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Copeland Borough Council Community Led Housing Statement

February 2018

1. Purpose of the Community Led Housing Statement

This statement has been developed to:

- Set out Copeland Borough Council's support for Community Led Housing (CLH) and intent to support CLH projects to deliver affordable and aspirational housing in the borough.
- Alleviate issues around housing affordability in the district by contributing to the overall delivery of housing, whether through investment in existing empty homes and buildings or through new build solutions.
- Enable our communities to realise their potential and take forward their own small scale housing schemes.
- Recognise the self-build and custom build community and put in place mechanisms to support the housing aspirations highlighted in the district's Custom and Self-build Register.
- Raise awareness of CLH and encourage its delivery through putting a range of support structures in place to enable schemes to progress from the earliest opportunity.

2. Principles – The definitions of Community Led Housing

The three fundamental principles which must be satisfied for a project or scheme to constitute CLH are:

- A requirement that meaningful community engagement and consent occurs throughout the process. The community does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes themselves, though some may do.
- The local community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes and in a manner of their choosing.
- A requirement that the benefits of the scheme to the local area and/or specified community group are clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity e.g. through an asset lock.

3. Collaborative approach to supporting Community Led Housing

The content of this Community Led Housing (CLH) statement will be effective from February 2018 and revised as necessary to meet changing circumstances. This statement will be formerly reviewed by October 2018 with proposed amendments to be approved by the Community Led Housing Advisory Group.

This statement is relevant to all officers of the Council, in particular Strategic Housing and Planning Policy teams within the Customers and Communities Directorate and the Economic Development/Regeneration Team. Although essentially focused on the provision of housing, it is equally relevant to the Planning Policy team who are responsible for ensuring future housing needs are met and incorporated into the Local Plan.

The Council recognises that there are many situations where there is a shared or complementary role with other agencies. Relevant officers within the Housing Team will seek to work collaboratively with national organisations who are leading on the CLH agenda. Agencies including the Community Land Trust Network and UK Co-housing Network will be working together as they disseminate information and policy updates from central government as well as taking a lead on national 'good practice' training and events for local authorities who have received Community Housing Fund grants. We will also work with local organisations and individuals including community groups, Registered Providers, LDNP, Private Developers and self-builders.

The Council also recognises that it has to have a flexible approach that responds to government housing strategy. CLH is currently seen as a viable method of increasing the supply of housing and at the same time, making a real impact on the lives of the communities who are delivering it. As government priorities change in the future, CLH may not receive the same level of support, but the Council will endeavour to continue supporting any groups or individuals (self-build or custom-build) who have taken an interest in delivering their own housing.

The Council will also work closely with neighbouring Local Authorities to deliver housing numbers and will work particularly closely with those Local Authorities who have also received CLH grants from the Community Housing Fund within Cumbria to maximise the impact of that funding in the district and Cumbria as a whole.

4. Links to Other Strategies

The Council recognises that the CLH programme will primarily work to meet the relevant objectives within Copeland Borough Council's Housing Strategy and the emerging The Local Plan and will complement Copeland's Empty Homes Strategy. The CLH programme also has the potential to complement other key strategies for Copeland Borough Council including Town Centre Regeneration and Extra Care Housing.

The CLH statement supports the council's Housing Strategy to:

- Maximise delivery of good quality housing of the right type and tenure by co-ordinating the activities of housing providers and support agencies to meet existing and future housing need in a sustainable way.
- To build new homes and contribute to the economic regeneration of Copeland
- To investigate alternative models of housing delivery to meet the housing and support needs of specific groups and sectors of the housing market.
- To meet the aspirational housing needs of the existing population and those moving into Copeland for employment

5. Identifying and implementing solutions to increase Community Led Housing

The Council's main objective for CLH is to raise awareness and encourage learning about CLH and increase provision of small scale affordable housing in the district by having:

- a) a designated officer to lead on CLH delivery, working in partnership with Registered Providers, Parish and Town Councils to offer advice and support and encourage small scale CLH schemes within the District.
- b) a Community Led Housing Member Champion
- c) a Copeland Borough Council Resource that will support and enable groups to make contact with the niche social investment banks, building societies, solicitors, consultants and architects who have expertise in the field of CLH.
- d) an effective communication strategy which;
 - ensures the Council's website content is updated to inform interested parties about the different models of community-led housing and current/forthcoming funding opportunities,
 - promotes an information leaflet as a brief introduction/reference guide for CLH
 - uses social media and newsletters to promote CLH.
 - works with other districts in Cumbria to create a dedicated Cumbria CLH website to promote CLH and provide resources for interested parties,
- e) ongoing development of the custom and self-build register.
- f) joint working within the Strategic Housing team to identify long term Empty Properties and consider their viability as CLH sites.
- g) exploring the potential of a Copeland or Cumbria wide CLH hub/umbrella organisation to support and mentor emerging CLH groups and be able to promote and champion CLH within the district.

6. Funding for Community Led Housing in Copeland

Copeland Borough Council received £193,768 from central government in 2016 to support CLH in the borough. This money is available for emerging and existing CLH groups to apply for to support a range of activities and development work. An advisory group has been established (with the terms of reference set out in Appendix 1) which will oversee the awarding of grants during the financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19. Future funding for CLH (2018 onwards) will be managed by Homes England; a prospectus for this fund is expected by March 2018.

As part of the CLH resources, Copeland Borough Council will monitor other funding sources for CLH and update resources as required and share new funding streams with all CLH groups.

7. Related Policy Documents

- Copeland Borough Council Housing Strategy
- Copeland Borough Council Empty Properties Strategy

This CLH Policy is available to the public on request and is also available on the council's website www.copeland.gov.uk

Any comments about the Community-led Housing Statement can be made to Copeland Borough Council's Strategic Housing Manager.

8. Models of Community Led Housing

For the purpose of this statement, the Council recognises the following models of Community-led Housing:

a) Self-build and custom-build housing

Self-builders usually build their own homes or enlist somebody else to customise a build to meet their needs.

b) Self-help Housing

Bringing empty properties back into use. It usually involves people working together with a shared goal of solving a local housing issue. It may also involve a renovation project where a redundant building is transformed into homes by an involved group of local people.

c) Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

CLTs are set up by local people in areas with a shortage of affordable housing. The local community take a lead role developing homes and other community assets. The CLT will work to ensure that the homes are genuinely affordable, based on average local earnings in the area.

d) Co-housing

These are intentional communities designed live partially independently but with an element of shared resources/accommodation. By creating a more neighbourly community, the social benefits are thought to have a positive impact on quality of life.

e) Housing Co-operatives

A Housing Co-op is a housing organisation where members (tenants) democratically control and manage their homes. Co-ops often have an impact on the sense of a community in the area and this can lead to reduced anti-social behaviour and higher levels of satisfaction.

A Temporary Group for duration of the project (whilst funding remains) from October 2017. At the end of the project the future need for such a body will be reviewed and it may be disbanded or refocused to address the existing needs at that stage

Vision

“To empower rural communities to create local housing solutions that meets local need in a way that mainstream housing developments cannot easily achieve and to ensure they are funding ready once the fund is passed to Homes England so that we can maximise inward investment to Copeland over the next 4 years of the programme”

Purpose

- Oversee the development and delivery of the project work plan
- Bring the strategic context for each organisation
- Contribute to decision making about grant applications

Governance Structure

The advisory group reports into the Project Board which will meet 6 monthly and as needed to consider grant applications over 10k

Decision Making

1. Under 500 pounds start up grants - at ACTs discretion and reported to Advisory group
2. Under 5 k officer level approval and reported to Advisory Group
3. 5k – 10 k Advisory group Approval
4. Above 10k Project Board Approval

Principles

The Group will have a consultative role and be made up of influential key partners from within the council, stakeholder organisations, elected members, third sector infrastructure organisations and statutory bodies

Attendance will include a core group but other members with specialist expertise may be co-opted as needed

Members will bring expertise and specialist knowledge with a focus on helping to set the strategic direction of the project, help shape the work plan and to ensure a multi agency approach is taken to maximise the impact of the CHF grant for Copeland

Members of the group will represent their organisations and offer a strategic context, oversee delivery and make recommendations on investment decisions in line with the agreed vision and principles on funding bids submitted but the public to the council

The group will be expected to meet on a quarterly basis and attendees are asked to provide a deputy if they cannot attend. Extra ordinary meetings may be called if there is a large or significant pipeline of activity or where urgent input is needed for example considering bid submissions