

VOLUNTEERS
COMMUNITY
SKILLS
HOUSING
SELF-HELP
SUSTAINABIL
SUPPORT
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

**Empty Homes Community Grants
Programme Legacy Impact
IMPACT BRIEFING 1: LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS
Leeds Town Hall June 14 2016**

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EHCGP Legacy Impact Project



Documenting the achievements of the programme

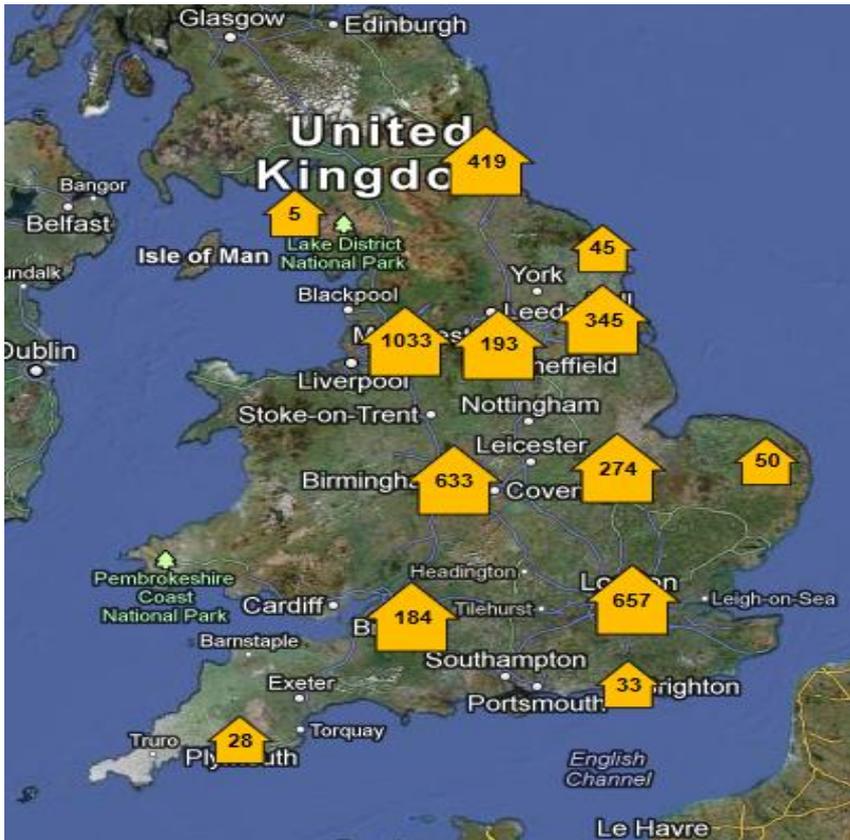
Identifying the scope for sustaining the contribution of community-led groups to empty homes work

Supporting new initiatives including:

- Financial sustainability and social investment
- Local Authority partnerships and support
 - Asset based development strategies

Empty Homes Community Grants Programme (EHCGP)

'a bold departure from large scale procurement of affordable housing...'



2011-15 Funding Programme

- £50 million capital funding
- Non-registered providers (i.e. Community-led)
- 110 successful projects – lease or buy and improve
- Over half groups not involved before the programme
- Filled in gaps in the map
- Peer support network through Self-help housing.org.

So what are the Legacy options?



- to attract **more private finance**, including **social investment** (BSC on the case)
- to **replicate successful local authority partnerships** in more areas (aligning towards devolution and local priority setting espoused by the Northern Powerhouse and related agendas) (**this briefing**)
- to support **asset based development strategies** - projects acquire and harness property assets to achieve financial strength and social impact.

Why an Impact Briefing?



- Local Partnerships were fundamental to success of EHCGP and local authorities were often the key partners (no 1 or 2 in 83% of the 52 responses to our legacy survey)
- Community groups can play a key role in local empty homes work (now recognised in Scotland too)
- But there was a lot of unevenness between areas
- Impact Briefing aims to show how other authorities can learn from the best practice

Why now?

- This is an important time for local government role in empty homes work
- Very unlikely there will be new earmarked national funding before 2020
- Fiscal Devolution and ‘Powerhouses’ are gradually changing the options
 - New Homes Bonus, RTB replacement, Local priority setting – empty homes key some areas
 - Community can be an important partner for local authority empty homes work
 - Empties into use – Social lettings agencies



What have we been doing?



- Survey of EHCGP participants 12 months on
- FOI request for Tribal survey and end of programme report
- Revisits to local organisations NE & Yorkshire
- Impact Briefings on Local Authority Support and Asset Based Development
- Support for case for grant programme in Scotland
- Engaging urban planning students in Amsterdam
- Continued partnership with University of Fukui, Japan – study visit to Hull by Japanese architect

Case Study Findings: Key Partners

Key sources for properties, funds, people, skills:

- **Local authority Empty property teams**
- **Local Authority Strategy/ Voluntary Sector Support**
- Banks and other funders
- Contractors
- Property Owners and Private Landlords
- Housing Associations
- Local colleges and Training bodies
- Self-Help.Housing.Org
- Housing Professionals

LAs played key enabling roles at different stages during EHC GP :

- ✓ Bidding phase
- ✓ Finding suitable properties
- ✓ Negotiating with owners
- ✓ Financing or funding the lease or purchase
- ✓ Refurbishment
- ✓ Finding suitable tenants
- ✓ Neighbourhood services



Some Key Roles Played by Local Authorities (2014/15 Reports)

- ✓ Help with bidding for grant
- ✓ Help with identifying and negotiating with owners
- ✓ Avoiding competition and targeting action on areas where most benefit achieved
- ✓ Co-ordinating with other investment sources

Experience of the programme in Hull

The Council's Role:

- Co-ordination of bidding and information
- Data Sharing and Memorandum of Understanding
- Sharing of approaches and challenges
- Tackling blockages



Japanese Architect visits Hull

*“This cross sector approach to project delivery proved to be very beneficial. Each party understood what the other parties needed which gave Probe Hull Ltd assurance that that the project would be delivered to time and to budget. The cross sector partnership approach worked so well, that **the organisation is now seeking additional funding in partnership with Hull City Council from the Homes and Communities Agency.**”*

Tribal: End of Programme Evaluation Report,
June 2015

Key Advantages for Local Authorities

- *Area based improvement through local community partners*
- *Tackling blight and ASB*
- *Community intelligence and motivation*
- *Additional Housing Supply through Social Lettings Agencies (SLAs)*
- *Mutual Benefit*
- *Delivering wider housing and regeneration priorities*



Area based improvement through partnership

*“Staff at Fresh Horizons held frequent meetings with the local authoritiesto allow local authorities to oversee progress. At those meetings the local authorities **helped the organisation to progress by identifying target properties or target areas and acting as an intermediary...**”*

Tribal: End of Programme
Evaluation Report June 2015



Tackling Abandonment, Blight and ASB

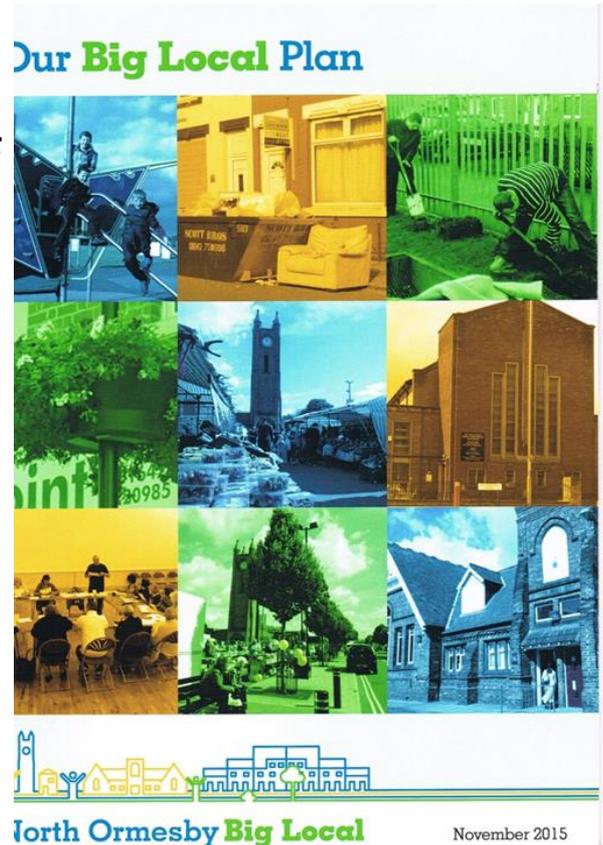


“When we started only 4 properties were occupied. When our properties are fully tenanted, 13 will be occupied and a local private landlord who owns two of the remaining properties, is accessing the Durham County Council cluster scheme. This is a substantial neighbourhood impact.”

“Without the EHCGP it is highly unlikely that this work would ever have taken place. The street would have continued to blight the community” Graeme Oram, Five Lamps Project Champion

Local Communities working with Local authorities to increase impact

- **North Ormesby Big Local** – tackling rented housing one of top five resident priorities
- Establishing a CLT
- Buying five empty properties from housing association
- **Selective Licencing Scheme for area agreed with local authority**
- **Community action reinforcing local authority** in grass roots partnership



North Ormesby VISION

Work together to make Ormesby a happy place everyone has the unity to flourish.

Created by:

- Working together to create positive change
- Giving young people a voice and helping them realise their potential
- Supporting neighbours who look out for each other
- Supporting local businesses
- Building confidence to speak up and act against poverty



RESIDENTS TOP FIVE PRIORITIES

- Tackle problems of private rented housing
- Increase feeling of safety for residents
- Cleaner and Greener Environment
- More activities for children and young people
- Strengthening our community

Community Led Organisations and Local Authorities worked together to:

- Tackle urban blight
- Provide employment opportunities
- Return empty properties back to use for marginalised and deprived sections of society
- **Social Lettings Agencies (SLAs) provide alternative to mainstream social housing.**



Methodist Action, Preston.
Property refurbished with local
builder and let through Methodist
Action's own SLA

Mutual Benefit

*“The great thing about Empty Homes...it was not only refurbishing properties and putting them back into use but also **meeting other agendas** of the councils such as youth homelessness which is huge and rising, and also creating a **stronger and better community**. So all in all it was a bit of a **win-win situation**.”*

**(Start Again Project,
Birmingham)**



*“The local authorities tied the Empty Homes Community Grants Programme projects to their **wider housing and regeneration priorities**. They assisted in sourcing tenants and provided an element of support for nominated tenants.”*

Tribal: End of Programme Evaluation Report,
June 2015

Further LA support after the Programme

- ✓ New Homes Bonus
- ✓ RTB replacement funding
- ✓ Regional growth packages
- ✓ Keeping empty homes on agenda
- ✓ Recognition for contribution of community led /self-help organisations



Devolution Deals like Northern Powerhouse could provide scope for local authorities to join up action on empty homes and support community-led groups

Legacy Impact Survey: LAs Key Partners

- Survey of 52 organisations who received EHCGP funding
- 46% organisations identified local authorities as most important partner during the programme and 53% after the programme
- 21% identified housing associations as key partners during the programme and 18 % since programme ended
- 21% identified other charities as key partners during the programme and 6% after

LAs the most important partners after EHCGP

“Liverpool City Council has been incredibly supportive since the beginning of our grant period. This has increased over the past year, with several stock transfers now underway.”

“Hull City Council, due to their continued support. We are trying to attract further funding to continue the objectives of the EHCGP.”

“Currently the only people we are working with is the local authority housing department”

Survey: Relationships with Local Authorities

- we developed the whole EP team for the LA and effectively run it on contract basis...the legacy will be with the LA as it has enabled them to build a multi functional EP team **(Rochdale Housing Initiative)**
- Rochdale Borough Council continue to support the programme and have been key in us developing new potential funding streams and diversification to meet the needs of the Authority. **(Groundwork Oldham & Rochdale)**
- Plans to participate in the Leeds City Council RTBR programme. **(Canopy)**
- Hull City Council, due to their continued support. We are trying to attract further funding to continue the objectives of the EHCGP. **(Probe Hull)**
- Local authorities around asset transfers and no-rent leases. Local housing associations have helped assist us with establishing new housing. **(YMCA Fairthorne Group)**

Growing Importance of Local Authorities after EHCGP

- Liverpool City Council has been incredibly supportive since the beginning of our grant period. This has increased over the past year, with several stock transfers now underway. **(Progressive Lifestyle Solutions N/W CIC)**
- Local residents are the force behind all we have achieved in Granby. Our first investment came from our social investor - the first and only person to back us after 30 years. The Local Authority followed and then others joined in including Housing Associations. **(Granby 4 Streets Community Land Trust)**
- We work closely with our local authority **(Coatham House)**
- We are working on several potential schemes at present with local authorities **(Five Lamps)**
- Currently the only people we are working with is the local authority housing dept **(DASH)**
- Local authorities still play a key facilitation role, and sourcing/part funding. **(Habitat for Humanity GB Homes)**

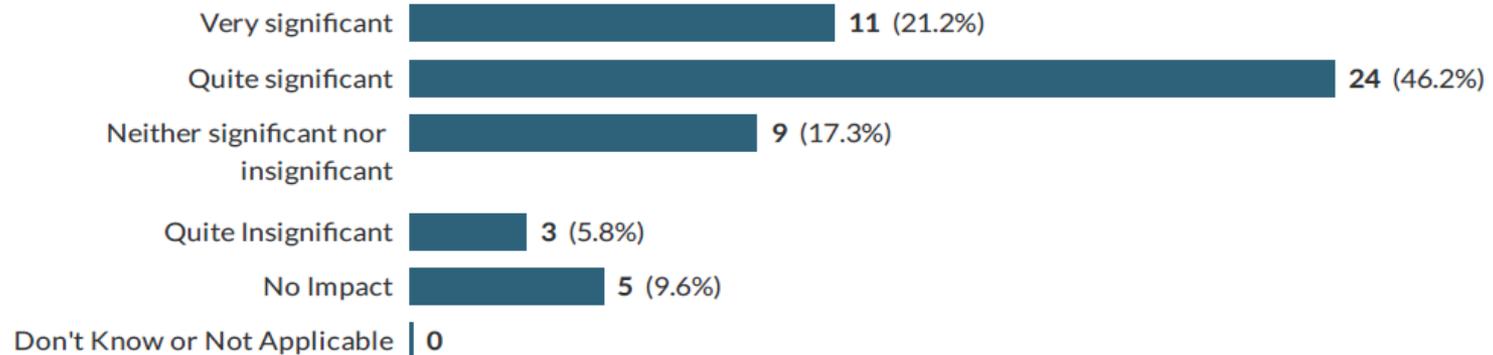
Less Positively !

- We still have most of our properties from Housing Associations, but most of our new property is coming from Developers and individuals. No new property coming from HAs and our council property dried up before that. **We are in London.**
- We were badly let down by the Housing Association which was supposed to be providing the expert support to us; which was the reason we only purchased one property. We are now linked in to Locality and gaining proper independent support from other trusts around country and Locality itself i.e. membership self-help (**community trust**)

Fewer than ten local authorities specifically named by the 52 respondents (scope to spread best practice?)

Key Impacts of EHCGP at local level

What impact has the programme had in promoting street level regeneration in your area?



67% say significant impact on street level regeneration,

59% on training and employment

44% on anti-social behaviour and crime

'As a local community trust; it opened our eyes to the huge impact investing in property can have in a deprived area: Creating quality homes for local families Significantly improving the quality of life of neighbouring residents, whose lives had been blighted by living by a vermin ridden, dangerous property. It demonstrated our commitment to the regeneration of the area (Moat House Community Trust)

Comprehensive Support in Leeds

- Thriving self-help sector
 - Canopy, Latch, Gipsil, Lilac, Hunslet Club, East Street Arts and the Empty Homes Doctor
- Work in partnership with Leeds City Council
 - Peppercorn leases extended – allow borrowing
 - £200,000 interest free loan
 - RTB receipts used to fund capital grants for repairs to empties – 20 new homes over 2 years



LATCH 25 years celebration speech “like a love letter to the council”.

Extending Peppercorn Leases



Canopy Houses Leeds: Leases at peppercorn rents extended to 99 years by City Council enabling borrowing against these assets to provide capital for further works

NEW RELATIONSHIPS



“the empty homes programme has put us in a different position...put us out there on the local radar ..and we weren't there before. It's created relationships that we never had. It's given us ways into other networks and that's been important for us. I can just pick up the phone now and things get sorted”

Project Champion, Redcar and Cleveland Mind

Asset Transfers

- Free or below market value disposal of empty properties to community-led organisations



Morrison Hall, Hartlepool NDC Trust:
asset swap for car park!!

Asset Transfers

Middlesbrough
CLT Limited
Community Land
Trust



First new homes in Gresham (Middlesbrough) since Housing Market Renewal : Made possible by £1 asset transfer by Middlesbrough Council

Future options for Asset Based Development



- Asset Transfers
- Extending leases
- Purchase from HAs disposing of street properties
- Using grants to acquire substantial assets
- Partnering with builders to bring assets back
- Partnering with LA area based strategies

Getting the Legal Terms Right

- A key discussion point at Middlesbrough impact event June 9th was the barrier to asset transfers of poor legal documentation
- Scope for a small project here to share learning and develop some model agreements to widen take up of asset transfers
- **We're working on it!**



Looking Ahead

- **Further growth of community-led action on empty homes depends on Local Authorities**
 - Asset based development
- Collaborative partnerships between community organisations and councils with mutual benefits:
 - Neighbourhood renewal
 - Employment and training outcomes
 - Decent affordable homes to rent
 - Social lettings
- **Empowering small community based organisations and sustaining their future**

THANK YOU

For more information:



Housing and Communities Research Group

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/social-policy/housing-communitie>

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Impact Briefing Launch June 14th