

Delivering community-led affordable Housing in rural Northumberland

Want to find out more?

- Has your community identified a need for affordable homes for people living / working locally?
- Have you heard about 'community-led housing' and do you want to find out more?

In July this year, CAN will formally launch a new community-led housing hub for Northumberland aiming to help communities across Northumberland that are interested in driving the provision of affordable homes for people living / working in their local area.

With funding from Northumberland County Council's Community Housing Fund allocation, the hub's mission will be to deliver a significant increase in community-led housing activity in the County, by identifying practical opportunities for new developments (new build and refurbishment) and raising awareness and understanding amongst a broad range of local stakeholders.

Some of the initial funding through the Community Housing Fund is being used to support a scoping exercise, along similar lines to successful work recently completed in North and East Yorkshire and a 5 year business plan for the new hub. Scoping work is the bedrock upon which the hub will go forward. This work has already begun and will be completed by the end of October 2017.

The scoping work and business planning is being led by a Northumberland-based consultancy – Social Regeneration Consultants (SRC) – with support from CAN, Glendale Gateway Trust and SCATA Stocksfield.

Policy and funding changes mean less and less rural affordable homes are being delivered and the existing stock is being eroded each year. The value of homes significantly outstrips the income levels of many local people often making it impossible to live locally. In rural communities the numbers of affordable homes needed are frequently small and can be difficult for social housing providers to deliver due to significantly higher costs per unit.

Community-led housing is a proven and growing method of delivering affordable homes in a way often more acceptable to local communities. Successful schemes have already been delivered in many parts of Northumberland – from Wooler to Stocksfield and from Amble to Haltwhistle. We want to support the development of more affordable homes, where they are clearly needed and wanted, through existing and new community-led organisations.

Over the coming weeks we will be undertaking survey work, focus groups and other activities to identify in detail where there is clear interest in exploring community-led housing provision further and supporting local organisations to clearly identify and meet local need.