

COMMUNICATIONS BRIEF

18 Sept 2017

OXFORD COMMUNITY LED HOUSING: ROUTES TO DELIVERY

Project overview

In March 2017, Oxford City Council received £54k Community Housing Fund (CHF) from the Government as part of a national scheme to support the promotion and delivery of more Community-Led Housing. Using its CHF funding for 2016/17, Oxford City Council has commissioned Community First Oxfordshire with partner organisations Oxfordshire Community Foundation and Oxfordshire Community Land Trust to undertake a research project to explore how community housing could be delivered sustainably within Oxford City. A report will be available in autumn 2018.

Why are we interested in Community-Led Housing (CLH)?

- CLH is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in delivering solutions to local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing development.
- Community Land Trusts, cooperative housing, co-housing and community self-build are examples of CLH.

What can Community-Led Housing help achieve?

- Stronger neighbourhoods, shared spaces, mutual support: cohousing principles can help achieve this. Households each have a self-contained home but residents come together to manage their community and share some facilities.
- Permanent affordability and local control of assets: Community Land Trust principles offer a mechanism to provide genuinely affordable housing in perpetuity, both for rent and ownership
- Building neighbourhoods: group self-build and collective custom build are great ways of supporting groups of households to work together to build or directly commission their own homes.
- Greater local accountability and control over housing management: co-operative and tenant management principles empower residents to democratically control and manage their homes, often leading to improved efficiencies and financial savings as well as increased skills and confidence within the community.
- Tackling empty properties: self-help housing offers people the chance to bring empty properties back into use, and help to revitalise homes, streets and neighbourhoods. It can form part of a strategy to tackle homelessness.

What will the project do?

- Examine and establish the needs for community led housing in Oxford.
- Undertake a feasibility study of how community-led housing can be practically delivered in Oxford.
- Identify viable opportunities and routes to delivery.
- Identify financial mechanisms for delivery that are sustainable.
- Provide technical advice that can be shared with community-led housing groups.

How will the project do this?

- Outreach: a series of events across Oxford to raise the profile of and discuss CLH.
- Focus groups: professional support needed for CLH; the legal structures of CLH; community engagement; funding.
- Desktop-research: definition of CLH; local housing need; CLH examples from elsewhere in the country.
- Financial modelling: identification of how different financial mechanisms can best achieve sustainable, affordable CLH models (e.g. cohousing, cooperative, land trusts)

Who's involved?

The main project partners are:

- **Oxfordshire Community Land Trust (oclt.org.uk):** OCLT is committed to creating permanently-affordable homes in the county of Oxfordshire and has built up considerable capacity, networks and know-how in this approach.
- **Community First Oxfordshire (www.communityfirstoxon.org):** CFO is a charity which helps 'communities to help themselves'. CFO has expertise in community and Neighbourhood Planning, affordable housing and 'placemaking', the creation of thriving communities.
- **Oxfordshire Community Foundation (oxfordshire.org):** OCF connects people who want to give to local charities with causes that are making a real difference to social problems in our county. OCF helps individuals, families and companies channel their generosity and directly address the issues that matter most to them.

Transition by Design (transitionbydesign.org) are supporting communication and outreach for the project.

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