



# Early Stage Support Programme Evaluation

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# 1. Foreword

## Foreword from Locality

We all know the housing crisis is one of the biggest challenges of our times. At Locality, we believe that to solve it, we need to unlock the power of community.

Community-led housing enables local people to build the homes they know their community needs. Too often young families are being forced to move in search of lower prices, or older people who want to downsize are having to look outside the places where they have lived all their lives. Instead, through community-led housing, local people can come together and ensure there is affordable, high-quality, environmentally sustainable housing for all those who need it.

Community-led housing (CLH) is an opportunity for people to really take control of their neighbourhoods through community ownership. It's not just about supporting the development of quality housing and affordable homes, vital though that is. It's also about building community power, improving local skills, accountability and pride within communities, creating better places to live, good jobs and improving health and wellbeing. We believe that the growing CLH sector has a key role to play in creating a fairer society in which valuable resources circulate within a community to create more sustainable and resilient places.

The Early Stage Support programme was designed in partnership with the Nationwide Foundation to provide the support required by new and existing community organisations at the start of their CLH journey. The programme ran from 2016 to 2018 and has provided 21 groups with a firm foundation to progress their CLH aspirations.

This programme has shown that early stage professional advice, peer to peer learning and grant funding is essential to support both new start up groups and existing community organisations to progress CLH schemes. This report illustrates the common types of support that groups need and provides case studies to illustrate the progress that groups made.

Locality is committed to developing the growth of community-led housing right across the country. Many Locality members have and are continuing to create truly inspirational and innovative housing projects. Through the Early Stage Support programme and our member's network, we are helping to share their knowledge and passion.

More work and more support are needed to maximise the opportunity CLH provides to tackle the housing crisis. We look forward to continuing to work with our national partners to support the sector and to truly unlock the power of community and build the homes local people need.

**Tony Armstrong, CEO, Locality, September 2018**

## **Foreword from the Nationwide Foundation**

The energy and commitment of local people and organisations can create a big impact for the individuals and communities in which they work. We believe that community-led organisations are well placed, both to challenge the threats to existing local homes for people in need, as well as to increase the supply of homes that meet the needs of local people.

By funding Locality to deliver the Early Stage Support programme we wanted to demonstrate the importance of providing tailored mentoring support that enables more communities to deliver their own affordable housing solutions. What is gratifying to see is that the programme has done exactly that by supporting groups with aspirations to build affordable housing in high value rural areas as well as organisations in both high and lower value urban locations looking to build or refurbish existing properties.

The Early Stage Support Programme has highlighted the common challenges that community organisations face when trying to initiate CLH schemes and the benefits that professional support at a very early stage can bring to help turn aspirations into viable CLH projects. It is therefore pleasing to see this important element of CLH support included within the draft plans for the proposed Community Led Homes partnership which have been submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in response to the Community Housing Fund.

The programme has also highlighted the strength of Locality's network of community organisations and the benefits of peer to peer learning.

We envisage a future where community-led housing is thriving and where many more people are living in homes created through this approach and we remain committed to supporting the community-led housing sector to deliver an increased number of homes for people in need.

**Gary Hartin, Programme Manager, The Nationwide Foundation, September 2018**



## 2. Overview of the Early Stage Support Programme

Funded by the Nationwide Foundation, Locality's ESS programme (2016-2018) assisted up to 20 groups through the start-up and early pre- development phases of a community led housing (CLH) project.

The programme was designed to offer support and a grant to enable community groups to explore the range of approaches to CLH, undertake early pre-development work, gain support for their project from key stakeholders and apply for further pre-development funding. After an open application process, 21 groups across England were accepted onto the programme. These consisted of:

- 5 established multi-use community organisations
- 4 early stage community organisations with CLH as one of their objectives
- 10 start-up CLH groups
- 1 Parish Council
- 1 neighbourhood planning forum.

An initial diagnostic of each group's support needs was undertaken by a CLH practitioner who visited the group, helped the group think through their ideas and then wrote a report of their support needs. Groups were then allocated 5 days of support from CLH advisors and a grant of up to £2250 to pay for early project costs such as community consultation and the costs of incorporation.

The most common types of support provided by the CLH advisors were as follows;

- Developing a group's vision and objectives
- Understanding the different approaches to CLH
- Undertaking community consultation and attracting community support
- Developing governance procedures and incorporating the group
- Finding and securing a site
- Assessing project viability and developing business plans
- Developing relationships and strategic partnerships
- Securing further pre-development funding
- Securing other sources of support

120 days of CLH advisor support were delivered between the 21 groups and a total of £49,252 in grant funding was distributed to the groups. Support provided by the programme has enabled 13 groups to progress new build projects, 3 groups have chosen to take forward refurbishment projects and 5 groups were supported to explore a mixture of refurbishment and new build opportunities.

### 3. Executive Summary

Early stage support (ESS) and grant funding is essential to support both new start-up groups and existing community organisations during the early stages of a community led housing (CLH) project. The ESS programme has provided 21 groups with a firm foundation to progress their CLH aspirations.

The ESS programme has helped to champion a range of approaches to CLH including new start-up groups and the important role that established community organisations can play in developing affordable housing for people in need. The programme has supported groups to begin to develop affordable housing in high value rural areas and groups hoping to refurbish properties in areas suffering from low values, abandonment and neighbourhood management issues.

With peer support from Locality's network of community organisations, the ESS groups have been supported to develop CLH schemes that will not just deliver affordable housing but wider benefits to people in need. The programme has supported the early development of specialist housing schemes for disadvantaged groups such as inner city young people, older people, LGBT communities and people with learning disabilities.

The groups on the programme placed a very high value on peer mentoring opportunities and the chance to visit successful CLH projects both within and outside of their region. Developing connections to other established CLH groups enabled learning to be shared, encouraged a wider range of approaches to CLH and supported groups' aspirations for community asset ownership. The support from CLH advisors helped opened doors to local stakeholders and gave groups more confidence and credibility to develop and strengthen local strategic partnerships.

The ESS programme has found that groups of people forming around a general housing need rather than a need in a specific neighbourhood can take longer to develop an active group, find a suitable site or building and then develop an outline project plan. A timeline of several years is not uncommon to find a site and groups have found it a challenge to maintain community interest and develop their membership without a site to focus on.

Established community organisations may be able to progress CLH projects quicker as they have built up social capital, trust and connections within the community and existing relationships with a range of key stakeholders. Existing community organisations may have a track record of managing large capital projects and have an asset base to help secure loan finance. If community organisations own a site this gives them greater certainty and security to develop local support and secure pre-development funding.

Both start-up groups and established community organisations commented that they would have liked the support programme to have been longer than the 12 to 15 month support period that groups typically received after their initial assessment of support

needs was complete. A longer programme would have ensured continuity of support and enabled groups to progress further.

By the end of the programme, £165,000 of revenue grant funding had been secured or committed to ESS groups to progress their projects. This has matched Nationwide Foundation's original investment in this programme to support these CLH projects to get started.

At the end of the programme confidence levels of groups were high. Feedback from groups highlighted that the support had built their skills and confidence to take their projects forward to a successful outcome. 17 groups out of the 20 groups that returned the evaluation form (85%) scored their projects 4/5 or 5/5 likelihood of success. The CLH advisors considered that 13 groups out of the 21 groups (62%) have a good or very good chance of success, a quarter of groups have a fair chance of success and only 3 groups might find it harder to succeed.

## 4. Programme Support

The following section gives an overview of the main types of support delivered to groups through the programme.

### Developing Group Vision and Objectives

Many of the groups on the programme had an aspiration to develop community led housing but required support to research local housing needs, refine their aspirations and agree their group's vision and objectives.

Kajans Women's Enterprise in Birmingham are aiming to build 40 to 50 units for younger people on the site of the previous Mohammed Ali community centre. The group have been supported to develop a visioning document which included an appraisal of Birmingham City Council's Business Plan and housing targets to ensure that their scheme will align to local housing priorities.

One of the key objectives of the programme was to promote the principle of CLH as a sustainable 'lynchpin' activity that can help community groups to reinvest in the local area through projects, assets or services to build sustainable communities.

5 projects have been supported to develop affordable housing schemes with wrap around support for specific disadvantaged groups:

- Kajans has aspirations to offer onsite employability support services and enterprise start up space for the young tenants housed in their proposed scheme.
- St Alban's Community Association (SACA) has aspirations to develop an older person's housing scheme in Sandwell in the West Midlands.
- St Budeaux Methodist Church are planning to build 9 affordable one-bedroom flats for rent to residents with moderate learning difficulties on the site of their existing church building in Plymouth with social activities provided through the church.
- London Older Lesbians Cohousing is hoping to build 25 units of cohousing with a mix of market sale and affordable rent for older Lesbian households.
- Chichester Development Trust is undertaking feasibility to purchase and repair housing association properties surplus to requirements and rent them to the council to house vulnerable families coming out of supported accommodation.

Several start-up groups on the programme have realised that whilst they may have more ambitious CLH plans for their area, smaller refurbishment projects can meet priority needs and are a realistic type of project for developing a track record and asset base. The case study about Middleport Matters explains how the group have been helped to look at different types of assets in their area and develop criteria to prioritise the CLH projects they will pursue.

To turn around areas of low demand and abandonment, wrap-around housing management services (from initial vetting to on-going support) and complimentary community development schemes are often needed to reverse the 'broken window' theory. Reducing the turnover of residents, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping are needed alongside investments in the housing stock to build community spirit and improve how streets are maintained. Attending an ESS workshop to see LATCH and Canopy in Leeds with other ESS groups interested in refurbishment projects has helped groups to think about how their approach will need to engage with tenants and the wider community as well as thinking about how to collect rents.

## Case Study: Middleport Matters, Stoke-on-Trent



A facilitated workshop for Middleport Matters

Middleport Matters was established in 2015, as an unincorporated association to improve the local environment and community facilities in the Middleport area of Stoke-on-Trent. Regular viewers of the Great Pottery Throw Down would instantly recognise the area from aerial pictures of Middleport Pottery, which hosts the show. Despite some national attention for the area and some notable local successes, the group needed to grow from an unincorporated pressure group to become an established CLH group with aspirations to own and manage its own property.

Middleport suffered negative impacts from demolitions undertaken by their local councils through the central government's Housing Market Renewal programme that targeted disadvantaged housing market areas in the North and Midlands of England between 2002 and 2011.

"Our community was ripped apart when lots of homes were compulsory purchased and the family spirit of the area dissolved. We need something to bring us all back together, to encourage new and old residents to find a common ground and to show Stoke-on-Trent that Middleport matters!!"

Amelia Bilson, Middleport Matters

Middleport Matters originally had many ideas, including a very ambitious multi-million pound project to renovate a mill. In their application the group requested help to guide the group through what they needed to do to make their dream a reality. They were also keen to create a Neighbourhood Plan.

The support from the CLH advisor has helped the group to manage their expectations as a new group and realise that developing a track record will be important with funders before they progress to larger complex projects. A series of workshops were organised which prompted the group to take important decisions about the sort of organisation they want to be, exploring their aspirations for the business as it develops over the next 5 years, and plotting their social, organisational and financial development using a balanced scorecard exercise.

In one workshop, a technique for comparing potential community assets was used that has become popular with development trusts in Scotland following training workshops under the name 'Backing Winners'. The technique uses a number of different criteria to compare a range of potential community assets such as land, buildings and heritage sites. The criteria are agreed with the group in advance and can include attributes such as availability, location and whether the asset can satisfy an established local need. The resulting league table of assets sees practical and pressing projects bubble to the top and difficult pipe dreams sink to the bottom.

With all the important questions answered, the group now has a hit list of community assets on which it can invest its resources to explore their feasibility and develop a viable project. 4 empty council owned properties have been identified and discussions are progressing with the council about how they can acquire and refurbish them. The group were supported to secure £10,000 of pre-feasibility funding from DCLG's Community Buildings Fund which has funded a pre-feasibility study to look at the different options for the properties including knocking 2 properties into 1 to create larger family homes.

The programme has supported the group to choose a legal structure and incorporate as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

"The funding was crucial in getting help from a local community enterprise consultant to help us understand the various business structures and guiding us through the incorporation process."

Middleport Matters' Chair, Amelia Bilson.

The original assessment of Middleport Matters support needs was undertaken by Witton Lodge in Birmingham and this mentoring relationship has continued with a number of follow up conversations and visits. After joining Locality, Middleport Matters successfully applied to Locality's Knowledge and Skills programme which funded 2 study visits to Witton Lodge. Witton Lodge have been successful in securing ownership of terraced housing from their local council. A group of volunteers from Middleport visited to understand how they achieved this and help them understand more of the process involved in refurbishments. These visits proved inspirational and the group was able to

see the potential of becoming a landlord to make Middleport a destination of choice and to provide an income source for Middleport Matters to provide other community benefits.

“We've made new links with groups nationally in Leeds and Birmingham who have been such an inspiration and support to us. We have made close links which I am sure will continue.”

Middleport Matters' Chair, Amelia Bilson

“Community groups often have passion and great ideas but can lack knowledge and skills which often prevent them from expanding and becoming sustainable. We have been so blessed with winning this support grant so that we can be helped through an unfamiliar process and end up in a much more secure place in the future.”

Middleport Matters' Chair, Amelia Bilson.



## Understanding the Different Approaches to CLH

There are a wide variety of different routes to delivery for CLH, different approaches, different procurement methods and different legal forms and this diversity is the sector's key strength.

Broadly speaking there are 3 main routes to delivery for CLH:

- i. **Group-led:** Grassroots 'start-up' groups responding to housing need or demand, or people seeking to deliver their own homes.
- ii. **Extension of community based activity:** Existing community based organisations with local roots decide to provide housing in addition to their current activities, or increase their existing provision, for and on behalf of the local community
- iii. **Developer-Community partnership:** A local authority/landowner/housing association or small builder wants to provide housing that benefits the local area in perpetuity. They access community-led housing expertise to recruit 'founder members' from within the community and support them to take over ownership/stewardship and/or management of the homes, or they may support an existing group or organisation to deliver their ambition.

Across the routes to delivery there are also a wide range of approaches to CLH e.g. Community Land Trusts, Housing Co-ops, Cohousing, Self-Help Housing, Development Trusts, etc. CLH groups or organisation may use just one of these approaches or may combine them to respond to their specific requirements. There are also overlaps between these routes to delivery with a variety of procurement methods e.g. new build, refurbishment, empty homes, self-build, etc.<sup>13</sup> of the ESS groups have aspirations to develop new build projects, 3 groups are exclusively looking at refurbishment projects and 5 groups are looking at a mixture of refurbishment and new build opportunities.

The programme recruited a mixture of groups onto the programme. There were 10 'group led' grassroots start-up CLH groups and 10 groups who were established or newer community-based organisations with CLH as one of their objectives (including 1 neighbourhood planning forum). There was also 1 Parish Council who wished to facilitate new housing that benefits the local area in perpetuity.

ESS support to 3 established community organisations in the West Midlands has helped Locality to raise the profile of this approach with local councils. Locality and Locality member practitioners are now working as key stakeholders to develop a new CLH enabler hub in this region to ensure it will provide a diversified support offer and encourage more established community organisations to deliver CLH.

CLG groups exploring different approaches have the potential to undertake a variety of different roles including influencer, freeholder, asset owner, developer, managing agent and also as a provider of wrap around support services. Groups require independent unbiased support to help groups consider the level of responsibility they wish to take on.



Through the support from this programme, there are 6 ESS groups that have decided to partner with a housing association (HA) to take a lead role in acquiring funding, developing, owning and managing the housing:

- Chiddingstone Parish Council have secured interest from Hastoe HA to develop the identified sites in their village.
- Following support from their mentor, Sussex Street Cohousing CIC explored the approach of partnering with a HA. They contacted several housing associations and identified Hastoe HA as their development partner. The ESS grant paid for professional support from a CLH consultant who has a track record of working with this HA, to help the group to develop the scheme design and agree partnership terms with Hastoe HA.
- Through the ESS programme support St Alban's Community Association were introduced to a specialist HA in the West Midlands called Housing and Care 21 who have a track record of developing affordable rented homes for older people. They are now hoping to work with Housing and Care 21 to secure a site and develop a scheme in partnership.
- London Older Lesbian's Cohousing (LOLC) have also decided to partner with a HA but had not begun the process of finding a partner.

"We think we are working at the right pace to ensure we have things in place before we progress to working with a Registered Provider. We have needed this year to lay the foundations, set up a company limited by guarantee and develop our partnerships and business plans. We will then move onto choosing our RP, looking for land etc."

Jude Watson, LOLC.

- At the start of the ESS support St Just in Roseland CLT were looking at taking on the lead developer role themselves. As the project progressed they have decided to partner with Cornwall Rural Housing Association. They hope this will enable them to progress the project faster and reduce risks by the HA taking on the responsibility for securing capital funding, building the homes and owning and managing the properties. This will then enable the CLT to move on and initiate another project to enable more affordable rented accommodation in their area.
- Portland Community Partnership are exploring 3 sites on the peninsula. The group were supported by a CLH advisor through the ESS programme and an umbrella CLT (Wessex CLT) who have supported a number of local start-up CLTs to partner with housing associations in the south west. The group were supported to

consider how involved they want to be in the management of new housing, and therefore what structure of group and type of housing they want to pursue. The LA is supporting the group with £50k feasibility funding through their allocation of Community Housing Fund grant and supports the lower risk approach of partnering with a HA.

Cohousing Upon Tyne (CoHuT), a grassroots start up group have developed a partnership with Town, a custom-build developer who developed the Cambridge Marmalade Lane cohousing project.

“The key partnership formed has been a working arrangement which has now been entered into with Town, a custom build developer which brings the group a realistic capacity to explore the viability of potential sites, and more credible delivery model as the arrangement provides development capacity and skills while also removing the group's need to raise significant upfront capital for any project”.

Jimm Reed, advisor to CoHuT

By the end of the programme other ESS groups have developed aspirations to take on more responsibilities, by owning the housing assets themselves. There are greater community business outcomes that can be achieved when projects decide to secure capital funding and loan finance to own some or all of the housing assets being built or renovated.

Support is crucial to help groups and other stakeholders to understand the trade-off between the risks of taking on debt finance and the rewards of developing an asset base to secure regular income and security for developing more CLH projects and funding community services. The support has shown that many groups and their boards are nervous about taking on debt finance but accessing the right peer support from other groups can develop their confidence to talk to investors and aspire to secure investment. Locality brokered a range of peer support from across the country to explore asset ownership and explore different partnership terms with housing associations, rather than groups following the lead from what might be a more limited range of CLH approaches within a particular region.

At the start of the programme there were 2 groups, Hay Habitat in Manchester and Cohousing Upon Tyne (CoHuT), who were interested in exploring co-housing and a mutual home ownership model based on the Leeds Low Impact Living Affordable Community – LILAC model. Hay Habitat has been supported to develop a mutual home ownership model by consultant Jimm Reed who successfully developed the LILAC scheme in Leeds. CoHuT were supported to look at a number of financial models in order to try to accommodate the different requirements of the group, based on outline capital assumptions for the delivery of the project and decided on a mixed sale/ shared ownership.

CLH is a rich and diverse sector and what works for one project may not be appropriate and relevant for another. Early support relies on the CLH advisor having a broad understanding of all the approaches to CLH so that there is no inherent bias in the advice given towards any particular route to delivery, approach, procurement method or legal structure.

Advisors need to understand all the variations which are based on:

- **Legal and governance options** (for example: co-operative, community benefit society, community interest company etc.)
- **Delivery model options** (for example: co-operative, community land trust, cohousing etc)
- **Development options** (new start up group, existing organisation and a developer led approach)
- **Land ownership options** - (for example: freehold, long leasehold etc)
- **Project options** (for example: self-managed, procured, new build, refurbishment)
- **Financing options** (for example: debt, grant, equity, community shares)
- **Post development management options** (for example - self managed, employee managed, agency managed)

CLH advisors providing early stage support need to understand the common threads across CLH approaches and give examples from across the CLH spectrum to assist groups to develop their purpose, objectives and chosen approach to CLH.

The training programme being developed by the Confederation of Cooperative Housing (CCF) and funded by the Nationwide Foundation is aiming to ensure that CLH advisors can be trained across England to deliver broad options-based support to early stage community led housing projects.

## Case Study: St Alban's Community Association



Older peoples' activities at St Alban's Community Association

St Alban's Community Association (SACA) has aspirations to develop an older person's housing scheme in Sandwell in the West Midlands. SACA is an established community organisation and has a strong record of partnership working in Sandwell with the Council and with other key agencies.

SACA has a good understanding of older peoples' needs and aspirations. SACA is already very well connected with and trusted by older people due to the wide range of support services it offers so the organisation will be well placed to recruit residents to a CLH scheme. The organisation has researched the idea of a community-led scheme and consulted widely. Support from the CLH advisers from the programme helped to highlight and draw upon national research on housing for older people, to support the rationale for this project as well as to analyse local and regional housing strategies to demonstrate this project's alignment with them.

One of the key roles of the advisers was to support the CEO to build support and commitment within the organisation and with the Council, officers and councillors to gain support for their vision. The advisers attended meetings with the CEO, with various Directors across the Local Authority and Cabinet Members in order to garner support for CLH and to ensure that they saw SACA as a potential 'player' in the development of CLH in Sandwell. This was initially a challenge as the LA saw SACA as providing services to older people in their homes (or council owned properties) but did not necessarily see them as developing sites for CLH. It was helpful to draw on other examples nationally and for the council to see that SACA had the support of Locality. In the last few months SACA has been liaising with the Director of Housing at Sandwell Council to work on identifying pieces of land that could potentially be used for a CLH development.

Through an introduction from one of their CLH advisors, SACA has made contact with a specialist housing provider, Housing and Care 21 (HC21), who has track record in supporting community-led approaches to older peoples housing in the East Midlands. The potential partnership with HC21 could enable SACA to access the resources/skills which will enable it to promote and develop a CLH scheme with a high level of

community involvement and stakeholder support. HC21 has invited SACA to submit more formal proposals to them.

SACA is moving forward in a purposeful and considered way. The CLH advisors have supported SACA to scope out their project vision and objectives. They have also provided advice on establishing a development partnership and proposals for a decision-making structure for the project. The advisers have supported SACA to develop a prospectus to share with HC21, stakeholders and funders.

A Locality member mentor Witton Lodge Community Association, based in Birmingham has provided SACA with additional technical and legal advice and has hosted an away day for their Board.

The next steps for SACA include:

- Active pursuit of land and buildings opportunities
- Direct research via study visits to decide on the specific type of project they wish to pursue
- Developing a decision-making structure/process including forms of community engagement
- Putting a proposal to HC21 and entering into formal discussions
- Developing a detailed business plan based on these discussions
- Formal liaison with Sandwell MBC

“The ESS Programme has enabled St Albans to access a mentor who has been through this process and has the skills and knowledge to support St Albans. We have been able to develop our vision and objectives, consult with older people locally and got the support of the local authority.

The away day gave the Board a real appetite for the project and gave them a much clearer understanding of Community Led Housing and how that would look for St Albans. I feel we have the tools and support needed to make this happen. The partners chosen to support St Albans on this programme were absolutely the right people.”

Tonia Flannigan, CEO of SACA

## Community Consultation and Attracting Community Support

One of the objectives of the ESS programme was to raise the profile of affordable CLH as an achievable community activity that brings benefits to neighbourhoods and particularly to people in need. All of the ESS groups have undertaken community consultation during the programme which has raised the profile of CLH and helped many ESS groups to attract more members. Consultation has ranged from confirming what success should look like for a community through to detailed consultation about housing designs.

Kajans Women's Enterprise Ltd. have undertaken a range of consultation exercises before and during the ESS programme support. They have filled in questionnaires at their local Tesco's and made presentations to their Local Enterprise Partnership, Housing Associations, Birmingham City Council, Soho Community Development Trust, and their Ward Members.

"We have done 10 face to face public consultations, participated in six radio interviews, appeared as news items on local television and received feature article coverage in national publications."

Hermin McIntosh, Kajans Women's Enterprise

Chiddington Parish Council undertook consultation with the community to discuss 3 sites assessed by the district council to be suitable for housing:

"We have carried out two public consultation events, one of which was attended by our advisor, for this we are grateful. There are some local concerns, understandably, but with Locality's help we have been able to allay these fears."

Louise Kleinschmidt, Chiddingstone Parish Council

Portland Community Partnership were supported by their CLH advisor to facilitate two workshops with the group, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council and Wessex CLT. Stimulated by the very positive encouragement that they received from the Local Planning Authority regarding the opportunity to secure Community Led Housing funding, the steering group decided that they wanted to engage more people in the discussion about the appropriate community goals for the housing.

"The group has moved from the Portland Partnership identifying the need for community led housing to meet needs, to the constitution of a Community Benefit Society to take forward this work. A public meeting to attract Directors reached over 50 people and raised awareness in the Portland community about CLH. There are now 10 members of the group with 5 Directors".

Francis Northrop, advisor to Portland Community Partnership





St Just in Roseland consultation event to develop designs for housing

Sussex Street Cohousing CIC owns the freehold of a site in Norwich which had prior planning permission for 17 units plus a commercial space. The group used their ESS grant to undertake consultation workshops with new members and local people, to develop a client brief which has wider community ownership.

“It has allowed us to run full day workshops led by our consultant. These have allowed us to explore issues, make decisions and progress towards developing our Client Brief, which will document our requirements for our architect / developer / housing association.”

Lucy Hall, Sussex Street Cohousing CIC

To develop local relationships, members of Sussex Street Cohousing CIC regularly attend the local residents' association, St Augustine's Community Together, to report on progress. They held an Open Day session to show plans and answer questions from local residents, businesses and neighbours and have distributed a printed newsletter to local houses and flats. Members of the group have also taken part in community engagement events for other building developments in the area and periodically organise local litter picks.

Undertaking community engagement and developing community involvement when groups do not have a site has proved to be more of a challenge. Groups without a site have reported that they face a chicken and egg scenario. Without a site to focus on they have struggled to increase their membership and active volunteers. Without a strong membership, talking to councils to try and negotiate a site is much harder. Core member burnout becomes a real threat over the length of time it can take to secure land and finance.

Hay Habitat in Manchester have 11 core members that believe that once a site has been found, widening the group's membership to attract local people will be more successful,

however they need to develop wider community membership to support their requests to the council to find a plot of land.

“Without a presence in a specific locality it has been difficult for the group to develop specific community support for its specific future plans. The core of the group's community activities through the Open Culture Project is well established in Cheetham Hill and the group has a strong affinity with this area.”

Jimm Reed, advisor to Hay Habitat

Market values for land in London are typically too high for most start-up community groups to purchase, and they cannot compete with developers. Because groups aren't able to identify a site in their area, they are having to look across London. Arcadia are finding it difficult to attract members when they cannot say where in London they might have a chance of acquiring a plot of land.

When Co-housing upon Tyne (CoHuT) were applied to the ESS programme they were a group of 5 people looking for a site. They were supported by their CLH advisor Jimm Reed to look at Yorspace's hybrid approach to community membership in York. Yorspace are a Community Benefit Society who developed a core group and a much wider membership in York. Now that they have secured a site from the council they have effectively relaunched the group – increasing local membership in that neighborhood and developing an allocations policy with the community to ensure that it supports both founder members and local peoples' needs.

CoHuT's core group now comprises 9 future resident members in 8 proposed households plus a wider list of 25 on an "interested" contact list. The group has a working action plan to increase its profile and reach out to additional members. The proposal is to expand to at least 12 resident households to enable a more viable core group to take forward any detailed project which may now emerge.

“The Co-housing upon Tyne group has not focused on developing specific community presence mainly as it has not had a specific community to base itself in, as no individual site has been identified to build a proposal on so far and so its focus is across the Tyneside area. The focus in this 12 months has been to build the foundations. However it is clear that when a site is positively identified that the group can make significant efforts to build its profile as a community organisation in that area.”

Jimm Reed, advisor to CoHuT

Several groups on the programme without a site requested support to present their objectives clearly to attract further support from the community and other local stakeholders. Arcadia, Hay Habitat and Starlings are examples of groups that were



supported to write their objectives up into a leaflet to share with the local community to try and recruit more members.



Photo of Otley CLT that appeared with an article in the Wharfedale Observer to promote their group

8 representatives from 5 urban based co-housing groups on the ESS programme came together for a workshop in London to jointly explore the barriers they are facing. Groups shared their draft leaflets at this ESS get together to pool ideas about how to recruit members. Following this meet up, the London Older Lesbian's Cohousing group decided to utilise their remaining grant to develop their publicity including a flyer and developing their marketing plans. London Older Lesbians Cohousing (LOLC) have recruited group members through social media, meet-up groups, UK Cohousing Network and word of mouth. They have interest from over 40 women and have a core membership of 12-15 women.

Some newly formed groups have realised that they lack capacity and were supported to try and understand their skills gaps and undertake targeted recruitment. Birkenhead and Tranmere Neighbourhood Forum were encouraged to contact similar groups to understand how they overcame things like apathy and to develop relationships with other local organisations to recruit additional members with specific skills.

Pathway Housing Solutions CIC have recognised the need to develop community involvement to develop from an entrepreneur-led group into a community-led group. Pathways utilised the ESS support to develop a community engagement plan which includes working with students from Nottingham Trent University to write articles about Homelessness, Housing Shortages, Empty Properties and the role of community led housing to raise local awareness and support their aim to increase their membership.

## Case Study: South Bank Community Housing

South Bank Moving Forward (SBMF) is based in an area of Middlesbrough with a transient population and lots of empty properties. Though the Housing Market Renewal programme, 500 houses were demolished leaving a once thriving community with tracts of undeveloped land at its heart. Since the demolition, no housing associations or developers have shown interest in the sites. There is a 20% void rate in the neighbourhood, property values are very low and the area suffers from a growing, often poorly maintained private sector and anti-social behaviour issues.

South Bank Moving Forward is a community and multi-agency group that meets monthly to discuss and bring local issues to the attention of Redcar & Cleveland Council, Housing Associations, Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade, Health Authorities and other service providers. The group works collaboratively with partners and residents attend meetings to bring a range of issues (such as fly tipping, drug use, removal of needles, etc). to the attention of local agencies.

“South Bank has suffered from previous failed regeneration projects that have left a once thriving community with tracts of undeveloped land at its heart. South Bank has had the heart ripped out of its community. The community has always tried to play a positive role in any regeneration projects but now sees a stronger role for itself in driving forward a community-based solution”

SBMF member

When the group applied to the ESS programme they were looking to explore a mix of housing solutions to meet the needs of current residents looking to remain and to develop a range of housing for those residents who have had to move out of area as a result of a lack of suitable housing but who would like to return.

A Locality member from the region, Back on The Map, undertook the group's initial assessment of support needs. Back on the Map have a track record of purchasing and refurbishing 'at risk' properties from private landlords and owner occupiers in Hendon with negotiations underway to transfer further housing association properties. A key first step was to consider the advice provided through the assessment and develop the group's short, medium and longer-term objectives. The group reviewed a range of examples of community led housing. It was agreed to prioritise work in the short term on empty properties and improving housing management. Stabilising the population and improving local housing management was suggested as a way to help attract housing associations and developers to build on the vacant sites in the medium to longer term. This was used as a basis for consultation with the local community.

To take forward the community led housing project, South Bank Moving Forward have set up South Bank Community Housing. The Steering Group is made up of community members, elected members, local authority officers, representatives from local housing associations and other agencies including Locality members Community Campus and Redcar Voluntary Development Agency. Community Campus have refurbished 64

homes across Teesside mainly for young people and are mentoring other less experienced CLH groups.

A consultation event was held at the South Bank Christmas Market on 30th November with two aims: to attract new members for South Bank Community Housing and to find out resident's views about the types of properties required in the town. 200 responses and 75 requests for further information and/or offers to get involved were received. South Bank Community Housing has secured Neil Cawson, who used to work for the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) as the group's Chair. This in turn has led to the involvement of one of his former colleagues who was involved in securing funding from the HCA for Holy Island Community Development Trust.

Visits to the ESS workshop with Canopy and LATCH in Leeds have inspired the group and helped them to think about the objectives of refurbishment projects and also consider the need for projects that support better housing management in the area. Another key part of the ESS support was to develop the documents to allow that group to become a company limited by guarantee to allow them to access further grant funding.

## Developing Governance Procedures and Incorporation

There are a wide range of different legal forms that a CLH project might take for example; Companies Ltd. By Guarantee (CLG), Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs), Community Interest Companies (CICs), Community Benefit Societies and Co-operative Societies. Locality always advises groups that 'form follows function' and CLH groups need to agree the scope of the group's activities and their approaches to CLH before exploring the most suitable legal form to adopt.

A benefit of this programme was that groups could access support from a CLH advisor before they applied for the ESS grant funding to pay for incorporation costs. This enabled groups to decide what legal form was most appropriate and develop an informed grant budget. 9 groups were already incorporated when they joined the ESS programme. 5 groups were established multi- purpose community organisations and they have sought advice about the most suitable legal form to develop a CLH project. Kajans Women Enterprise Ltd for example gained advice from their mentor Goodwin Development Trust that setting up a subsidiary company is recommended if Kajans wish to become a Register Provider.

4 start-up CLH groups were already incorporated before they joined the programme. St Just in Roseland CLT utilised the programme support to broaden the CLT's articles to encompass 5 Parishes. Community membership has increased to 40 paid up members compared to 11 members as part of their former structure.

"Our legal structure was already set, but the support has allowed us to develop our governance and management structure. We now have clearer membership procedures and decision-making systems, which we have started to utilise."

Lucy Hall, Sussex Street Cohousing CIC

6 of the unincorporated ESS groups were supported to become incorporated during the support period. Middleport Matters, South Bank Moving Forward and London Older Lesbian's Cohousing were supported through workshops to develop a governance structure with clear vision, mission and objectives and have been supported to become incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

The CLG structure can be adjusted later to become a charitable CLG or a CIC or be turned into a Community Benefit Society. It is therefore a good starting point for many groups who need to become incorporated to access other funding sources.

"The Locality mentor held a workshop with us to explore governance structures. we decided to apply to become a company limited by guarantee, from developing our interim constitution. The funding from ESS paid for our incorporation."

Jude Watson, LOLC.

“We were able to pay for legal advice which was a fantastic support, to ensure we made the right choices on our structure etc.”

Amelia Bilson, Chair of Middleport Matters

Pathways Housing Solutions were supported to become a CIC and Otley CLT and Portland Community Partnership used the support and grant to become Community Benefit Societies.

6 groups have been supported to decide which legal form will be most suited to their group.

Following a workshop to explore legal structure's, Highfield Food Coop have decided to become a CIO and are progressing this with their local Council for Voluntary Service. St Budeaux Methodist Church have also been supported to explore legal forms, agreed to form a CIO and were supported to draft the rules for a CIO which will undertake the management and running of the proposed housing and community facility.

Arcadia have decided to become a Community Benefit Society and have been accepted onto The Hive, a programme of support from COOPs UK for new cooperatives. This will provide the group with the support to use COOP UK's model rules and incorporate.

CoHuT worked through CLT model options with their advisor and with support from Wrigleys solicitors to undertake a full pros/ cons analysis outlining the group's legal options. The group is looking to proceed towards incorporating as a CLG in the short term to be able to take forward formal dealings on sites as they come forward.

“CoHousing Upon Tyne held a constitution as an unincorporated association for several years. The programme allowed us to commission an options report from Wrigleys solicitors that took the CoHuT Business Plan and used this to narrow down the options between CLG and IPS cooperative.”

Helen Jarvis, CoHuT

## Case Study: St Budeaux Methodist Church



Site of St Budeaux Methodist Church that will be redeveloped for affordable housing and a new church facility

St Budeaux Methodist Church were supported through the Early Stage Support programme to progress their aspirations to build affordable rented accommodation on their Church site in Plymouth.

Support from the programme has enabled the Church to work with the community to develop initial concept designs to create 9 affordable one-bedroom flats alongside a new community facility. The flats will be available for rent to residents with moderate learning difficulties. The plans also include rebuilding the church to create a new facility which will include a café and new worship space.

St Budeaux plans to retain ownership of the land and building and use a management company for day-to-day management of the accommodation with added support services provided through the community facility and the church.

The Early Stage Support Programme has helped St Budeaux to;

- Discuss the pros and cons of various governance models and drafted rules for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Develop initial concept designs and a 'Design and Access Statement'
- Fund pre-application advice from Plymouth City Council
- Support the group to meet key stakeholders to gain local support
- Develop an initial financial model based on the concept designs
- Understand how best to acquire different sources of funding

The Church has experienced delays in setting up a CIO as this legal form is new to the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes (TMCP). With another Church in Sheffield gaining permission to establish a CIO, this is now leading the way for St Budeaux to gain agreement for this legal form for their project.



Support to develop an outline business plan has helped the Church to calculate that they will need £1.7M to realise their ambitions. The Methodist Church Property Development Committee have voiced support with a potential for £200k funding. The group are exploring a loan of £300k from Methodist Chapel Aid and approaching Barclays Bank Foundation. A number of local fundraising activities are also now underway.

The support provided by the programme has moved the group from an aspiration to a project which is now being considered by the planning authority.

“Our CLH advisor has introduced us to an architect who has drawn up concept designs and is now supporting us through the pre-app process. He has also ensured that we knew what we needed to say when meeting other bodies so that they saw our scheme as a viable option. The support has put us in a strong position to argue for a CIO and this is being considered by TMCP. We knew what we wanted to achieve but not how to achieve it. We now have the process in place and are confident that we can do it.”

Pauline Parnell, St Budeaux Methodist Church

## Finding and Securing a Site

Availability of suitable land and buildings is often one of the key barriers to progressing CLH projects. Time to find a site, undertake outline viability work and start to secure an interest in a site can take several years.

There are 5 ESS groups that are progressing schemes on sites that they own or lease. 3 of these are existing community organisations, 1 is a Methodist Church and one is a cohousing group that has purchased some land.

Marsh Farm Futures CIC originally applied to the ESS programme to look at a piece of council land which was leased to them, but after the council returned this to their ownership, they turned their attentions to exploring the suitability of land surrounding their community building with support from Urban Vision. Marsh Farm utilised their grant to undertake further feasibility work for this site and undertake a facilitated workshop with their board to understand the implications for their organisation of developing affordable housing on their site.

There are 17 groups on the ESS programme that have been supported to identify and negotiate land and buildings. 11 of these groups have not yet identified a site to progress pre-feasibility work.

8 ESS groups are looking for land for new build projects in urban areas, 7 of these are start-up CLH groups and 1 is an established community organisation. One of the main topics of conversation at the ESS co-housing group get together in London in December was finding land. This led to all the groups discussing the self-build register and the self-build obligations of councils. This led to several groups finding and registering on their council's self-build register. A number of mapping tools including NEF's public land mapping tool were also discussed.

"The funding from ESS bought in expert help through the Right to Build Task Force. The Task Force is developing assessment criteria for looking at potential land opportunities and help in understanding some of the implications for our group and our members in taking up either the government older person's shared ownership or the Leasehold Scheme for the Elderly."

Jude Watson, LOLC.





CoHuT has been supported to look in outline at a number of potential sites in different locations in Newcastle and Gateshead by their ESS advisor. For a number of reasons none of these have been suitable either due to scale, value, or unsuitability to the group. The group are now optimistic that the arrangement with the developers 'Town' will help them identify a suitable site and several potentials are currently being looked at.

"We are still searching for land. This is a primary obstacle to the next stage of development. Urban brownfield land suitable for discounted/best consideration for our project is very difficult to secure. But we are working the relationships that we've cultivated so far. We are also publishing a Prospectus to circulate to local land owners."

Helen Jarvis, CoHuT

In June 2017 Hay Habitat and their CLH advisors met with Manchester City council's (MCC) officers and a Residential Growth Board representative to discuss their business plan. Hay Habitat would like to secure public land and create a mixed tenure and culturally open & diverse community of 10-15 dwellings with a community facility promoting low impact living and sustainable development. Following this meeting MCC requested further information and additions to be made to the business plan which were actioned. MCC is now helping the group to look for sites and contact other community organisations to develop support for their CLH model.

"We have put most of our efforts into building and polishing a formal business case/ project proposal which has been issued to Manchester City Council in order for them to consider identifying a site for

Community Asset Transfer. A lot of consideration has gone into defining the requirements of any site to be transferred to the group and assuming a site is identified by the council, the work carried out on the project plan should help this carry through relatively smoothly.”

Jimm Reed advisor to Hay Habitat



Hay Habitat meet officers from Manchester City Council

Some ESS groups were held back by the limited capacity within local planning teams. Several groups mentioned that local council planning teams are so stretched (‘firefighting’) that moving discussions forward with them was slow. One group submitted a long list of sites to their District Council and waited 9 months to receive the site assessments. This resulted in six sites being identified, and the ESS grant funding was then utilised to undertake a public consultation to help agree which sites to prioritise for further feasibility work.

Faced with massive funding cuts, local councils across England are under pressure to sell off public land ‘at best consideration’. Nationwide Foundation has funded NEF to highlight where public land is for sale or has been sold through a mapping tool<sup>1</sup>. Locality’s ‘Great British Sell Off’ report estimates that on average over 4,000 publicly owned buildings and spaces are sold off every year.<sup>2</sup>

Arcadia met with Tower Hamlets Council and have made progress to understand which plots are for lease or for sale and they have identified a range of sites that could fit 1-5 homes and 5-19 homes, mostly infill sites on council estates. Arcadia utilised Land Insight<sup>3</sup> which helped them to identify a site in Tower Hamlets and pre-app advice was purchased for the site using the ESS grant.

CLH groups are not only competing with developers to purchase land at ‘best consideration’ but are facing increasing competition for suitable sites from council’s own Local Housing Companies (LHCs). LHCs are independent arms-length commercial organisations wholly or partly owned by councils. They can develop, buy and manage properties within and outside of a local authority area. The majority of LHCs are wholly owned by the council, which typically provides loan finance and land. On the current

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<sup>1</sup> <https://neweconomics.org/save-public-land/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://locality.org.uk/policy-campaigns/save-our-spaces/the-great-british-sell-off/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.landinsight.io/>

trend, up to half of all councils in England may have a LHC by 2020, most building on council land. (Smith Institute, 2017)<sup>4</sup> The Smith Institute's findings suggest that LHCs offer councils a "triple dividend" in the form of much needed extra housing, a greater stewardship role in place-shaping and a financial return to the council. Around 30%-40% of new LHC homes are likely to be 'affordable', with a minority at the equivalent of social rented levels.

The development of regional CLH enabler hubs can support land acquisition for CLH groups by the hubs working strategically with local councils to develop CLH policies that will allocate sites for CLH. Where regional enabler hubs have been in existence, they have been supporting ESS groups to look for suitable sites. The London Older Lesbian's Cohousing group are hoping that the Community Led Housing hub for Greater London<sup>5</sup> can help them identify land as they are working closely with the hub as a pioneer group.

Starlings Housing Cooperative are being supported by their local CLH enabler hub, Brighton and Hove CLT (BHCLT) which has been developed by local people is being supported by Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) through the Community Housing Fund. When the local Council dissuaded Starlings Housing Cooperative from pursuing a site on the urban fringe until the council's own process for community consultation have run its course, the group has started looking at other sites identified by BHCLT.

Otley CLT in Yorkshire are yet to find a suitable site and are still keeping their options open with interest in a refurbishment project and new build. Although a site has not yet been found the group is skilled and motivated and has developed many useful contacts through his programme. The supportive relationship built with Leeds Community Homes will be continuing funded by Power to Change's core grant funding for LCH to establish a CLH enabler hub.

The ESS programme has supported 3 groups looking for sites in smaller more rural settings. Portland Partnership identified 3 potential sites through the development of their Neighbourhood Plan and the ESS support has enabled the group to consider the CLH approaches and role they could take to develop affordable homes on those sites. Chiddingstone Parish Council has been recommended 3 suitable housing sites by their District Council and discussions are underway with the private landowners. St Just in Roseland CLT's has been supported to negotiate land values with a private owner.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.smith-institute.org.uk/book/delivering-renaissance-council-built-homes-rise-local-housing-companies/](http://www.smith-institute.org.uk/book/delivering-renaissance-council-built-homes-rise-local-housing-companies/)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.communityledhousing.london/>

## Case Study: All Saints Action Network (ASAN):

All Saints is a small residential area in the northern part of the Ettingshall Ward in Wolverhampton.

ASAN has approximately 500 households in its membership and holds community forums, produces community newsletters and achieves high resident involvement in various events such as the annual All Saints Festival and their AGM.

Through consultation ASAN discovered that a high priority for residents is building affordable housing on the former Royal Hospital site to meet local housing aspirations. ASAN has organised several community forums to enable local residents to express their aspirations for the NHS Royal Hospital site and these have been well attended.

Through the ESS programme ASAN hoped to identify community led housing opportunities that could emerge from the Royal Hospital site particularly in the large vacant former Nurses Home, a large 3 storey building which could be used for a number of housing and linked projects and on vacant land within the hospital site.

The Royal Hospital site closed in 1997 and nearly a decade later, the site has not seen any positive progress, even though several organisations have owned it and tried to develop it for different purposes. Tesco were the last owners of the site and when they could not find a commercial buyer to buy them out, the Homes and Communities Agency bought the site from them. NEF have written a report about the sale of NHS land showing that only one in 10 of the homes built on sold-off NHS land will be for genuinely affordable social rent<sup>6</sup>.

The site is over 12.5 acres with a substantial amount of ground work that will need to be undertaken to get the site ready for housing. There is an old nurses home on the site that is in disrepair and the old Royal Hospital which is grade II listed. All these points will increase the overall build costs for any developer.

At the start of the programme ASAN wanted help to:

- Assemble more qualitative data to more fully understand the nature of housing preferred by local residents in housing need and explore housing affordability preferences
- Undertaking more extensive local community / partner consultation to be clearer regarding the preferred options of community led housing in All Saints and to stimulate interest in community led housing amongst local people.
- Support to develop meaningful working partnerships with key agencies working within the housing field locally including the LA, social landlords and the Homes & Communities Agency.
- Analysis of potential development models.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://neweconomics.org/2018/01/no-homes-for-nurses>

ASAN have a track record of CAT and asset development. ASAN acquired a local former primary school which had become surplus to local authority requirements in 2001. ASAN skilfully assembled a funding package in 2007 worth £2.3M to allow them to develop the site into the 'Workspace'. The Workspace has enabled ASAN to achieve an income stream from office rentals and hiring of meeting space, it also runs a successful day nursery from the site. ASAN also manages Southside Sports (an all-weather flood lit facility).

At the start of the programme Saffron Lane Neighbourhood Council (SLNC) were chosen to undertake the assessment of ASAN's support needs and these were a good mentor match, having achieved a CAT of public land in Leicester to build 68 affordable homes for rent. As part of the mentoring support SLNC helped ASAN look at the feasibility of building 15 terraced properties on a local site which would need the least amount of ground work to allow building work to commence. This feasibility work helped ASAN to understand the need for capital grant funding and that ASAN would need to acquire the land for below market value or, ideally, at no cost.

The CLH advisor supported ASAN to draft a visioning document to share with community for consultation and were supported to consolidate their extensive community consultation and analysis and demonstrate the need for housing for older people which helped shift their vision about the type of scheme they are aspiring to develop.

ASAN were supported to liaise with HCA regarding the Royal Hospital site but struggled to have any meaningful engagement with the HCA about plots of land. Whilst ASAN were initially disappointed not to have been able to secure land on the Royal Hospital site the adviser helped them to identify other roles they might have in the development of the site including possible community enterprise development and as advisers to the development to ensure it support local needs and aspirations.

During the project conversations Wolverhampton council became more positive with the possibility of the local authority including a small CLH development within their Right to Buy (RTB) Receipts Plan. This outcome prompted the CLH advisor and ASAN to agree that their organisation should focus on a smaller project on a site at the back of their current building that they already have access to. This would allow them to 'test' and demonstrate their ability to develop a CLH project. Locality was able to share key learning from other Locality members' innovative uses of RTB receipts. The support also included completing Locality's Lighthouse diagnostic to look at the strength of the organisation and any capacity building needs to ensure the organisation is investment ready to secure social investment for a CLH project.

## Project Viability and Developing a Business Plan

ESS groups both with and without identified sites identified have been supported to develop outline financial models to understand how to assess viability.

Starlings Housing Cooperative were supported to develop a project plan and develop a spreadsheet of financial projections for a site which they submitted to Brighton and Hove City Council. The group is now working with a local CLH enabler service to secure further feasibility funding for a number of sites with a transferable financial model. Hay Habitat were supported to develop a financial model for a mutual housing scheme for a theoretical site in Manchester. This has helped Manchester City Council to understand more about this innovative approach to CLH and has supported their ongoing conversations to identify a site.

CoHuT were supported to look at a number of financial models in order to try to accommodate the different requirements of the group members, based on outline capital assumptions for the delivery of the project. The group initially looked in detail at mutual ownership models but this caused some issues for members with lower incomes so a mixed sale/shared ownership approach is the one which has been adopted. The group has developed a working business plan, to accommodate the current working arrangements with a developer and to provide concise versions to use for publicity and awareness raising process.

“Jimm Reed and Neil Murphy (TOWN) have both run our household member finances through a viability model to ensure that our membership profile (including low income) can be catered for via a mix of shared ownership (Homes England) and discounted (covenanted) market purchase to ensure a scheme committed to affordability in perpetuity”

Helen Jarvis, CoHuT

London Older Lesbian Cohousing (LOLC) were supported by their CLH advisor to help them to understand what they needed to add to their business plan. The ESS grant of £2,250 meant LOLC could hold a series of workshops to develop the business plan's content. The group held a workshop with an architect who is experienced in designing cohousing projects to develop their design and cost specifications. Another workshop was held to explore the group processes – building the capacity and capability of the group. A workshop with the UK Cohousing Network helped LOLC to understand the finances required from the start to the end of the project.



Business case high level Gantt chart 2018- August 2019		Start	End	Jan 18	Feb 18	Mar 18	Apr 18	May 18	Jun 18	Jul 18	Aug 18	Sep 18	Oct 18	Nov 18	Dec 18	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	May 19	Jun 19	Jul 19	Aug 19
<b>Organisational development / membership</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Active outreach to BAME groups		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Review BAME outreach and create new plan as req.		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Develop 6 monthly plans for outreach & recruitment		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Develop community and resilience to gaps		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Organisational resources / working capital for each stage		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
<b>Policies - review &amp; develop for each stage</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Early Stage policy review		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Development Stage policy review 2019		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
<b>Business Plan</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Financial elements & draft completed		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Consult with GSA		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Final drafting version (i)		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Final version (ii) completed		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Business plan review at each stage		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
<b>Legal structure</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Company Ltd by Guarantee complete		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Review Legal structure for Development stage		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
<b>Partnership with housing providers</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Develop criteria for selection of Registered Housing provider (Housing Association or developer)		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Meetings with Reg Housing providers		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Explore options for finance of mixed tenure		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
<b>DECISION ON HOUSING PROVIDER TYPE / COMBINATION / MODEL</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Negotiations with Housing provider(s) shortlist		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
<b>FINAL SELECTION OF HOUSING PROVIDER(S)</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
Negotiation of contract / partnership agreement with housing provider		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				
<b>FINALISE CONTRACT WITH HOUSING PROVIDER(S) 2019</b>		01/01/2018	31/08/2019																				

Example of LOLC's project planning

In Chichester there is a need for rented accommodation for vulnerable families or individuals, progressing from the sheltered accommodation the council already provides. In late 2017 Hyde Housing Association approached Chichester District Council to ask if they would like to buy a 1 x 3 bed and 1 x 4 bed property which are not financially viable for them. The Council have approached Chichester Development Trust to ask if they would like to purchase and renovate the property with a grant and loan from the District Council's Community Housing Fund allowance received in 2016. The ESS programme has provided support to assess the viability of renovating and leasing these properties back to the council to house vulnerable families.

## Case Study: Kajans Women's Enterprise Ltd



Images of the derelict Muhammed Ali Centre

Kajans Women's Enterprise Ltd is an established community organisation in Birmingham, delivering education, training, bespoke activities for young entrepreneurs and healthy living actions, as well as capacity building support for other partners in the voluntary and community sector. Much of Kajans work is supporting BME communities with low aspirations, poor educational attainment and high levels of unemployment.

Kajans is a member of Soho First, a local multi-agency partnership who have developed several key priorities for this deprived area of Birmingham, including better quality housing stock and a specific need to regenerate the derelict Muhammed Ali Centre.

Kajans have purchased the Muhammed Ali Centre site from Birmingham City Council and have developed ambitious plans to provide affordable accommodation for young people in housing need, include disabled individuals, single parents and young entrepreneurs who may already be working within Kajans' enterprise units. Kajans will provide the wrap around support that young people need to thrive as active community members.

Kajans Women's Enterprise were supported to model different scenarios and understand the outline financial requirements for developing their site. This has helped them start conversations with their Local Economic Partnership to explore local funding opportunities.

The Early Support Programme has helped Kajans to:

- Develop a draft visioning document
- Understand the external stakeholders in the project
- Build a relationship with the planning team at Birmingham City Council, crucial to the development of their vision
- Develop their housing allocation strategy and ensure it fits into Birmingham City Council's housing policy
- Develop several costed options
- Understand how the project will relate to the overall finances of the organisation
- Look at what Kajans will need to before investment ready to secure both capital grant and debt finance.
- Secure £50k from DCLG's Community Buildings Fund
- Establish a mentor with another Locality member, a trail blazer in the field of CLH who has advised them through the best legal structure for the CLH project.

"Without the presence of a knowledgeable and effective broker (such as Locality) these early stages would have been painful for small community based organisation like Kajans and more than likely we could not have got through these early negotiations."

Hermin McIntosh, Kajans Women's Enterprise



## Developing Relationships and Partnerships

Groups have commented that being part of this programme has been very helpful at bringing key stakeholders around the table and bringing credibility to their projects. Groups with no track record can find it hard to develop new strategic partnerships and the CLH advisors helped the groups to connect with council officers and play a valuable influencing role.

In Birmingham, Kajans Women's Enterprise were supported by Locality to meet with Birmingham City Council to ensure they asked the right questions and have been supported to undertake follow up work to ensure their plans align with the council's housing strategies. Kajans have been accepted to join a number of black business enterprises in the Mayor of Birmingham's business programme, which will provide mentors and access to other resources. They have also secured a Champion from the Local Economic Partnership.

"Locality has been strategic in making connections at every stage, through the provision of a range of specific and general network meetings, which has been invaluable in gaining information, learning from the experience of others, by creating opportunities to build partnerships, gain mentors and share resources in an open and transparent forum."

Hermin McIntosh, Kajans Women's Enterprise

In the early stages of developing relationships, having a knowledgeable advisor present at meetings with the local authority can provide groups with the support they need to build confidence in their project and answer technical questions.

"Our advisor ensured that we knew what we needed to say when meeting other bodies so that they saw our scheme as a viable option."

Pauline Parnell, St Budeaux Methodist Church

CoHuT's partnership understanding with the developers 'TOWN' is allowing the group to share the cost and gain expertise to produce a site prospectus to circulate in search of site/financial considerations. CoHuT are continuing to cultivate relationships with both Newcastle and Gateshead local authorities and their custom build registers.

"The Early Stage Support Programme helped us to translate our existing vision and project aims into a more practical application, by negotiating a memorandum of understanding with an enabling developer (TOWN). We believe that working with an enabling partner with experience of

driving through successful cohousing development will help us to be taken seriously and secure a viable (if difficult) site.”

Helen Jarvis, CoHuT

Hay Habitat have developed a good partnership with Straw Works, who is the preferred partner to help develop and build out a site. From this relationship some good partnerships have developed with other straw build groups increasing the potential for shared learning, resources and mutual help.

Starlings Housing Cooperative approached Jon Hallett from Footprint Design Studio, a finalist in The National Custom and Self Build Association (NaCSBA) 2015 self-build competition. The brief for the competition by NaCSBA was to design an innovative ‘self-build’ starter home that could be constructed for less than £40,000. This design complements the vision that Starlings have for economical, flexible and modular homes. Footprint Design Studio have created a preliminary outline design for Starlings and as the project develops they will remain in consultation with the Studio and other delivery partners with regards to design and delivery.

One of the objectives of the programme was to develop a strong and cohesive network of CLH practitioners working together nationwide. Each group was paired with a CLH practitioner who had experience in the type of CLH approach that the group had shown an interest in exploring in their application. Several groups have developed very successful ongoing mentoring relationships following the initial period of mentoring to diagnose their support needs.

Kajans Women’s Enterprise has had regular contact with their assessor from Goodwin Development Trust in Hull. With their track record of new build developments, Peter McGurn has been well placed to provide constructive challenge to Kajans’ project managers and have received support from Goodwin Development Trust to consider whether Registered Provider status is suitable for them.



St Albans Community Association have developed a lasting relationship with Witton Lodge in Birmingham who were asked to deliver an away day for St Alban's board, funded through their ESS grant. Following the initial mentoring from Witton Lodge, Middleport Matters successfully applied for Locality's Knowledge and Skills Sharing grant to visit Witton Lodge to learn more about their work in Birmingham and help them understand more of the process involved in refurbishments.

"Witton Lodge were fantastic hosts! They were friendly, organised and provided us with enough (but not too much) information for us to be massively inspired to emulate them. They spoke to us as peers, as opposed to our seniors (even though they are far more experienced than us); they made us feel as though we were able to achieve whatever we want to, even if we don't currently have the skills to do so, as neither did they when they started."

Member of Middleport Matters

2 group workshops were arranged to bring ESS groups together to learn from experienced CLH practitioners, share their own experiences and develop mutually supportive relationships. A refurbishment workshop brought together 6 ESS groups in Leeds to receive support from Jon Fitzmaurice from SelfHelp.org, have a tour of a current self-help housing project by Canopy staff and undertake a workshop session with LATCH.



Self-help housing workshop and visits in Leeds

8 representatives from 5 urban based co-housing groups on the ESS programme came together in December for a workshop in London to jointly explore the barriers they are facing, share experiences and receive advice from Urban Vision and this led to the groups continuing to share draft business plans with each other.

The programme encouraged ESS groups to attend other CLH events. A volunteer from Birkenhead and Tranmere Neighbourhood Planning Forum was encouraged to attend a Self Help Housing network meeting in Manchester run by Jon Fitzmaurice. This led to an introduction to 'Access to Employment' – another group on the Wirral that have developed empty properties and public houses into accommodation. This led to one of the directors from the organisation visiting the group and undertaking 1 day of consultancy support.

Locality's My Community Powerful Communities CLH event in Leeds in January was attended by over 75 delegates, including several ESS groups who utilised their ESS grants to cover travel costs. A session was held for new CLH groups to hear about learning from the ESS programme.



ESS workshop at a My Community event in Leeds

Through NWF's 'Added Value' offer, 9 Early Stage Support groups were provided with bursaries to attend Locality's Convention in Manchester over two days. Locality's Annual Convention in November is two days of inspirational learning, connecting and networking with a diverse and interactive schedule of sessions, talks, visits and workshops. These bursaries enabled the ESS groups to:

- meet other ESS groups and swap stories and ideas at a ESS Fringe event
- hear from inspiring leaders, thinkers and doers from the UK and around the world who are taking back control in their communities through CLH.
- Gain insight, skills & ideas from the CLH workshop where they met other Locality members doing innovative CLH projects
- Influence the debate by joining conversations to have a say in Locality's future work.

A Community Led Housing workshop was held on both days of Convention and representatives from Kajans Women's Enterprise in Birmingham delivered a 15-minute presentation at each workshop to over 70 delegates to share their experiences of how the support from the Early Stage Support programme has helped them to move forward.





Kajans Women's Enterprise presenting at Locality's Convention in 2017

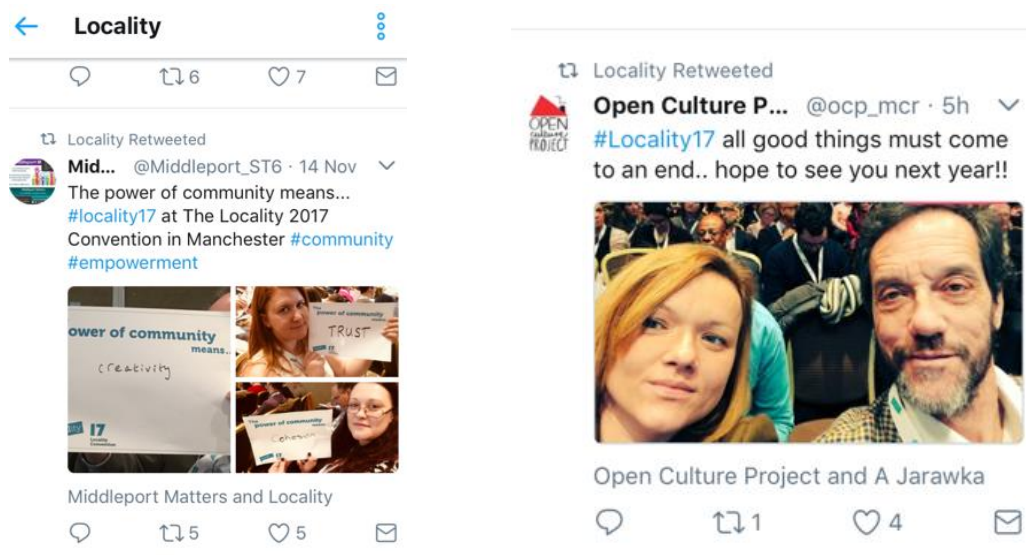


"This was an excellent opportunity to learn, meet, exchange thoughts and ideas. It met my objectives. A well organised and structured conference offering focused workshops. It would have been difficult to attend without the bursary, so it's really valued. The event enabled me to make new contacts as well as meet existing ones."

Ishaq Kazi, Programme Manager, Marsh Farm Futures

"We learnt so much, our heads are spinning! We actually stayed afterwards to crack on with a few things on our laptops before getting the train home because we were so inspired! We have been encouraged to challenge the local authority with their Reviving Communities Scheme and asked them to let us lead the regeneration in our area instead - what this space! And we got lots of fab tips for managing our volunteers better and hopefully retain them. I was feeling a little bit deflated, and not very motivated, but now I'm full of energy, full of hope, full of power and I'm ready to fight when I get back home"

Amelia Bilson, Chair of Middleport Matters



## Case Study: London Older Lesbian Cohousing (LOLC)

London Older Lesbian Cohousing (LOLC) <http://lolcohousing.co.uk/> are developing a co-housing community of between 20-25 housing units for older lesbians, aged over 50 in north-east London. Their vision is to create a community that is affordable, with a mixed tenure – combining homes for purchase, rent and shared ownership. It will be environmentally friendly, with low emission/footprint standards. Housing units will be accessible and based on the principles of Lifetime Homes – designed to meet the changing needs of their members.

In Stonewall Housing's report 'Building Safer Choices'<sup>7</sup> (2016) it highlights that there are only a handful of specialist housing schemes in the UK despite the levels of housing discrimination that lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) citizens suffer.

The members of LOLC are all Londoners, with the majority holding extensive experience of working successfully in cooperative and collective ventures. Currently, most of the members live or have lived, in north-east London (Haringey, Islington, Hackney, Waltham Forest), and this is their favoured location to find a suitable site.

With help from Locality mentors, CLH advisors and grant funding, the ESS Programme has allowed the group to move from imagining what their project might be, to developing their governance structure, a business plan and outline project plans for 2018. An advisor has worked with the group to explore governance structures, and from an interim constitution the group have been supported to become a company limited by guarantee.

The group have recruited group members through social media, meet-up groups, cohousing U.K. and word of mouth. They have had interest from over 40 women and have a core membership of 10-15 women.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.buildingsafechoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/BuildingSafeChoices\\_full.pdf](http://www.buildingsafechoices.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/BuildingSafeChoices_full.pdf)



The links through the ESS programme helped introduce the group to the Greater London Authority (GLA) and at the launch of the GLA Community-led housing hub a support group of professionals was set up to work with the group as a pioneer model for the GLA in developing small scale intentional community housing.

The support group has met with them over the year to help develop a business plan. This group includes representatives from:

- Pollard Thomas Edwards: award winners for their design of New Ground, Older Women's Cohousing community opened in 2017 in Barnet, London
- NaCSBA: representative from the National Association of Custom and Self-Build
- Innisfree Housing Association: Chief Executive
- Walterton and Elgin Community Homes, WECH: Chief Executive
- LB Waltham Forest: Affordable Housing Development and Investment project
- Social and Sustainable Capital.

These experts, across the field of community-led housing, are crucial for advice, as well to help make the contacts the group will need in the coming year. The GLA hub is helping link the group to the GLA small sites programme, which aims to help groups access land, as this is a particular challenge. Through this work with partners they are identifying the specifications of sites and exploring flexibility.

"The Early Stage Support programme, through our mentor support and the funds, has been fantastic and really speeded up the process for us. It has enabled us to receive advice from experts that otherwise would have been beyond our means."

Jude Watson, LOLC

It has been a challenge for the group to balance holding workshops and decision-making meetings, at the same time as ensuring support and participation from group members. The offers of support have really helped the group to move forward, but the group has found they need time to discuss, assess and progress ideas. Most of the group are still working, so it's challenging, especially as older people, to go at a pace that suits their needs.

The next steps for the group will be to continue to work with the London hub to find a site and find a Housing Association or other developer partner.

## Securing Funding

One of the key barriers to project development is the ability to secure pre-development funding to work towards planning approval. Supporting groups to secure follow up revenue grant funding was therefore an objective of the ESS programme.

By the end of the support period over £165k of pre-development grant funding had been secured or committed to ESS groups which has matched the Nationwide Foundation's investment in this programme to support these groups. There was a further £38k of revenue funding known to be in the pipeline.

### Other Start Up Support Programmes

2 groups have accessed the National CLT Network's Start Up Support programme. South Bank Community Housing have submitted a stage 3 £4k grant application to progress their plans for a refurbishment project.

Arcadia have been accepted onto COOP UK's Hive programme, so they will receive advice and support to incorporate with a housing cooperative structure once they have developed their membership numbers further.

### DCLG's Community Buildings Fund

The Department of Community and Local Government's (DCLG) Community Buildings Fund managed by Locality from 2015 to 2018 supported CLH groups looking to build homes through the traditional planning permission route or through a Community Right to Build Order. A pre-feasibility grant up to £10k and a Project Support Grant up to £40k were available to eligible, incorporated groups. Through support from the ESS programme a total of £87k of these grants were secured to progress projects.

5 groups were supported to secure DCLG's pre-feasibility grant (St Just in Roseland, Middleport Matters, Sussex Street Co-housing, Marsh Farm CIC and Kajans Women's Enterprise). All applicants required help to ensure their application would score well and be approved by the grant panel.

The eligibility criteria for DCLG's pre-feasibility grants preventing the following types of ESS groups from applying:

- groups looking at refurbishment projects without need for planning permissions
- groups who had not identified a site or had a site in mind but could not evidence that the landowner is supportive of their CLH project.
- groups who were not incorporated.

'Project Support' Grants were available to groups who could provide sufficient evidence to show security of land, to help them achieve planning approval. Kajans Women's

Enterprise were provided with 3 days of support through the ESS programme to secure a £40k grant. This Project Support grant has helped to lever in additional support from the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership. The LEP have confirmed that they wish to support Kajan's with funding and in-kind support to fund the gap between the £40k secured by DCLG and the £64k pre-development funding required to achieve planning consent. They have been allocated a Champion inside the LEP and there is a potential of £154k available for clearing and preparation of the Brownfield site.

## **Community Housing Fund**

By the end of the support period a total of £77k of Community Housing Fund monies had been committed to 3 ESS groups from councils who received an allocation through the first round of the CHF.

£17k had been committed from Chichester District Council to Chichester Development Trust towards a feasibility study to acquire several properties surplus to requirements from a local HA. The Portland Partnership had been promised a £50k revenue grant from Weymouth & Portland Borough Council to fund architect drawings. St Just in Roseland received a grant from Cornwall Council for £10k for development costs. In addition, Starlings Housing Cooperative were intending to apply to their local CHF small grants programme for a £10k feasibility grant, funded by their local council's CHF allocation.

## **Other Contributions:**

LOLC secured £2400 from London Borough of Waltham Forest to fund the Right to Build Task Force to support the group with site specification and drawing up criteria for selection of Housing Providers. The London CLH hub provided a panel of professional supporters providing in-kind support from architects, funding bodies, housing associations, local authorities, CDS and was estimated by the group as having a monetary value of £2k to date.

Groups have been supported to explore a variety of sources of capital funding. Following the Land Aid presentation at the Locality's CLH networking meeting for members hosted in Birmingham, Kajans Women's Enterprise submitted an application to Land Aid for the renovation costs of three existing properties for 'Kajan's Girls Transitioning to Adulthood Partnership' project which was unsuccessful, but the group have been supported by Land Aid to re-apply. Kajans were also approved onto Land Aid's Pro Bono support programme. The Methodist Church Property Development Committee have voiced support for St Budeaux's plans with an indication of £200k towards capital costs.

## Case Study: St Just in Roseland CLT



A public consultation held by St Just in Roseland CLT to develop the housing designs

Cornwall has one of the greatest disparities between wages and the cost of housing. The need for affordable housing was realised in the development of St Just in Roseland Neighbourhood Plan which passed referendum in 2015. The consultation showed that 87% of respondents would support the building of affordable housing to meet the needs of local people. This objective in turn produced 6 policies supporting the change of use of holiday lets, conversion of hotels and guest houses, the re-use of redundant buildings for affordable housing and the construction of new affordable housing for people with a clearly defined local connection and managed by a Roseland based CLT.

St Just in Roseland CLT are hoping to build 12 properties for affordable rent on part scrub land and part agricultural land, with a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bed properties to cater for single people and families.

The proposed site for development requires the purchase of land from a private owner and Cornwall Council who are looking to gift the land to the group. The landowner had agreed sums for the land acquisition but when the group decided to partner with Cornwall Rural Housing Association, the landowner subsequently questioned the amount being offered for the land. The groups have been supported to have on-going discussions with the private landowner in relation to the size of the site he will dispose of. This will either be land for 6 houses or just for an access road. The group have revised the site design and the pre-application advice and are considering two schemes, one for 12 houses and one for 6 houses. The council are happy in principle with both schemes and Cornwall Rural Housing Association are happy to take the development forward and to manage the houses.

The ESS support work has included meetings with the Cornwall Council in order to determine the route forward for land acquisition, support from architects to prepare a pre-application submission and support to submit pre-application advice from Cornwall Council and Cornwall AONB.

The group were supported to consider different funding sources. They spoke to Tridios Bank and considered recruiting local business sponsors and whether local holiday lets might donate 1 week's rental income to their project. The group have decided to partner with Cornwall Rural Housing Association as a means to secure capital grant funding for

affordable rental housing, act as the developer and then manage the affordable housing.

The group were supported to secure a pre-feasibility grant from Locality's community buildings grant programme for legal fees to secure option agreements and asset transfers and to fund architect fees. The group have also received a grant from Cornwall Council for £10k towards pre-development costs.

The role of the group has been to unlock this land for affordable housing. They have learnt about the development process and are keen to move onto enabling more affordable housing on other sites.

## 5. Programme Outcomes

At the end of the programme 20 groups reported their stage of development as follows:

Stage of development	No. of groups
Site searching	11
Site identified	5
Site secured	5
Planning pre-app	5
Planning submitted	0
Planning secured	0

13 groups reported that they are aspiring to build a total of 203 units. 7 groups did not state the number of units they are aspiring to develop so it is difficult to estimate the total pipeline of homes supported through this programme. Some groups have a clear idea of the number and types of houses they are planning to build and some have not yet found a site.

Estimated No. of units in scheme	No. of groups
0 to 4	2
5 to 9	2
10 to 15	4
16- 20	3
21 -30	1
30 +	1
Unknown	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>

13 groups reported on the types of tenures they are aspiring to build. 59% of the 122 units reported were types of affordable housing which is a far higher figure than the average percentage of affordable homes built or funded through other types of housing developments. Based on the schemes being progressed it is likely that a high proportion of the units in the projects who did not report a tenure will be for affordable and social rent.

Tenure	No. of units	Percentage
Affordable rent	51	42%
Social rent	12	10%
Market Rent	4	3%
Market Sale	46	38%
Shared Ownership/ Equity	4	3%
Price covenant sale	5	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>100%</b>



Building the capacity of groups was a key objective for the programme. 17 groups out of 20 groups (85%) scored themselves 4/5 likelihood of success or 5/5 likelihood of success at the end of the programme. The support has raised groups confidence levels to succeed and has provided a good foundation for these projects to progress their projects.

<b>Likelihood of Success Score by Groups (1-5)</b>	<b>No. of groups</b>	<b>Percentage of groups</b>
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	3	15%
4	11	55%
5	6	30%

The CLH advisors considered that 13 groups out of 21 groups (62%) have a good or very good chance of success, a quarter of groups have a fair chance of success and only 3 groups might find it harder to develop projects through to completion.

<b>Likelihood of Success Score by Advisors</b>	<b>No. of groups</b>	<b>Percentage of groups</b>
Unlikely	3	15%
Fair	5	25%
Good	10	50%
Very Good	3	15%

At the end of the programme the ESS groups rated the support they had received through the programme. 95% of groups rated the support 4/5 or 5/5.

<b>Support Rating</b>	<b>No. of groups</b>	<b>Percentage of groups</b>
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	1	5%
4	7	35%
5	12	60%

## 6. Future Sources of Support

### Action Plans

To enable groups to feel confident in moving forward with their projects, groups were encouraged by their CLH advisors to co-produce action plans towards the end of the support programme. Groups commented that this process was useful to set themselves SMART targets and to delegate tasks between group members. An example of an action plan is provided in the appendix.

### Membership of Support Organisations

At the end of the programme 18 of the 21 groups reported that they are now a member of a national support organisation:

- 7 groups on the ESS programme were already Locality members and these included all the multi-use community organisations on the programme
- 2 new start-up CLH groups joined Locality whilst being on the programme
- 8 groups on the programme are NCLTN members
- 1 group is a member of CCH
- 5 groups are members of UK Cohousing Network

Through the Locality CLH members network, ESS groups are supported to meet innovative Locality CLH members from across the country and are given the opportunity to cascade their learning to others. The Locality member's CLH network meeting in Birmingham in September 2017 was attended by several ESS groups. When ESS groups reach key milestones in their projects they will be encouraged to present their learning to future meetings of this network.

### Community Housing Fund

4 of the national membership bodies supporting CLH groups (National CLT Network, Locality, Confederation of Cooperative Homes and UK Cohousing Network) have formed a partnership called Community Led Homes to submit a joint proposal to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to fund an early stage grant programme funded by the Community Housing Fund.

If successful this will provide groups with the early stage support they require to develop their projects to a point when they can apply to Homes England's Community Housing Fund revenue grant programme, to enable groups to fund pre-development costs through to start on site.

## **CLH Enabler Hubs**

Several ESS groups have accessed support from local enabling services. There are plans to develop a network of CLH enabler hubs around the country with support from the Nationwide Foundation and the Community Housing Fund, which will provide an ongoing regional source of support for the ESS groups.

## **CLH Advisor training**

Funding from Nationwide Foundation and Power to Change is funding CCH to develop a training programme to support the professional development of CLH advisors and increase the pool of CLH advisors that groups can access for support through enabler hubs.

## **Community Led Homes Website**

Nationwide Foundation has provided grant funding to develop a one stop shop CLH website to collate all the existing CLH guidance, tools, templates and case studies and commission new resources to fill gaps in the guidance available.

## 7. Conclusion

Early stage support and grant funding is essential to support both new start up groups and existing community organisations to understand local housing needs, develop their CLH objectives and receive unbiased advice about the range of approaches to CLH.

The ESS programme has provided 21 groups with a firm foundation to progress their CLH aspirations. At the end of the programme confidence levels of groups were high and £165k of revenue grant funding had been secured or committed to ESS groups to progress their plans. This has more than matched the Nationwide Foundation's investment in supporting these CLH groups through the ESS programme.

Groups put a very high value on peer mentoring opportunities with experienced CLH practitioners, the opportunity to visit successful CLH projects both within and outside of their region and to network with other early stage groups.

The ESS programme has found that groups of people forming around a general housing need rather than a particular neighbourhood and/or site opportunity can take longer to develop an active group, find a suitable site and then develop an outline project plan. Time to find a site, undertake outline viability work and start to secure an interest in a site can take several years.

Existing community organisations may be able to progress projects quicker as they have developed social capital, trust and connections within the community and with a range of local stakeholders. They may have a track record of large capital projects and have an asset base to help secure loan finance.

Both start up groups and established community organisations commented that they wished the support period could have been longer than the 12 to 15 months of support that groups typically received. It is therefore recommended that early stage support programmes and grants can be provided to groups over a two-year period to ensure continuity of support through the early group development stage.

## Appendix: Example of an Action Plan

ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	START DATE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED (staff, funds etc. )	DESIRED OUTCOME
Concept designs prepared with an initial Design and Access Statement	Architect	Jan 18	Mid Jan 18	£ 1,325.00	Concept plans and Design and Access Statement package completed for Pre-App
Application made to Plymouth City Council for Pre-App advice	Architect with support from pro bono business adviser	Jan 18	Feb 18	£ 925.00	Pre-App underway
ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	START DATE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED staff, funds etc. )	DESIRED OUTCOME
Review of programme in light of Pre-App	Project leader volunteer	Jan 18	End March 18	Project leader volunteer time	Revised programme which leads to submission of planning application
ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	START DATE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED (staff, funds etc. )	DESIRED OUTCOME
Review and revision of initial financial model as a consequence of Pre-	Project team with support from pro bono business adviser	End Feb 18	March 18	Volunteer time only	Financial model and initial business model that sits alongside revised concept plans following Pre-App opinion

App opinion from PCC					
ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	START DATE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED (staff, funds etc. )	DESIRED OUTCOME
Applications for full feasibility work following Pre-App opinion	Project team with support from pro bono business adviser	End Feb 18	April 18	Volunteer time only	Funding in place for full pre-development work that leads to planning application following Pre-App opinion
ACTION STEP DESCRIPTIONS	RESPONSIBLE	START DATE	COMPLETION DATE	RESOURCES REQUIRED ( staff, funds etc. )	DESIRED OUTCOME
Discussion with investors and capital funders	Project team with support from pro bono business adviser	March 18	Autumn 2018	Volunteer time only	In principal offers of capital funds to support the development phase once planning is obtained





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