

North Horsham Parish Council

Notes from the Meeting of the Community Land Trust Working Party held on Wednesday 11th September 2019.

The working party meeting followed an earlier meeting with a representative of Legal and General which started at 6pm at Roffey Millennium Hall, Crawley Road Horsham.

In attendance:-

Nick Wood – Legal and General – for the first discussion

Tom Warder – Sussex Housing Hub – for the first discussion and part of the working party meeting

Alison Best- Dufour - Resident

Cllr James Davidson – North Horsham Parish Council

Cllr Joy Gough – North Horsham Parish Council

Stuart Norton – Resident

Cllr John Smithurst – North Horsham Parish Council

Cllr Ray Turner – North Horsham Parish Council

Pauline Whitehead – note taker.

Discussion with Legal and General

Cllr Gough gave an overview of how a Community Land Trust (CLT) worked and Tom Warder expanded to explain what Community Led Planning schemes could look like and what they could achieve, especially in larger development schemes such as the one north of Horsham. He gave case studies and explained how CLTs can work as stand alone entities which are involved in all of the processes in providing homes from start to end, or with third parties such as Housing Associations, to commission areas where specific expertise is required. In the case of Legal and General, as they are registered providers (RP) and have their own in house specialisms, they may be interested in working with a CLT to provide affordable housing but, in a way that is more directed by the community.

The key drivers for setting up a CLT is to make sure that local people have somewhere to live that is really affordable. There could be a bespoke Housing Allocations policy for homes provided by a CLT and greater control over the rental costs.

For many the average house price in Horsham of £437,000 is unattainable. Whilst shared ownership offers a choice for some, the models are quite complicated and it doesn't guarantee that land/ homes wouldn't be lost to the open market.

Horsham District Council (HDC) is setting up a housing provision and development company. The CLT working party has been advised that setting up a CLT would not be in competition with HDC but offer more choice.

Mr Wood agreed to look at the proposal of working with a CLT and to continue the dialogue with regard to them being a Registered Provider. He explained that Legal and General are passionate about solving housing issues. They are keen to embrace new technologies such as modular housing, where units are built off site and brought in. This improves the working conditions for those building the units and ensures that there is a better gender balance, but building costs are higher than building on site in the traditional method. To balance the higher build costs of modular housing, the costs on site are reduced but more importantly there are acoustic, fire resistant and thermal benefits which means that houses are cheaper to run and more sustainable in the long term. Ultimately there needs to be a level of viability with any project.

Legal and General intend to start a consultation process in October 2019 on tweaks to Liberty Property Trust's original designs to inform an emerging masterplan. Building infrastructure is due to start in early 2020 and the Bohunt School hope to start building their school in January 2020.

It is hoped that work on site will start towards the end of 2020. Affordable housing is mixed throughout the phases of the building, with fewer in phase one. Custom build housing is ring fenced and separate. In the first phase 20 parcels of land have been allocated for custom build housing.

Mr Wood acknowledged that Legal and General had expertise that may be of assistance to a group forming a CLT and was willing to consider ways in which this may be used to support the CLT going forward. For example, further explorations could take place into a CLT purchasing a freehold and finding a partner or working with Legal and General to provide the dwellings. Legal and General were willing to work with the CLT to assist the provision of housing with market rent lower than the 80% definition.

Homes on the development north of Horsham will be subject to an estate service charge that covers maintenance and upkeep of the communal areas. Until the build is completed, Legal and General would hold a majority interest in a Residents Management Company that would be set up to oversee the maintenance and upkeep. It is likely that a service charge would be in the region of £250 per year and that would need to be built into any rental charge.

To summarise, the CLT requires land to provide houses. It needs to attract more people to get involved and Legal and General was willing to enable the working party

to piggy back on their consultation events. Legal and General was keen to obtain views from a wide range of residents. They hoped to set up a Youth Panel from students at the Bohunt School. Legal and General was very positive about the meeting and were willing to produce a letter of intent/ heads of terms to move the initiative forward. It was recommended that the Parish Council alerts HDC to the potential for setting up a CLT. Sussex Housing Hub would be able to help the Steering Group to work up a vision and start a concept plan with the working group if they decide to form a CLT.

Chairman, Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Joy Gough was nominated the Chair for the meeting and for ongoing working party meetings.

Welcome and introductions

Cllr Gough thanked members of the group for her election and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Tom Warder agreed to stay during part of the working party meeting.

Apologies

There were apologies from Peter Kenworthy.

Review notes from last meeting and response from the Parish Council Planning Committee

The Planning Committee acknowledged the notes of the CLT working party held on 31st July 2019 with a small amendment relating to the average gross earnings for Horsham which should have read £29,000 per annum (November 2018) sourced from the WSCC website.

The Planning Committee agreed to support the CLT working party by extending the time that they had to explore further the possibility of establishing a CLT for North Horsham parish.

HDC had responded to a request for terms of reference for their Housing Company and Housing Management Company with a response that indicated that the organisations they were proposing would not conflict with a Community Land Trust as they were not based on the same basic premise. Under those circumstances it would be hard for the CLT to work directly with HDC on this initiative.

The Planning Committee had supported the opportunity for the CLT working party to speak with Legal and General to ascertain the availability of land and options on how the proposed CLT would work with them. The meeting to speak with them had occurred prior to the working party meeting and the initial discussions were very positive.

The Planning Committee wanted more information before agreeing to release funds to support the CLT and had asked for a breakdown of the proposed budget and a timeline. The funding would allow the working party to join the CLT Network,

undertake surveys and consult to establish an evidence base of need and land availability.

The CLT would ask for secretarial/administrative support and the hire of a room as part of the next stage in progressing the CLT.

HDC don't hold housing numbers specific to North Horsham, they are grouped together with other areas

It had been suggested that parishes that bordered North Horsham should be approached to gauge their interest in joining a CLT. The Clerk queried this as it would seem more logical that individuals in parishes would want to support their own CLT rather than one that north Horsham set up as there was no benefit for them or their parish. It was AGREED that this would not be pursued.

The Planning Committee had agreed to allow the working party to raise with Legal and General, at the next North of Horsham parish Liaison Meeting on 4th October 2019, the possibility of them providing land for development by a CLT.

Tom Warder explained that Parish Councillors could join the CLT but they would be acting as individuals. A CLT Steering Committee can be formed with 3 people (to become a board) and can then apply for start up funding of approximately £500. Further funding is available to produce heads of terms and concept plans. Membership of the CLT Network is very much recommended as is taking out indemnity insurance.

Tom observed that the meeting with Legal and General was positive. He felt that modular housing was the way forward as the UK is behind in this concept and the sustainability and quality evident by using modular housing was to be much sought after. As Legal and General don't have modular housing or work with a CLT, this could be an opportunity for both parties to benefit.

Basic aim for consideration

The basic aim at this stage is to get sufficient resident volunteers (5 – 10) to set up a CLT, to provide at least 6 community homes in perpetuity for North Horsham and to work towards setting up a CLT Steering Group.

Tom advised that the CLT working party shouldn't constrain themselves and to aim higher than 10 homes. Real concern was raised that there were not sufficient people to take forward the project, therefore face to face consultation with the public was required to make the CLT visible and encourage more people to get involved. It was positive that Legal and General were supportive of the group being present at their consultation meetings.

Community Engagement

Several methods of community engagement were suggested. For example going to churches, the food bank, Horsham Matters, playgroups and other local organisations to invite them to a public meeting. The Co-op has a community stall that could be utilised so that specific groups could be targeted. It would be helpful to engage with the Citizen's Advice Bureau. It is important to get differing perspectives on the issue.

An introductory letter could be sent out on the lines of the sample from Angmering and East Hoathly.

Social media and website would be needed and articles could be put into the West Sussex County Times, All About Horsham and the District Post. Volunteers could speak to groups and the ultimate aim would be to have a public meeting to encourage people to get involved.

Detail of Initial costs

It was agreed to request £1,000 from the Parish Council.

Breakdown for request for £1,000 by the North Horsham CLT to promote the initiative within the local community and to encourage local people to join the CLT with an aim of a co-exhibition with Legal and General after a positive meeting.

Join CLT network - £50

Printing for flyers - £300

Banner - £100

Social Media, Website, Facebook and Twitter - £500

The North Horsham Parish CLT will look to approaching the Parish Council to give formal support for the project and to ascertain what ongoing support it would be willing to give after November 2019. This could be free hire of a room at one of the Parish Council Halls at a time that will not compromise other hires. The Council may also consider providing secretarial support by the Clerk until a Steering Committee is formed.

Alison agreed to get a quotation for supplying and printing 2,000 colour flyers to distribute at events and a banner. She also agreed to work to provide a logo for the CLT group in order to give brand recognition.

Joy agreed to write to Churches Together to invite them to a forthcoming meeting of the working party.

Work was required to ascertain the cost of providing a website and Facebook.

Projected time line

The projected time line for the Working Party is as follows:-

Meeting with Legal and General representative – 11th September 2019

Finance Meeting to consider funding – September 2019

Discuss CLT with Legal and General further at Parish Liaison Meeting – 4th October 2019

Meeting with HDC – October 2019

Advertisement of the CLT in North Horsham – late October 2019

Support from Parish Council – November 2019

Date for formation of Steering Committee for the CLT leading to completion of the Working Party investigation – December 2019

It was agreed to put the following recommendation to the Planning Committee:-

Recommendations:-

- 1. To consider the notes from the Community Land Trust (CLT) Meeting held on 11th September 2019.**
- 2. To agree the basic aim of the CLT working party which is to get sufficient volunteers (5-10) to set up a Community Land Trust, to provide at least 6 community homes for perpetuity for North Horsham and to work towards setting up a CLT Steering Group.**
- 3. To request up to £1,000 for start up costs (see Clerk's Report for breakdown).**
- 4. To request that the Chairman of the Finance Committee convenes an Extraordinary Finance and Administration Committee Meeting to agree expenditure on a Community Land Trust.**
- 5. To agree a time line for the initial phases of the CLT (see Clerk's Report)**
- 6. To agree that the CLT working party co-exhibits with Legal and General at their consultation meetings scheduled for late October 2019 with an aim of encouraging local people to join the CLT.**
- 7. To agree that the CLT makes contact with HDC to register their potential interest in forming a CLT.**
- 8. To get a formal statement of support for the CLT from the Parish Council and commitment as to what support they will give the CLT.**

Next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 16th October 2019 starting at 6pm. Cllr Gough thanked all in attendance and closed the meeting at 8.30pm.