

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

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Date: Thursday 8 June 2006

Time: 1.30pm-4.30pm

Venue: National Assembly for Wales

Title: Community Land Trusts – update paper

Purpose

To update the committee on the latest situation and recent developments in respect of Community Land Trusts in Wales.

Summary / Recommendations

This paper provides details of the established and proposed CLTs in Wales and identifies the progress made by different communities and the different approaches adopted by individual communities in establishing land trusts. Committee members are requested to note the recent progress made in establishing CLTs and to provide their views on the recent developments.

Background

Members of the committee have expressed considerable interest and support for the CLT concept and it was recently agreed to provide support through the Community Purposes Programme towards a 2-year project to pilot 3 CLT demonstration projects in Powys. This will enable the potential benefits of this approach to be tested, and subject to the outcome of the pilot, to establish a framework for its wider application. Further information on the individual CLT projects and on Land for People who will undertake the Powys pilots are covered in this paper.

Consideration

Land for People

Land for People is a not-for-profit company established in May 2005 for the purpose of working with local people and acting as an enabler on projects that will regenerate their community with an emphasis on affordable homes for local people. Land for People was successful in applying for Assembly Government funding of £20,000 per annum for two years to enable it to undertake the Powys Affordable

Homes Project that involves working with 3 specific communities in Powys on affordable housing schemes.

Officials are in the process of clarifying budget and cash flow details with Land for People to enable the project to proceed.

Castell Caereinion Community Land Trust

The Castell Caereinion CLT is undertaking a development of 6 affordable homes for local people on a site in the village. The land is on the edge of a private housing development currently under construction. The land has been acquired from a developer with the assistance of Powys County Council.

The aim of the Trust is to build affordable homes from local materials, labour and services and that are energy efficient and economical to run. Invitations have been extended to builders to tender for the construction of the houses.

Land for People is acting as a facilitator for the project and has been involved in the housing need assessment and also in developing the finance model for the development along with the assisted ownership scheme.

Negotiations are proceeding with the Principality Building Society and Powys CC to agree an innovative funding model where the interest on the capital finance is repaid by the authority from receipts from the sale of houses funded by the Homefinder scheme.

Heulfryn Regeneration Steering Group (HRSG), Ceinws

HRSG was formed in response to the Forestry Commission's desire to dispose of the former forestry camp in Ceinws. The site formerly contained a village hall, football pitch, playground, 14 dwellings and offices and light industrial units. The aim is to regenerate the site to provide affordable housing as well as community amenities such as a play area and work units.

A housing needs survey has been undertaken and discussions are proceeding with the Forestry Commission. Land for People will be assisting HRSG in producing its development plans.

Pantydwr, Rhaeadr.

Land for People aims to facilitate a housing project in Pantydwr near Rhaeadr. Two local landowners have offered to donate plots to build affordable homes. A detailed housing needs survey is currently being undertaken to determine the type and numbers of houses required.

If a need for affordable housing is identified, the proposal is to create a CLT to own and manage the donated land and to develop homes to meet local needs.

The above 3 schemes form the pilot projects that Land for People propose to undertake during the next two financial years. Land for People will be issuing a regular newsletter noting progress on the 3 projects as well as producing and updating a CLT toolkit that will share information on good practice and new innovations.

To Gwyrdd, Trefdraeth (Newport), Pembrokeshire

To Gwyrdd was set up by a group of local people to develop "green-build" affordable housing to meet local needs. The aim is to work with others within the community to create affordable and sustainable housing. A co-ordinator has been appointed for 6 months funded from the Sustainable Development Fund.

Negotiations are proceeding to obtain a long lease on a plot of land suitable for 2 or 3 units whilst a local housing needs survey is being undertaken. To Gwyrdd is currently considering a suitable finance model for any assisted ownership development within the project.

Sylfaeni, Llanuwchllyn, Bala.

Sylfaeni is a new CLT established by local residents in Llanuwchllyn to address the issue of affordability in the local property market. The group has undertaken a local housing need assessment and has identified the need for 4 affordable housing units. Sylfaeni is working closely with Cymdeithas Tai Clwyd who is programmed to develop affordable houses for rent or assisted ownership on a site owned by Gwynedd County Council.

Gwynedd Council has agreed to sell a proportion of the site at less than market value to Sylfaeni and also to fund the work to provide services to the Sylfaeni site e.g. roads, drains etc. which will be undertaken by Tai Clwyd during the construction of the SHG funded houses.

The proposal is to sell self - build plots to members of the local community on a leasehold basis with the CLT retaining the freehold. Sylfaeni is currently exploring the options of the best financial model for this project. There will be a maximum size for the footprint of each self-build property and it is understood that Sylfaeni will adopt Gwynedd Council's policy regarding the re-sale of properties with preference given in the first instance to households with local connections.

Dyffryn Nantlle.

This group has commenced discussions with Gwynedd Council regarding the purchase of land but there are problems with undertaking site surveys and also in financing the purchase of the land. The group has recognised the need for assistance in producing a business plan and also in keeping local interest in the project during periods of apparent inactivity. Antur Dyffryn Nantlle and Cymdeithas Tai Eryri have agreed to provide expert assistance in producing a business plan and in keeping the momentum going.

Pen Llyn

Gwynedd Council has identified Pen Llyn, and especially the area around Aberdaron/Nefyn as a "hot spot" in terms of the lack of affordable housing. The community councils in the area have applied unsuccessfully to Communities Directorate for financial assistance to undertake housing need surveys. A public meeting has been arranged for the end of May to discuss the way forward. The Gwynedd Rural Housing Enabler, partly funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, has been helping the communities to produce a housing needs questionnaire and in looking for other funding sources.

Dyffryn Ardudwy

The community council was concerned that any affordable housing developed in the area should remain in perpetuity for local people. The Gwynedd Rural Housing Enabler has worked closely with the local community in reaching agreement with Cymdeithas Tai Eryri and Gwynedd CC to develop 6 houses on a rural exception site which will be subject to a section 106 agreement restricting the future sale of the properties. The development will be SHG funded and the community council will monitor Tai Eryri's compliance with the conditions of the s106 agreement. The community decided that it was not necessary to set up a CLT as it was confident that local planning conditions on subsequent sale of the properties was sufficiently robust to satisfy concerns regarding keeping the houses affordable for assisted ownership or rent in the long term.

Moelyci Environmental Centre, Tregarth

Moelyci was formed when the residents of 3 villages on the outskirts of Bangor came together to purchase a mountain and a farm to prevent the land being sold off in small parcels. This is the only communally owned farmed mountain in the United Kingdom.

The group is constituted as an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) that manages an environmental centre and runs projects such as the waste management system that deals with the organic waste of the local communities. The IPS is highly structured and consists of governance, management, committee and member groups. The IPS model provides a way for the community to become involved in managing its own environment. There are other environmentally friendly projects such as managed allotments, horse grazing and bridleways. The group also provides employment and training opportunities in administration, horticulture and estate management.

The farm is secured through a 20 year mortgage with Farming and Agriculture Finance. The group's long term aim is to continue with community regeneration by equipping an increasing number of people with the skills and confidence to promote regeneration and sustainability strategies.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this paper.

Compliance

There are no issues of regularity or compliance.

Action for Subject Committee

The committee is requested to note the current developments regarding Community Land Trusts.

Edwina Hart MBE AM

Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration

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