

Working Collaboratively to Support the Growth of Community-Led Housing

Collective Support for Promotional Activity

The Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF) is halfway through a 2 year programme focused on supporting the growth of community-led housing through promotion, awareness raising and improved collaboration across the movement.

Through funding from the Nationwide Foundation, the Building and Social Housing Foundation has commissioned Full Stop Communications to **increase awareness about community-led housing, reaching as broad an audience as possible**. The brief being taken forward includes the following 4 objectives:

- 1) *Generate greater media awareness of and interest in community-led housing activity at national, regional and local level.***
- 2) *Get the concept understood and talked about.***
- 3) *Create awareness of, and support for, community-led housing among 'power players' (e.g. local and national government, housing associations, funders, landowners, philanthropists, think tanks etc.).***
- 4) *Link activity across the movement.***

Measuring Impact

The PR work includes measures to assess impact. It is intended to help with identifying and demonstrating demand and support for community-led housing. Through monitoring we can help to map community-led housing activity and the attention it's getting.

Wider Programme

This area of work forms part of a wider programme which also includes the following activities:

- Data collation including a map of all known community-led housing projects in England and Wales (forthcoming).
- Stakeholder Analysis identifying and categorising key contacts across community-led housing for our outreach and communications activity (forthcoming).
- [Case Studies](#) (now available for download) which highlight the positive ways community-led housing benefits people in communities as well as organisations.
- Event (23-24 February 2016): Working collaboratively to support the growth of community-led housing. Community-led housing experts who provide front-line support and advice worked on shared messages and explored how to design a mechanism to improve how we all support community-led housing.
- Supporting the 'New Sources of Supply workstream' of the Housing and Planning All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG), ensuring community-led housing and community engagement are threaded through discussions. This work will be delivered by the National Community Land Trust Network.
- Knowledge Exchange events. The [first event](#) kicks off in London in March (hosted by London Community Neighbourhood Cooperative in partnership with the Glasshouse Community-led Design). [Another 5 events](#) are coming up over the next 18 months, hosted by Locality in partnership with DTA Wales and Scotland.

Participants in the event **'Working Collaboratively to Support the Growth of Community-led Housing'** (23-24 February 2016) discussed the **overall objectives of the work**, explored the approach of Full Stop Communications, and identified a **range of approaches** which could help them achieve the goal of increased awareness of and support for community-led housing.

The group also identified some specific areas where **further input** is required from the community-led housing sector in order to capitalise on the opportunities created by a promotional drive.

Overall objectives of the work

What does 'good' look like?

- Community-led housing is visible as a movement with thousands of members
- This creates a mandate which generates political pressure
- Community-led housing is legitimised in political culture. Homeownership includes collective ownership!
- Community-led housing is recognised as a 'normal' housing delivery activity
- The capacity of the movement to deliver housing is increased
- Growth in community-led housing is achieved
- Stakeholders recognise the value of community-led housing and take effective action, e.g.
 - Asset transfer of existing/surplus/redundant stock from LAs/HAs to community groups
 - Seed-corn funding
 - Capital funding
 - Mortgage lending
 - Recognition/opportunities in self & custom build
 - Etc.
- Community-led housing providers are given equal access to the same subsidy as other housing providers.
- Supportive policies are introduced at local (e.g. in Local Plans) and national level (e.g. NPPF)
- Community-led housing achieves better access to land, money and resources
- **BSHF is no longer needed to support collaborative working and promotion of community-led housing!**

Why we want a single voice & message

We want to:

- Offer a simple explanation of CLH
- Convince the audience about the benefits and potential of collaboration
- Create a voice for the demand side of housing
- Present community-led housing as a default model (not niche!)
- Include affordability in the wider conversation – affordable homes are part of meeting local needs
- Overarching messages – community-led housing is about:
 - Control
 - Choice
 - Quality
 - "Housing Plus"
 - Addressing market failure – CLH is actually working
 - Addressing the democratic deficit
 - CLH is a normal part of the housing market with added value e.g. security/support/control

Range of approaches identified

To be explored by Full Stop Communications

- Identify stories and make them engaging to particular audiences but avoid deliberate segmentation/exclusion. Cover both the journey and the destination.
- Understand people's motivations. Why do people get involved? Use known motivations to motivate others.
- Link to housing themes - relate local to national issues – pick up topical problems e.g. sink estates/ regeneration/how are older people going to live well?/low demand/downsizing in rural areas/planning reform benefitting communities.
- Link specific messages to specific projects/approaches e.g. Employment & Skills – Self-help housing/Permanent affordable housing – Community Land Trusts.
- Work on balanced reporting to avoid stereotyping (e.g. 'hippies', 'lefties', 'middle class groups' etc.) – cover a range of approaches.
- Frame community-led housing as a positive response to the negative narrative around housing.
- Craft personal stories to make the wider point.
- Link stories with existing media interest (e.g. EU referendum...!).
- Use the forthcoming map data to build a story.
- Promote 'early adopters' e.g. proactive LAs/HAs & pioneering projects.
- Create a narrative – highlight added value (beyond housing).
- Understand and craft stories to appeal to a range of 'fertile' audiences:
 - Existing community initiatives
 - Sharing economy
 - Neighbourhood planning market
 - People who need secure, affordable housing
 - Social entrepreneurs
 - Groups with an interest in new technology
 - Virtual networks
 - Intermediaries/enablers (e.g. Local Authorities, Housing Associations, etc.).

“Change the mainstream” “Business not as usual” “Housing heroes” “How do we want to live?”

Discussions we might explore further

- How to protect local groups from over-exposure
- Press packs for local groups
- Advice/training on media management for projects

Further Input: What everyone (**this means you!!**) can do to help

Tell the story

- Share all you can about community-led housing activity with Full Stop Communications. There is always a story! Please help them to be the loudhailer for the movement:
 - What's happening?
 - Why is it happening?
 - Help us understand the people behind the projects
- Use **#communityledhousing** whenever possible to generate shared momentum
- Use existing networks & resources to help generate attention
- Share good practice among early adopters (Local Authorities/Housing Associations) e.g. Leeds City Council/East Cambridgeshire District Council/Case studies etc.

Email: david@fullstopcommunications.co.uk or stephenie@fullstopcommunications.co.uk

Tell them about your own communications channels.

Share to Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CommunityLedHousing/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Community-Led-Housing-Matters-168181360209583/>

Share to Twitter with @CommLedHousing: <https://twitter.com/CommLedHousing>

Communicate with each other

- Keep sending your ideas to support the communications process – the Full Stop Communications Comms Plan will be a live document, responding to changes in environment/identification of successful strategies etc.
- Get your Comms people talking to each other
- Share openly and pass on information about your own activities – get your networks/members involved. This is about helping people in different places to feel part of the bigger movement – encourage people to use #communityledhousing, get in touch with Full Stop Communications, start talking to each other on Facebook, share links to what they do and anything they see on their travels through the community-led housing world that inspires them. There are lots of quick and easy ways to add to the noise!
- Use Facebook as a 2 way hub – talk to each other and everyone else:
 - <https://www.facebook.com/Community-Led-Housing-Matters-168181360209583/> (Public)
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CommunityLedHousing/> (Closed Group)

Improve the clarity and accessibility of community-led housing – Share your ideas!

A range of questions for the sector were posed at the event. We will be posting some of these on Facebook to try to stimulate discussion and debate. Some examples are:

- How do we enable people to input in ways **other than** actually delivering new projects?
- What's your simplest explanation of community-led housing?

Make the most of existing opportunities

- Encourage all new enquiries to register on their Local Authority's self/custom build register
- Offer Local Authorities <http://localselfbuildregister.co.uk/> as a resource to help meet their new responsibility
- Help to shape and improve the register to support community-led housing by giving positive feedback and support to [Ecomotive](#)
- Be available to act as part of an informal sounding board to guide PR and provide input when needed
- Think about who will do interviews/appear on programmes etc. in response to this promotional drive?

Share your policy asks and objectives

At the event we discussed whether it's possible to develop a **shared manifesto** for community-led housing which could benefit from collective support. BSHF agreed to gather and collate different lobbying objectives across the movement to see whether we can identify a set of **shared themes** (for example changes to national planning policy) that can then be taken forward.

We also discussed developing a **shared statement of common purpose** to accompany the process of developing collaborative working.

If we are able to create and agree a shared manifesto we could then explore taking forward a community-led housing advocacy campaign. To enable us to explore this, please:

- Send us your policy asks – what changes in policy would you ask for to support community-led housing?
- Send us your statement of purpose – what do you think community-led housing should be about?