

Draft Kent & Medway Housing Strategy Consultation
Consultation response from the Tenterden Community Land Trust Steering Group

1. We are a group of residents concerned at the lack of affordable housing in Tenterden for local inhabitants and key workers. We are tackling this issue by drawing on our professional backgrounds in the legal, housing and planning professions by forming a Steering Group with a view to shortly incorporating as a Community Land Trust. As such we were interested to learn of this consultation on the Draft Kent and Medway Housing Strategy (“the Strategy”).
2. The approach adopted in the Strategy is said to be “bottom up.” The key message in this response is that to reflect that approach, the Strategy should give greater emphasis to community-led housing initiatives, and Community Land Trusts in particular, and attach weight to achieving their success.
3. To do so would be in the spirit of both the Housing White paper of 2017 and “A New Deal for Social Housing” Green Paper of 2018.
4. A passing reference is made to Community Housing in Theme 1 “Accelerating Housing Delivery.” Any reference is to be applauded but the Strategy should make so much more of it. Community-led Housing has a lot to offer. By working in partnership with community groups local authorities unlock enthusiasm, expertise and funds which are essential to increase the supply of homes, maintain that supply into the future and diversify tenure. Community Land Trusts are a growing movement. If you are unfamiliar with the concept, please look at the website of the National Community Trust Network at communitylandtrusts.org.uk. The freedom from right to buy and the inability of purchasers of shared equity to staircase out ensures a long-term housing supply rooted in the community served by a Community Land Trust.
5. The reference in the Strategy also places Community Housing in a rural context. To be sure, that is important and we do suggest you liaise with Action with Communities in Rural Kent for case studies. We suggest a possible one below. But Community Housing also has a wider application. Whilst Tenterden has a rural context as a market town, its size ensures it cannot benefit from rural exception site planning policies. Its level of prosperity means deprivation is hidden, although what is clear is that even those from professional backgrounds, let alone those in lower paid jobs, find both renting and purchasing beyond their means.
6. It should be noted that the concept is applicable in urban areas. The work of London CLT shows what can be done in tackling affordability by linking sale prices to area median income rather than the market. Granby Four Streets in Liverpool will not only regenerate housing but the whole community. In urban areas the concept is just as relevant given the levels of deprivation which exist in parts of our county.
7. Professional help from local authorities can establish such bodies and through service level agreements they can assist in areas such as property management where technical expertise can be most usefully employed alongside local commitment.
8. A case study you might wish to consider is Shepherdswell in Dover District. A small scale CLT, it shows what can be done by a local community with the right support and with professional management of the stock. It is early days for this CLT and Action with Communities in Rural Kent may be able to suggest other examples for your case studies.
9. Please broaden the Strategy as we suggest and make it truly “bottom up.”

Mark Ellender

Chair, Tenterden CLT Steering Group