



Dear Nick

CPCA Housing and Communities Committee - 13 March 2023
Item 2.3 Community Housing Report

Open email to the members and substitutes of CPCA's Housing and Communities Committee

I am writing to provide you with additional information regarding the report on Community Housing and the recommendation to discontinue providing a support service to community housing groups from March 2023.

Supporting communities to deliver community-led housing has been a priority for the Combined Authority since it was set up in 2017. From the outset, CPCA had an ambition to enable local people to shape their communities and a dedicated team of advisers was put in place who did a great deal of good work in those early days resulting in a healthy pipeline of schemes which is only now bearing fruit.

However, the pandemic and reorganisation at the Combined Authority resulted in a changed delivery model with the in-house team being disbanded in 2021 and,

understandably, the number of schemes reduced. As members will know there is CPCA budget for supporting community-led housing to offer long term support to communities to engage in what is often a complex and slow process from inception to completion.

From March last year (2022), Eastern Community Homes stepped in to work with the remaining communities and, as you can see from our accompanying report, three schemes are ready to proceed and apply for the £100k grant. One of these, from Suvana Cohousing, is currently with the Combined Authority awaiting approval. We are pleased to report that there is a healthy interest from communities in pursuing community-led housing in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and our report outlines a clear plan of support to build the pipeline again and deliver the ambition for more community-led homes.

The recommendation being made through the Committee paper is to cease support for community-led housing. This will have a detrimental impact on existing community groups and any future work. The government is currently reviewing planning policy and is likely to increase support for community-led housing in the NPPF. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are in a strong position to build on this policy change, if they have a strong pipeline of schemes wanting to be at the forefront of delivering housing for their own communities. The proposal from ECH included in Appendix 1 to the Committee paper would ensure you have the capacity to deliver and grow community-led housing in the future.

More specifically if the recommendation in the report is passed:

1. The three existing groups will no longer be able to proceed as there is no alternative form of funding.
2. The ongoing work with the other groups that are in their early stage will not be supported as there will be no dedicated adviser to work with them.
3. The pipeline of groups will dwindle and groups looking for support will have to compete nationally for very limited help.

Now is the time, we believe, to increase CPCA support for community-led housing rather than reduce it. The new schemes that have recently come on stream, like Great Staughton in Huntingdonshire, are an inspiration to us all and show us what can be achieved with support from community-led housing advisers. We would like to continue giving this support to communities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and hope you do too.

Eastern Community Homes would be very happy to answer any of your questions or provide you with any additional information to assist you with making your decision on 13 March.

With best wishes

Nick Shuttleworth

Chairman

Eastern Community Homes



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