

Briefing Note Template

Elected Member Briefing – Community Led Housing

Elected Member Briefing Note Ref. No. 2026-04

About this Briefing Note

Briefing by: Emma Perring, Team Leader – Community Planning

Date: 26th January 2026

Subject: Community Led Housing Seminar

Public / Exempt / Confidential

Purpose

This briefing note is to provide a summary of the presentations and discussion, following a Seminar for Elected Members on Community Led Housing.

Background

Community Led Housing is about local people playing a leading and fundamental role in solving their specific housing problems.

Both National and Local Policy refer to Community Led Housing as a means of delivering housing, particularly in remote and rural areas, and a key means of sustaining local communities.

It is recognised as a housing option, which can support an increase and diversification of housing, weighed up against other Council and community priorities.

Key points

A presentation was provided by the Director of Development Services, the Interim Executive Manager of Housing and the Team Leader – Community Planning. This covered:

- the national and local policy context;
- the level of delivery across Scotland;
- national support available, through organisations and funding (such as the Rural and Islands Housing Fund and the Scottish Land Fund);
- the complex route map for delivery; and
- the current work of Council officers, with partners, to enable community bodies to explore, and potentially delivery Community Led Housing options.

This was followed by a presentation from Davie Campbell (Rural Community Solutions Ltd) and Luke Fraser (L & L Fraser Ltd). They have been commissioned, by the Shetland Community Benefit Fund (SCBF) to directly support community bodies in Shetland to develop housing projects, from the early stage of feasibility and options, through to delivery and putting in place management arrangements. The presentation covered:

- examples of projects delivered in Orkney;

- key success factors;
- financing; and
- where they see opportunities for Shetland.

Following the presentation, the discussion covered:

- support, such as that provided by these firms, can be provided through funding at the Feasibility Stage;
- how SFRS are working with the North Ronaldsay community;
- how evidence of need can be provided in remote areas;
- the opportunities available through Council finances (e.g. second homes fund) and SCBF;
- the opportunities to purchase homes, not just new build, the role of landowners in this (including the Council);
- local lettings and allocation processes; and
- the funding model recently developed by Orkney Housing Association Ltd, to use local investment to build housing.

Overview

The consensus was that there is a lot of potential in this area, and is one in which, in the main, the Council needs to step back and empower communities – who often have the levers and opportunities to access funding, that other organisations are unable to.

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