

About Cheshire Community Homes

Cheshire Community Homes is the community-led housing support hub for Cheshire and Warrington hosted by Cheshire Community Action (CCA). The hub is the local arm of the national community-led housing alliance of organisations promoting and supporting community-led housing in the UK: [Community Led Homes](#). This was in part supported by the Community Housing Fund, and helped develop the localised market infrastructure, of which Cheshire Community Homes is part of, to improve delivery and sustain the growth in the community-led housing sector.

The host organisation for Cheshire Community Homes, CCA is a member of the [ACRE](#) Network, England's largest rural network and, the [National Community Land Trust Network](#) (NCLTN) which is the official charity supporting Community Land Trusts (CLTs) in England and Wales.

This submission is endorsed by:

[Cheshire West & Chester Council](#)

[Muir Group](#)

[Regenda Group](#)

[Plus Dane Housing](#)

[Weaver Vale Housing Trust](#)

The case for community-led housing

Community-led housing is where communities come together to deliver new or refurbish existing housing to meet local needs.¹ This includes: community land trusts, housing co-operatives, cohousing communities, development trusts and self-help housing.

The movement has grown more than tenfold since 2010, driven chiefly by the shortage of affordable housing for those on low incomes and a strong appetite amongst communities to have more control over housing developed in their area.² There are now nearly 900³ groups in all parts of the country developing homes.

¹ For a definition of community-led housing see <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/what-community-led-housing>

² Capital Economics 'Housing by the community, for the community: an assessment of the value for money of community-led housing in England', September 2020. <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/2020-09/final-report-capital-economics-housing-community-community-sept-2020.pdf>

³ Dr Tom Archer 'ADDENDUM: Estimating the pipeline of community-led housing projects and its grant requirements', September 2020. http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/_filecache/519/bc6/1000-dr-tom-archer-pipelinerreport_addendum_sept-2020-final.pdf

There are 173,225 existing community-led homes⁴ and the pipeline of new homes has more than trebled from 6,000 homes in 2017 to up to 23,000 today.⁵ This growth has principally been driven by the Government's investment in the Community Housing Fund.

Many of the 900 community housing groups have played a central role in supporting their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic by working with local suppliers to deliver food to food banks and those in need during lockdown. Others have been operating mutual aid donations in their communities.

This submission argues that the community-led housing sector is delivering on many of the Government's priorities for housing and the aims for the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), as follows:

It is ready and able to support the economy to recover - there are 10,780 homes in live applications on Homes England's system following the closure of the Community Housing Fund in March 2020. Groups are ready to get to work on these homes as soon as the Community Housing Fund (CHF) is reopened. They are a vital source of contracts for local SME consultants and builders, saving local jobs in the construction industry. Many are developing on sites mainstream developers deem too challenging, especially in this current commercial environment, as proven by the recent study by Capital Economics.⁶ Tattenhall CLT in Cheshire West is developing social rent units on a former garage site to address the chronic shortage of affordable housing for young people in the village;

It can help deliver the Government's ambitions for 300,000 new homes per year - as set out above, there are 10,780 homes in firm applications on Homes England's system. This is part of a broader pipeline of up to 23,000 community-led homes by 2025;

It delivers additional supply that is not available through the mainstream - community-led housing groups are frequently able to overcome development constraints that would defeat established housing providers and have access to sites previously unavailable or unattractive for development. Furthermore, because they are led by the community and

⁴ The majority of these homes is attributable to housing cooperatives formed in the 1970s and 1980s.

⁵ Dr Tom Archer 'ADDENDUM: Estimating the pipeline of community-led housing projects and its grant requirements', September 2020. http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/_filecache/519/bc6/1000-dr-tom-archer-pipelinerreport_addendum_sept-2020-final.pdf. The research found that the pipeline included 10,000 homes for which there was complete data and another 13,000 homes for which the data was patchy. The latter 13,000 homes may or may not therefore come to fruition. However, it should be noted that the CHF itself simulated a growth in the pipeline and would turn the more speculative projects into deliverable schemes.

⁶ Capital Economics 'Housing by the community, for the community: an assessment of the value for money of community-led housing in England', September 2020. Page 20. <https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/2020-09/final-report-capital-economics-housing-community-community-sept-2020.pdf>

trusted by the community, they are also able to mobilise popular support for new housing amongst interest groups as diverse as landowners, conservationists, environmentalists, employers and communities themselves.

A recent survey found that in 10% of cases community groups have developed sites which local opposition had previously prevented. Tattenhall in Cheshire West is a rural community that is experienced in opposing large housing developments having been involved with appeals that have reached Secretary of State level⁷, yet the CLT's development proposals for social rent units on a site deemed otherwise unviable by a local housing association, received almost unanimous support from the community with only one objection from a neighbouring resident.

It is giving deprived communities the means to level themselves up - many of the 900 groups are in areas that have been 'left behind' and are helping to revive local economies. NCLTN worked with the ONS to carry out analysis on 'left behind' communities and discovered that CLTs tend to be building homes in middle super output areas with below-average incomes, particularly when looking at incomes after housing costs.

It is bringing ownership within reach of more people and pioneering First Homes - For example, London CLT's first project, opened by the Prime Minister when he was Mayor of London, built 23 discounted market value homes for sale at prices that ensure that the annual housing cost is no more than one third of median income;

It is building beautiful homes and delivering the Government's vision for local design codes - This is because the projects are community-led and draw upon the ingenuity and creativity of local people. The Tattenhall CLT scheme in Cheshire West has produced proposals for a high quality design that received popular support from the local people during their consultation process;

It is embracing innovation and modern methods of construction (MMCs) - Hook Norton CLT, for example, is combining MMC with PassivHaus standards to create low energy homes.

It is committed to building to high environmental standards - homes are being planned and built with both future climate challenges and running costs in mind. Christow CLT was a pioneer of PassivHaus homes on Dartmoor National Park, Goodwin Development Trust is Hull's first code-5 social housing development which includes innovative features such as a communal rainwater harvesting tank and water recycling system.

⁷ <https://www.tattenhall.org/news/tattenhall-planning-decisions-are-now-live.html>

The value for money case for community-led housing

In addition to the multiple benefits outlined above, recent research by Capital Economics⁸ demonstrates that community-led housing delivers high value for money for the public funds invested. This is due to the additional supply, the affordability of the homes and the wellbeing benefits.

In particular, Capital Economics found that, when using a ten-year horizon each pound of public support delivers 1.8 pounds of benefit, rising to 2.7 pounds when health and benefit savings, wellbeing and income distribution benefits are factored in. This places community-led housing support in the medium to high value for money categories.

They also suggest that, given the long-lived nature of housing as an asset and legal clauses that ensure community-led homes remain affordable in perpetuity, a longer timeframe for assessment is more appropriate. Over thirty years, each pound of public support delivers 3.1 pounds of benefit when health and benefit savings, wellbeing and income distribution benefits are allowed for. This places community-led housing further into the high value for money category.

Benefit Cost Ratios and value for money categories of public funding for community led housing

		10 year horizon	30 year horizon
Narrow	Benefit Cost Ratio	1.8	1.8
	Value for money category	Medium	Medium
Broad	Benefit Cost Ratio	2.7	3.1
	Value for money category	High	High

⁸ Capital Economics 'Housing by the community, for the community: an assessment of the value for money of community-led housing in England', September 2020.

<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/2020-09/final-report-capital-economics-housing-community-community-sept-2020.pdf>

Summary of our representation

- The community-led housing sector is delivering on many of the Government's priorities for housing and the aims of the CSR: it is ready and able to support the economic recovery and Government's ambition for 300,000 new homes per year (including First Homes), it delivers additional supply that is not available through mainstream building, it is giving deprived communities the means to level themselves up and its projects often deliver on beautiful, innovative and environmentally friendly homes. For example, Tattenhall CLT in Cheshire West has developed proposals to provide much needed social rent units for young people.
- Recent independent research commissioned by the National Community Land Trust Network and carried out by Capital Economics has proven that community-led housing represents high value for money for the public funds invested.
<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/2020-09/final-report-capital-economics-housing-community-community-sept-2020.pdf>
- The Community Housing Fund has been a significant success for the Government and has built up a pipeline of supply. There are 10,780 homes in live applications on Homes England's system, 859 communities bringing forward projects and the potential pipeline has grown from just under 6,000 homes in 2017 to over 23,000 homes today. In Cheshire it has helped set up a new support hub, which has increased local capacity to enable community-led housing schemes to come forward. Tattenhall CLT received revenue funding, which has enabled it to acquire a site, commission an architect and submit its planning application. It is therefore now vital that it can access capital funding to build the scheme, which, if successful, is set to kick start a new wave of interest for community-led housing in the sub-region of Cheshire and Warrington.
- It is vital that the Government now delivers on its manifesto commitment to community-led housing and:
 - **Renews the CHF for five years to provide the sector with long-term certainty.**
 - **Provides a total of £180m, including £57m for revenue funding, £108m for capital funding, as well as £15m for sector market infrastructure.⁹**
 - **Ensures the Social Housing Regulator works with the sector to put in place a more proportionate process for the registration of Registered Providers for small community-led housing organisations.**

⁹ Evidence from Dr Tom Archer's independent update to the pipeline research - http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/_filecache/519/bc6/1000-dr-tom-archer-pipelinerreport_addendum_sept-2020-final.pdf