

This guidance sheet has been produced to help community groups who are considering setting up a Community Land Trust as a way to meet their community's need for affordable housing. It is a starting point and signposts groups to more detailed information if needed.

## What is a Community Land Trust?

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a non-profit, community based organisation run by volunteers, which owns assets on behalf of the community. CLTs can develop housing which is both affordable and available to the community for the long-term, they can use leases to limit the value of the land, or housing, enabling occupiers to pay for the use of buildings at prices they can afford.

The community can benefit because the value of the land, planning gain and any other benefits are held in trust for the long term by the CLT.

## Where to start

CLTs can develop non-housing projects too. Start by developing an understanding of your community's needs, then consider whether or not a CLT is the appropriate means for the community to meet these needs.

The availability of an independent source of advice, specifically the existence of a Rural Housing Enabler, can not only help communities with the identification of their precise needs, but also assist with their identification of suitable sites,

secure their involvement in the design of the scheme, and steer them through the planning and development process. They can do this by bringing together all those who can help, and support the community to consider the approach that might work best for them.

## Considerations

There are a number of things to consider before setting up a CLT. You will need to get together as a group to discuss ideas, decide the purpose of the CLT, and what you want to do:

- What are your aims? What type of housing is needed? Has a recent Housing Needs Survey been carried out to indicate this?
- What practical steps need to be taken to start a project and who else will you need to work with?
- Avoid duplication! Is someone already doing something similar? Could you work in partnership with them?
- Who will be involved in making sure it happens?
- Can you identify support for your project and funding to cover any start-up costs?

### What is a Community Land Trust?

- Non-profit, community run organisation which owns assets on behalf of the community
- Can develop affordable housing in perpetuity

### Understand your community's needs

- Why is a CLT needed and who is it for?
- Has a recent Housing Needs Survey been completed?

### Find the right solution

- Local housing need met by Housing Association OR
- CLT set up on its own or in partnership with Housing Association / developer

### Sources of Information and Support

- Learn from the experience of existing CLTs
- Many sources of support and advice available; technical, funding, project planning etc

## Understanding local housing needs

Details of the need in your community can be quantified and better understood through research and local housing needs surveys.

Communities in Cumbria can benefit from the advice of Cumbria Rural Housing Trust who can help communities to identify their specific local housing needs and then consider the range of options or possibilities for satisfying those needs, including the possible use of a CLT. Their CLT Project Officer can fulfil the housing enabler role by supporting the development of CLTs.

## Finding the right solution

Each community will have distinct needs and each will have different skills, time and resources available to meet those needs.

For many, the solution to their local affordable housing needs will be the conventional approach, working with a Housing Association. However, for some communities the step to set up and operate a CLT, on its own or in partnership with a Housing Association or developer, may provide a realistic and even preferred alternative.

## Learning from others

There are an increasing number of community groups who have discovered that it is possible to use Community Land Trusts to benefit their community. A considerable number are either up and running or in the process of being set up. A national network is now established to ensure experiences are exchanged and lessons, both good and bad, are learned (see Sources of help).

One Cumbrian example, in Crosby Ravensworth, is featured in ACT's Community Owned Housing Case Study.

## Sources of help

It's unlikely that any difficulties or problems that you might face are new, and contacting organisations such as the Cumbria Rural Housing Trust can often provide tried and tested solutions to them. They can also signpost you to support networks, provide information and advice and guidance on sources of funding.

Some examples of the help and advice available includes support from:

**Community Land Trust Project Officer**  
Cumbria Rural Housing Trust  
Tel. 01768 210265 [www.crht.org.uk](http://www.crht.org.uk)

**Community Land Trusts in a nutshell** – a step by step guide for communities available on the National CLT Network website:  
[www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk)

**HCA Rural Housing Information Centre** – provides examples of good practice online:  
[www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk](http://www.ruralaffordablehousing.org.uk)

**Affordable Rural Housing: a practical guide for parish councils**  
[www.housing.org.uk/campaigns/save\\_our\\_villages/resources.aspx](http://www.housing.org.uk/campaigns/save_our_villages/resources.aspx)

## Other useful websites

[www.crht.org.uk/](http://www.crht.org.uk/)  
[www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk](http://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk)  
[www.housing.org.uk](http://www.housing.org.uk)



**For more information please contact ACTion with Communities in Cumbria on Tel: 01228 817224 or visit our website: [www.cumbriaaction.org.uk](http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk)**

## ACT champions community and rural issues

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