

HOUSING COMMISSION

The Housing Commission has been set up by the Cooperative Councils' Innovation Network led by Croydon Council and was launched on 29 September 2016.

AIMS OF THE COMMISSION

- To identify positive responses to the housing crisis to show how cooperative, community-based solutions can help to boost housing supply, involve local communities, and safeguard and deliver new affordable social housing.
- To focus on community leaders, institutions, innovative practice, drawing lessons for replication and mainstreaming
- To maintain a practical focus to ensure its products enable councils to encourage and support co-operative and community-led housing (CLH).

PROGRESS SO FAR

- Commissioners recruited from councils (Croydon, Cardiff, Oldham, Rochdale), support organisations, policy experts and community-led organisations
- Evidence sessions held in Rochdale and Croydon in September and November 2016.
- Agreed to work with HACT housing sector solutions agency to develop a toolkit to support community-led housing.

CHALLENGES

- Most councils prefer one big contract to deliver large-scale development over several smaller contracts with community-led schemes
- Some councils sell assets, when leasing enables CLH groups to raise loan finance
- Councils are unaware of potential of CLH as partners – and wider social benefits
- No clear process or designated person in councils for CLH groups to go to
- Lack of council time and resource to learn about CLH

INITIAL IDEAS FOR ACTION FROM FIRST EVIDENCE SESSION

- **Products** of the Commission could include a knowledge bank website (with case studies to suit different housing markets), a technical toolkit and templates
- **Recommended practice** for local authorities:
 - Political and chief officer commitment and targets essential to drive CLH
 - Area support networks could be developed to link officers to pioneer councils
 - Charter for local authorities should be developed setting out guiding principles
- **Plans:** encourage councils to deliver a test site of community-led housing
- **Policy:** urge councils to have community-led housing element in housing strategy

NEXT STEPS

- A Housing Commission website will be developed with a blog to exchange ideas
- Call for evidence from CCIN and other stakeholders
- Develop a pledge for local authorities to support CLH
- Work with HACT to develop a technical toolkit
- Report and products launch Sept 2017

@CCINHousing #CommunityLedHousing

John.montes@croydon.gov.uk