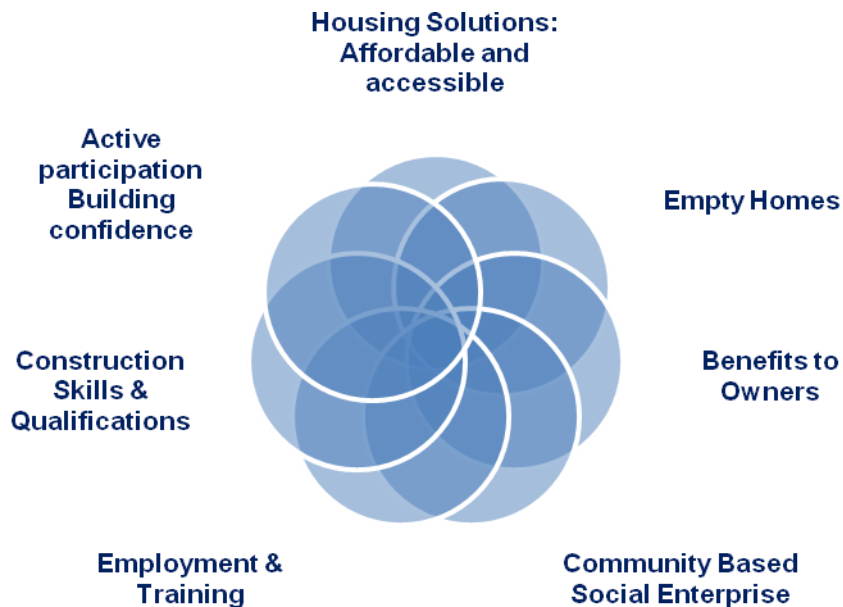


## **The Case For Another Empty Homes Community Grants Programme**



### **The Empty Homes Community Grants Programme (EHCGP)**

The DCLG's EHCGP ran from September 2012 until the end of March 2015. £50m was allocated to 110 local community driven organisations over two rounds of funding. It provided access to capital funding for small community driven *organisations that would otherwise have been ineligible to receive funding*, on account of their not being registered with the HCA. As a result, the Programme was outsourced and administered by Tribal. Final figures are not yet available but over 1,290 homes will have been created from vacant properties, along with a range of associated social outcomes.

### **The Case For Another Programme**

#### **Demand Has Been Identified For Further £52m Programme**

A survey conducted by HACT/Self-Help Housing.Org towards the end of 2014, identified demand for a further £52.276m. EHCGP recipients were asked how much money they would be able to commit over a further three years and, based on returns from 73 EHCGP recipients, the figure came to £52.276m. Among the respondents, 53% wanted to only acquire properties outright, and a further 31% wanted to both acquire and lease properties.

## **A Cohort Of Over 100 Organisations Now Exists With The Capacity To Procure & Renovate Vacant Property**

At the outset of the EHCGP the capacity of those organisations bidding for funding to undertake the required work and produce good quality housing was unclear. However, there now exists a cohort of around 100 organisations that have built up a range of experience and knowledge, and in many cases most importantly an asset base, that are now well equipped to undertake further work. It makes sense to capitalise on this, rather than let it wither away.

## **EHCGP Creates Training & Employment Opportunities And Street Level Regeneration**

One of the reasons that Ministers were persuaded to approve a Community Grants Programme was in expectation of the social outcomes that were likely to arise. An evaluation of the Programme's impact is currently being undertaken by Professor David Mullins from Birmingham University. Meanwhile, of organisations responding to the Survey conducted in October 2014 89% reported involving trainees/apprentices in renovating properties, 72% reported involving volunteers and 74% reported involving prospective residents.

In terms of the impact on the community of renovating property, 95% claimed to have contributed towards regenerating their local environment, while 92% believed they had helped reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. All of these claims are entirely credible, since empty property can only damage communities.

## **It Makes Sense To Capitalise On the Partnerships With Local Authorities, Other Housing Providers & Funders That Have Arisen**

Many of these organisations have developed very productive working relations with local authorities and other housing providers which can be continued and developed further. They have also gained experience of working with banks and charitable funders to raise money and put together funding packages. A further round of EHCGP funding will provide a great opportunity to build on all this.

## **£26m Of Additional Capital Funding Has Been Levered Into The EHCGP Programme**

Finally, returns from 65 organisations in receipt of EHCGP to a Survey conducted in May 2015 by HACT & Self-Help Housing.Org reveal that collectively, they have levered in an additional £26,411m in capital expenditure relating to acquisition and cost of works.

*Sources and amounts:* £11.5m in the form of loans from banks and local authorities; £5.8m by means of grants from trusts/foundations and local authorities; £2.4m via contributions from owners in respect of schemes involving leasing properties and £6.7m invested from their own reserves.

***Overall, a Community Grants Programme which leads to a variety of social outcomes and more sustainable community organisations, accords well with the government's Localism agenda. Further funding could therefore come from the same, or another division ( eg Integration & Community Rights), within DCLG.***

**See the impact that EHCGP has had in Leeds though the combined work of three organisations: Canopy, Latch & Gipsil:**

<https://vimeo.com/119497211>

**Jon Fitzmaurice, Self-Help Housing.org**