

Birmingham City Council

Report to Cabinet

26 May 2020



Subject: Policy on Community Led Housing

Report of: Acting Director - Neighbourhoods

Relevant Cabinet Member: Councillor Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

Relevant O &S Chair(s): Councillor Penny Holbrook - Chair of Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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Are specific wards affected?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No – All wards affected
If yes, name(s) of ward(s):		
Is this a key decision?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, add Forward Plan Reference: 007113/2019		
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential:		

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council has pledged in Housing Strategy to support Community Led Housing as a mechanism to deliver increased supply and enabling local people to have a greater involvement in their area. This report sets out the Council's policy position in regard to how it can support Community Led Housing (CLH) as part of the wider housing supply solution.
- 1.2 The policy sets out how CLH can enable local communities to have a greater role in housing provision and supply in their neighbourhoods, support the Council's localisation priorities and foster greater local influence within neighbourhoods creating true neighbourhood regeneration.
- 1.3 The policy sets out the opportunities, constraints and the legal and financial considerations in regard to the Council's role in enabling CLH in Birmingham.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Cabinet are recommended to approve the Community Led Housing Policy contained in Appendix 1 (the CLH Policy).
- 2.2 Cabinet delegates authority to the Acting Director for Neighbourhoods to bid for any available Community Homes Fund Revenue Grant to support the CLH Policy development work further, alongside the CLH sector and Housing Birmingham Partnership.

3 Background

- 3.1 Community-led housing is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing.
- 3.2 The City Council can play a key role in supporting and promoting CLH as a delivery mechanism to deliver its Housing Strategy and localisation priorities. With resources at a premium and a strong forward build programme in place for available land in the city, making sites available and providing resources to enable this is a key challenge. However, this does not prevent the City Council playing a key role in promoting and enabling CLH to deliver positive outcomes for its citizens.
- 3.3 The City Council has committed through its Housing Strategy approved by Cabinet in July 2017 to promote, enable and support CLH.
- 3.4 The Council recognises that the CLH Policy will primarily work to meet the relevant objectives of the Housing Birmingham Partnership and the City Council's Housing Strategy.
- 3.5 The CLH Policy will support the Housing Birmingham Partnership to:
 - Maximise delivery of good quality housing of the right type and tenure by supporting the activities of housing providers and support agencies to meet existing and future housing need in a sustainable way.
 - Build new homes.
 - Investigate alternative models of affordable housing delivery to meet the housing and support needs of specific groups and sectors of the housing market.
 - Promote models under which communities take on ownership, stewardship or management of existing homes and support delivery of localisation priorities.
- 3.6 The CLH Policy sets out the Council's role as an enabler of CLH not a provider. It clarifies its enabling role in the following key areas.

- Strategic support
- Planning and Land
- New build and BMHT
- Empty Homes
- Existing Stock
- Custom and Self Build

- 3.6.1 Accessing finance as well as Land is a key barrier for organisations wanting to deliver CLH schemes. Considerable policy work is being undertaken by Birmingham Community Homes (BCH), the recently established CLH enabler hub in Birmingham, and the Council to explore a range of solutions and financial models to overcome these barriers.
- 3.6.2 The CLH Policy commits the Council to providing ongoing support for the development of such solutions and work with BCH to further develop policy and best practice.
- 3.6.3 The CLH Policy also sets out the Council's role and considerations it needs to make in supporting grant bids to Homes England within the Community Homes Fund (CHF).
- 3.6.4 The CHF provides grant funding to organisations to enable feasibility and start up work, as well as capital and infrastructure funding for schemes.
- 3.6.5 The fund can be accessed by the Council as a Local Authority and Homes England have proactively sought to receive such bids to enable the CLH Policy development work needed to deliver real outcomes. It is proposed that the Council seeks to apply for revenue funding for a resource to take forward CLH in the City depending on future funding availability from Homes England.

4 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

- 4.1 Considerable considerations have been given to including specific financial models within the CLH Policy that includes the Council taking on funding risks, making available subsidised land and property or accessing funding streams for third party organisations. Currently the Council is not in a position to commit to specific options but the CLH Policy does commit to ongoing support on policy development in these areas.
- 4.2 The option of not having a CLH Policy has been considered however supporting CLH is a Council pledge and directly supports its priorities as set out in 7.1 and the CLH sector have been asking for a clear policy position from the Council. It is therefore recommended to approve the CLH Policy.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 The CLH Policy has been consulted on with the CLH enabler hub 'Birmingham Community Homes' who are very supportive of the proposals contained within it and the

Council's commitment to support and enable CLH. City Council Tenant representatives were consulted at the City Housing Liaison Board (CHLB) meeting on 19 March 2020.

- 5.2 Homes England have been consulted on the [draft] Policy who commented 'it is extremely encouraging to see that Birmingham City Council is moving towards a public policy position on CLH. Hopefully this will enable you to maximise the opportunities emerging through the new Enabling Hub.'
- 5.3 The report has been developed with senior officers from the following service areas of the Council
- Inclusive Growth, Housing Development and Property and Assets Board
 - Planning Policy
 - Strategic Policy Executive

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 See Appendix 3 which identifies the key risks and mitigations of [the CLH Policy]?

7 Compliance Issues:

7.1 How are the recommended decisions consistent with the City Council's priorities, plans and strategies?

- 7.1.1 CLH if successful can support the Council in delivering against a number of its priorities set out in the Council Plan 2018-2022 (as updated in 2019) namely.

Outcome 4: Birmingham a great City to live in:

- We will have the appropriate housing to meet the needs of our citizens
- We will foster local influence and involvement to ensure that local people have a voice in how their area is run.

Enabling communities to have a greater role in delivering and/or degrees of control over Housing in their area directly supports the localisation priorities approved by Cabinet . It supports the principles set out in the Council's 'Working together in Birmingham's neighbourhoods' approach in particular supporting a framework of relationships by exploring the role neighbourhoods can have in service delivery and influencing the future of their area and being part of wider neighbourhood regeneration.

7.2 Legal Implications

- 7.2.1 The CLH Policy sets out the legal framework and considerations relating to the Council's ability to dispose of [and to support CLH. There are key statutory powers and duties that need to be considered where the Council dispose of Land, namely, S123 Local Government Act 1972 and General Consents (**General Fund Land**); and Section 32

Housing Act 1985 and General Housing Consents 2013, General Consents S25 Local Government Act 1988 (**Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Land**).

7.3 Financial Implications

7.3.1 This Cabinet report and CLH Policy does not commit the Council financially. It is however committing to supporting CLH strategically as an enabler and partner and that it will work to develop solutions that can support organisations to deliver CLH schemes. Any subsequent proposals for CLH schemes from organisations that involves a council interest or draw on resources will be subject to existing city Council decision making and governance processes.

7.4 Procurement Implications

None.

7.5 Human Resources Implications

None.

7.6 Public Sector Equality Duty

7.6.1 Attached in Appendix 2. The Equality Assessment did not identify any adverse equality impacts as a result of the policy proposals.

8 Background Documents

Birmingham's Housing Strategy 2017

Incentivising Self Build in the City Cabinet report 25th July 2017

CCIN CLH – A key role for Local Authorities

BCC Property Strategy

List of Appendices

Community Led Housing Policy – Appendix 1

Equality Impact Assessment – Appendix 2

Equality Duty Statement – Appendix 2a

Risk Management – Appendix 3