

Interim Report to the Full Council on Community Led Housing

At the Full Council meeting on August 15th it was agreed to support the investigation of the above by a small working party. The objectives laid down were as follows:

1. **To further research the processes and route map for the provision of community based housing.**
2. **To assess the financial viability of such provision.**
3. **To propose the structure and governance of an organisation that could support the implementation of community based housing.**
4. **To research and propose alternative levels of involvement by Thame Town Council in community based housing and the implications, financial and otherwise, of the alternatives.**

Since that date discussions have taken place both within the group and with SODC Housing. At the meeting with SODC, Fran Ryan of OCLT (Oxfordshire Community Land Trust) was present and she has been the source of procedural advice and support. In addition, progress of the working party has been regularly reported to the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee

The minutes of the meeting with SODC are attached for the sake of completeness. Both I and the NP Continuity Officer considered the meeting very positive.

Although we are still at the early stages of the process, it has become clear that certain immediate steps need to be taken.

What are the immediate steps?

1. **Actual formation and launch** of a CLT following structural and governance work carried out by an expanded steering group incorporating community expertise.
2. **Identification of a potential site** by the steering group. Initial size to be modest-estimated at 10-12 units- volume, type and tenure subject to review.
3. A **housing needs analysis** needs to be completed to support any development. Anecdotal evidence is not sufficient.

Why are the immediate steps important?

1. From discussion with SODC it has become clear that funds could be released (including for revenue items) if there was an identified scheme. In other words, initial development costs **could** be covered if an organisation was in place with a potential site.
2. SODC will look at supporting a needs analysis though this will have to incorporate other market towns as well.
3. Initial launch funding for a CLT can be supported by a grant from the National CLT network.
4. Momentum is clearly vital.

What are the implications for TTC?

1. Limited financial involvement subject to needs analysis outcome and SODC commitment. Any small funds needed would be covered by the NP Professional Fees budget.
2. Maintenance of supportive role in dealings with SODC. Inclusion of Community Based Housing in Neighbourhood Plan is paramount
3. Officer and councillor involvement in a steering committee.
4. Potential need for TTC to act as a custodian member of a CLT to ensure adherence to community ownership of assets.

Conclusion

We require agreement to proceed as outlined. Any significant unbudgeted funding required will be referred back for approval.

R Austin
16 January 2018