

Liverpool City Council Case Study

The story of the local authority's approach to community-led housing

Basic summary

- **Local housing market characteristics**
 - Urban
 - Low housing demand
- **Region: North West**
- **Refurbished empty homes. Examples:** CLT; Self-help housing co-op
- **Partners:** Liverpool Mutual Homes, Plus Dane Group, Granby CLT, Terrace 21 Co-operative

Key message: After decades of decline, effective joint working with the community and others is making Granby a vibrant busy neighbourhood where people want to live once again. Granby Four Streets CLT was established as a vehicle for involving local people in the regeneration project and acted as a catalyst, encouraging other organisations to commit to the area. In partnership with a range of stakeholders, the Council launched a £14m project that will return 110 empty properties to use. The CLT, a housing co-op and the wider community form an integral part of the project.

1. *The story: what was the problem that needed addressing?*

Liverpool City Council is an urban authority where low housing demand contributed to housing market failure in the 1990s/early 2000s. There are some signs that recent population growth is stabilising the market, though recovery is fragile. The top three local housing market challenges are:

- Improving pre-1919 stock which accounts for 35% of the city's housing
- Reducing vacancy rates
- Increasing opportunities for home ownership.

2. *Why is Liverpool City Council supporting CLH?*

Liverpool City Council (LCC) considers that community-led housing (CLH) supports the Council's strategic priorities as it:

- Increases housing choice
- Creates more sustainable neighbourhoods
- Reduces vacancy rates.

Other benefits for the authority are an improved environment and enhanced equality and diversity.

CLH schemes benefit low income households. Local lettings initiatives are in place to ensure that local people benefit from new provision.

3. *How does Liverpool City Council enable CLH schemes to develop?*

The City Council supports initiatives brought forward by voluntary and community groups for tackling empty homes. LCC transfers properties it previously acquired to CLH organisations for £1. It also provides advice and support.

Partner housing associations provide strategic and management support. North West Housing Services provide management services to over 25 co-operatives in Liverpool.

4. Examples of homes that have been or will be produced by CLH schemes in the area:

Most homes created by CLH schemes are produced through the refurbishment of existing homes although co-operatives have delivered new build schemes in the past. It is a condition of the disposal of land and properties that the homes created are affordable. There is flexibility in terms of the type of affordable home. LCC is keen to ensure a mix of affordable rent and low cost home ownership options.

Granby Four Streets Refurbishment

After decades of decline, effective joint working is making Granby a vibrant busy neighbourhood where people want to live once again. A number of stakeholders including the City Council, two Registered Providers - Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) and Plus Dane Group (PDG), [Granby Community Land Trust](#) and [Terrace 21 Housing Co-op](#) embarked on a £14m regeneration project in Spring 2014 to bring 110 empty properties back into use.

The regeneration has been sensitive to the character of the neighbourhood and has retained many of the attractive features of the Victorian properties in the area. The programme has attracted worldwide recognition culminating with the award of the 2015 Turner Prize.

The key elements of the regeneration include:

- Refurbishment of long term empty properties for affordable rent and low cost homeownership
- Engagement with local people through the Granby Four Streets CLT
- Opportunities for self-build projects in partnership with Terrace 21 Co-operative and through the Council's innovative 'Homes for a pound' scheme
- Employment and training opportunities for local people through the establishment of the Granby Workshop
- A monthly community-run street market attracting up to 70 stallholders
- The emergence of Granby has a hub for artists culminating in the creation of a winter garden

Background

The Granby Four Streets lie near the Princes Park, Princes Road and Canning Street Conservation Areas. The streets are characterised by two and three storey pre-1919 terraces, many of which were empty and had fallen into a severe state of disrepair over the years and have been a major blight on the streetscape.

A sequence of stalled regeneration initiatives in recent decades threatened community cohesion. However, those residents who chose to stay have shown great resilience and demonstrated their community pride in a number of innovative ways including their award-winning 'guerrilla gardening' scheme and the popular monthly market.

Despite these issues, the area possesses many good qualities. Granby has a unique history particularly in terms of its diversity and multiculturalism. The black community in Liverpool 8 is the oldest in the UK, going back ten generations. More recently a new generation of Somali settlers have made Granby their home. It has strong community ties within its multi-ethnic and multi faith population. Its location gives easy access to the city centre as well as the Women's Hospital and Liverpool's Universities.

Granby Four Streets Vision

Local residents and key stakeholders for the area have developed a Vision for the Granby Four Streets area as follows:

The vision for Granby is to grow into a diverse residential neighbourhood, interspersed with small scale local businesses and quality public spaces. The vision for Granby proposes retaining and refurbishing as much of the existing built fabric as possible celebrating the area's character and using this to create a distinctive and desirable place to live, work and play and one which is sustainable for both existing and future residents.

Tackling Empty Homes

The properties targeted by Liverpool Mutual Homes (LMH) and the Plus Dane Group (PDG) are focused on Jermyn Street, Cairns Street and Beaconsfield Street. The scheme includes refurbishment of 38 empty houses by LMH and 24 refurbishments and three new builds by PDG. These refurbishments have been delivered through a combination of government Clusters of Empty Homes grant, match funding invested by the RPs and the transfer of properties by Liverpool City Council. In addition to Clusters of Empty Homes grant the RPs have also secured further grant funding from the Empty Homes Fund to help redevelop further vacant properties in the area.

The newly refurbished properties have been made available for affordable rent and shared ownership and include a mixture of 2, 3 and 4 Bed accommodation. This scheme has not come without its challenges. No two properties are the same and the build refurbishment has encountered major technical difficulties in delivering modern homes while retaining as many of the original features as possible.

Granby Community Land Trust

Following the cessation of the Housing Market Renewal Programme, the Council recognised the need to consider alternative ways of delivering housing renewal and the opportunity for a community-led approach in Granby. This culminated in the establishment of the Granby Four Streets CLT as a vehicle for involving local people in the regeneration of Granby.

The CLT has worked closely with the Council and other partners to refurbish 11 vacant properties bringing them back into use as homes for affordable rent and shared ownership and is due to refurbish six more properties. The CLT have made some of the refurbished properties available for sale using a resale covenant based on median wage levels. This is only the second such scheme in the U.K. and is an innovative mechanism for keeping these homes affordable in perpetuity.

The CLT has secured Arts Council funding to bring forward plans to convert two of the properties into a winter garden providing leisure space for the local community as well as facilities for artists and crafts persons. Negotiations are well underway with the City Council to transfer a further six properties to the CLT for refurbishment.

Terrace 21

A locally based co-operative has been formed to undertake a self-help housing project. The project will include an eco-retrofit of five houses in Cairns Street. These properties will be refurbished to the highest energy efficiency standards. Other features of the properties will include recycling and composting facilities, larders and cold food storage without the need for refrigeration, clothes drying facilities and cycle storage.

Homes for £1

The City Council was also keen to provide home ownership opportunities for individual first time buyers and has made five properties available through its innovative 'Homes for a Pound' scheme. This is a homesteading initiative which allows local people to refurbish vacant properties and take a first step onto the home ownership ladder. These have all been completed and the new owners have moved in.

Ducie Street

A development brief has been produced for the refurbishment of the derelict properties in Ducie Street and for the cleared site opposite.

Enveloping Works

In October 2015 the Council approved plans to offer a package of frontage improvement works to a total value of £650,000 to the private home owners in the Granby Four Streets. This covers items such as brickwork, window and door replacement and roofing. Around 34 properties will benefit from these works. Under the scheme the council makes the upfront capital commitment and places a charge on the property which is repayable if the house is sold within ten years after which it expires

The Four Corners Project

Discussions have been underway with the Heritage Lottery Fund regarding the creation of the Granby Four Corners hub which will build on positive community engagement as well as tackling the dereliction clearly evident in Granby Street which is the central artery for this neighbourhood. The revival of Granby Street as a focus for thriving businesses, shops and community-led enterprise is a key component of Granby's regeneration.

A Focus for the Arts

The regeneration of Granby Four Streets has attracted national and international attention, with the Community Land Trust's project winning the Turner Prize. In the Liverpool Arts Biennial exhibited a stained glass installation created by a Russian artist in one of the vacant properties in Granby Street. At the same time the community has not forgotten its green heritage and has formed the 'That Bloomin' Triangle' group to deliver horticultural projects in the area.

Delivering the Granby Vision

The vision has been delivered by finding ways of unlocking assets for the benefits of the community. This has involved a wide range of partners. There has been a focus on widening housing choice and building community confidence.

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