

17th December 2018

Dear Planning Policy Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies Main Modifications consultation.

Background

Cheshire Community Action (CCA) is an established local and independent charitable company, which supports rural communities to improve places and services. It is the main local, not-for-profit support provider for Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Groups in the Borough. The organisation's client list is now in excess of 60 NP Groups across Cheshire West, Cheshire East, Warrington, Trafford and Shropshire.

CCA is also leading on the development and support for Community-Led Housing across Cheshire and is an associate member of the National Community Land Trust Network.

Reference MM26

The amended seventh paragraph of the policy text is proposed as follows:

"New housing development outside but adjacent to a key or local service centre boundary will only be supported where the proposal is in line with Local Plan (Part Two) policy DM 24; is for a community land trust development supported by the Parish Council; the site has been allocated through a neighbourhood plan; or is brought forward through a Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order."

CCA proposes that the reference to: "community land trust development" be changed to: "community-led housing development".

Justification:

Community Land Trusts are a model of community-led housing, of which there are several different types. Changing the policy wording to "community-led housing" is less restrictive to one type of delivery mechanism, whilst still protecting the principles and purpose of the planning policy. Since the Government has invested £300 million into the community-led housing sector, the national trade bodies, which support community-led housing have agreed on a definition as follows:

- **"A requirement that meaningful community engagement and consent occurs throughout the process. The community does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes themselves, though some may do**
- **"The local community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes and in a manner of their choosing**

- **“A requirement that the benefits to the local area and/or specified community must be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity e.g. through an asset lock”**

“Community-led housing comes in many different forms – there are no standard, off-the-shelf approaches, but they can include:

- **“Community Land Trusts** provide affordable homes for local people in need – for rent or shared ownership - by acquiring land and holding it as a community asset in perpetuity
- **“Housing Co-operatives** involve groups of people who provide and collectively manage, on a democratic membership basis, affordable homes for themselves as tenants or shared owners
- **“Cohousing** schemes involve groups of like-minded people who come together to provide self-contained, private homes for themselves, but manage their scheme together and share activities, often in a communal space
- **“Tenant management organisations** provide social housing tenants with collective responsibility for managing and maintaining the homes through an agreement with their council or housing association landlord
- **“Self-help housing** projects involve small, community-based organisations bringing empty properties back into use, often without mainstream funding and with a strong emphasis on construction skills training and support
- **“Community self-build** schemes involve groups of local people in housing need building homes for themselves with external support and managing the process collectively. Individual self-build is not widely regarded as community-led housing. The **National Custom and Self Build Association** is the national voice for self-builders. It has a Right to Build Toolkit for self-builders which can be found here: <http://righttobuildtoolkit.org.uk/>
- **“Community development trusts and community ‘anchors’** are independent, often well-established community-led organisations operating in a local area. They are focused on a range of economic, social and environmental issues; some are now involved in community-led housing provision

“There are overlaps between these different approaches; for example, some cohousing schemes operate as co-operatives and some community land trusts include self-build in their schemes.”

Source: *Community-Led Housing Toolkit for Local Authority and Housing Professionals*
<https://clhtoolkit.org/introduction-clh/what-community-led-housing-clh> (accessed 17 Dec 2018)

There are advantages for Local Authorities, that provide a supportive policy environment for community-led housing including:

1. Improving housing supply and providing permanently affordable housing.
 - Diversifying the local housebuilding market, unlocking small sites not attractive to mainstream developers.
 - Providing permanently affordable housing for local people, helping to reduce opposition to development (CLTs and co-ops are not subject to the Right to Buy).
 - Increasing choice by producing a range of housing options for people on the housing register and for people priced out of home ownership.
2. Supporting regeneration and returning empty homes to use.
 - Mobilising support for regeneration.
 - Increasing the commitment to and confidence in deprived neighbourhoods.
 - Providing skills, training and jobs for care leavers, homeless and unemployed people.
3. Empowering communities so they come self-sufficient, cohesive, resilient and sustainable.
 - Promoting community cohesion and helping to reduce anti-social behaviour.
 - Providing housing options that enable people to remain in the local area and ensure schools, services and amenities remain viable.
 - Assisting local employers to recruit and retain their workforce.
 - Skilling up CLH group members in building, property refurbishment and management.

Source: *"Community-led Housing: A Key Role for Local Authorities"*
http://www.ccinhousing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Community_Led_housing_Report_2017.pdf

If you have any queries on this response, please feel free to contact me on the details below.

Kind Regards,

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