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Appendix 2 - Community-Led Housing – Routes to Delivery report - Recommendations

A summary of priority actions for the Council are:

Ref	Report Recommendation	Council Response
1	Develop a strategy to enable genuinely affordable community-led approaches in Oxford.	As referenced in the report, the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-21, and Tenancy Strategy 2018-23, reference and support community led housing as an approach to furthering housing supply in Oxford. The Local Plan is also supportive. The development of a strategic approach to realise these ambitions is acknowledged and the Council seeks to take forward this work through initiatives and actions as detailed in this report, and through on-going communications and work with officers.
2	Promote community-led housing within the Oxfordshire Growth Board and Joint Statutory Spatial Plan.	Officers within the Growth Board have met with local CLH representatives, along with Homes England, and the Board supported a successful bid into the Community Housing Fund to provide additional resource to the Collaborative Housing hub to further develop approaches to delivery and drive potential schemes forward at county level, building on the partnership approach being developed in Oxford as a model for the county. The county team preparing the Oxfordshire Plan Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP) are receptive to considering the promotion of CLH in the plan at the appropriate time in this work programme.
3	Appoint a Councillor as Oxford's community-led housing champion.	The Council has also created the role of a member Co-operatives Champion. This is currently with Councillor Richard Howlett. The champions are non-executive members who have an informal role in leading on certain issues. Richard has attended briefings and meetings with various CLH representatives and will be supporting the launch of the Routes to Delivery report at a local event being planned for Jan 2020.
4	Apply to the Community Housing Fund to provide enabling support within the council for community-led housing schemes that are currently being proposed by groups in Oxford.	In addition to the Oxfordshire Growth Deal bid, as outlined above, Oxford City Council is also supporting a bid into the Community Housing Fund by the Oxford Cohousing group to improve their capacity to develop proposals for delivery within Oxford, focusing in particular on local potential sites at feasibility stages.
5	Include support for community-led housing in the Local Plan,	As referenced above, CLH is already supported in these documents. In the Proposed Submission Oxford Local Plan, Draft Policy H7 says about community-led

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	<p>housing and tenancy strategies.</p>	<p>housing that ‘... Proposals for community-led housing will be supported because of the benefits they are expected to bring in terms of community cohesion, permanent affordability and sustainable development.’ It is hoped that this provides the support recommended regarding planning policy. Members of the Oxford Co-Housing group also contributed thoughts into the Housing Panel Scrutiny Meeting for the emerging Local Plan in October 2018.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Help to unlock sites for community-led housing, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require larger sites to include some community-led housing through Section 106 agreements; • explore small and difficult Council sites for development by community-led housing groups as exemplar schemes; • make local authority owned land available leasehold for long-term investment return; and • allow an exclusivity period on a site or sites for a community-led housing group to work up a feasible project and then purchase the land. 	<p>The Council continues to develop a programme of housing delivery in Oxford and beyond to help address local housing needs. As part of this, the Council recognises the importance of supporting CLH on suitable sites, where a partnership approach could improve the site feasibility; bring forward additional affordable housing units; accelerate the delivery of new homes; or bring wider community benefits through the development of the site, or the future management of it.</p> <p>The Council considers that requiring larger sites to include some CLH through planning agreements, is likely to impact on viability, and could be seen as an unjustified burden on developers, that might also be ineffective as there are limited CLH groups, and they may not necessarily want or be in a position to take on part of any large site. It is considered unlikely that the Council could present a strong enough case to justify this through an examination of the Local Plan. Other Councils, while also supporting CLH in Local Plans, do not appear to have exercised this policy approach in terms of a requirement. Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Transport, responded to suggestions at the Housing Panel in October 2018 in this regard also.</p> <p>The Council has identified a derelict garage site in its ownership and has supported a bid through the Community Housing Fund to develop a scheme through feasibility stages with local community architects Transition by Design and the CLT. This scheme is in pre-planning stages with the Council and a delegation for the transfer of the land interest, and award of grant, is included in this Cabinet report. The hope is that an exemplar scheme on this difficult site will demonstrate proof of concept and could be replicated and scaled up to other unlet Council garage sites in Oxford.</p> <p>The Council has limited opportunities identified for further housing supply on Council owned land that is</p>

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		not currently under consideration within the affordable housing supply programme already, but will continue to explore and develop opportunities, as set out, as and when they might arise. Where appropriate, any such sites could include a reasonable period of grace to assist a CLH group to work up a feasible and financed project.
7	Liaise with landlords of empty properties and poorly managed houses of multiple occupation to promote and facilitate opportunities for community-led housing groups to bring the properties back into occupation.	Oxford has a limited number of empty properties, but, as with HMO properties, the Council will seek to work with landlords to ensure properties are brought into use and are of good quality and well managed. Where suitable opportunities arise, officers are able to suggest a CLH approach to try and support these objectives.
8	Set up a revolving loan fund that community-led housing groups can access for cheaper finance.	The Oxfordshire Growth Board bid into the Community Housing Fund was successful (recently announced in October 2019), so now intends to commission work to focus on how best to secure land, finance and technical support to develop a programme of schemes, building on the 'Routes to Delivery' report for Oxford. The approach, as used successfully elsewhere, such as in Cornwall, of local authorities making available a revolving loan fund, is expected to be considered with this exercise across Oxfordshire.
9	Develop practical responses to help support and encourage community-led housing including providing support and guidance for the identification of appropriate sites and working with landowners.	Council officers have already engaged colleagues from CLH (the CLT; Collaborative Housing hub; and Oxford Cohousing) in meetings around possible site identification and joint work, and this is intended to continue. Further joint workshops are expected to identify areas where further support and communication could be improved.
10	Add questions related to community-led housing to the self-build register to collect data about interest in community-led housing.	The Council's self-build register form collects information required by the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015, which is to keep a register of persons seeking to acquire land to build a home. This includes the opportunity for associations of individuals to register an interest, so the self-build register can and does already include associations of individuals who may wish to develop self-build plots as community interest housing.
11	Further recommendations to increase awareness of CLH are also made, including arranging public events; training and workshops for professionals; and training for CLH groups.	The Council will endeavour to support public awareness events through officers and members, including the Council's media and communications team. Officers from housing, planning, development and regeneration teams hope to engage with future training

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		<p>events by the CLH to share best practice and CLH approaches to improving housing supply and community involvement in development activity.</p> <p>Discounted use of the Town Hall for events, and ability to use the Town Hall for free monthly meetings on Tuesday or Thursday evenings under the Town Hall Community Interest Group arrangements.</p>
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