomes being advocated by the Quality of Life Foundation (now chaired by Jonny Anstead of TOWN, developers of the celebrated Marmalade Lane development in Cambridge) and the Government's Office of Place.

Cohousing communities have the capability for becoming an anchor community in the first phase of a large new place, as happens in many 'New Urbanism' developments: the USA's version of beautiful development. Marmalade Lane is taking on aspects of that role in the Orchard Park area of Cambridge, albeit retrospectively, and as had been hoped by the original champions of the project, (including HG's Peter Studdert). This idea is developed further by Owen Jarvis, CEO UK Cohousing Network in a recent article for Inside Housing 16.11.22 'How do

we as citizens have agency in our housing and neighbourhoods?’

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6998967310686289920/>

These ideas are widened out in the latest edition of The Developer Magazine on ‘Community’ (<https://lnkd.in/gcjsw26j>) Christine Murray, Editor-in-chief, Founding Director and Owner at The Developer and Festival of Place, has written this trailer for the issue on the role of communities in making new neighbourhoods: ‘Being community-led is worth it, so cut the co-wash’ (<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6998676771478921216/>)

### **Recommendations for Policymakers**

Highbury Group should put its weight behind a call for support and scaling up of the CLH sector:

1. Local Planning Authorities should be required to issue a Call for Community Priority Projects (CPPs), along with the more traditional Call for Sites, as part of the early stages of making new Local Plans or carrying out interim reviews of Plans. This would include CLH projects as well as other community led development initiatives. This would give communities a clearer role in the earliest stage of community engagement, giving them a real stake in the planning process in relation to projects that are important to them, and could go some way to tackle the public’s low level of trust in the whole planning process. LPAs would be required to carry out the necessary analysis of the CPPs to identify ones to be put forward into the Plan. Ideally, LPAs should convene deliberative assemblies of some kind to determine the relative priority of proposed CPPs. The LPA’s analysis and method of prioritising CPPs should be open to later Examination in Public. The Call could also be an attractive and much quicker alternative for communities with one or two key projects they wish to see happen, without the need for and costs of a full blown Neighbourhood Plan process.
2. Local authorities should be required to produce specific capital delivery programmes for CLH as part of their housing plans and policies, in consultation with community groups, parish and town councils, which should be able to specify locally appropriate requirements for tenure and affordability levels, based on local income and patterns of tenure data.
3. Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans should contain presumptions in favour of CLH on certain allocated sites, both strategic sites and programmes of small windfall sites. The idea of giving CLH bodies first refusal of this land/buildings is normal practice for some land in Scotland and in Zurich, for example.
4. In addition, CLH could also be specified as needing to be part of the policy compliant quantum of affordable housing required, as happened at the St Clement’s Hospital project for the London CLT. On that site, although the CLT only owns 10% of the stock, it

has latterly stepped in to work with all residents to set up an effective site management/stewardship regime...to fill in for those who should have done it.

5. To ensure communities can respond effectively to these plan led opportunities, the Government's Affordable Housing or Levelling Up funding should include sufficient resources to support new entrants with risk equity capital for pre-development costs, and revenue for delivery infrastructures, with the objective to scale up CLH and its support systems to reach its potential over a more realistic but extended timescale; i.e. more than the two and a half year effective operation of the Community Housing Fund.
6. The existing network of CLH Hubs and secondary coops, and similar organisations like ACRE, any remaining Rural Housing Enablers etc, should be integrated into local policy making and delivery infrastructure mechanisms at sub-regional level. They have the potential to work as intermediaries, inter alia, in supporting councils collect better information about hyper-local housing needs, develop local supply chains of services and construction capability, connect community bodies and councils to work cooperatively together, in making the case for new housing at all scales and as active partners in planning, development and long term place stewardship.

### **Political Postscript**

In answer to a recent question in the House of Commons from Theresa Villiers MP on the 'new' Secretary of State's approach to housing targets, Michael Gove said that he wanted "decisions to be taken locally, with greater say for local communities rather than distant bureaucrats". The subsequent initiative by a significant number of Tory MPs to ensure targets are removed altogether shows that popular opposition to new housing near them is a challenge to which the Government has few compelling answers, and that new housing supply will continue to be a material factor in the outcome of national elections.

Putting aside current financial and housing market uncertainties, mainstream providers are not currently in a comfortable place with the Secretary of State, local communities, homeowners or tenants. Housebuilders and housing associations need to put significant cash allocations aside for safety repairs, and so are less able to maximise output. Housing association tenants are more militant than they have ever been, clamouring for better repairs and maintenance to be prioritised over new development. Although renewed emphasis and resources are being given to 'beauty', the work of the Office for Place, and the planning reforms contained in the original Levelling Up Bill, the government will be wary about taking any definitive actions regarding housing targets or the promotion of specific large scale projects that will arouse local opposition in the two years remaining before the General Election. None of these would actually deliver any new homes on the ground during that short period.

So what could a smart government do to take at least some advantage of this likely hiatus in supply? Perhaps to use resources that might otherwise go unused, to help change public perceptions about the need for and impact of new housing supply...and possibly enhance its own reputation in the process? Maybe...supporting high profile community inspired housing projects, involving small local builders and citizen builders, that will mostly be highly popular in their localities and could get planning permissions quickly...rewarding the many dedicated citizens who have been working for years to bring urgently needed affordable homes to their places...and giving communities a more central role in the planning and long term management of new places already in the development pipeline? It might be more straightforward with a lot quicker and more immediate impact than 'street votes'.

### **Further information on CLH**

This section from the Community Led Homes website gives a comprehensive factual overview of the different CLH housing types with examples of each

<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/what-community-led-housing>.

As noted earlier, additional materials on each form of CLH are in a separate paper, labelled Annex 1.

For a comprehensive review of the history and forms of forms of CLH in the UK and Europe see Martin Field, *Creating Community-led and Self-Build Homes : a Guide to Collaborative Practice*, Bristol: Policy Press, 2020

<https://bristoluniversitypressdigital.com/view/book/9781447344407/9781447344407.xml>

Stephen Hill in his report, 'Property, Justice and Reason: Reconnecting the Citizen and the State through Community Land Trusts and Land Reform', Churchill Fellowship Report, 2015 focuses on the difficulties that communities in England have faced in establishing their democratic legitimacy to provide housing appropriate to the evidenced needs of their communities. He analyses the characteristics and causes of the resistance and prejudices they continue to face from elected politicians and officials, and others in positions of established power. As well as a range of practical recommendations for process reforms, his research of the experience of citizens trying to do this in the USA and Canada provides helpful narratives about how the citizen and the state (at all levels of governance) can (and must) collaborate to achieve community objectives and public policy outcomes that neither can achieve on their own. This is also the ambition reflected in the long held views of the current Shadow SoS for DLUHC, recently reaffirmed at a cross-party event at the Labour Party Conference, organised by the Conservative UK Onward and the New Social Covenant Unit.

[https://www.academia.edu/12082488/Property\\_Justice\\_and\\_Reason\\_Reconnecting\\_the\\_Citizen\\_and\\_the\\_State\\_through\\_Community\\_Land\\_Trusts\\_and\\_Land\\_Reform\\_April\\_2015](https://www.academia.edu/12082488/Property_Justice_and_Reason_Reconnecting_the_Citizen_and_the_State_through_Community_Land_Trusts_and_Land_Reform_April_2015)

The latest 2022 edition of the UK Cohousing Network's 'A Practical Guide to Cohousing' will be available in late November: <https://cohousing.org.uk/>

Nicholas Falk's paper on Co-operatives is a separate paper, labelled as Annex 2

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<sup>i</sup> Some info on ESG and housing and planning:

- <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/insight/explainer-what-is-esg-and-why-is-it-important-68516>
- <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/comment/comment/esg-reporting-can-bring-real-power-to-housing-association-tenants-76016>
- <https://sustainabilityforhousing.org.uk/>
- <https://www.planningpotential.co.uk/news/how-can-planning-be-an-ally-of-the-esg-agenda/?id=579>
- <https://www.placechangers.co.uk/blog/esg-for-housing-development/>