

Case Study

Affordable Housing Grants Midhurst Community Land Trust

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 is able to offer 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, in conjunction with Housing Hubs, the SDNPA is well placed to support the provision of affordable housing across the whole of the National Park.

This particular project has used S106 developer contributions to enable the purchase of two homes by Midhurst Community Land Trust.

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



The project

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) worked alongside Midhurst Community Land Trust (MCLT) at all stages of the project; a key factor in its success being the early engagement with the Authority.

Midhurst Community Land Trust initially identified an opportunity to purchase two new homes in the centre of Midhurst and consequently sought advice from the SDNPA in order to progress and inform their project. By engaging in discussions with the Authority at an early stage the CLT were able to check and review the design and sustainability criteria for the dwellings as well as inform their funding strategy. This early engagement ensured the homes for the CLT were secured through a S106 agreement.

Following the submission of an Affordable Housing Grant application to the SDNPA, funding totalling £60,000 was transferred to MCLT upon practical completion in May 2021, with the new residents moving into the dwellings in early June 2021.

The Affordable Housing Grant secured by the CLT, along with other funding, resulted in a reduction of rental levels to 70% of market rates as well as enabling them to offer in-perpetuity leases.

“Without the SDNPA grant, this project would not have been possible.”

Adrian Moore, Chairman, Midhurst CLT

“This is a game changer for the town, the first CLT properties in the district.”

Gordon McAra, Midhurst District Councillor

The outcome

The primary objective of this project was to support the purchase of two affordable homes in a central location in the heart of the National Park and secure reduced rental rates for the dwellings in perpetuity. This objective was achieved, with two families now occupying the homes.

Collaboration between the CLT and SDNPA has informed and benefitted this project and potential future projects in the following ways:

- Design and potential planning issues were able to be identified at an early stage of the process;
- Early collaboration by all parties provided good background knowledge for SDNPA Officers to facilitate the funding request and ensure the funding process was well informed at all stages
- Close liaison with the CLT has created other opportunities for the provision of affordable housing. Other CLT's will benefit from the learning experience from this project in order to support the development of their projects across the National Park. This will undoubtedly lead to further bids for Affordable Housing Grants in the future.

The future

The expectation is that this will be the first of several projects brought forward by Midhurst Community Land Trust who are currently progressing several sites in the Midhurst area.

With the potential for similar organisations to secure funding through the Affordable Housing Grants, the SDNPA hope to be able to support additional projects across the SDNP.

Affordable Housing Grants are available to not for profit organisations and for developments on rural exception sites that secure affordable homes in perpetuity.

Further information on our Affordable Housing Grants and guidance on developing affordable homes is available on our website or by contacting:

affordablehousing@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 11 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 PMP outcome:

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

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