



## CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING ENGAGEMENT WITHIN LARGE DEVELOPMENT SITES

### **Proposal**

To work with the site owners and / or developers of large development proposals to explore land opportunities that can enable new community-led / group-build approaches to deliver complementary community and neighbourhood development.

### **Why community-led housing?**

EMCLH<sup>1</sup> believes that a community-led approach within larger residential development sites could provide a number of benefits to site stakeholders:

- The site developer could sell land for a number of plots through one transaction giving certainty over sales and less administration
- This offers to demonstrate further innovation that is achievable through a group-build / self-commissioned project at scale
- Cohousing and other collaborative initiatives are evidenced to help provide a sense of community and place. People join a project with the intention of balancing a private home with a shared sense of community, reducing isolation, increasing opportunities for sustainability and taking on responsibility to actively manage the shared space. This invariably has a positive impact on the wider community.
- Potentially market plots could be brought within a greater range of affordability through products such as mutual home ownership.
- Affordable housing provided through community-led approaches tends to be better integrated into the community as a whole.

### **Principles for the release of land**

In recognising how phases within larger development sites are progressed, EMCLH is keen to explore how new group-led housing projects could access suitable sites:

- (1) To allow the CLH Hubs an 'option' on areas of land or group of plots (1-2 acres or up to 30 plots) in order to allow proactive engagements with local residents who could create new groups that could deliver the group group-build projects, within the context of Local Plan requirements and expectations. Schemes could be replicated on later phases of the site development.
- (2) Available parcels of land could enable different forms of community-led housing to take shape: for example, one as a (likely mixed-tenure) cohousing

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<sup>1</sup> EMCLH were co-organisers of the recent webinar on 'Promoting community-led housing within large-scale developments in the ARC sub-region', at which the Graven Hill Development Company provided a presentation

development and one as an affordable housing project, delivered through a body such as a new community land trust. Such a variety could demonstrate how different types of projects can deliver a mix of complementary homes and neighbourhoods within a wider development area.

(3) EMCLH, using qualified technical advisors, would:

- promote the sites identified as opportunities to people wanting to engage with these projects
- assist groups to establish as incorporated entities, with a clear vision and business plan for their respective projects
- support groups to raise appropriate funds in line with the business plans the projects would draw up
- provide development project management services to the new groups in order to obtain the required planning permissions and identify the funding and procurement routes for subsequent delivery of the projects.

(4) At an agreed point over a 12-18 month period during which the site 'option' applies, it would be envisaged that the groups would be in the appropriate position to confirm purchase of the land (at the market rate whether for affordable and private market units), utilising technical advisors and developer partnerships to continue the planning and construction programme as appropriate. A crucial part of delivery will be having 'Hub'-employed technical advisors to be the interface between the site developer and the groups.

### **Timescales**

The time to deliver on such proposals would be tailored to fit within the next proposals of phased on-site developments within each development area.

**East Midlands Community Led Housing (EMCLH)** is a non-profit making Community Interest Company in existence since 2012. It works:

- To set-up and support a variety of community-led housing initiatives across the East Midlands
- To promote and arrange partnerships between community groups, local authorities, Parish Councils, developers, land-owners and housing associations
- To undertake project capacity building, legal incorporations, training, site assessments, feasibility studies, and funding applications for CLH groups;
- To provide the project management of ongoing schemes, such as the community land trust scheme for 49 units in Lincoln just finalising the appointment of a contractor to start works on site in 2023
- To provide other associated support for the community-led housing sector, such as the compilation and production in 2022 of a national 'Practical Guide to Cohousing', commissioned by the UK Cohousing Network.

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