



# COMMUNITY HOUSING FUND DELIVERY REVIEW

September 2024

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Housing Fund was set up by the Government in 2016 in response to calls to grow the pipeline of community led homes. It ran through three phases:

1. £60m disbursed to councils with affordability stress and high levels of second homes in 2016/17.
2. £163m from 2018-20 provided to Homes England and the GLA to provide revenue and capital grants to projects (most of which was not allocated for reasons explained below), and £6m to the Community Led Homes partnership to develop the body of expertise in the housing industry to support delivery.
3. £4m of revenue grants disbursed by the Community Led Homes partnership in 2021/22 to projects at more advanced stages.

In this report we have analysed the progress made by a sample of 206 projects that received funding through the Community Housing Fund. The Government's objectives for the fund were to:

- increase housing supply in England by increasing the number of additional homes delivered by the community led housing (CLH) sector;
- provide housing that is affordable at local income levels and remains so in perpetuity; and
- deliver a lasting legacy for the community led housing sector in the form of an effective and financially self-sustaining body of expertise within the house building industry in England.

The data shows significant success in meeting those objectives:

- Housing supply has been increased with at least 4,222 homes that have been delivered or in active projects, including 913 that have either already been delivered or are under construction.
- Of the projects in receipt of substantial funding (i.e. not just a small start-up grant), two thirds have either completed their homes, are under construction, or have a site and planning consent secured to do so.
- Affordable housing represents 90% of the pipeline, with 80% of that for sub-market rents, and a recent academic review suggests these are highly likely to be affordable at local income levels and remain so in perpetuity.
- The engagement of the CLH enabler hubs and advisers (the body of expertise funded under CHF) appears to be a factor in the success of projects.

Other key findings from the research are:

- There is strong demand for non-standard tenures not supported by the AHP, and the restrictions of tenure under the AHP may be suppressing delivery.
- The median development size is 15 homes, indicating that CLH is able to make use of small sites which may be unviable for mainstream developers, while 40% of projects planned for 20+ homes, 11% for 50+ homes and the largest was a 500 home garden village, also indicating demand for CLH at larger scales.
- A little under half of the projects are on public land, indicating that CLH may be an effective way of disposing of surplus public land, maximising social value.
- The use of Modern Methods of Construction is slightly higher than in mainstream development (18% compared to under 15%).
- The offer of self/custom build for first occupants is higher than the industry average (12% compared to 6-8%), and is highly unusual for affordable housing where tenants rarely have any input at all.

These findings add to recent evidence that successful community led housing represents medium to high value for money<sup>1</sup> (with only 5% of funding lost on failed projects to date), achieves genuine affordability<sup>2</sup>, reduces loneliness<sup>3</sup>, strengthens social cohesion and health<sup>4</sup>, and tends to achieve high energy efficiency standards<sup>5</sup>.

The revenue grants provided through the 2018-20 and 2021-22 CHF were all substantially oversubscribed, with £27m of bids for the £16m budgeted in 2018-20. Had the funding met demand the pipeline would be significantly larger.

In addition to these projects that have received funding from the CHF, more have been initiated and supported by the enablers that the CHF funded. For example, there has been an upsurge in projects in the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester not included in this study. These followed developmental work by CHF-funded enabler hubs, supported by the combined authorities and local authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Capital Economics, September 2020, 'Housing by the community, for the community: an assessment of the value for money of community led housing in England', September 2020.

<https://www.communityledhomes.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/files/2020-09/final-report-capital-economics-housing-community-sept-2020.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Dr Acher & Wilson, December 2023, The Affordability of Community-Led Homes,

<https://nationwidefoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Affordability-of-Community-led-Homes-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> DLUHC, November 2021, Community-led housing and loneliness,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-led-housing-and-loneliness>

<sup>4</sup> UWE, September 2019, Community-led housing and health: A comprehensive literature review,

<https://www.uwe.ac.uk/research/centres-and-groups/spe/projects/community-led-housing>

<sup>5</sup> CLTN, November 2011, Leading to Net Zero,

[https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Leading\\_to\\_Net\\_Zero.pdf](https://www.communitylandtrusts.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Leading_to_Net_Zero.pdf)

## METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

### Data collection

The Community Land Trust Network maintains a database of community led housing projects across England and Wales on behalf of the wider movement. This has drawn on historical data sources including reports from CLT members, sector surveys, a World Habitat data review in 2015 and updated in 2018, and information gleaned from news reports and websites.

Since 2018 we have sought to collect records of the projects that have received grants through the Community Housing Fund via Homes England, the GLA and our Community Led Homes partnership (formed by CLTN, the Confederation of Co-operative Housing, Locality and the UK Cohousing Network). We have also sourced a small number of funding records for grants awarded by the local authorities that received CHF money in 2016/17.

CHF-funded enabler hubs or advisers have supported CLH projects whether or not those groups received direct financial support from the CHF. In this report, we have included only the projects that received a specific revenue or capital grant for their project from the CHF.

We periodically update CLT project records when we receive updates, or spot news. In December 2021 we received updates to 88 projects through a survey. In the autumn of 2023 we shared a project spreadsheet with enabler hubs asking for updates.

In early 2024 we issued another survey to all projects that had received CHF funding, and to the enabler hubs still in operation.

We have collated data from all of these sources into our central database, and used this to produce the analysis of project progress. The data is imperfect - some project records may still be out of date, or inaccurate. Often we have verified or supplemented data, for example by checking against planning records. In many cases, resource constraints mean that we have not independently verified the data provided by groups or enablers.

For the purposes of this analysis, we have only included projects where we believe we have any substantive update since the grant was awarded. So the report does not represent the progress of 100% of projects funded by the CHF.

## Terminology

In 2017 the community led housing sector developed and agreed upon a 'total process' to capture the stages through which projects progress. These are similar to schemas like RIBA's plan of works, but are simplified to help community groups understand them. They are:

- Concept - project being formulated
- Site - searching for or securing a site or building
- Plan - designing the scheme, seeking planning permission where necessary
- Build - work to get on site and then under construction
- Live - completed, residents living in the homes

Projects can be at multiple stages at once, but for the purposes of this analysis we have treated one stage as 'primary'. For example, it is common for projects to be both securing an identified site and designing the scheme for that site. Which stage is primary has been a case-by-case judgement.

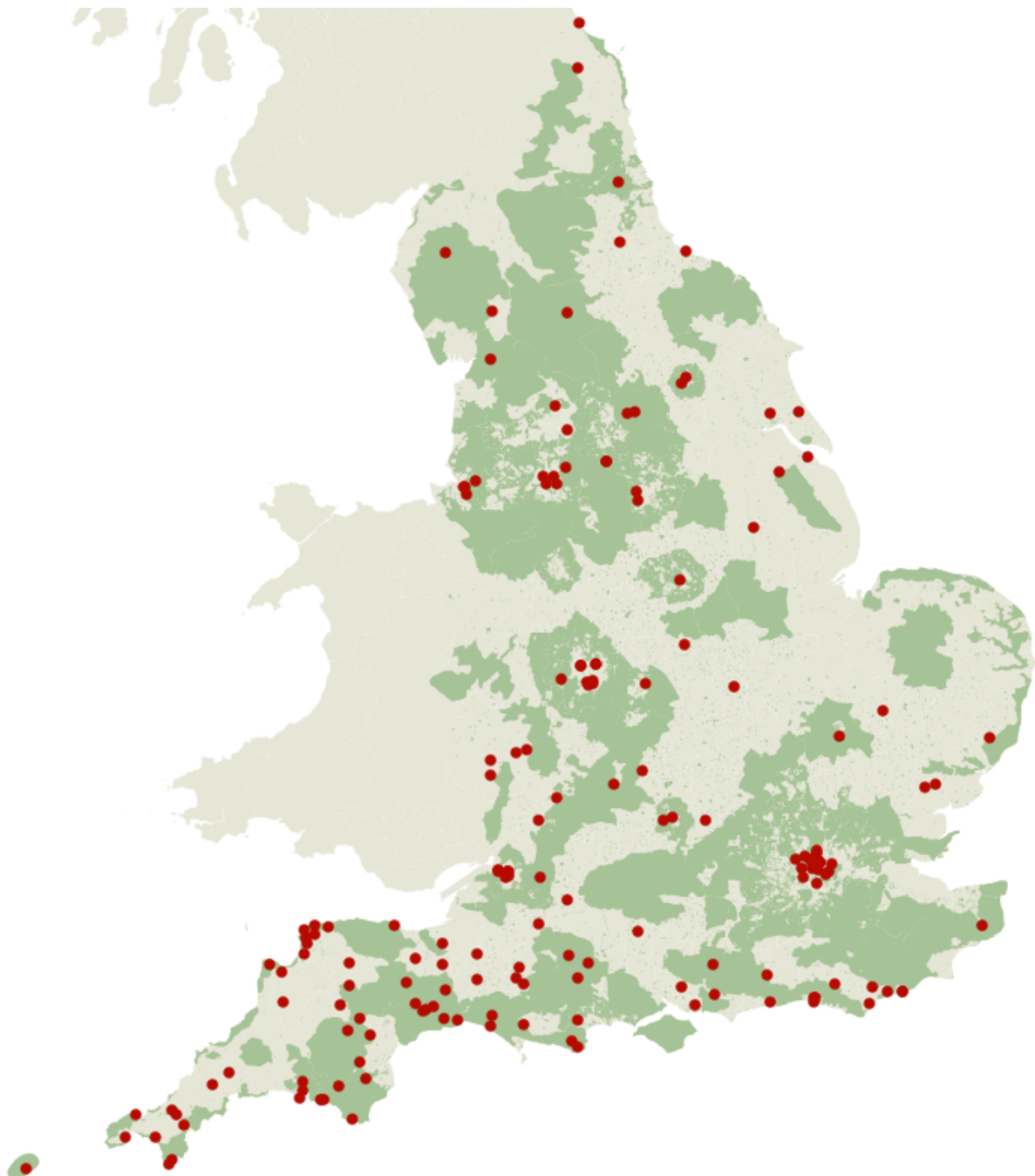
Other terminology in this report is standard to the housing sector and so we assume it can be understood.

## PROJECTS OVERVIEW

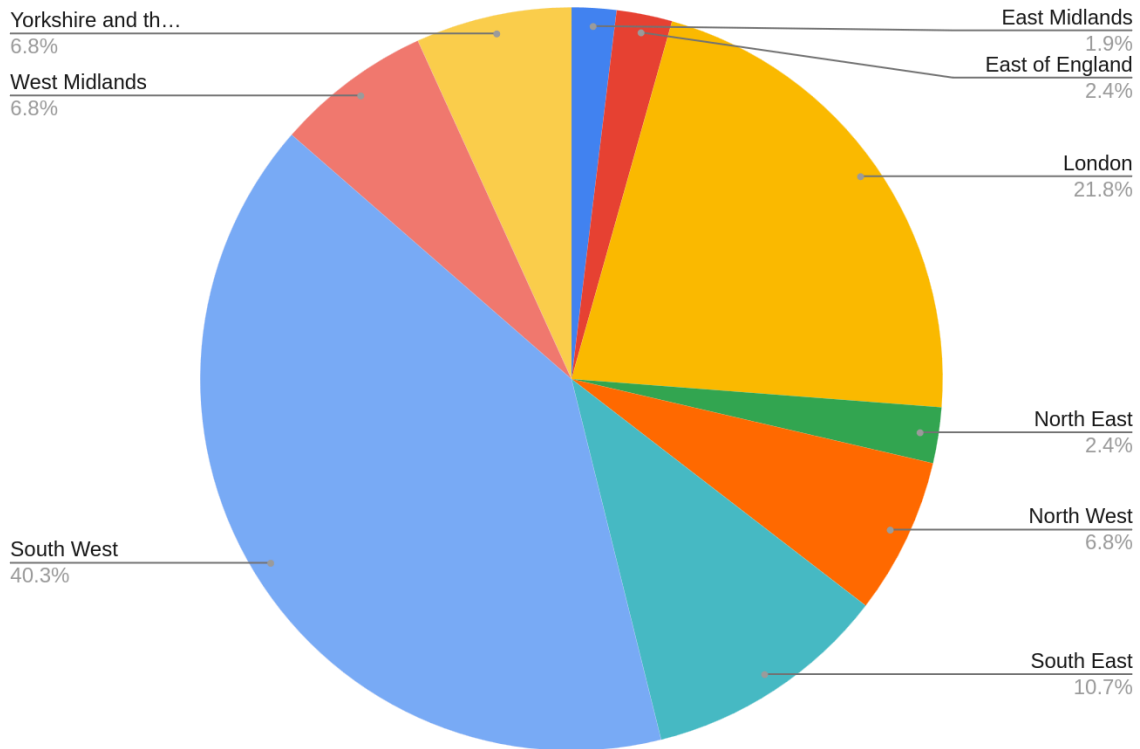
We have obtained updates on 206 projects in total. Of these, 95 received project revenue grants through Homes England, the GLA, local authorities or the Community Led Homes partnership.

### Locations

All of the projects for which we have postcodes have been mapped below, with green belts, protected landscapes and conservation areas shaded in green.



The regional distribution of projects can be seen in the following pie chart. Projects in the South, including London, represent 73% of the total, compared to 42% of the English population.



The regional concentration in the south reflects a number of factors:

- the affordability pressures motivating many projects to form;
- the longstanding presence of enabler hubs creating pipeline;
- the related support developed in local authorities e.g. with planning policy, housing enabling support, land disposal and funding.

In a separate report on the 2021/22 grants programme, we found the skew towards the south had lessened, and projects in Yorkshire and the Humber had increased to represent 22% of total funding awarded. This reflects the successful pipeline development work of newer enabler hubs in those regions.

There is also a rural skew, relative to the UK population, for the same reasons:

	Projects	Homes	Affordable homes
Rural	71	1257	1063
Urban	96	3010	2282

## CHF funding

Of the 130 projects where we have data available confirming the grant amount, the total value of CHF grants was £27.5 million. This is much smaller than the total amount committed by the government - £60m to councils (which we have not been able to track); £163m to Homes England and the GLA (most of which was not allocated because it ran for less than 18 months, compared to rolling 5 year programmes for the Affordable Home Programme); and £4m to the CLH partnership (95% of which was spent).

The largest sources were the Homes England 2018-20 grants (£19.9m), GLA 2019-24 revenue grants (£2.4m) and CLH 2021-22 revenue grants (£2.6m).

The total value of grants under each of these programmes was higher, but we either lack the grant award amount or updates from projects to represent the full amount.

Many projects will also have received, or are applying for, capital grants from Homes England and the GLA. We have not been able to track these consistently, and HE/GLA have not been able to provide data on relevant grant awards. Sometimes this is because the application is made by a housing association partner, and the CLH nature of the project is not recorded; this is particularly complicated where a housing association is a Strategic Partner and so doesn't apply for a project-specific grant through the continuous market engagement route.

## Project progress

Of the 206 projects, 191 are completed or under development and 15 have folded or been mothballed. Using the total process described above, we can estimate the progress of the 191 projects still being actively pursued:

- **Concept** - 1 project (0.5%) is still on the drawing board
- **Site** - 56 (29%) are working on their site or building, of which
  - 12 (6%) are seeking a site
  - 18 (9%) are negotiating on a site
  - 26 (14%) have secured a site
- **Plan** - 80 (42%) are working on their plans, of which
  - 33 (17%) are working towards a planning application
  - 41 (21%) have submitted a planning application
  - 6 (3%) don't require planning permission
- **Build** - 18 (9%) are under construction or working on prelims



- **Live** - 36 (18%) are completed

Of the 15 projects recorded as dormant (put on ice, or abandoned), which had received £1.3m (5% of the funding), reasons given include:

- Projects were financially unviable, particularly during the period of high inflation and interest rates.
- Landowners or key partners pulled out, often related to the viability concerns.
- A small number of planning refusals, or indications of refusal at pre-apps.
- A few cases of local opposition from parish councils, allotment associations or others that caused the group to withdraw their proposals.

Many of these 191 projects only received small start-up and seedcorn grants of up to £5k. If we exclude those projects, and only look at 101 projects that received substantial revenue funding totalling £24m from Homes England, the GLA or (in 2021/22) the Community Led Homes partnership, these projects are further along on average than the total set:

- **Concept** - no projects are at this stage
- **Site** - 17 (17%) are working on their site or building, of which
  - 2 (2%) are seeking a site
  - 5 (5%) are negotiating on a site
  - 10 (10%) have secured a site
- **Plan** - 47 (47%) are working on their plans, of which
  - 17 (17%) are working towards a planning application
  - 25 (25%) have submitted a planning application
  - 5 (5%) don't require planning permission
- **Build** - 15 (15%) are under construction or working on prelims
- **Live** - 22 (22%) are completed

Overall, this shows that, of the projects in receipt of substantial funding, 67% have either completed their homes, are under construction, or have a site and planning consent secured to do so. Only 7% are still in the early stages seeking or negotiating on a site, with the remaining 26% in the middle of the process.

## HOMES

All 206 projects (including those that are dormant or that have failed) were working to provide a total of 4,812 homes. Of those where the tenure is known, 3,744 were affordable homes (89% of that total).

Taking only the 191 projects that are still active, there are a total of 4,222 homes completed or in the pipeline, including 3,398 affordable homes (90% of the total where tenure is known).

### Tenure

The homes in active projects are at the following stages in our ‘total process’:

Current Stage	Active Projects	Affordable Homes	Market Homes	Unknown Homes	Total Homes
Concept	1	0	0	20	<b>20</b>
Site	56	1,228	215	173	<b>1,616</b>
Plan	80	1,482	104	87	<b>1,673</b>
Build	18	278	23	120	<b>421</b>
Live	36	410	15	67	<b>492</b>
<b>All stages</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>3,398</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>4,222</b>

Of the affordable homes, by far the majority (80%) are for forms of sub-market rent, with the remainder being different forms of low cost home ownership. The division between social/affordable rent probably reflects capital grants policies from Homes England and the GLA at the time it was set, and homes may be moving between these columns as policies change.

The complete affordable housing tenures break down as follows, by stage and in total:

Current Stage	Social Rent	Afford. Rent	Living Rent	Shared Owners.	Rent to Buy	Mutual Home Owners.	Discount Market Sale (% income)	Discount Market Sale (% market)	Shared Equity
<b>Site</b>	593	376	73	82	6	20	62	12	4
<b>Plan</b>	570	597	0	130	0	22	114	47	2
<b>Build</b>	104	89	12	50	0	0	23	0	0
<b>Live</b>	62	196	34	64	0	0	34	4	16
<b>All stages</b>	<b>1,329</b>	<b>1,258</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>22</b>

It is worth noting that 14% of these affordable homes are planned to be provided in tenures not normally supported by the Homes England or the the GLA. These include Mutual Home Ownership, forms of Discount Market Sale, Shared Equity, and (except for the GLA) Living Rent.

The data shows a demand - suppressed by grants policy - for innovative forms of affordable housing. For example, we know there has long been considerable interest in Mutual Home Ownership as a way of enabling residents to build up equity while paying a rent; and in Discount Market Sale tied to incomes to provide homes that people on average incomes will always be able to afford to buy; but few groups adopt these models for lack of grant funding.

There may also be Social Rent homes planned in areas where Homes England would not normally fund them. Most groups, when canvassed on other occasions, have stated a preference for rents that most closely match local incomes (which Social Rent tends to do) rather than local market rents (which Affordable Rent does), but grant conditions mean many groups have had to try and make projects with with Affordable Rent grant rates.

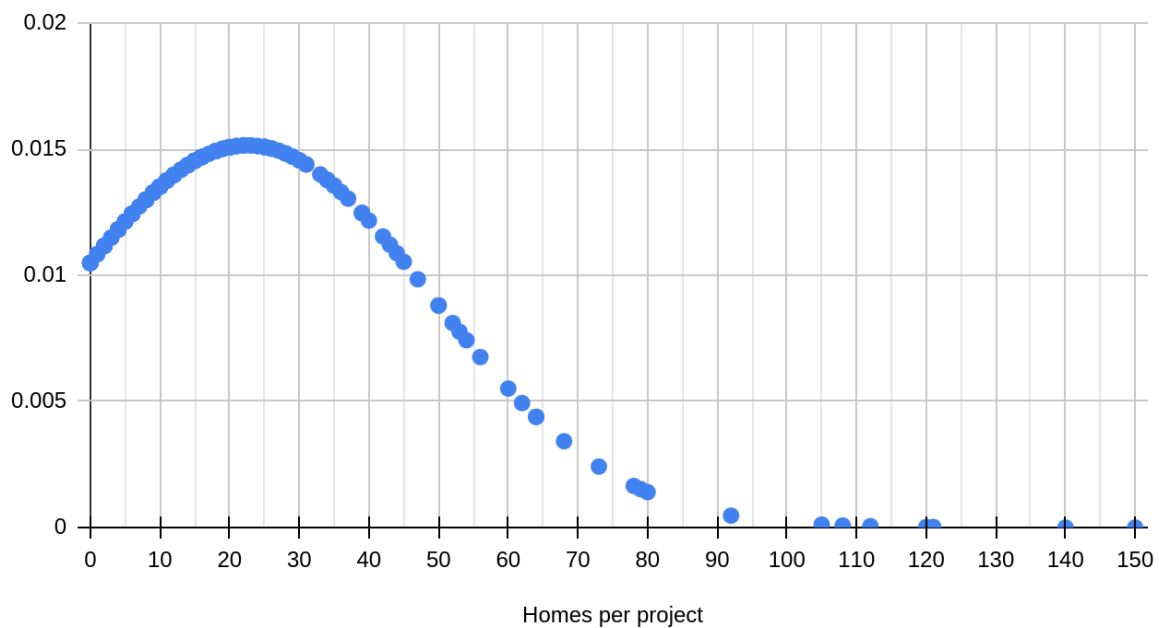
The restrictions of AHP programmes will hinder viability and are therefore suppressing the delivery of these homes.

When providers have been able to access the CHF, and other innovation funds created by the GLA and Welsh Government, there has been a surge of innovation in terms of tenure, and also - as discussed below - MMC, self/custom build and other diverse approaches which the Government has sought to promote. The experience with the CHF suggests that the restrictive approach of the AHP is curbing innovation.

## Project sizes

The median number of homes per project is 15, of which 11 are affordable. The mean (average) number of homes is 23.

The chart below shows the distribution of projects, with most (176) falling between 0 and 39 homes each, and a small number (8) with more than 100 homes.



This distribution reflects both demand and opportunity. That is, many community-led projects are relatively small - cohousing communities, for example, tend to aim for between 20 and 40 homes. But the projects also reflect the opportunities they have been able to secure, e.g. the disposal of public land which tends to mean small sites with marginal viability, or many projects on rural exception sites restricted to meeting evidenced local need for social housing.

Despite the perception that CLH is inherently small, it is interesting to note that 40% of projects planned for 20+ homes, 11% planned for 50+ homes and the largest was a 500 home garden village. So there is demand for CLH at a larger scale, and this would probably be larger if there were clearer opportunities - for example to be part of large-scale house building projects, or to develop community-led exception sites larger than 1 hectare.

## PROJECT DETAILS

### Modern Methods of Construction

Of active projects, 35, or 18%, indicated they are using Modern Methods of Construction to build 869 homes. Within these projects, 87% of the homes were planned to be affordable housing.

At 18%, the use of MMC is slightly higher than one estimate of the national average; Glenigan charts a gradual rise over recent years, with the trendline over the period for MMC projects rising from 12.5% to 15%<sup>6</sup>.

Of the 35 active projects using MMC, 8 have completed; 4 are at the build stage; 13 at the plan stage and 10 at the site stage.

There are projects known to be using MMC in every region of England except the North East, including 13 in the South West, 7 each in the South East and Yorkshire and Humber, and 5 in the West Midlands.

Some, such as WeCanMake in south Bristol, have sought to develop local manufacturing and supply chains as a means of deepening the economic benefits of housebuilding in deprived areas.

### Self/custom build

We asked groups whether the first occupants of homes had input into the design of their homes, making them self/custom build.

In total, 22 projects (12% of the total active) were reported to be self/custom built, aiming to build 728 homes, including 505 affordable homes. The majority of these involved residents having complete control over the design (13 projects) with a further 9 offering first occupants choice over internal layouts and other later design decisions.

In terms of project progress, 2 of these projects had completed (48 homes), 4 were under construction (137 homes) and the remainder were working towards planning consents and securing sites. This is a similar picture of progress to the wider pipeline.

Anecdotally, more projects would like to offer self/custom build opportunities to first occupants. But the two main barriers are:

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<https://www.thenbs.com/knowledge/continued-growth-for-mmc-and-off-site-construction-despite-setbacks-in-modular-housing>

- the lack of supply chain, in particular partner developers or housing associations able to offer this option.
- the very high proportion of affordable homes that will generally only be allocated late in the project, and sold/let to people for whom waiting several years for their homes to complete is not an option.

The Bacon Review estimated that custom and self build accounts for around 13,000 homes per year, or around 6-8% of total housebuilding. So the 12% figure for CLH is above average.

But custom and self build is also mostly private market development with little or no affordable housing. It is extremely rare among housing associations. So CLH is also providing a significant and untapped appetite for this approach within the affordable housing sector. What is more, CLH provides ongoing ‘primary input’ from occupants to decisions such as retrofits and changes to common areas, which is rare in affordable housing and are not considered in the definition of self/custom build.

### Land sources

Of the full set of 206 projects, we have data on the previous landowner for 141. Of these, the split between public and private landowners was quite even:

	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Project %</b>	<b>Homes</b>	<b>% affordable</b>
<b>Private</b>	71	50%	1,257	92%
<b>Public</b>	61	43%	1,499	96%
<b>No previous landowner</b>	9	6%	123	85%

Compared to the wider housebuilding industry the community led housing sector is clearly far more dependent on public land, particularly in urban areas.

Projects on all types of land were able to achieve high percentages of affordable housing, and slightly higher on public land where this is likely to have been accounted for in valuing the ‘best consideration’ for the site.

CLH is providing a route for public land disposal which can achieve high social value. Local authorities like Bristol and Liverpool have pioneered new land disposal policies to prioritise release to community-led organisations, and to account for the social value of developments rather than just the capital receipt or annual ground rent revenue for the land.

None of these disposals, that we know of, involved the use of any 'community rights' such as a Community Right to Bid or the Right to Contest

The slightly more detailed breakdown of sites by landowner is as follows:

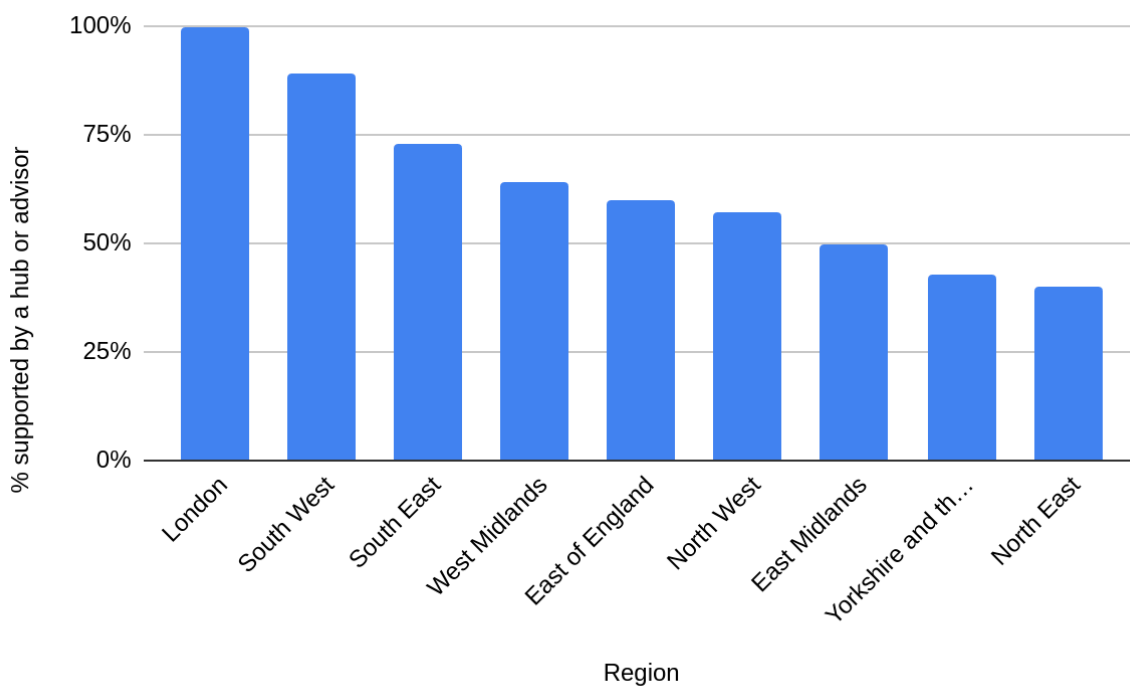
Private household	66
Local authority	47
No previous landowner	9
Parish/town council	7
NHS	3
Other Public	3
Church of England	2
Other church/religious	2
Housing association	1
Duchy of Cornwall/Lancaster	1
<b>Total Result</b>	<b>206</b>

## ENABLERS AND PARTNERS

### Enabler hubs and advisers

Of the 206 projects, 155 were being actively supported by an enabler hub, and a further 10 by an independent adviser. So 80% of projects in total were receiving support from an organisation part-funded and trained by the infrastructure grants through the Community Housing Fund.

The proportion being supported varied by region, as seen in this chart:



Of the 15 dormant projects, 4 (27%) were supported by hubs or advisers - a far lower proportion than projects supported by hubs overall (80%) suggesting that these supported projects have been less likely to fail.

We don't have enough data on projects to accurately compare progress made by those that were and weren't supported. Some projects received funding months before starting on site, particularly among some unsupported community organisations that already had plans to build homes on land they already owned. We can say that, of the projects currently at the 'site' or 'plan' stages, those supported by a hub are much more likely to have submitted a planning application (41%) than those not supported (8%), but this should be treated with caution due to the lack of data on when they began this work and how far they might be expected to have progressed.



These projects supported by enablers have also tended to build a more positive set of relationships locally. The longstanding growth of rural CLTs in the South West of England exemplifies this impact, with the Devon councils recently commissioning a study from an enabler (Middlemarch CLH) on how to further scale the CLT sector across the county. As one Homes England manager in another region put it to us, they could see the difference in groups supported by a professional enabler. Those groups were better able to make a set of compromises to design a deliverable project while retaining the things that mattered to them, and were more able to work constructively with agencies like Homes England.

## Project partners

92 projects are working with development partners to develop and/or manage their homes - 82 with housing associations (HA), eight with private developers, one with a combination of developer and HA, and one with a city council.

There are 53 different organisations recorded as partnering with communities, most on one project each. Aster HA stands out with 17 projects with Teign HA at 7, Hastoe HA at 6 and White Horse HA at 4 - all rural CLT projects following a replicable model that has achieved scale in the South West. A few housing associations in urban areas are also partnering on two projects - e.g. Green Square Accord and Brighter Places.

The housing associations range in size from small local providers to large nationals like Stonewater, L&Q and SNG. Private developer partners also vary from SMEs like TOWN and Greencore Homes to volume builders like Bellway Homes.

Those partnering with registered providers of social housing and using standard tenures have a straightforward route to accessing AHP grants. Those going it alone are either assuming no bid to the AHP or are going through the process of registration, which can add a further two years to project timescales and considerable expense for expert support.

## REFLECTIONS FOR FUTURE FUNDING

We - along with other national sector bodies including the UK Cohousing Network and the Confederation of Co-operative Housing - have long urged the Government to commission a proper review of the Community Housing Fund.

We are not able to provide any substantive evaluation of the fund on the basis of the data collected. But we are able to offer some reflections on lessons that can be taken from the data, and our own experience of administering the 2018-21 infrastructure funding and 2021-22 project funding.

### Government objectives

the Government's first objective for the CHF was to *'increase housing supply in England by increasing the number of additional homes delivered by the community led housing sector'*. On that measure, the delivery of 492 homes and the strong progress of 4,202 homes represents a qualified success.

That 67% of projects are somewhere between a planning application submission and a completed project indicates strong progress for most. But there are clearly a lot of projects still at earlier stages two or more years after receiving funding, making slower progress than might have been hoped.

We do not have enough information to determine whether each project, and any/all of those homes, are additional to those that would have been built in the absence of the CHF and CLH. But the preponderance of small sites and rural exception sites suggests most are not on sites allocated in Local Plans; the high level of public land site as garages; and the very high level of affordable housing point to a very high additionality.

It is difficult to compare this speed of progress to the wider housebuilding industry. In their benchmarking study from October 2021<sup>7</sup> Dr Tom Archer and Dr Lindsey McCarthy compared CLH to a CWE study indicating that development took 6-7 years, with 1.2 to 2.2 years for the pre-application stage. However, this benchmark took an identified and secured site as the starting point. Most CHF-funded projects began at an earlier stage, seeking and securing a site, and in many cases starting a new organisation. The CWE study noted that this earlier 'land assembly' phase can take 5-20 years, and didn't estimate how long it takes an SME to form. Some groups were also delayed by the process of registering as a registered provider of social housing. With this in mind, the

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<sup>7</sup> Archer & McCarthy (Oct 2021), Community-led development and the speed of development, Nationwide Foundation

progress of the CHF funded projects - up to 5 years on from receiving a grant - against the objective of housing delivery looks positive.

the Government's second objective was to '*provide housing that is affordable at local income levels and remains so in perpetuity*'. As noted above, 89% of the homes being delivered are affordable housing tenures, and of those most (80%) are for sub-market rent. So the CHF has succeeded in stimulating a considerable uptick in affordable housebuilding.

Furthermore, an academic study completed in 2023 concluded that community led homes tended to be highly affordable, when measured as a proportion of the occupants' incomes<sup>8</sup>.

the Government's third objective was to '*deliver a lasting legacy for the community-led housing sector in the form of an effective and financially self-sustaining body of expertise within the house building industry in England*.' This has not been the focus of this study.

But it is notable that 80% of funded projects received support from the body of expertise that the CHF helped to grow. This is relevant given that the main sources of grant funding for enabler hubs, including the CHF as well as Power to Change, ended in 2021 after as little as 18 months (when a 2017 study suggested 5-6 years of consistent start-up support would be needed). Given the lack of consistent start-up funding, enabler hubs covering more than half of England have now effectively folded, with others offering a reduced service.

## Targeting funding

The sheer variety of projects, and the extent of innovation with MMC, self and custom build and partnerships, suggests there was a virtue in offering revenue grants in an open, competitive bidding programme. This review does not suggest there has been a high failure rate, though further tracking of projects will be needed to determine what happens to those still seeking a secure site and planning consent.

Innovation and diversification were not explicit objectives of the fund. But they are wider government objectives. When funding innovation, a high failure rate and funding write-offs would be normal. One estimate of start-ups estimates that half fail within five years<sup>9</sup>. Set against this benchmark, CLH groups look remarkably resilient and successful. A number of surveyed groups with projects still at earlier stages told us that they had used CHF funding for feasibility studies or technical work on sites that turned out to be

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<sup>8</sup> Archer & Wilson (2023) The Affordability of Community-Led Homes, Nationwide Foundation

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fundera.com/blog/what-percentage-of-small-businesses-fail>

unviable, some due to the worsening market conditions. Most were working on other options, while a few shelved the idea to return to their core business.

There are some success factors in the data, supported by wider research, which could be used to target future funding, if delivery was prioritised above innovation and diversification:

- Projects supported by experienced enablers, which are less likely to fail and more likely to establish successful partnerships.
- Projects partnering with a developer or housing association, which can access capital including the AHP and can provide professional skills and capacity.
- Projects initiated by organisations for whom housing is a primary focus or a significant element of their business plan, which are less likely to shelve a project after an initial feasibility study.

## Programme management

The data provided in this report is unusually open and full. However, the report could be fuller and more substantial still, with more complete data on projects. This would have been possible had those managing grant programmes been required to collect consistent data on projects at application stage with an agreed schema; to seek permission to share contact details with researchers; and to undertake ongoing monitoring of project progress, requiring grantees to provide basic monitoring returns on their progress after money had been spent or returned. Doing all of this would have resource implications, but would enable us to maintain a much more complete and accurate dataset.

If the funding were targeted at projects supported by enablers, this could involve the enablers and the national CLH bodies playing a stronger role in grant making. The CHF grants disbursed by Homes England and the Community Led Homes partnership were all made on a project-by-project basis. There was no requirement for the involvement of an enabler, and no ongoing hand holding beyond grants management. The GLA and CLH London, by contrast, developed a large portfolio of projects that they handheld along the way, paying for studies and technical assistance as required, and taking forward those with promise to the more advanced stages. It might be beneficial to roll out any future CHF grants programmes based on the London model, with regional enablers working closely with partners like the GLA and Homes England to develop and finance a pipeline.

Such an approach could also tie in project funding with the development of enablers able to create and deliver a pipeline with communities. We noted a strong correlation

between the areas with the strongest pipeline and project success and the longstanding presence of regional enablers. These developed replicable models through an action research approach which predated the CHF, so that they were well positioned to help communities bid into the CHF to then take forward projects. CLTN and UKCN developed an action-research 'Community Led Housing Growth Lab', piloted in 2023, to help intermediaries design, test and roll out replicable models. A future CHF programme could tie into this approach to provide the funding to develop new models and then fund the testing of pilots, and/or the roll-out - that is, ensuring grants go to projects with a clear route to delivery.

These alternative approaches could improve delivery, but may also close off some avenues for innovation and experimentation. So there would still be a role for an open, project-by-project grants programme.