

# Brent CLT

Workshops Summary

11<sup>th</sup> May, 25<sup>th</sup> May & 8<sup>th</sup> June

## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the last 18 months Brent CLT has established itself as a new organisation made up of a diverse range of local people as Trustees and a Community Panel.

Brent CLT's vision is to develop housing in consultation with local residents, that addresses local housing needs by acquiring land and building homes for affordable rent.

As a first step to achieve this Brent CLT is in the process of acquiring a site and developing a site brief that will be shared with the consultant team that is appointed to assist BCL with developing the site.

To help inform and develop this brief, a series of workshops were held for Trustees and the Community Panel.

This report provides a summary of the discussions and key points raised in the workshops.

## **WORKSHOPS**

Three workshops were held on 11<sup>th</sup> May, 25<sup>th</sup> May and 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2021. The topics included housing needs in Brent, development and viability and technical design.

The workshop on Housing Needs in Brent was delivered by Nkechi Okeke-Aru, a Brent CLT Trustee, while the workshop on Development and Viability was delivered by Levent Kerimol from Community Led Housing and Rick Gibbs, a Trustee. The final workshop on Technical Design was designed and delivered by Ioana Lupus also a Brent CLT Trustee. All workshops were facilitated by Paul Bragman and supported by Nazra Zuhyle from Community Regen.

The sessions were held online and were attended by Brent CLT Trustees and the Community Panel.

## **WORKSHOP OVERVIEW AND KEY POINTS DISCUSSED**

### **Workshop 1 – Vision of Brent CLT – Homelessness & housing needs in Brent - 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 6pm – 8pm.**

Aims:

- For the Community Panel meet board
- To brief the Community Panel on the history of the project
- To agree who BCLT is providing housing for

Delivered by Brent CLT Trustee Nkechi Okeke-Aru. A total of 15 people attended the workshop.

Following the workshop, a follow-up meeting with two Trustees and three Community Panel members were held to take forward the discussions on who BCLT is providing housing for.

Three key messages around who BCLT should provide housing came up in the workshop discussions, these were the following:

1. People in precarious accommodation i.e., those who might be couch surfing for example, with no defined accommodation.
2. People in low paid or insecure employment.
3. The housing provided by Brent CLT should offer the option of being a stepping stone to more permanent housing and work.

Here is an overview of the key points that were discussed:

- The housing should be aimed at single people and couples, not families. There should be no age limit so it's open to young and older people.
- Focused on shared facilities - high quality sharing arrangement i.e. Not too many rooms to each self-contained unit so as avoid a hostel feel. Have an option for shared lounge/ laundry facilities.
- Tenants will be expected to be in work - low paid, insecure/precarious work.
- Have fair/affordable rent for people working or who are likely to be in low paid jobs. - but no minimum income set.
- Housing to be transitional - tenancy could be between 6 months to 2 years- 'stepping stone' to more long term accommodation.
- Have a clear management ethos and values.
- Brent CLT will need to ensure a management model is in place to support people to move on to new accommodation/more secure work.
- Ensure that there is some form of assessment process and code of conduct for tenants (exact form is to be confirmed).
- Consider design and layout - specially to support mental wellbeing (e.g have a screen / wall between the sleeping area and kitchen).
- No shared bathrooms between non-related households

#### **Additional questions raised (for Brent CLT to consider)**

- Can we do away with deposits?
- Will BCLT cater for people on benefits?

#### **Workshop 2 – CLH Development and Viability workshop - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2021, 6pm – 8pm**

##### **Aim:**

- To understand a schedule of accommodation (feeding into workshop **Design Workshop 3**)
- To understand income/cost balance
- To understand the viability challenges of the site

Delivered by Levent Kerimol, Community Led Housing and Rick Gibbs, Brent CLT Trustee. A total of 13 attended the workshop.

This workshop was more informative and provided an overview of financial appraisals and current rental scenarios.

- Costs should not be higher than what comes in as values

- If costs are greater than income, then the scheme is not viable. Need to avoid this happening.
- If a person is on low income and on benefits, would it put the CLT at a high risk of not being paid the rent?
- Council housing is generally for people on benefits. The government can choose to subsidise low rent housing which is currently the arrangement with housing associations, or they can pay private landlords through housing benefit.
- Service chargers – people on benefits have rent covered but often can't afford to pay the service charge. This may be a risk for BCLT to consider.
- BCLT considering live-share option as one of the options – each resident will pay a room rent so overall rent from the house will be higher than rent from a family paying for the house or flat.

### **Workshop 3 – Design Technical aspects of buildings/development, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021, 6pm – 8pm**

#### **Aim**

- To agree BCLTs design principles
- To develop more understanding about the unit mix on the site
- To develop an understanding of the constraints of the site
- To agree key elements of the brief for consultants' team.

Delivered by Ioana Lupus, Brent CLT Trustee. A total of 13 attended the workshop. The session provided an overview of technical design aspects and suggested a variety of design options for flats and housing.

A poll was held to gauge the five most important things Brent CLT should adopt when it considering design.

The results of the poll are:

1. 91% securely financed and affordable
2. 73% low energy and affordable bills
3. 64% designed for health and wellbeing
4. 55% designed for privacy and dignity
5. 45% accessible for diverse people
6. 45% efficient use of resources
7. 45% adaptable, flexible use

A further exercise was carried out to get a sense from trustees and Community Panel members of the top three types of accommodation Brent CLT should consider.

A total of 6 responses have been received as of 5<sup>th</sup> July 2021. The following is a summation of the scores for each unit.

House Share	Deck-access flats				Central core flats
Rooms	Mini 1 bed	Compact 1 bed	Standard 1 bed	Large 2 bed	Mix Standard & Large
17 m2 room & shower	30 m2 with shower	40 m2 with shower	50 m2 with bath	60 m2 with bath	50 m2 / 60 m2 per flat
6	12	21	24	20	18
21	25	32	34	31	29
9	13	30	34	30	27
20	28	34	33	31	25
8	13	18	20	17	18
3	3	23	29	4	6
61	94	158	174	133	123

As shown in the above table, the top three types of accommodation are as follows:

1. Standard - 1 bedroom flat with bath
2. Compact - 1 bedroom flat with shower
3. Large - 2 bedroom flat with bath

Further key points discussed during the session were:

- To have a balance between singles and couples as tenants.
- Consider how to manage cleaning common areas, this could lead to higher management costs.
- The aim is to keep rents affordable, therefore Brent CLT should look to keep low management cost as far as possible.
- Privacy and dignity are important – and needs to be taken into consideration
- Avoid the hostel feel.
- Sharing model doesn't work for adult living, which needs to be taken into consideration when planning.
- Deck access – people tend to use it as extra storage, therefore good management is key and needs to be considered
- BCLT should move away from the stepping stone model with the option of being able to live on the premises for a longer time period if needed.
- BCLT should consider how tenants can be supported with their tenancies.
- Consider the length of tenancy.
- Explore a mixed model in terms of the length of stay depending on need. Have some staying longer while those who want to move on can be supported.

- Small and Mini flats are less than the Housing Design Standards and could affect the funding condition.
- There is a need for clarity around the target audience and the client group. If Brent CLT choose to target young people, it is important to specify the age group.
- Viability – is not just about the persons housed but also the number of flats built.
- BCLT would get a single rent from the medium to large flats. Whereas if it's a shared house the rent will be for each room.
- Consider disabled access / accessibility when designing flats.

**Further question for Brent CLT to consider**

- Are there options to have plants and green space?
- Is there a possibility of having a roof terrace?