



State of the Community Land Trust Sector 2023

communitylandtrusts.org.uk

Executive Summary

Across England and Wales there are people who want to see more homes built, green spaces better managed, derelict buildings converted into new workspace.

People who recognise that 4 in 10 people are struggling to meet their housing costs, that poorly insulated homes cost us £6 billion a year in wasted energy, and that left behind areas are only getting a third of their fair share of charitable funding.

People who are willing to volunteer their time and energy, over a period of years, to do something about this. To make their communities more sustainable.

The Community Land Trust movement has grown rapidly in the last decade as the numbers overleaf show. Their impact is felt not only in the increased access for affordable homes, but also in reduced greenhouse gas emissions, greater social cohesion and better health.

CLTs are not doing this alone. They are working in partnership with councils, developers, housing associations and landowners.

With CLTs, communities become clients for architects, not consultees; partners to developers, not opponents; campaigners with, rather than against, councils.

This report is an invitation to industry and government - to join with us. To partner with CLTs on projects. But also to help us to find new ways to make partnership a success. To write, with us, a pattern book of partnership. To develop products that can be replicated at scale up and down the country.

Working together, in partnership, communities, industry and government have the power to do amazing things.

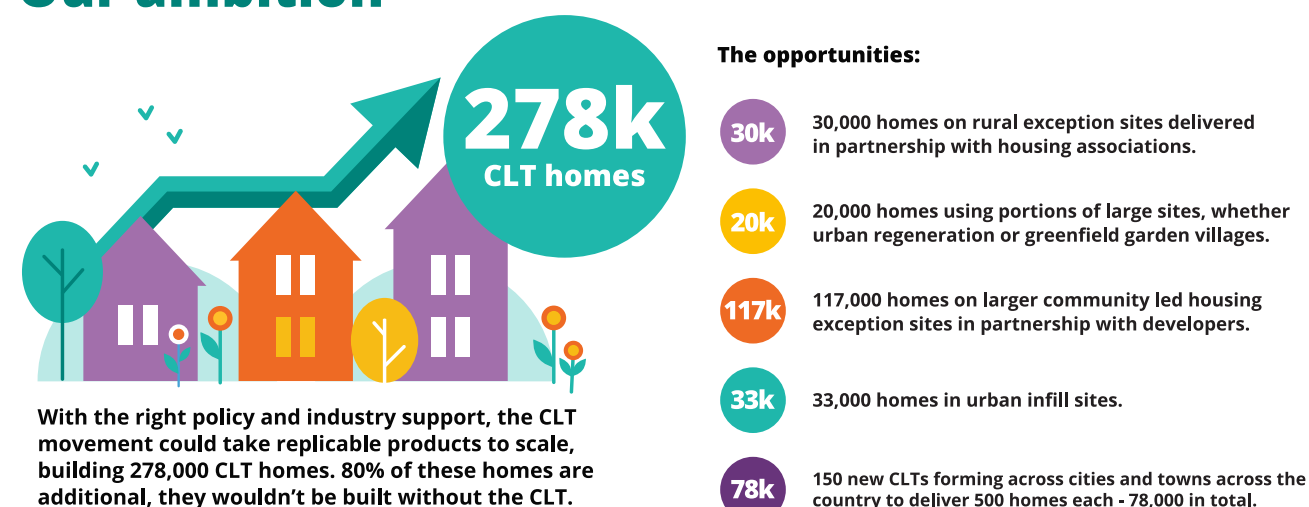
Current



Critical to success



Our ambition



Introduction

Community land trusts, or CLTs, are democratic, non profit organisations that own and develop land for the benefit of the community.

What is a CLT?

The legal definition of a CLT enshrines three key principles:

Community

Their focus is a defined geographic community, anybody who lives or works in the area can join as a member, and the CLT is governed democratically by its members.

Land

They exist to steward and develop land and assets, such as affordable homes, community gardens, civic buildings, pubs, shops, shared workspace, energy schemes and conservation landscapes.

Trust

They hold these assets in trust for the local community, ensuring that homes stay affordable, shops meet local needs and habitats are well managed in perpetuity.

CLTs develop a range of assets on their land for community benefit.

The most common focus is affordable housing, often in mixed-use schemes. CLTs also own workspace, parks and gardens, community centres, pubs and shops. Some are established purely for purposes like buying farmland and managing it for biodiversity and climate resilience. Some run community services like food banks, or use their surpluses to fund local groups.



Market Context

Why do CLTs exist?

Across England and Wales there are people who want to see more homes built, green spaces better managed, derelict buildings converted into new workspace.

People who recognise that 4 in 10 people are struggling to meet their housing costs¹, that poorly insulated homes cost us £6 billion a year in wasted energy², and that left behind areas are not being invested in, attracting only a third of their fair share of charitable funding³ and similar shortfalls of public and private investment.

People who are willing to volunteer their time and energy, over a period of years, to make their communities more sustainable.

People like Andy, desperate at the lack of housing options for young people growing up in Dartmoor, echoed in rural tourist hotspots across England and Wales.

People like Kitt in East Cambridgeshire, living with family and friends because her work as a technician at a vet's won't pay the rent or mortgage on a home of her own where she grew up and her family still live.

They recognise the problems their communities face - severe housing affordability pressures, too few job and training opportunities for young people, the unfolding climate crisis.

They are willing to do something when they read that more than 271,000 people are homeless in England; that 4 in 10 people are struggling to meet their housing costs or falling behind on payments⁴; and that high prices coupled with rising interest rates are pushing more than one million homeowners into poverty⁵.

They also know that terms like 'housing crisis' miss the very varied local markets across the country.

Most CLTs form in two sorts of places:

Deprived areas

There are a disproportionate number of CLTs in deprived communities in places like Liverpool, Tower Hamlets and Jaywick Sands. While housing can still be unaffordable in many of these places, people in these places also struggle with derelict buildings, absentee landlords who don't look after their homes, and a lack of job and training opportunities. **CLTs give communities a tool to restore pride in their local place.**

Expensive areas

There are also high numbers of CLTs in the most unaffordable parts of each region, including tourist hotspots in the South West and Cumbria, commuter villages in Cambridgeshire and expensive cities like London and Bristol. CLTs give communities a tool to develop their place without displacement.

Market Opportunity

Scope for growth

Housebuilding is worth £47bn per year, representing 40% of all construction activity in the UK⁶. So it is a significant opportunity for communities to exercise agency and build local wealth. While the number of CLTs has risen rapidly in the last decade, they are only just beginning to show their true potential.

The Community Land Trust Network - our staff and members - are starting to identify, develop and roll out replicable, scalable and investable propositions using the CLT model.

In the last decade, half a thousand flowers - over 500 nascent CLTS - have bloomed. In amongst this diversity we have begun to **identify a pattern book** of proven solutions to recurring problems, such as how to incorporate a CLT, access land, obtain planning permission and raise development finance.

Drawing on this pattern book, our network can see **replicable products** emerging, which bundle together a package of patterns into a form of CLT project that can be replicated again and again in certain market contexts. And we have begun to develop **enabling services** that can support communities, landowners and developers to roll these products out at scale.

This report focuses on five replicable housing products. Using the numbers of different types of settlement from the ONS⁷, and estimates of the potential scale of each type **we estimate that there is a market opportunity to develop at least 278,000 community led homes** through scaling out these products. If built, this would increase the notional value of the assets of CLTs **from £550 million to £47 billion**.

How we can build 278,000 homes

| Product | Where | Opportunity |
|---|---|--|
| CLT housing association partnerships | Rural exception sites in one third of the 6,116 villages and small communities | 15 homes each = 30,000 homes |
| CLT developer partnerships | Larger community led exception sites in 944 small and medium towns, and 10% of the 6,116 villages and small communities | 75 homes each = 117,000 homes |
| CLTs owning portions of large sites, whether urban regeneration or greenfield garden villages | CLTs owning some of the 393,000 planned homes in 107 sites with more than 1,500 homes each ⁸ | 5% of these as CLH = 20,000 homes |
| CLT-led suburban infill with local MMC factories | Low density inter-war council estates with 1.1 million existing homes | 3% intensification = 33,000 homes⁹ |
| CLTs developing multiple projects of their own | One CLT in each of the 155 cities and large towns | 500 homes each = 78,000 homes |

Impact Thesis

We believe that if communities can play an active role, as landowners with agency, then they can develop assets that benefit local people, places and the planet.

| If (inputs) | Then (outputs) | Meaning (outcomes) |
|---|---|---|
| Communities shape or control asset development | Greater priority is given to affordability | Better access to genuinely affordable housing |
| Communities own and steward the land and other assets | Greater priority is given to environmental consideration and sustainable lifestyles | Less greenhouse gas emissions, resource extraction, impact on local ecology |
| Communities have the capacity and expertise to be active agents | Local people become active agents in local change and in community activity | More social cohesion and reduced loneliness |
| | More emphasis is given to local views and insights | Opposition to new development is reduced |

With CLTs, communities become clients for architects, not consultees; partners to developers, not opponents; campaigners with, rather than against, councils.

Independent academic evidence suggests that housebuilding is no slower when communities are involved in this way¹⁰. But CLTs are far from reaching the market opportunity we have identified.

Communities, landowners, developers and councils aren't aware of the CLT option. There are too-few replicable patterns and products, and skilled enabling services to scale them. Communities lack the skills and knowledge to set up and manage an effective CLT. There is often a lack of affordable finance at key project stages, particularly when securing a site and at planning consent.

Public policy, at the local and national levels, doesn't recognise or support CLTs as well as it might.

So the Community Land Trust Network exists to create the conditions in which the CLT movement can realise its full market potential.

Our mission is to make community ownership of land and affordable housing commonplace.

Our mission is to make community ownership of land and affordable housing commonplace.

How

We can see a growing number of projects adopting replicable products, based on a pattern book of solutions to recurring problems.



Every CLT project is, in a sense, unique and bespoke to its place. But we can see a growing number of projects adopting replicable products, based on a pattern book of solutions to recurring problems.

We have identified five housing products developed by CLTs in the market opportunity for growth. Together these could, if taken to scale, see 278,000 homes built or renovated, coming into community ownership.

The following section describes how four of these housing products actually work. We have not included the fifth product - CLT-led suburban infill with local MMC factories - as it is less well developed at the time of writing.

CLTs don't only develop homes, but they are often there in the mix.

Calder Valley CLT has a broad range of projects: they have built six completed bungalows for independent later life living; are buying and refurbishing empty flats and cottages; have bought, refurbished and now steward a Victorian community hall, and have refurbished two connected affordable homes; are buying a disused signal box and will turn it into a heritage centre; are planning to build a new enterprise centre, part-funded by the Todmorden Town Fund bid.

These projects are a mixture of their own direct development, and partnerships with local housing associations, almshouses, community associations and town and borough councils.



There is a market opportunity to develop at least 278,000 community led homes.

Solo product: CLT developing multiple projects

A significant minority of CLTs choose to develop multiple projects and to aim for rapid growth. Often they develop the new homes and other assets themselves. They can develop the internal capacity, project teams, relationships with funders and lenders, and relationships with local authorities, to grow their stock in a sustainable way.

Some develop themselves but also partner with housing associations and developers. For example, London CLT has completed 34 homes in total, 23 of which were a developer partnership, and has a mixed portfolio of 145 in development. Other examples include: Cornwall CLT (260 homes completed and 285 in development) and Keswick CLT (40 homes completed and one new project in its early stages).

Roles explained

The following table (right) describes the role of the CLT, a regional enabler service and the Community Land Trust Network in this product.

Together, we ensure that the CLT has the capacity and expertise to be active agents, and can buy, steward and develop land and other assets. Through this CLT, the local community can shape or control development in their area.

CLT

- Establishes as a steering group, and then an incorporated CLT
- Recruits and builds up a diverse and inclusive board and membership, and builds the capacity and skills among volunteers and staff to undertake projects
- Builds strong relationships with local authorities and undertakes local advocacy work to make the case for their CLT and new projects
- Registers with the Regulator for Social Housing if acting as landlord (optional)
- Finds, and buys, land and buildings to develop. Takes freehold, or long lease, of land to steward for community benefit
- Undertakes housing needs surveys if needed, and community engagement. Takes the project through the full RIBA Plan of Work, with ongoing and deep community involvement
- Raises funds through a mixture of local donations, community shares, social investment, charitable and government grants and bank lending

CLT Network

- Incorporation service to establish the CLT, and legal support from Wrigleys and Anthony Collins.
- Healthcheck, handbooks, resources, webinars and training to support good governance and management.

Enabler service

- Helps CLT identify local housing needs, find and secure a site, and undertake early feasibility and planning work.
- Facilitates partnership agreement between CLT and housing association or developer where applicable, ensuring the CLT is an informed and professional partner.
- Supports the CLT to act as developer, where applicable, providing - or sourcing - a full development management support package.

Partnership Products:

CLT - housing association

With this product, CLTs and housing associations partner to develop small numbers of affordable homes on rural exception sites. **43 schemes** of this type have completed so far delivering a total of **666 homes** with an **average scheme size of 15**; **80 more** are in the works, delivering a pipeline of **1,172 homes**. These kinds of projects represent **55%** of all completed schemes.

It has proven popular in touristic and remote rural areas where housing associations lack the resources to bring projects forward, and communities don't want to take full and sole responsibility for the development and management of the homes.

At least half of all rural CLT-housing association partnership schemes are navigating specific planning designations, being as they are located in Areas of Natural Beauty, National Parks or on Green Belts.

- CLTs provide the local knowledge, win the local community around, and steward the development for community benefit in perpetuity.
- The housing association brings its technical expertise in housing development and management, and its access to development finance and Homes England capital grants.

Roles explained

| CLT |
|---|
| Finds site and negotiates with landowner |
| Leads on housing needs survey and community engagement |
| Co-produces project designs, tenure choices, allocations policy, other assets/amenities |
| Takes ownership of freehold of land and stewards for community benefit |
| CLT Network |
| Incorporation service to establish the CLT, and legal support from Wrigleys and Anthony Collins |
| Healthcheck, handbooks, resources, webinars and training to support good governance and management |
| Housing Association |
| Co-finances pre-development work to obtain planning consent |
| Finances and builds homes, transfers land to the CLT |
| Manages homes with 125 year lease from the CLT |
| Enabler service |
| Helps CLT identify local housing needs, find and secure a site, and undertake early feasibility and planning work |
| Facilitates partnership agreement between CLT and housing association, ensuring the CLT is an informed and professional partner |

Spotlight on...



Appledore CLT

Key features: Additional supply benefits of community led housing; area with high levels of second and holiday homes.

Appledore CLT in Torridge District Council, North Devon, was incorporated in 2009 in response to locals being squeezed out by second and holiday homes, which was around 40% of the housing stock.

With very few opportunities for new housing of any kind, the CLT bought a vertiginous piece of land outside the settlement boundary. Despite having spectacular views across the confluence of the Rivers Torridge and Taw, the land had been of no interest to commercial developers because of the unprepossessing approach through an ex-local authority estate.

The CLT partnered with Aster Housing group to deliver the project. The project has not been without its challenges though, mainly due to the very high cost of development on the side of a hill but also because of the negotiation of access rights.

A first attempt to develop had to be aborted due to lack of sufficient capital grant to fund the nine affordable rented homes (six two-bedroom homes, two one bedroom and one three bedroom).

A second attempt subsequently succeeded due to a combination of a Community Housing Fund grant from Torridge District Council, Affordable Homes Programme grant from Homes England, recycled grant from Aster Group, and Aster Housing Group's private borrowing.

Completed in 2019, the project benefits from beautiful views and is an excellent example of how community led housing is providing additional supply that wouldn't otherwise be made available.

Spotlight on...

Stretham and Wilburton CLT



Key features: strength of relationship with the developer and local authority; scale of delivery of both affordable and market housing in rural context.

The two villages of Stretham and Wilburton in East Cambridgeshire joined forces in 2011 to start a new CLT, formally incorporating it in October 2012. They wanted to give the people who live or work in the villages more say over how to develop locally and in ways that could benefit the whole community. They were concerned about the lack of housebuilding in the area, particularly of affordable homes that would enable local people to live closer to their work, schools, shops, clubs, friends and families. Local average house prices are more than 12 times the median local income.

The CLT partnered with local SME Laragh Homes for their first project. Laragh's CEO had already been speaking to a college that owned a farm on the edge of Stretham, and together they persuaded the landowner that a CLT-developer partnership would be the way to go.

Unable to sell the land with planning permission to a mainstream developer and aware that the Council was prepared to make exceptions for mixed developments put forward by local communities, the landowner struck a deal with the CLT and developer which delivered an increased land value from the change of use to housing. Cross-subsidy for the affordable homes came through the sale of market housing on the site.

Two years of intensive community engagement followed. The CLT got planning permission in 2014 for 75 homes with a new village green, GP surgery and workspace. Construction began in June 2015, with the development built out in phases. Funding for the GP surgery has only just been secured in 2023, enabling a fourth and final phase to begin.

The CLT and Laragh homes later embarked on a second, larger project in Wilburton. A planning application is awaiting a decision at the time of writing.

Partnership Products:

CLT - private developer

With this product, CLTs and private developers partner to build larger numbers of homes on the edges of villages and small towns, often providing a significant number of open market sale as well as affordable homes, and other amenities such as new village greens and GPs.

There are currently 30 projects known to be using this model. Of projects completed to date, 21% are developer partnerships. It has worked particularly well in East Cambridgeshire, where the District Council introduced the concept of 'community led exception sites'.

These are described in a Local Plan policy with an accompanying Supplementary Planning Document. They permit CLTs to develop affordable homes on unallocated sites within, or on the edge of, settlements. Market housing is allowed, up to a level required to cross-subsidise the affordable homes and other amenities. The policy creates a land value that is higher than a rural exception site, but lower than an allocated site, and the market sales can fully cross-subsidise the affordable homes without need for capital grant. The policy has provided a strong incentive for landowners and developers to adopt this CLT product.

CLTs provide the local knowledge, win the local community around, and steward the development for community benefit in perpetuity. The CLT may manage the affordable homes itself, or partner with a housing association as above, as is the case with 7 of the currently planned schemes. The developer brings its technical expertise in housing development, and its access to development finance.

Roles explained

CLT

May find the site, or agree to take on an allocation in a developer's land-led project

Leads housing needs survey & community engagement

Co-produces project designs, tenure choices, allocations policy, other assets/amenities

Takes ownership of freehold of affordable homes and amenities and stewards for community benefit

CLT Network

Incorporation service to establish the CLT, and legal support from Wrigleys and Anthony Collins

Healthcheck, handbooks, resources, webinars, training to support good governance & management

Private developer

Co-finances pre-development work to obtain planning consent

Finances and builds homes

Sells land and homes to the CLT for £1 (cross-subsidised by market) or for the capitalised rental value of the homes, lending from banks like our partners Ecology Building Society and Triodos.

Enabler service

Helps CLT identify housing needs, find and secure site, undertake early feasibility and planning work

Facilitates partnership agreement between CLT and housing association, ensuring the CLT is an informed and professional partner

Partnership Products:

CLT allocation in a major developer-led site

With this product, CLTs are allocated a portion of homes as part of a major site being built out by a master developer. In some cases the CLT also becomes the management company for the whole development upon completion, stewarding the homes and amenities for community benefit. Landowners and developers can either sell the plots of land to the CLT to develop itself, or develop the homes in partnership with the CLT and sell them turnkey upon completion.

CLTs provide the local knowledge, win the local community around, and steward the development for community benefit in perpetuity. The CLT may manage the affordable homes itself, or partner with a housing association as above. The developer - if not just selling the plots for CLT-led development - brings its technical expertise in housing development, and its access to development finance.

Examples include St Clement's in Tower Hamlets (London CLT with GLA as landowner and Galliford Try as developer), Kennett Garden Village in East Cambridgeshire (Kennett CLT with Bellway Homes as developer and a local private landowner) and Bayswater in South Oxfordshire (new CLT to be established, with Christ Church College as landowner and developer to be confirmed).



Roles explained

| CLT |
|--|
| Leads on housing needs survey and community engagement for only its plots or for the whole site. |
| Optionally co-produces project designs, tenure choices, allocations policy, other assets/amenities. |
| Optionally sits on development partnership overseeing the phased build-out of the project. |
| Takes ownership of freehold of affordable homes and other amenities and stewards for community benefit. |
| CLT Network |
| Incorporation service to establish the CLT, and legal support from Wrigleys and Anthony Collins. |
| Healthcheck, handbooks, resources, webinars, training to support good governance & management. |
| Landowner/private developer |
| Identifies and secures site, leads on planning application and community consultation. |
| Finances and builds homes and other amenities. |
| Sells land and homes to the CLT for £1 (cross-subsidised by market) or for the capitalised rental value of the homes, lending from banks like our partners Ecology Building Society and Triodos. |
| Optionally transfers other assets like green spaces and community centres to the CLT with endowment from the land value to support maintenance in addition to estate/service charges. |
| Enabler service |
| Helps CLT identify local housing needs, and to establish itself as a landlord or find a partner housing association. |
| Facilitates partnership agreement between CLT and developer and other partners, ensuring the CLT is an informed and professional partner. |

“Just days after moving in, a resident dropped their debit card outside St Clement’s and a neighbour retuned it to them within hours because they already knew who they were.

Such interactions can restore faith in humanity and hope in the ability of a community to care for you.”

London CLT staff member

What

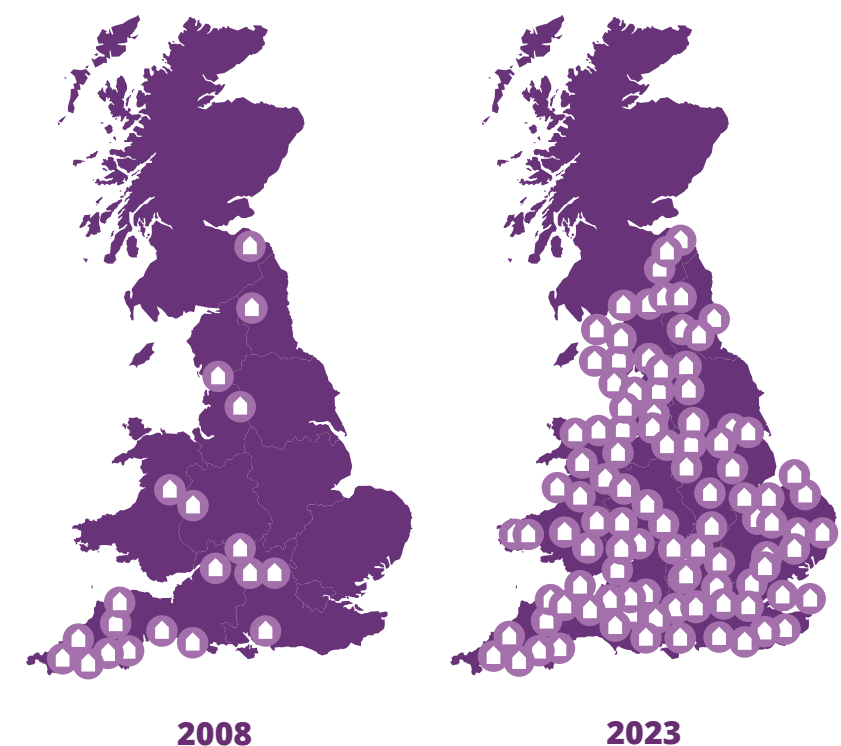
In 2023, there are 350 active CLTs, with another 209 communities exploring or forming one.

350
active CLTs

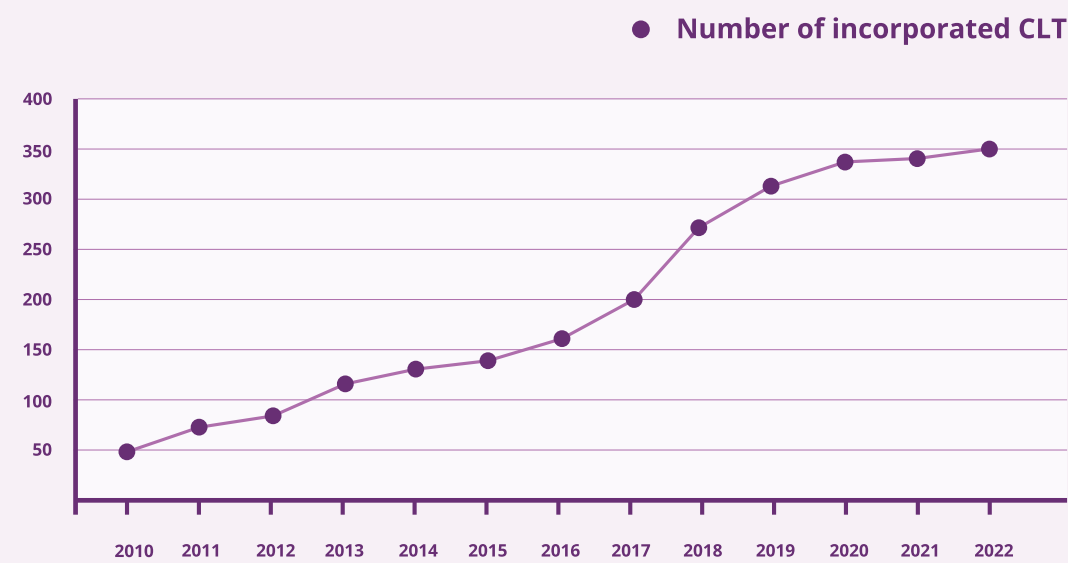


Increase in number of CLT initiatives

Between 1983 (when England's first CLT was formed) and 2008, 79 CLT homes were completed by 20 active CLTs. In 2023, there are 350 active CLTs, with another 209 communities exploring or forming one.

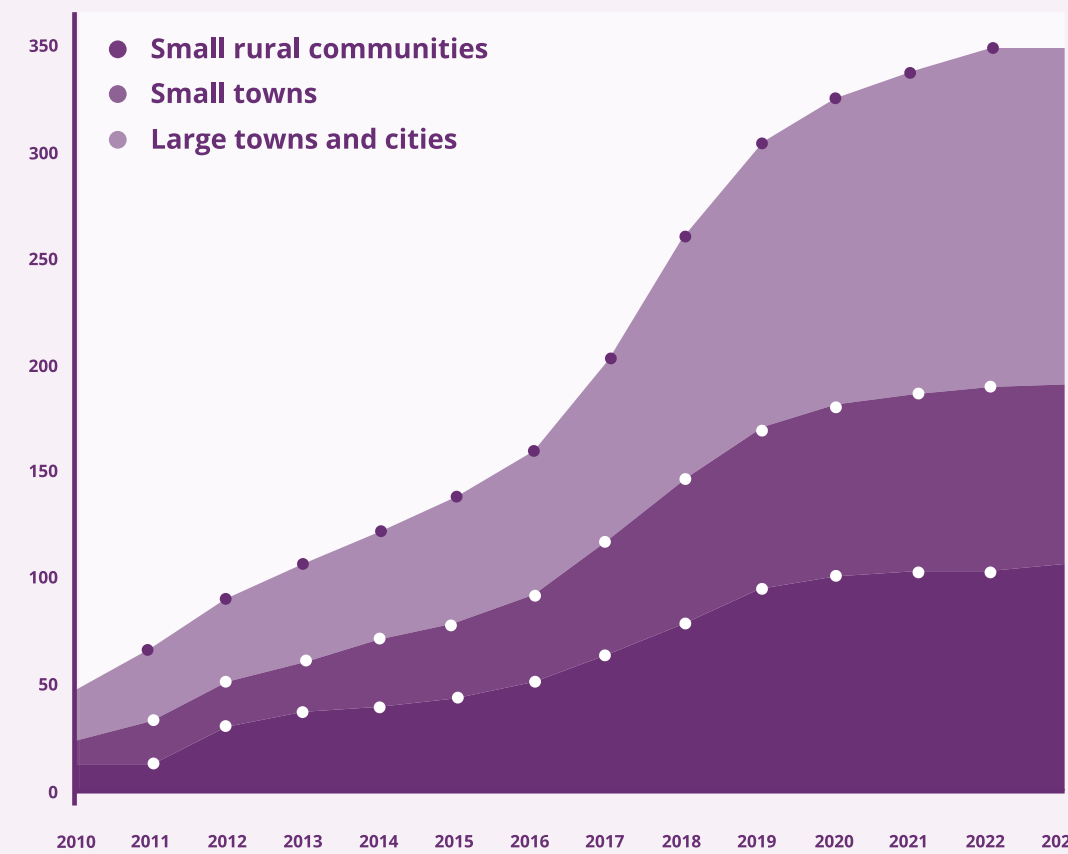


Number of CLT initiatives



Diverse locations

Of the 350 CLTs that are incorporated, 106 are in small rural communities, 85 in small towns, 159 in large towns and cities.

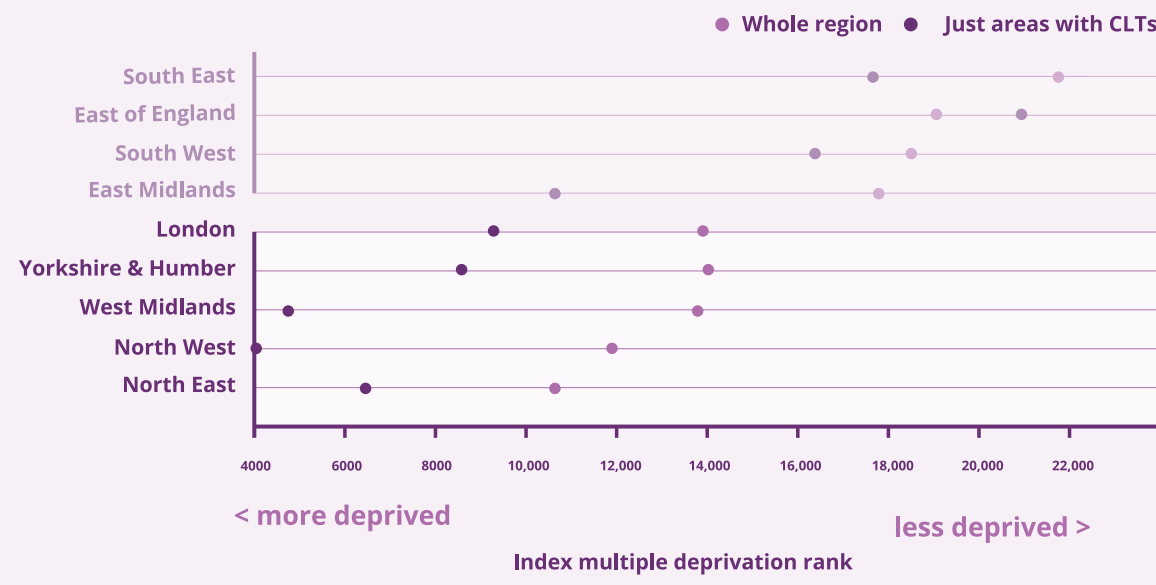


CLTs typically form in two types of place:

One is in the least affordable parts of the least affordable regions:



The other is in the most deprived areas of the most deprived regions:



In 2021 we produced an analysis for Local Trust (unpublished) showing that there is also a disproportionate amount of Community Led Housing activity in left behind areas, i.e. more than you would expect if the activity were evenly spread across England. This includes a significant number of CLTs in places like South Bank (ranked the 160th most deprived community out of 32,844 in England) and Jaywick Sands (ranked 1st). We also found 276 Community Led Housing projects active within 2.5 miles of the 206 left behind areas across England identified by Local Trust, together owning, building or planning 20,600 homes. Many of these organisations could extend into those neighbouring left behind areas, or catalyse new community activity.

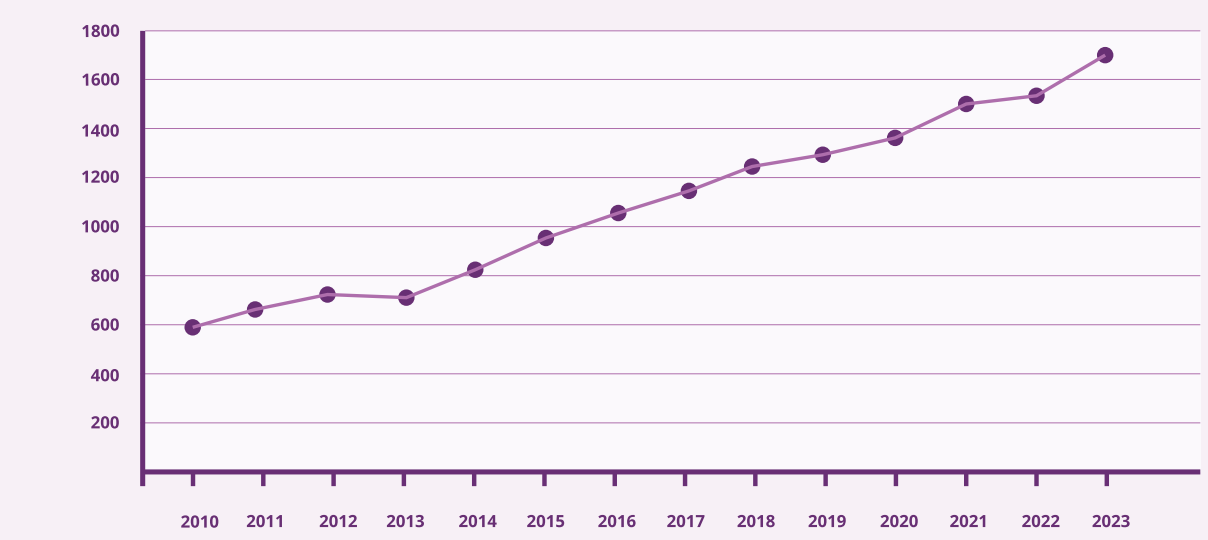
If all the CLT homes currently in the pipeline were built, the stock value would rise to £2 billion, creating £1.2 billion of social value.

A global movement

The UK is now home to more CLTs than any other country in the world. Together with the 118 CLTs in Scotland¹², we can count 468 British CLTs. We have overtaken the 225 CLTs in the United States, where the CLT model originated. We are also a leading member of a new European network bringing together our members with at least another 8 CLTs in Ireland, France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. They are part of a wider network of similar organisations exploring the CLT model, using UK examples to build off.

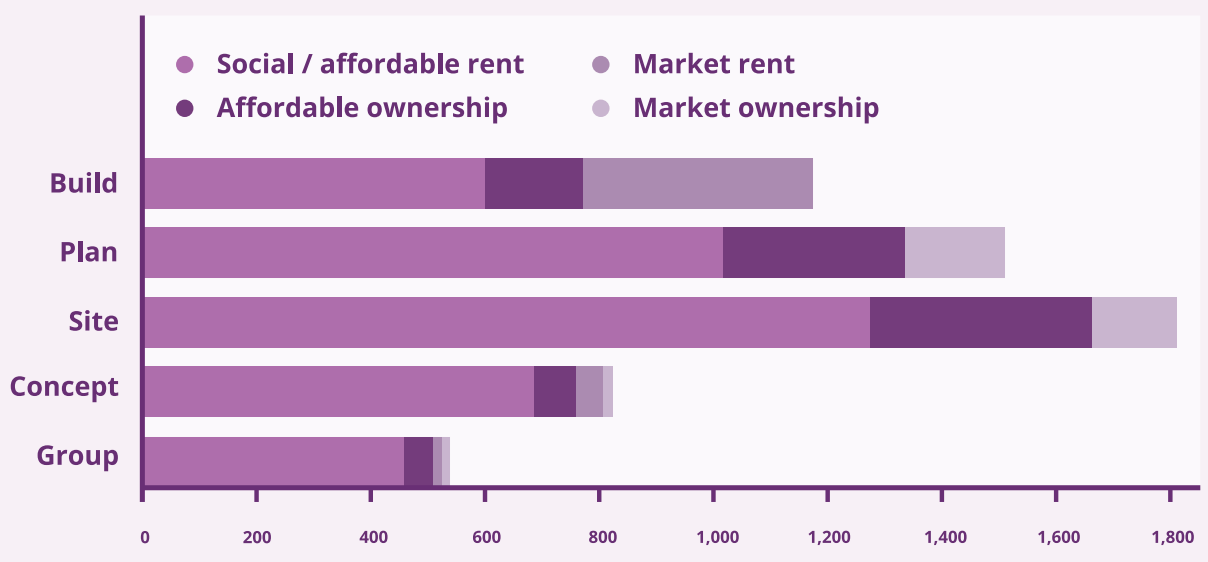
Increase in assets that meet local needs

The most common type of asset CLTs own are affordable homes - they now own 1,711.



The notional market value of all these homes is £550 million¹³. The social value, accounting for access to affordable and quality housing, the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and ecological impact, better social cohesion and reduced loneliness, and local economic benefits from jobs and local spend, stands at £220 million¹⁴.

There are 5,413 more homes in the pipeline. The following chart shows the breakdown by stage (group just forming, early concept work, seeking a site, working towards a planning application or on site and building) and the tenure of the homes. The majority of homes coming through are for social or affordable rent, reflecting the needs identified by CLTs in their communities.

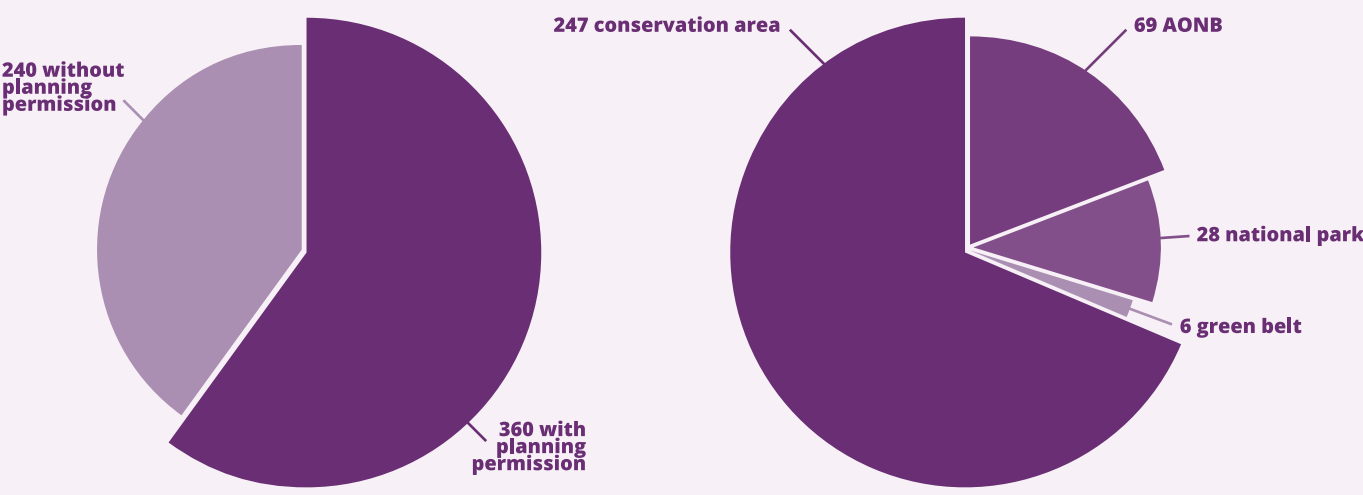


Able to build in sensitive areas

Six in ten CLT projects are in an area with some kind of protection in the planning system.

The most common protection is the conservation area, affecting 247 projects. But there are also 69 projects in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 38 in National Parks and 6 in the Green Belt. Some projects can tick two or more of these boxes.

CLTs have proven themselves adept at choosing the right sites, designing sensitive schemes, and winning local community support in places where developers and housing associations can otherwise struggle.



Community-led development, more than homes

In its evaluation of Power to Change's Homes in Community Hands programme, the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University found that the 44 funded organisations (not all CLTs) were also investing in high streets, green spaces, agricultural provision, renewable energy infrastructure, commercial space, community centres and other much-needed amenities.

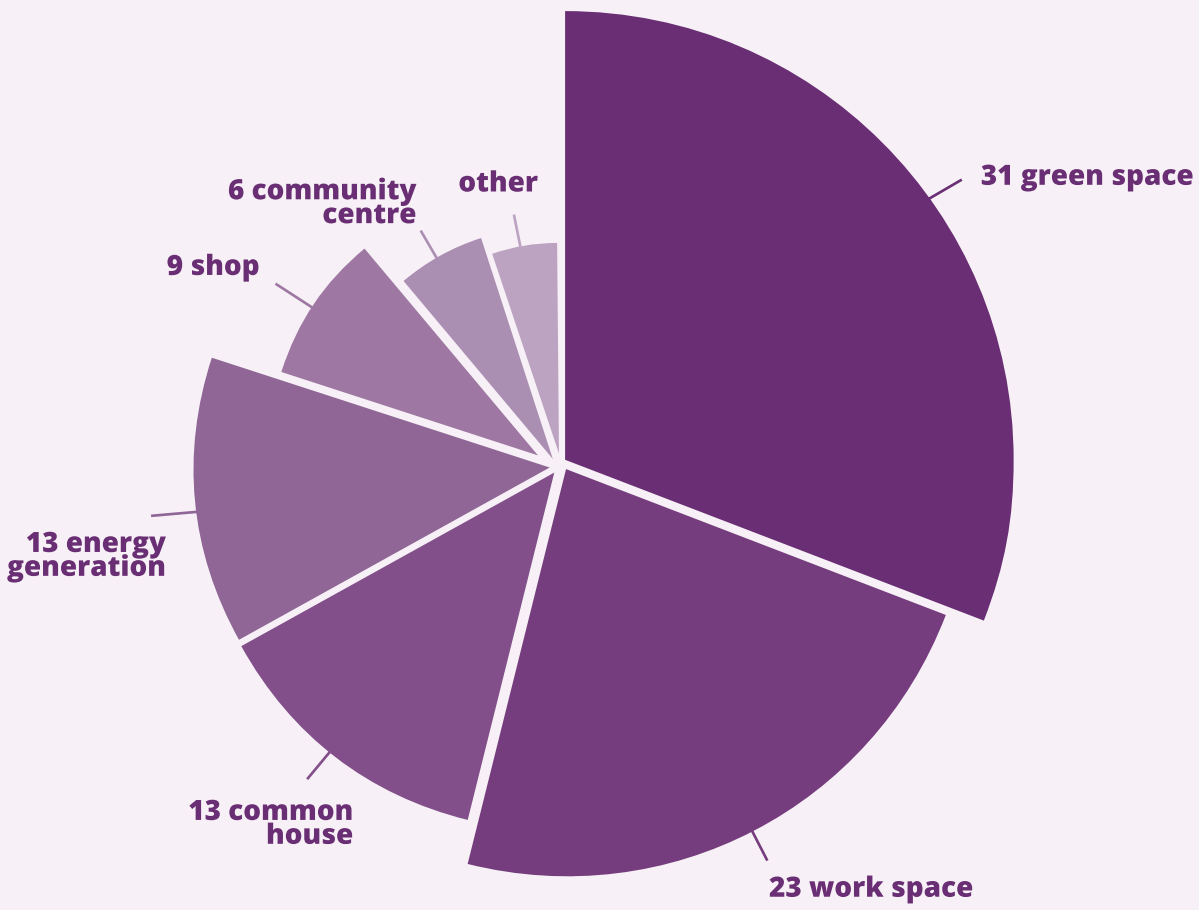
In total, over a third of the development budget for projects in the programme was allocated to non-residential assets.

Many of these 44 organisations were CLTs like Homebaked CLT in Liverpool (which hosts a bakery and is developing new retail and workspace), New Ferry CLT in Wirral (which converted a disused bank building into new retail space and affordable flats), and South Bank CLT (which opened a food bank alongside buying and refurbishing poor quality private rented homes)¹⁵.

In another survey undertaken by Capital Economics, 60% of community led housing organisations reported providing or intending to provide non-housing amenities to their local community. These included parks and green spaces, renewable energy infrastructure, community centres, work space, sports facilities, shops, pubs, post offices, libraries and other assets¹⁶.

More than housing - a breakdown

Our records show 13% of CLT housing projects are planning on delivering more than housing. In a recent survey of 103 of our members this rises to 42%, with the most popular assets planned being some form of green space, be it farmland, nature reserve or park, and workspaces.



Increased awareness and engagement with CLTs

As the number of CLTs and their projects has grown, so too has support from key stakeholders.

Widespread Local Authority support

Our research, using freedom of information requests sent in November 2021, found that half of councils in England and Wales are actively supporting community led development by CLTs and other bodies, with a slight rise in the number giving high levels of support compared to the previous survey in 2019.

One in three councils has adopted policies specifically to support community led development, and two in three have provided grants or loans for housing projects¹⁷.

Increasing housing association and developer support

We have recorded 39 partners, HAs and developers, and growing. Of these, we can count 123 CLT projects adopting the partnership product with housing associations.

We also count 30 projects being delivered with developers. These are pioneers of a new product, seen in examples like Stretham & Wilburton CLT (with Laragh Homes), Newton & Noss CLT (with Pillar Land Securities), Kennett CLT (with Bellway Homes) and London CLT (with Galliford Try, now part of Vistry Partnerships).

The value these partners bring is well understood by many CLTs. The data for the sources of land is very patchy, but we have recorded 77 different private landowners selling or transferring land to CLTs.

“There’s a benefit of delivering a relatively small number of homes in terms of the positive publicity it generates for the organisation. The brand awareness helps develop our working relationships with local authorities, Homes England and others. There’s the feel-good factor of working with CLTs too.

Our board and executive team really believe in CLTs and staff from other areas of the business really love working on these projects and see the benefits as well. It’s a win-win for both sides.”

Housing association development manager

“We got on really well and worked very much in partnership to find the right solution to put together a deal that worked for everyone.”

SME developer

Why

“It utterly transformed our life... we have our own home, which is big enough, in the place that we set down roots twenty years ago.”

London CLT resident



As our impact thesis states, we believe that if communities can play an active role, as landowners with agency, then they can develop more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable homes and other assets. There is a growing body of evidence to support this thesis.

But it's more than the bricks and mortar (or perhaps wood panels...). The impact CLTs and their developments and activities are having a ripple effect far and wide. Lives really are transformed and communities are strengthened.

A study we commissioned from Capital Economics in 2020 assessed the value for money of community led housing including CLT projects using an analytical framework, the Green Book, employed by government officials to evaluate spending proposals¹⁸.

They found that over a thirty-year horizon, CLTs deliver £3.10 of public benefit for every £1 of public support, representing high value for money.

“There’s more housing coming but we’re doing lots of other things too - there’s a climate project, we support other groups through our small grants scheme, we work with the community larder - this was something that was set up in lockdown, and has continued, to help people who were struggling to get food, be that because of food poverty or insecurity, or because the affordable supermarkets are a long bus ride away.”

Christow CLT resident and board member



Increased access to genuinely affordable housing

The 1,711 affordable homes owned by CLTs, and the 5,413 in development, are all significantly increasing access to affordable housing in those communities.

Around 80% of CLT homes are estimated to be 'additional' - that is, they wouldn't be built (or brought back into use) without the CLT's involvement. This additionality comes from CLTs being able to develop in sensitive areas, on small sites others wouldn't touch, and by gaining community support for higher densities.

CLT rental homes are protected from the Right to Buy and Right to Shared Ownership. So communities and landowners can be confident that they will stay affordable in perpetuity.

"Like a lot of villages, we got the curse of becoming fashionable, which has had a major effect on housing for local people - at the time 42% of the housing in Appledore was second homes. When the invitation went out to people to apply we received over 240 applications, with around half actually qualifying, for the nine dwellings. To be able to fill the properties ten times over at least shows the need."

Appledore CLT board member

Further additionality also comes from and being able to win greater local support for larger projects.

We Can Make is a CLT based in Bristol. They are unlocking microsites and infill land for affordable community led housing. The 'unlocking' is made easier because of the true bottom-up nature of the CLT. The CLT has identified 1500 microsites where one or two-bed homes could fit, with their analysis indicating that the existing urban infrastructure could viably take an additional 150 homes (developing 10% of the available sites). Making use of the end of a large and underutilised back garden, We Can Make completed its first one-bed, carbon neutral, eco-home in June 2022.

Reduced greenhouse gas emissions, resource extraction, impact on local ecology

More than half of CLTs in one survey stated that developing environmentally friendly homes with low running costs was a key motivation¹⁹.

We tested whether this motivation translates into practice. In 2021 we commissioned an energy expert to study a random sample of 100 homes across 11 CLT projects. He used information from their approved planning applications to model the expected energy consumption and CO2 emissions from the homes. The study found that every CLT would meet, and many would exceed, local authority targets, and all would significantly exceed national targets²⁰.

Sustainability isn't just a priority for new build developments, it steers renovating and retrofit projects as well. Homebaked CLT in Liverpool is rescuing a derelict terrace of nine houses. There will be new build aspects, but by keeping a large part of the existing terrace by way of preserving the buildings' frontage the embodied carbon in the buildings won't be released.

Some CLTs also see environmental concerns as their main focus. For example, Middle Marches CLT was set up to buy and steward land in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In just a few years they have raised the funds to

buy a 47 acre hill farm, 16 acres of productive grassland next to a village, and a 3 acre water meadow. All the land will be managed to protect, conserve, restore and enhance the ecology as well as bring social and economic benefits to the local community.

When I look at friends that rent privately or own their own homes, with less eco friendly heating, they're really struggling at the moment. If you have to fork out for a whole tank of oil to heat your home over the winter. This house has underfloor heating and I've put a wood burner in. Both makes it really cheap to run and environmentally friendly. My bills are monthly and really manageable."

Stretham and Wilburton CLT resident and board member



Increased social cohesion and reduced loneliness

There has been growing interest and concern as to how homes and communities can be designed to reduce loneliness, and build more cohesive communities.

Research commissioned by the government from the London School of Economics and Political Science found a positive link between community led housing, including CLTs, and a reduction in loneliness²¹.

One simple reason was that communities, when they can design the homes and streetscape, tend to ask for more sociable places. CLTs often design in shared gardens and greens, and move parking away from homes.

But CLTs also bring added dimensions through the participation of their members and residents - the joint activities of meeting, designing homes, organising community consultations, and so on. The more the CLT works to recruit and involve members, the more it reduces loneliness in its local community. The more meaningful the interactions, the more they give people a sense of power over their lives and their local area, the better.

This LSE study shows that the relationships we foster through being involved with a CLT, and the control it gives participants over their lives and the changes affecting their local area, make the communities more cohesive and the individuals less lonely.

These findings echo an academic literature review undertaken by University of the West of England in 2019²², which found a clear link with better social cohesion. Residents of community led housing schemes reported an increased sense of belonging and connection to their neighbours. This not only led to people feeling more connected but also provided more practical outcomes such as shared childcare, or reducing time spent preparing meals, in turn creating more leisure time and reducing time pressure related stress.

Improved health outcomes

The same UWE literature review also found a range of health benefits from community led housing.

These included more support for residents to undertake physical activity and healthier eating behaviours. There is a particular opportunity for healthier ageing, with stronger social and intergenerational ties. In some cases, living in a community led project was perceived to slow age-related health decline through actions such as supporting each other to exercise and eating healthy meals together.

A study of CLTs in the USA also found positive health outcomes²³. These included improved mental health resulting from increased housing stability and affordability. The researchers also found health benefits arising from improvements in housing quality and neighbourhood amenities, services and partnerships with healthcare organisations, and the participation of residents in the CLT's democratic governance.

“We have a WhatsApp group for neighbours to exchange food, borrow things, it's a really nice environment to live in. The CLT means a lot, the opportunity to live within a two minute drive of my elderly parents or pop over to my parents on my wages. You can't put a price on that. I've lived locally, grown up locally, I've got so many friends and family locally. I feel part of the community by being in a house that I can pay for and maintain myself. I can't really describe how many things it has done for me.”

Stretham and Wilburton CLT resident and board member

Get involved

This report is an invitation to housing associations, developers, landowners and councils - to join with us.

You can partner with CLTs on projects

Communities across England and Wales are looking for landowners, developers, housing associations and councils that share their values. If you are committed to high quality development that is inclusive and sustainable; if you are interested in working in partnership with communities, rather than in opposition; then CLTs want to hear from you.

You can initiate projects and create new CLTs around them. We, and our network of enablers, have the knowledge and skills to integrate CLTs into developments of any scale, including creating community stewardship and ownership strategies for large sites and new settlements.

You can also partner with the national network on product development.

The Community Land Trust Network is also looking for help to develop new ways to make partnership a success. We want to work with leading landowners, developers, housing associations and councils to write, together, our pattern book of partnership. To develop products that can be replicated at scale up and down the country.

We have established an industry growth programme to discover, define and develop these replicable products, and to then deliver them at scale. This work is delivered jointly with the UK Cohousing Network and the European CLT Network.

Find out how you can work in partnership with the CLT movement on our website:

communitylandtrusts.org.uk/working-together



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Images

Image of St Clements, Mile End, designed by architects and masterplanners JTP on page 18 is by Craig Auckland / Fotohaus. All other primary images by Ian Miles for the Community Land Trust Network.

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With thanks

The Community Land Trust Network is one node in a network of CLTs, enabler hubs, local authorities, funders, lenders, housing associations, and others in the wider community led housing and community land movements -- our achievement is a collective one.

We would like to share a special thank you to The Good Economy for their valuable guidance to craft this report; Ecology Building Society for sponsoring the report's parliament launch; and our core funders, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and Nationwide Foundation.

Our corporate partners

Thank you for you ongoing support. Together we can make community ownership of land and affordable housing commonplace.

Ecology Building Society

Ecology specialises in supporting properties and projects that promote sustainable communities.

They provide:

- Development finance for CLTs to build
- Mortgages for CLTs to own rental homes, and buy turnkey off developers
- Mortgages to residents including innovative low cost ownership products

Triodos Bank UK

As one of the world's most sustainable banks, Triodos has been financing housing projects for over 40 years.

They provide:

- Development finance for CLTs to build
- Mortgages for CLTs to own rental homes, and buy turnkey off developers
- Lending up to £10m

Anthony Collins Solicitors

Anthony Collins is a specialist law firm with a clear purpose – to improve lives, communities and society.

Their legal services include:

- Help with incorporation and governance
- Contracts with project partners, landowners
- Long-term management matters

Wrigleys Solicitors

At the forefront of the community led housing movement for over 30 years, Wrigleys has a wealth of experience.

Their legal services include:

- Help with incorporation and governance
- Contracts with project partners, landowners
- Member agreements and leases

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