

Attendees:

Stephanie Baxter	East Suffolk Council Strategy and Enabling Manger
Isobel Wright	Hastoe Housing Association. Regional Development Manager
Cecilia Tredget	Eastern Community Homes
Sunila Osborne	Rural Housing Enabler and CLH advisor
Debbie Wildridge	Locality – Development Officer
Leiston CLT	Chair
Peninsula Villages CLT	Business Manager & Trustees
SouthGen (CLT)	Chair
Thorpness CLT	Chair
Aldeburgh TC	Mayor
Bungay	Councillor
Snape PC	Councillor
Southwold TC	Councillor
Suffolk County Council	Director

Each guest introduced themselves to the group and highlighted their aims, objectives and their interest in the event. There was a mix of existing and emerging projects. A synopsis of their projects is below

- Leiston CLT – Working with Council on regeneration projects across the Town centre to deliver housing, retail and civic projects.
- Peninsula Villages (Deben Peninsula), in partnership with developer and Orwell HA will deliver 4x2 bed houses for affordable rent in Bawdsey. Expected delivery December 2023
- Southgen (Southwold) in partnership with Hastoe HA – First project of 4x2 affordable rent and 1 shared ownership flats opening soon.
- Thorpeness CLT. High need for affordable housing to protect sustainability of the parish, however, flood defences have taken priority for now.
- Aldeburgh TC highlighted great level of need for affordable housing but constrained by availability of land. See links on powerpoint slides.
- Bungay PC – Beginning to write Neighbourhood Plan. They highlighted great need for affordable homes in the Town.

Short presentations were given detailing the support available from East Suffolk Council, Eastern Community Homes, Community Action Suffolk, Locality and Hastoe Housing Association.

The three existing CLT's provided details about their projects which raised the benefits and pitfalls of their work. All groups have ambitions to grow and deliver other schemes including affordable housing.

Constraints such as land, funding and skills were raised. Working with the Council and a Housing Association partner can bring benefits that private developers could not. The example of Lavenham CLT was given, whereby it was a partnership between Suffolk County Council, Lavenham Town Council, Lavenham CLT and Hastoe Housing Association.

Land owned by public organisations, ie, Suffolk County Council, NHS, MOD, will be looking for best consideration in financial terms. However, it was highlighted that community groups have potential but must have robust business plans and the skills or partnerships to deliver efficiently and quickly. They can also be the catalyst for schemes that benefit the local community . The project at Southwold was the result of people power, imagination and partnership working with Hastoe HA, resulting in a project that all are very proud of, despite the time and hard work required.

All of the areas represented highlighted the difficulty in access to land. This was either due to land prices or limited availability due to blue and green (water or protected land) infrastructure. Innovation and partnership working can deliver schemes and groups were encouraged to be imaginative, starting small. Debbie gave the example of 'Bunker Hill' at Brighton, whereby disused garages were turned into 2 small houses for local people.

Future networking events were supported.