

Case Study

Community Led Affordable Housing

Background

House prices within National Parks are higher than the average for their constituent counties. Enabling the provision of Affordable Housing is a priority for the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), with the focus being on increasing the numbers of affordable housing stock that uses exemplary design and where possible locally sourced sustainable materials.

The SDNPA offers Affordable Housing Grants to not for profit organisations who are looking to provide affordable housing to be held in perpetuity, this ensures the retention of affordable homes for future generations.

Community Land Trusts (CLT's) are one of many providers of affordable housing and have a particular focus on providing homes for local people. This enables families to stay within their community long term. By working alongside CLT's the SDNPA is well placed to support the provision of affordable housing across the whole of the National Park.

This project has used held S106 developer contributions, specified to be used for the provision of affordable housing, to enable the purchase of eight homes by Midhurst Community Land Trust.

<https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/affordable-housing-in-the-south-downs-national-park/case-studies/>

How was the need for this project identified?

Midhurst Community Land Trust (MCLT) were approached by the developer prior to commencement of the building works, they subsequently approached the SDNP with a request for an Affordable Housing Grant to support the purchase of eight new build flats within the village of Easebourne.



The project

Data taken from the Housing Register during the planning application process highlighted a need for one and two bedroom affordable homes within the parish of Easebourne and the neighbouring parishes, with a preference in tenure of affordable rental.

Engagement with the SDNPA and developers meant that Midhurst CLT were able to secure the homes early

in the construction process, ensuring that they were delivered to meet the specific needs of the CLT and the local community.

The development is situated on one of the sites allocated in the South Downs Local Plan, with planning permission being granted in Spring 2023, the development completed in early 2025. The homes will be held as affordable rental in perpetuity at a maximum rental of 70% of open market rental prices and have been designed to support families and individuals from the area and key workers who are essential for local health services and the economy. Further information on the work of Midhurst Community Land Trust is available on their website: [Midhurst Community Land Trust](#)

“It means everything, it will make a massive difference to me...” New tenant

The outcome

The project has enabled local families to remain living in the area where they have established themselves, in some cases meaning they are able to continue to work within the local community. Without the support of grant funding from the SDNPA the CLT would not have been able to raise funds to cover the purchase of all the available dwellings, it is likely that the homes would not have been held in perpetuity for future generations.

The future

It is impossible for the SDNPA to work in isolation on the provision of affordable housing, it needs other stakeholders to work together to ensure that affordable housing is an achievable priority for all those who live and work within the national park.

The SDNPA continues to be proactive with its approach to the provision of affordable housing, the review of the policies within the Local Plan will reflect this approach. New collaborations with CLTs, district housing enablers, Homes England and other registered providers will prove invaluable as the SDNPA progresses its target to achieve opportunities for all.

For more information on the SDNPA Affordable Housing Grants, please contact:

Gill Welsman, Planning Project Management Officer – cil@southdowns.gov.uk

[The South Downs National Park Partnership Management Plan \(PMP\) 2020–25](#) sets out a shared vision for how we all would like the National Park to be in the future. It includes 9 long-term outcomes, and provides a framework for communities, landowners, charities, businesses, and public bodies to work together to make this vision and these outcomes a reality.

This project successfully achieved the following 2020-2025 PMP outcomes:

Outcome 9 – Great Places to Live – 9.1 Increase Affordable Housing

Outcome 9 – Great Places to Live – 9.2 Support Vibrant Communities