

**An Evaluation of the CLT Start Up Fund  
2008-2018**

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**March 2020 (Research conducted 2019)**

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### **Acknowledgements**

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 *Key Findings*

1. The CLT Start Up Fund (SUF) is generally perceived as having had an impact on the community led housing sector and has helped to advance the sector as a whole. In addition the SUF is seen as having evidenced the need for and value of funding for community led housing.
2. The SUF is generally perceived as having been accessible, flexible in application and effective at introducing nascent community groups to technical advisors.
3. The SUF is regarded as having been critical to the success of most groups, whether such success is measured in terms of incorporation, community engagement, planning consent, project completion or other milestones.
4. The SUF facilitated timely technical advice, enabling informal groups to mobilise and transition to confident, incorporated community organisations. The SUF leveraged further technical advice – as much again funded from other sources and three times as much as pro bono support. The quality of support provided by both technical advisors and the National CLT Network (NCLTN) was highly valued. ‘Handholding’ of community groups by technical advisors is seen as being the key benefit of the SUF, by which groups mean person-to-person support as and when they needed it and from the same technical advisor – even if such support might in due course have been funded from elsewhere or provided pro bono.
5. Although the SUF could have been improved, the new regime of technical support from Enabling Hubs is seen as being less effective at the time this evaluation was conducted<sup>1</sup>. Although it is early days for the Enabling Hubs there were concerns about the new regime being more complicated, less flexible, more likely to provide fragmented technical support and less likely to provide the all-important continuity of ‘handholding’ from an experienced advisor.
6. It is recognised that there were few technical advisors in the early days and that funding through the Community Housing Fund (CHF) is helping to rectify this. The question was raised about whether the accreditation programme is sufficient preparation for advisors, partly because relatively few entrants to the programme complete it and partly because practical experience is also important.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.2 *Recommendations*

1. If the key benefit of the SUF is to be carried forward into the new Enabling Hub regime of technical support, it will be important to ensure that ‘handholding’ [Finding 4] is provided from the earliest opportunity, shaping through the challenges along the way. This should help to overcome the concerns expressed about access to the operation of the Enabling Hub

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<sup>1</sup> True as of March 2019 when research was conducted. Improvements have since been made that address these concerns.

<sup>2</sup> See above.

regime [Finding 5]. A similar concern about the systemisation of access to support services has led Professor John Seddon of the Vanguard Consultancy to advocate and apply a specific form of 'systems thinking' methodology in the public sector. The emphasis of this is to 'absorb the variety' of people's needs rather than potentially frustrate them with online portals, scripts, service gatekeepers, systems driven by scale economies and the like. In view of the feedback from this research, there would be value in reflecting on this for the community led housing sector<sup>3</sup>.

2. Given the critical importance of technical advice [Finding 4] and the concerns expressed about plans to ensure a high and consistent quality among technical advisors [Findings 5 and 6], it will be important to review the efficacy of a) the accreditation programme, b) the capability of Hubs to recruit technical advisors with appropriate experience, c) the extent of on-the-job training, and d) the investment needed achieve this aim.

With regard to a) an area to consider might include elements of Problem Based Learning (PBL). PBL is a style of active learning which refers to learning opportunities that use real-life issues or problems to increase knowledge and understanding. One-the-job-training (c) could include new and less experienced Technical Advisors being assigned a Mentor and shadowing experienced TAs.<sup>4</sup>

3. The lack of monitoring and evaluation through the lifetime of the Start Up Fund was identified as a weakness of the initiative. It is recommended that monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems and processes are built into any future grant making programmes. For example developing a Theory of Change model is valuable in planning for social change as it ensures that causal relationships are made explicit and that underlying assumptions are articulated. In particular, in cases with complex causal relationships, 'the precise link between activities and the achievement of the long-term goals are more fully understood. This leads to better planning, in that activities are linked to a detailed understanding of how change actually happens' (Harries, Hodgson and Noble 2014<sup>5</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://vanguard-method.net/library/systems-principles/absorbing-variety/>

<sup>4</sup> Training processes for advisors has developed since the research was completed.

<sup>5</sup> Harries, E., Hodgson, L., and Noble, J. (2014) *Creating your theory of change: NPC's practical guide*. London: NPC

## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

The CLT Fund was established in October 2008 as a four-year pilot programme by a consortium of funders which has included the Tudor Trust, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, CAF, Nationwide Foundation and a private donor. The aim of the Fund was to stimulate the development of the Community Land Trust (CLT) sector in England and Wales by providing access to funding and technical assistance. The Fund had four distinct stages of funding:

- The Feasibility Fund awarding grants of up to £500 (or one day’s consultancy) for emerging CLTs to help them to secure maximum community engagement, consolidate their early ideas into an action plan or develop an outline action plan.
- The Technical Assistance Fund awarding grants of up to £5,000 to purchase additional technical assistance to support the development of “investment ready” business plans, including the incorporation of the CLT where required. Eligible costs include:
  - Community engagement and membership (excluding administration costs)
  - Legals and governance. This can include: establishing the CLT as a legal entity; entering into an option agreement and purchase with the landowner; entering into an agreement to lease or alternative disposal method with prospective residents; negotiating a Section 106 agreement; capacity building for the CLT board.
  - Financial viability. This can include: site-specific feasibility study and valuation; business planning; conveyancing and other professional fees.
  - Procurement. This can include: initial feasibility studies essential to determine a scheme’s financial viability and contracting a professional development team.

The pilot programme was extended by a year to 2013 and then in July 2014 the CLT Fund became the ‘Start Up Fund’ (SUF) and received additional funding. The SUF closed in December 2018 following the complete commitment of all Funds. The Fund had three stages:

<i>Stage 1</i>	<i>Stage 2</i>	<i>Stage 3</i>
Scope out the idea with a technical advisor, with one day of support worth £500	If a CLT is an appropriate model and the plans show potential, Stage 2 provided a further 2 days of support with a technical advisor	A grant of up to £4,000 to help get the CLT set-up and investment ready

NCLTN supported over 130 groups at stages 1 and 2 and more than 70 groups at stage 3. A further 176 projects were supported in its first iteration. Note that some groups received support from all stages.

The project’s key objectives were:

- To facilitate the delivery of affordable housing by CLTs.
- To facilitate the establishment of more CLTs in England and Wales.
- To provide a robust evidence base on the financial and social performance base of CLTs.

The project also aimed to:

- Contribute to the development of 600 permanently affordable homes by the CLT sector by 2020.
- See a pipeline develop such that a further 220 units are scheduled to be delivered by recipients of CLT Start Up Fund support after 2020.
- Support the establishment of an additional 30 CLTs by 2020.

### 3.0 EVALUATION AIM

This evaluation sets out to explore the extent to which the SUF has achieved its objectives, and what implications the findings have for the future work of the National CLT Network and organisations involved in the wider sector. The evaluation objectives were:

1. To review the landscape of funding and support for Community Land Trusts within the UK and to identify how the Start Up Fund fits within this landscape.
2. To assess the impact of the Start Up Fund in enabling supported CLTs to achieve their aims, and to explore the impact on local communities.
3. To explore the impact of the Start Up Fund on the wider CLT sector.
4. To consider the degree of success of the Fund in the programme's own terms, and in terms of achieving the longer term aim of the Fund.
5. To consider the total value of support being obtained by CLTs, including the proportion and relative importance of the Fund's contribution.
6. To identify areas of strength and weakness of the Fund, and the key characteristics of the fund that contribute to their success or otherwise.
7. To propose recommendations.

#### 3.1 *Limitations and constraints of evaluation*

There are some limitations of the evaluation which need to be noted. The first is the budget allocated to the work which limited the scope of the evaluation and depth of analysis. The second, as previously indicated, is the lack of monitoring data collected over the lifetime of the Start Up Fund which impacts on the potential for tracking progress and improvements over time. Thirdly participation in the evaluation was entirely and relied on groups having the capacity to commit time to complete survey data or participate in interviews.

Lastly, unexpected findings in relation to the Hubs capture a snapshot of how groups and individuals perceived the new way of working at the time of the evaluation. The research was conducted during a period of transition from one funding regime to another and some comments may not be applicable to current activity given that the Hub initiative has had more time to bed in. However this data does provide a useful baseline for future research and evaluation.



## 4.0 METHODOLOGY

The evaluation adopted a mixed methods approach to explore the success and perceived impact of the SUF over the ten years that it was running. Data were collected via an online survey (See Appendix 1) and semi-structured interviews. The majority of interviews were conducted via telephone, lasted an average of 15 minutes and followed specifically designed schedules (See Appendix 2). Three separated interview schedules were developed.

### 4.1 Sampling

The survey was administered to everyone who had received funding through the SUF. A purposeful sampling strategy was employed to select key stakeholders, known as Interested Parties (IP), to be interviewed. Interested Parties were identified by the Fund Project Manager and included:

- National CLT Network staff
- Technical Advisors
- Representatives from Community Land Trusts supported by the Start Up Fund
- Representatives from Enabling Hubs
- Project funders
- Key individuals with links to the community-led housing sector.

The SUF Project Manager sent an email to all identified Interested Parties asking if they were happy to be contacted by the Evaluator. Based on their connection to the Fund interview participants were then selected from those who confirmed they were happy to be contacted. CLT Groups self-identified through the survey which asked participants whether they would be happy to be contacted to share their experiences of working with the Fund.

### 4.2 Data Analysis

The survey was analysed using descriptive statistics. The interviews were all audio-recorded, and transcribed by the researcher. The analysis was carried out using 'bottom up' inductive coding, and followed the process of 'thematic induction' as described by Braun and Clarke (2006)<sup>6</sup>. This involved attributing codes to segments of the data, clustering them into nine overarching themes. The themes are:

- Significance
- Navigating the Process
- The Importance of Risk
- The Right Advice
- A Gap in Support
- Strengths of the Start Up Fund
- Weakness of the Start Up Fund

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<sup>6</sup> Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), pp. 77–101.

- Challenges
- Impact of the Start Up Fund.

#### **4.3 Ethics**

The evaluator ensured that participants understood the process they were involved with, including why the evaluation was being undertaken and why their participation was important to the research process. Participants gave written informed consent. Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured for research participants. Data analysis will take place on an encrypted laptop and no-one else will have direct access to the data. Any analysis will ensure individuals are anonymised and confidentiality is ensured.

## 5.0 FINDINGS

The report first looks at the results of the survey before presenting the analysis from the interviews with Interested Parties.

### 5.1 Results from the survey

The survey attached in Appendix 1 was sent to all Community Land Trusts. 21 questionnaires were returned. This section presents findings from these returns.

#### 5.1.2 Approximate population of 'area of benefit'

The Survey asked participants to estimate the population served by their CLT. Estimates ranged from 10 people to 270,000. Excluding these outliers, the average population was c. 14,000 and areas of benefit included villages, towns, districts and urban neighbourhoods.

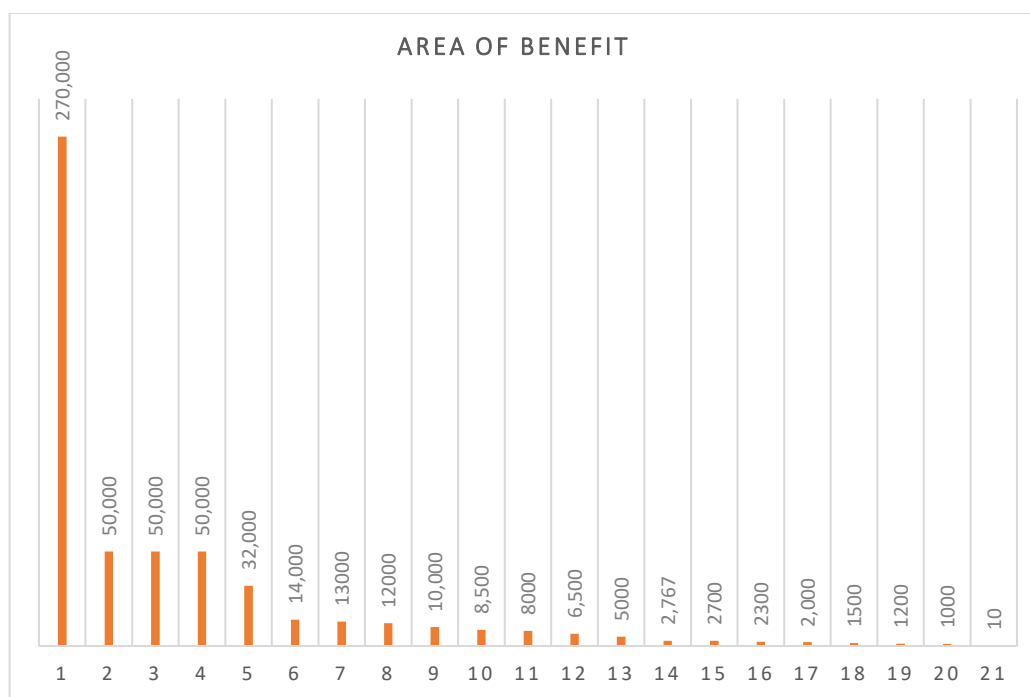


Figure 1

#### 5.1.3 Funding received

The Survey asked participants about the type of funding received. Between 2008 and 2013 two pots of money were available – the Technical Assistance Fund, and the Feasibility Fund. Between 2013 and 2018 the CLT Fund became the Start Up Fund and a three stage process was developed:

- *Stage 1:* Scope out the idea with a technical advisor, with one day of support worth £500.
- *Stage 2:* If a CLT is an appropriate model and the plans show potential, Stage 2 provided a further 2 days of support with a technical advisor.
- *Stage 3:* A grant of up to £4,000 to help get the CLT set-up and investment ready.

17 participants accessed the initial 'scoping stage' pots of which 12 progressed to the second and third pots. Three dipped straight into later pots, bypassing the initial scoping stage. Responses demonstrate that communities employed the SUF as intended with groups using the grant for advice, community engagement, training and incorporation (see Appendix 3).

<i>Funding Received</i>	<i>No.</i>
<b>2008-2013</b>	
The Technical Assistance Fund	1
The Feasibility Fund	2
<b>2008-2013</b>	
SUF Stage 1	4
SUF Stage 1 and Stage 2	7
SUF Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3	4
SUF Stage 3 only	1
The Feasibility Fund; SUF Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20*</b>

\*One CLT returned their funding.

#### 5.1.4 Total number of days of technical support received, whether funded or voluntary

The SUF led to considerably more technical support than the days it funded. The extra days support were either funded from another source or provided pro bono. The survey also highlights that there were significant differences in the number of unfunded days of support that groups received with some groups receiving none, three groups receiving 10 days, two groups receiving 15 days and one receiving 20 days' technical support.

	No. of days
<b>A.</b> Number of days funded by the CLT Start Up Fund (or the Technical Assistance Fund or the Feasibility Fund)	62
<b>B.</b> Number of days funded from other sources	69
<b>C.</b> Unfunded days eg through a technical advisor providing you with additional support on a voluntarily basis, or through suitably qualified and experienced volunteers with the community	238
<b>D.</b> Total number of days of technical support (A+B+C)	369

#### 5.1.5 Value of the CLT Fund in comparison to the total value of the project, including discounted assets such as land

The financial value of the support received by the 21 respondents through the SUF and from other sources has been estimated at £100,000; similar in volume to the grant allocated to an Enabling Hub through the CHF.

	Value
<b>E.</b> Total value of technical support (number of days in D from above x £500) <i>See Figure 1</i>	£101,500
<b>F.</b> Total cost of the project to date. <i>See Figure 2</i>	£490,820
<b>G.</b> Total value of discounts to land or property purchases (if any)	£600,000*
<b>H.</b> Total value of project (E+F+G)	<b>£1,192,320</b>

\*G consists of just two CLTs who received £500,000 and £100,000 respectively.

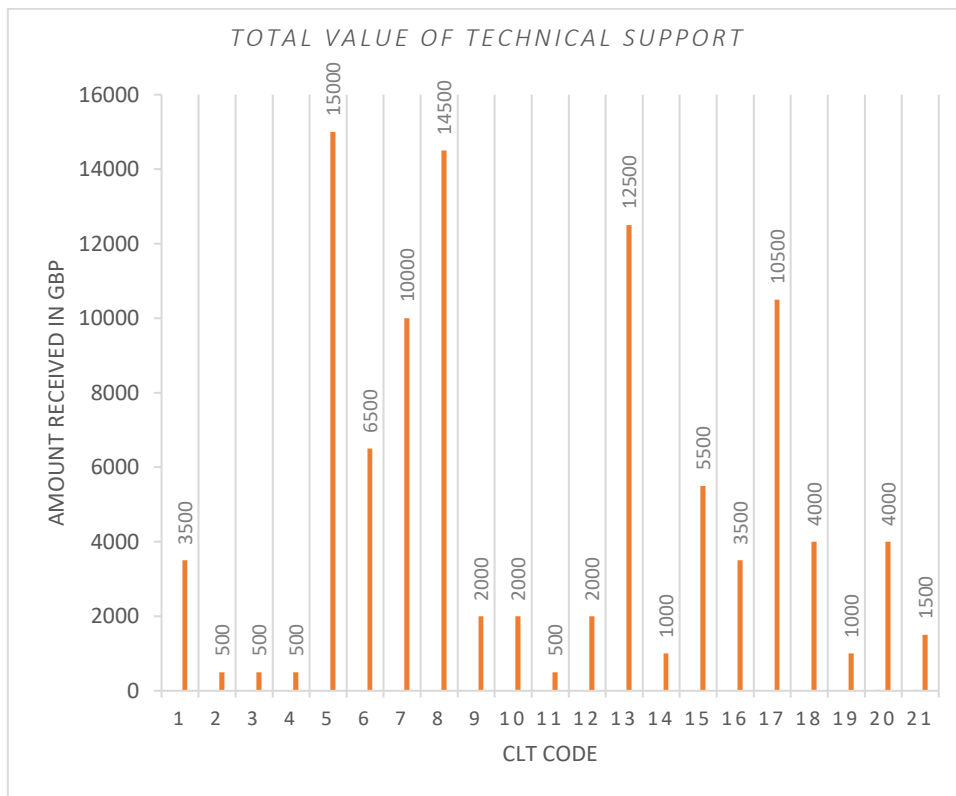


Figure 2

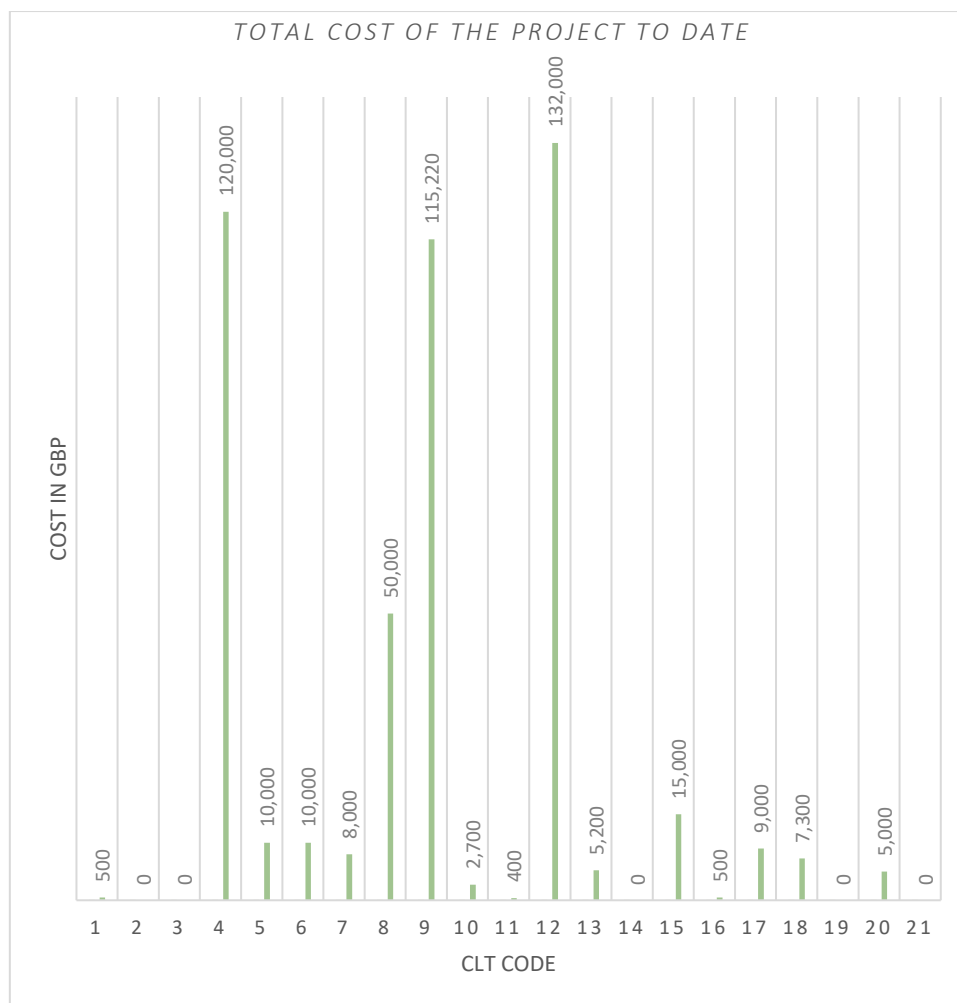


Figure 3

### 5.1.6 Reason for establishing a CLT

One CLT aimed to develop a self-build project but the majority of respondents communities wanted to establish a CLT in order to be able develop affordable housing for the local community. There were slightly different drivers (see Appendix 4 for full list of reasons) for affordable housing and included:

- “Market housing very expensive”.
- “Almshouses”.
- “Wanting to retain a balanced community and family structures that are necessary to sustain inter- generational support and access”.
- “Housing for refugees and asylum seekers”.
- “No other avenue”.
- “To be in a better position to respond to opportunities”.

### 5.1.7 Number of homes delivered or planned

The relatively low number of homes completed to date by the 21 respondents reflects the large number of homes still in the pipeline. That said, early aspirations appear to have been overestimated by around 25%.

	<i>No. of homes</i>
How many homes did you hope to deliver?	380
How many homes have been delivered?	10
How many homes do you have in the pipeline?	267

#### 5.1.8 *Projects achieved to date*

Although many homes remain in the pipeline, participants counted milestones such as incorporation, feasibility exercises, community support and planning consent as achievements, along with a range of non-housing projects. (See Appendix 5 for a full list)

#### 5.1.9 *Wider impacts of the CLT on the community*

Community Groups that set up a Community Land Trust often go on to do other things. The survey responses showed that the wider impacts on the community focused on knowledge creation and capacity building, and community engagement, and developing links with other organisations. Comments included (See Appendix 6 for full list):

##### *Knowledge and capacity building*

“Greater awareness of CLTs and the ability of communities to take the lead for their own benefit. Slow understanding that we can improve our local environment and look after our own people by building accessible and appropriate homes with priority for local people even if not on the housing list”. (CLT6)

“Volunteers and staff have learnt and are still learning about housing and all aspects associated with building a community-led scheme. This is leading to an increase in skills and confidence and if successful in gaining planning permission, once the homes are built, they will be a real asset and benefit to our community and people from outside accessing the scheme”. (CLT9)

##### *Community engagement:*

“There is a much stronger community awareness within the village. The community are beginning to identify projects which could be undertaken in order to improve the village”. (CLT20)

“The perceived ability of the community to address its own housing needs rather than be subject to remote and invalid deliberations and decisions”. (CLT12)

“The start of a local focal point within our village communities to deliver affordable housing, suitable for local needs. By so doing we are establishing a belief that we can continue to sustain lively, viable communities and provide homes for both young and old into the future”. (CLT5)

“Confidence that as a community we can work together to keep the village community vibrant. Networking across county and nationally to support and giving our advice”. (CLT13)

“It has brought the community together and made them aware that as a community we can make affective changes”. (CLT14)

“Participation of the local community in our various projects and the consequent building of relationships, skills, knowledge and confidence”. (CLT8)

*Developing links:*

“Creating partnerships, but also considering wider community benefits of development and open spaces”. (CLT15)

“So far the main change has been better communication between local authorities (we have 2 planning authorities) other providers and interest groups”. (CLT17)

“We are working with all key organisations in the area and the networking has been excellent”. (CLT18)

*5.1.10 Ways in which support could have been better focused*

Half of survey respondents reported that they did not think that the support could have been improved. Comments included in the survey:

- “Regular meetings and support to push through things would have been helpful”.
- “A more positive outlook”.
- “Increase more support throughout different steps”.
- “Only gap was in us not being able to use the 2 days technical support as we had difficulty deciding which area to seek. By the time we did the fund had closed and we lost the opportunity. Our fault”.
- “All advisors have different skills and experience and this was not totally clear from the outset in selecting the appropriate support. Perhaps greater flexibility in agreement with NCLT”.

*5.1.11 Criticality of the Start Up Fund*

The significance of the Fund is emphasised by the questionnaire responses. In answer to the question “Would you say that the CLT Start Up Fund was critical to your success”? 81% of respondents stated that it was.



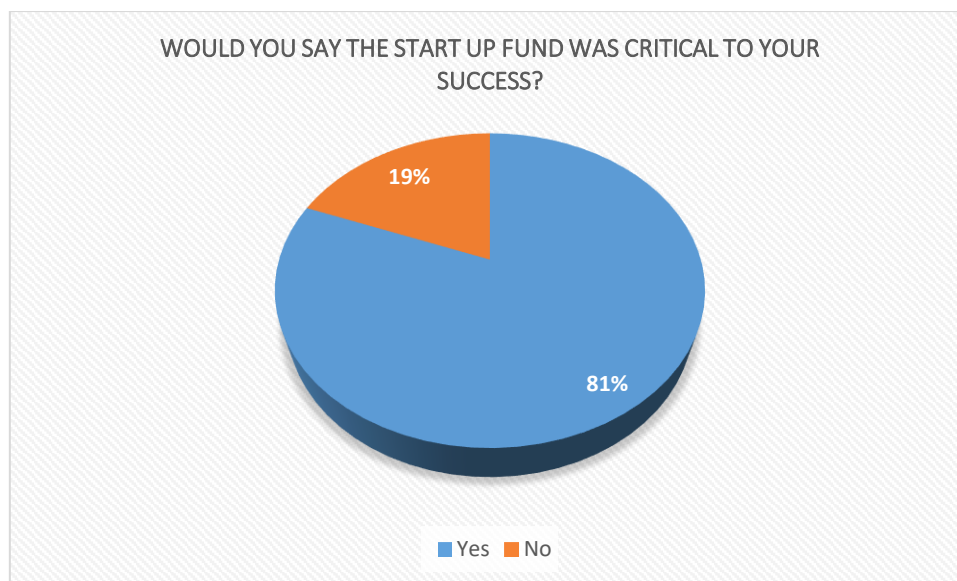


Figure: 4

There were several comments from survey respondents that without the funding they would not have been able to progress at all. Further reasons given for why communities considered the SUF to be critical to their success included:

- “Knowledge acquisition”.
- “Credibility and legitimisation”.
- “Confidence”.

A full list is included in Appendix 7.

#### 5.1.12 *The most useful aspects of support provided by the Fund*

Survey comments in this section reflect responses in the previous section and centered on the significance of the SUF in getting groups off the ground, increased confidence and the expertise and support provided by Technical Advisors. A full list of comments is included in Appendix 8.

#### 5.1.13 *Technical advice*

Survey analysis reveals that central to communities’ success is the expert advice groups receive. In the early stages of the Fund Community Land Trusts were relatively unknown with low levels of “*expertise and experience available for others to draw on*” (Susan). The majority of survey respondents cited being able to secure the advice and expertise provided by the Technical Advisor (TA) as the most useful element of support. Advice from TAs meant that groups were able to make informed decisions about the way forward.

The Survey also asked respondents to rate the quality of their relationship with their TA, the support they received, the advice they received from their TA, the support they received from the NCLTN, the speed of the application process, and the feedback from received from the NCLTN. The results reveal that respondents highly valued both the TAs and the NCLTN. See figures 5 to 10.

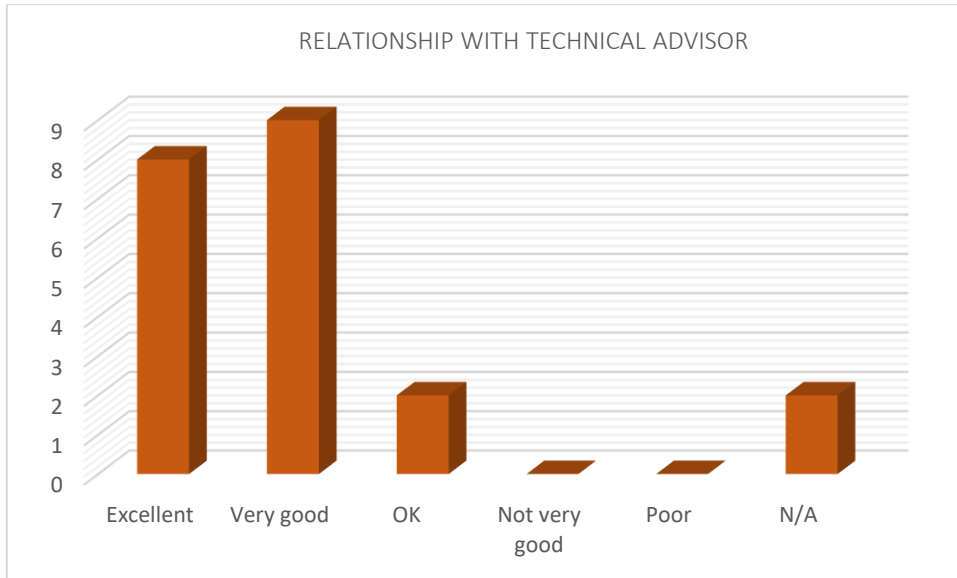


Figure 5

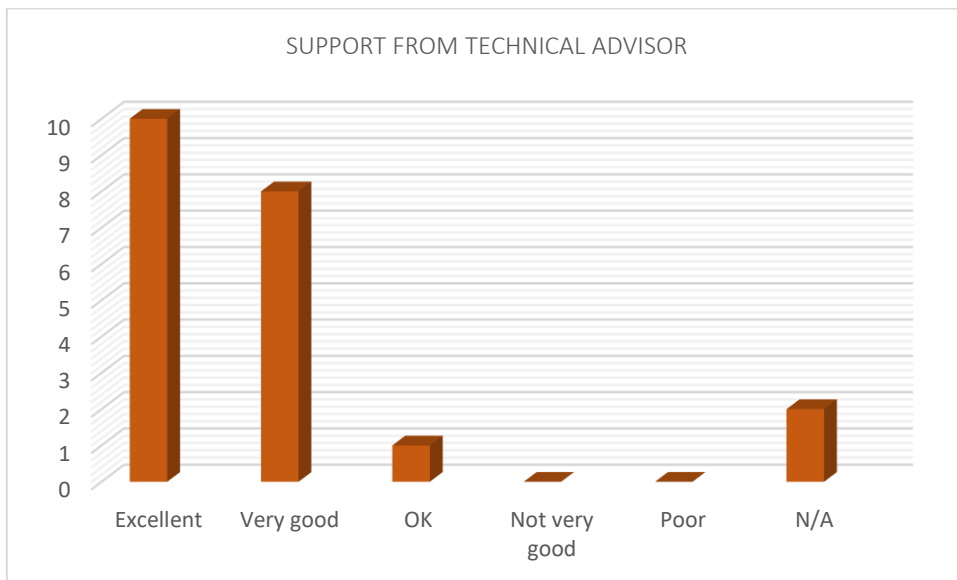


Figure 6



Figure 7

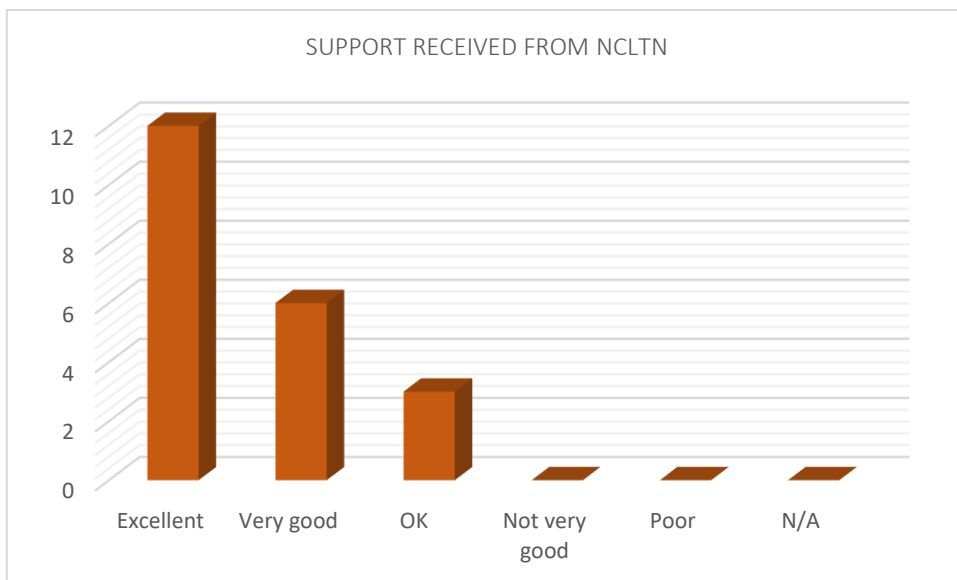


Figure 8

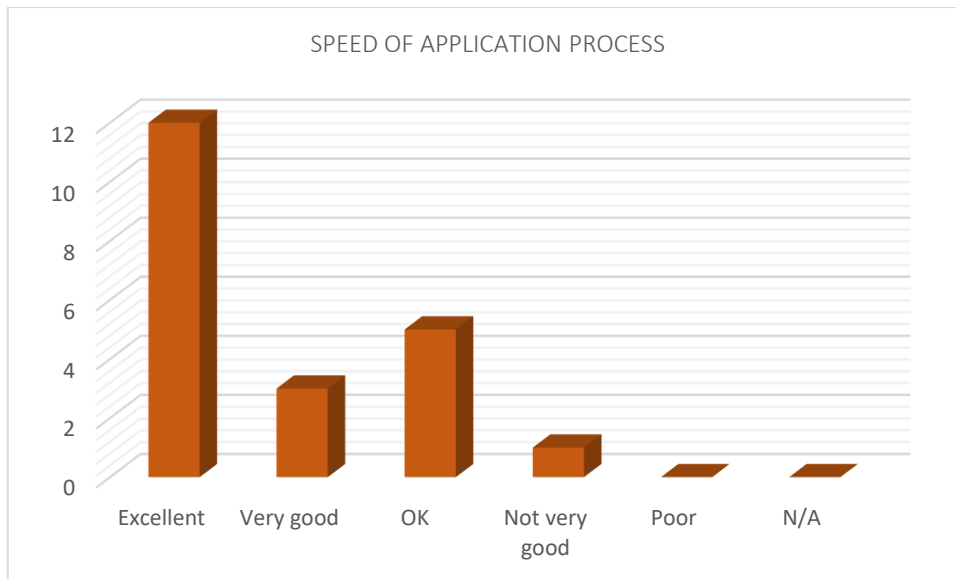


Figure 9

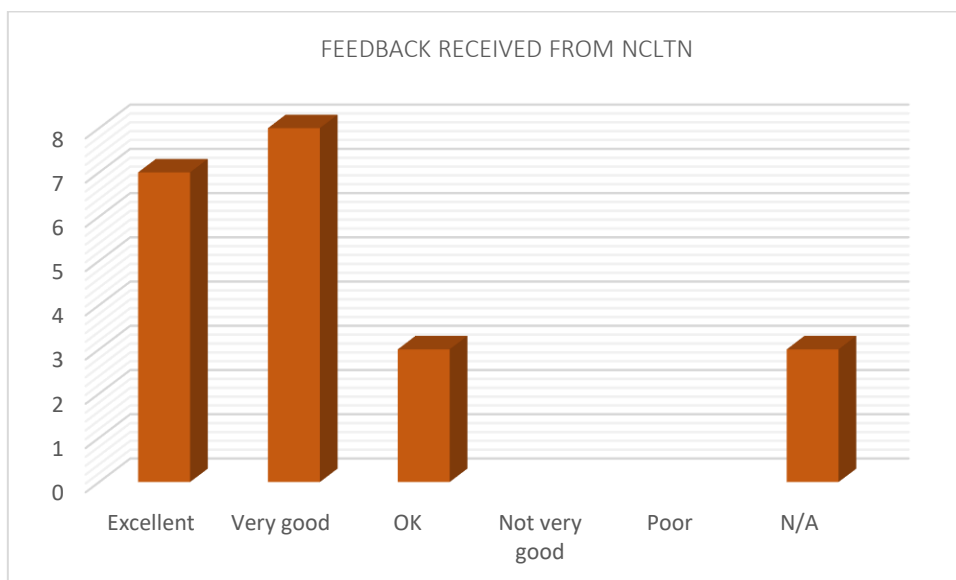


Figure 10

The majority of survey respondents rated the Start-Up Fund as the most valuable source of support (Figure 11) if they were to initiate their project now.

The Start-Up Fund	14
Community-led Homes	3
Enabling Hubs	1
Don't know	1
Other	2

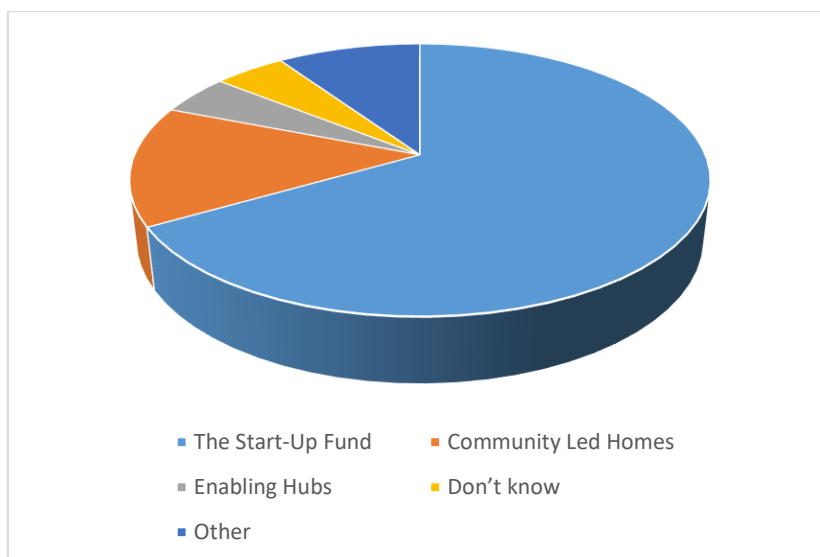


Figure 11

#### 5.1.14 Key factors to success

Key factors considered to have contributed to a Groups' success centre on people and community engagement, and the drive and commitment of trustees and project steering groups. A full list is included in Appendix 9.

#### 5.1.15 Challenges

The Survey asked groups "What challenges or difficulties did you experiences while working with the Start Up Fund"? Two respondents reported that they did not experience any challenges or difficulties. The remaining responses centred on the following areas: Knowledge and understanding; Finding a site; Engaging with local planning authorities; Knowledge of the sector; and Capacity. See Appendix 10 for the full list.

#### 5.1.15 Aims for the next five years

The majority of respondents stated that their aims for the next five years centred on delivering affordable housing. A full list of aims is contained in Appendix 11.

## 6.0 THE INTERVIEWS

This section of the report presents findings from the interviews conducted with individuals connected to the Start Up Fund which includes NCLTN staff, funders, Technical Advisors and representatives from CLT groups. Findings are presented under nine overarching themes and 14 sub-themes:

- Significance
- Navigating the Process
  - Starting Off
  - Moving Forward
  - Staying on Track
- The Importance of Risk
  - Confidence
- The Right Advice
  - Making the Most of the Time
  - Consolidating and Developing Expertise
- A Gap in Support
  - Enabler Hubs
- Strengths of the Start Up Fund
  - Advice and Support
  - Administration of the Fund
- Weakness of the Start Up Fund
- Challenges
  - Community Engagement
  - Following Advice
- Impact of the Start Up Fund
  - Upskilling of Technical Advisors
  - Wider Community Impact
  - Wider Funding Environment.

All participants' names have been changed in order to maintain anonymity. Each name is followed by a code which indicates which type of Interested Party (IP) they are:

<i>Type of IP</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>No. of interviews</i>
NCLTN staff member	Staff	3
Funders of the Start Up Fund	Fund	4
Key individuals with links to the community-led housing sector	Sector	4
Technical Advisor	TA	10
Enabling Hub representative	Hub	2
CLT representative	CLT	10

### 6.1 Significance

The Start Up Fund is regarded as a significant source of support by the majority of respondents across the different groups of participants. Perceptions of significance centred on the Fund being the only source of financial support available at the time, providing access to expert advice which '*helped keep people focused on what they are actually trying to achieve*'. Participants described the Fund as '*very*

*valuable*, giving groups *'comfort and security'*, providing them with *'a good head start'*, provided *'thinking and working out space to see if they have a viable project'*. Comments included:

*It was really needed to actually get projects of the ground. (Louise, Hub)*

*The size of the fund was teeny tiny but it often started a ball rolling. (Frances, Fund).*

*It was critical to our success ... we're now on a roll due to the Fund. (Adrian, CLT)*

The Fund also *'helped people move forward and move on'* and *'created a pipeline of projects'*. It provided *'comfort and security'* and removed *'a huge barrier'* of how groups could afford to set themselves up as a legal entity so that they could engage with Local Authorities, Housing Associations and Lenders. Comments included:

*When it first started up it was very helpful and we were just grateful for it because it was the only source of funding. Also quite a lot of LAs match funded it which was good because a lot of soft work is done before incorporation and it wasn't enough to pay for doing things like site investigation in those days so I think a lot of work pro-bono to try and help things along. (Zac, TA)*

*It was a very valuable fund. It was very good at creating that pipeline of projects and supporting them ... The number of projects and applications provides evidence of the success of that Fund. (Felicity, Sector)*

## **6.2 Navigating the process**

The process of developing a CLT was likened to navigating a tricky journey by a number of interviewees. At the start of the journey and without a road map communities were often lost and unsure of which way to turn in order to get going. For the majority of evaluation participants it was the technical advisor that was critical in supporting groups to write their map and kickstart their journey. The TA acted as a highly knowledgeable guide along the road, supporting them through the many twists and turns encountered along the route and advising on the best direction in which to head. However a minority of communities will already have had their route fully planned and no amount of advice would have persuaded them to deviate and try another path. For these groups the SatNav had been pre-programmed and alternative routes were dismissed, even where the evidence would suggest that taking an alternative tack would have been prudent (This point is further explored in the *Challenges* section 6.8.2).

### **6.2.1 Starting the journey**

Analysis of the data reveals that the early stage support was significant because it provided communities with a starting point and enabled them to start their journey. As Liam (TA) comments:

*Applying for the grant has been a good way to say yes we are serious, we do want to start on this journey, and we're keen to have some advice and assistance which gives us guidance about what that journey is and how we can take it forward (Liam, TA)*

Comments from interviewees reiterated how valuable the advice of TAs was, particularly in the early days of the Fund and in areas where there was no other source of support. *'Knowing where to go and who to ask what questions'* was perceived as *'significant'* and *'hugely important'*. The support was regarded as *'significant in setting them off on the right path ... Being able to think through with someone with the experience what you want to achieve'*. As James (TA) explains:

*For a community that wants to understand what CLTs have to offer and wants someone to come along and explain and talk them through it in a day, there's no one to do that in the absence of the CLT fund. SUF is brilliant for that because it gets them from the conversation in the pub or something they've heard about to a much better formed idea of what they can do. (James, TA)*

*The early CLTN [sic] support got us going and got us into a brilliant relationship with the City Council which has then funded our work since ... Due to the Fund we've developed very good connections with Housing Strategy at City Council who had community-led housing funds to spend and since then we have had two further grants for a feasibility study which got us going on the site, and we've now been awarded £260,000 pre-development costs for the whole of the upfront site work, planning permission, legal issues, and doing a partnership with an HA. (Crispin, CLT)*

Indeed there is a general view that not having access to this advice very early on in the process would have resulted in CLTs developing far more slowly, not developing at all or taking the wrong path; the key issue being knowing where to start:

*There are so many critical points where you can say 'if that hadn't happened this would've failed'. And no doubt for communities to get good advice at the start to help them shape their ideas is one of those moments that helped a lot of them progress that might otherwise have melted away. (James, TA)*

*Far fewer groups would've formed if that funding hadn't been available and it would've slowed their progress. It's essential. That initial funding is critical for that first step. The most important thing is that people know where to get the money. The funding environment is very complex for people to work through ... Particularly as it's an environment that communities are not familiar with. (Jane, Sector)*

*It was essential for groups to have that technical expertise right from the outset because otherwise Groups might choose the wrong path for scheme. (Felicity, Sector)*

The above comments very much ring true with the way communities talk about the very early stages of CLT development. Greg (TA) describes how he had heard about community land trusts but was uncertain about how to proceed or:

*... think it through or what steps to take. We applied to the Fund and we were able to bring in expertise which was great. It gave us freedom to develop an idea without committing to the process straight away. It helped to demonstrate that community groups can take this forward. (Greg, TA)*

Participants also talked about the need for specialist advice in the context of *'groups who had quite often not done this before'* (Christopher, Sector). A significant number of participants considered that there is a risk of communities spending a lot of time trying to work out what they need to do and how:



*... the most difficult thing often is where to start and deciding on how they want to deliver schemes ... It was really needed to actually get projects off the ground because they're lay people, and volunteers and can't pay for things out of their own pocket. (Louise, Hub)*

*I think it's complicated for early stage groups just to have that very basic understanding of what they're taking on. It can be quite daunting so to actually have a direct advisor, someone who can actually go through stuff with them is essential. (Rita, Staff)*

### 6.2.2 Moving Forward

The importance of the Fund in enabling communities 'to move forward' is mentioned several times by interviewees:

*For the rural villages where there was no other source of advice and support it was very important ... so by using the SUF they had their issues framed for them, they got an idea of the challenges they were facing, some ideas of how to meet those challenges and then move forward. It's really difficult for community groups to know how to take things forward on their own and it's a lot of stress to try and figure it out whereas there's a body of knowledge growing in the sector and if community groups can access that knowledge then it makes a significant difference to them moving forward and take a bit of the pressure off on what they have to do and the sense of responsibility they have. (Zoe, TA)*

*Supporting a group of people coming together with the aspiration to provide affordable housing for local people but don't really know what to do next – the issues and practical ways of how to take the project forward ... [SUF] provided invaluable support, if hadn't had it far more difficult to see how these embryonic groups could be helped. (Liam, TA)*

*A group of people from a geographical location would get together having come across CLTs and think it was a good idea ... but beyond good will and a small amount of relevant knowledge or skill but they wouldn't know how to take it forward. Not just in terms of the practicalities but also in terms of not really having an understanding of what a commitment it was, and the time frame – how long it can take. (Frances, Fund)*

The point about the process taking a long time was also made by Richard (TA) who felt strongly that communities 'have to know what they're letting themselves in for! And that it's going to change their lives for the next few years'. Lewis (Fund) suggested that 'communities can spend a lot of unnecessary time going round and round the houses and not being clear about which decisions they need to make at the early stage' thus 'Having the right TA to go in and advise the group is really important' (Lewis, Fund).

### 6.2.3 Staying on track

The notion of setting off on a journey was also employed by a number of participants to describe the process of keeping groups focused and on track. Christopher (Sector) commented that there is:

*Potential in any group for people to wander off in their discussions down alleyways and cul-de-sacs that might take them off the core purposes. The broader challenge is that there are no guarantees and you can take people down a certain road and they hit practical barriers of not being able to progress in way they desired. (Christopher, Sector)*

*Support with developing the vision and what route to go down is vital so that communities can assess what they want to do and develop clarity of purpose. (Louise, Hub)*

The reasons for this might be because they are:

*... trying to do something where there's no availability or in a very active marketplace where other players able to move in a quicker and more nimble manner start ups not able to from perspective of not having the money in hand to be able to engage in the market as and when necessary. (Christopher, Sector)*

This clearly highlights the complexity of the community-led housing process, where communities need to be accompanied as they navigate their way through the twists and turns of a road.

### **6.3 The importance of risk**

The positive impact of early stage risk taking is talked about by several participants in relation to both the SUF and wider support available. One interviewee observed how important it was to emerging groups that the Fund was prepared to invest in something which may or may not materialise. As George (Fund) explains, the Fund was:

*... happy to take risks at the very earliest stage and happy to make small grants available to give organisations to explore whether a CLT right for them. That's been a real strength. It hasn't always resulted in CLTs coming forward but has helped people realise whether a CLT is the right model for them. (George, Fund)*

There are two areas of the country where the SUF was not a significant source of funding. This is due to the business model used by local technical advisors. In one area James (TA) explains how public funding enabled him to provide free scoping and then achieve financial sustainability by recovering costs as projects reached various milestones: planning consent, start on site and completion. In addition Councils in the area gave £5,000 for legal costs which meant that the only communities that needed Stage 3 funds were where councils '*just didn't have the money to pay for it*'. The second area of the country benefited from a very supportive local authority and is another '*example of how things can develop differently*' (Trevor, CLT).

#### **6.3.1 Confidence**

The observation about organisations being prepared to take very early stage risk was made by several other interviewees. Firstly in the context of giving groups confidence and a boost, and secondly in terms of providing additional support. Some respondents noted that the SUF instilled confidence in them to take action and '*to engage with landowners to jointly develop plans for affordable housing in our villages*'. Another wrote '*It gave us the confidence to identify the opportunity and establish a CLT*'. Confidence was also mentioned by a number of interviewees. Richard (TA) suggests that '*giving them confidence*' will help to turn:

*... their basic idea or their ambition ... very quickly into some kind of credible idea of what the project could be like. It's difficult but it's possible ... In the early days it was about instilling confidence in people that there was a model that could help people do what they wanted to do ... It's about giving people confidence that they can do it. (Richard, TA)*

Two interviewees also considered that simply having a supportive framework in place played a significant role in encouraging communities that community-led housing was something worth pursuing:

*This gets you to the next step to see that there are people, organisations and funding that want you to do well. I think that's inspiring and motivational and confidence building. (Susan, Fund)*

*It was less about the money and more about the fact that the grant gave people confidence that what they were doing was worth doing. That a group of funders worthwhile recipients of some funding – a morale boost, we see value in what you're doing. (Frances, Fund)*

The support of the NCLTN in building confidence was also commented on:

*The Network team were very hands-on. They knew the people, the personalities, the organisations and that helps to build confidence, and being part of a wider network helps. (Gail, Sector)*

#### **6.4 The right advice**

As discussed, the research reveals that access to technical advice is perceived to have been the most significant aspect of the SUF in enabling groups to proceed. One interviewee remarked that the TAs *'were absolutely amazing', 'often working beyond cash allocation'* (Felicity, Sector). This section explores the role of the Technical Advisors in more detail.

##### **6.4.1 Making the most of the time**

A few interviewees suggested that, given the complexities involved in the process of establishing a CLT, a limitation of the Fund was that it only provided Groups with three days of support. James (TA) made the point that it is difficult, and at times impossible, to lump the time into single days. Instead support is made up of hours, half days, and phone calls. One project, for example, required 50 project team meetings over six years. Moreover James (TA) highlighted that there are times when difficulties and sensitivities emerge that can only be resolved in person. This meant that some TAs went beyond:

*... providing the allocated three days, offering support, coaching and advice over a much longer period. Indeed some groups continue to be in touch with their TA. (Zoe, TA)*

Freddie (TA) also identified the challenge of *'going in, delivering what you said you would do and then extracting yourself ... Groups do hang on, especially where [you] have a good relationship going'*. His response to this was to find different ways to support Groups to optimise the amount of time available other than through visits and face-to-face support. This included offering meetings via Skype, and putting together a workshop and running a full day's training with everyone in the room in order to *get everyone moving at the same time and at the same pace'*. Moreover:

*A big issue was that there's always one person who's the point of confluence for all the information. Getting people to come together one Saturday for a morning's training starts to establish things and they move much faster rather than contact with just one person. (Freddie, TA)*

Three years later Freddie (TA) is still in contact with one group. He does not have the resources to help them but he talks to them regularly, helping them 'structure their thoughts'.

There are differing perspectives on how to deliver the advice. Malcolm (CLT) describes how there their TA 'has been a star. More than helpful'. For them, 'getting the right amount of advice at the right time rather than getting it all in a lump has been very helpful'. Further comments illustrate the importance of expert advice to convince others:

*It's one thing for a parish clerk to come up with a good idea but it's even better if it's underscored by professional experience! It was particularly important for that. I knew all about this stuff but you wouldn't expect any town or parish council to go ahead on the basis of what one person thought! And then you get you get into the detail and it helps to have someone who's actually been through the process to talk from the horse's mouth ... The fact that he's done it, he has first hand knowledge of the process, not from a textbook, is very important. (Malcolm, CLT)*

The evident value to groups of early advice underlines the importance of ensuring that TAs are equipped and available to support them. It also raises two questions: firstly about how to maintain a network of quality assured advisors, and secondly about whether Groups are receiving the same level of advice and support under the new funding arrangements.

With regard to the quality of advice offered by TAs, the significant majority of participants rated their advice very highly. This may in part be due to the close relationship that the Network had with Advisors which meant that they were confident that the advice communities received was 'sound' and 'would enable groups to make informed decisions'. Generally speaking advisors were matched on a geographical basis but sometimes it was the case that there was a particular group that needed very specific support with an issue. The Network were often aware of where advisors had been working on a similar issue with another group and so could match advisors' specific knowledge and experience. As Lewis (Fund) stated, advice was provided by 'a recommended pool of people. It was either a name we knew or no one'.

There are three examples that further highlight the importance of an experienced TA being able to provide the right advice. Gail's, (Sector) comments draw attention to the unique suite of knowledge and skills that are needed by a TAs in order to maximise the potential for a group to be successful in developing affordable housing. She says:

*Advisors may be people who understand affordable housing but they perhaps do not have experience of advising people on what it is to be a client for a first time, or how to approach landowners, how to negotiate, how to find sites, or broker a relationship with a local authority. (Gail, Sector)*

For her there are too few appropriately qualified TAs and 'there is still a gap in expertise and advisory skills'. Related to this issue Sally (CLT) makes the point that when undertaking something new 'you

*don't know what you don't know'* and it was not until they started to work with a second advisor that they realised the advice and support originally received could have been better.

*Our first TA was good on the big picture and on the legals but looking back I think we needed some basic nitty, gritty stuff. We weren't at all good at using the land registry website and now our current TA has given us a tutorial which has been brilliant and very helpful. So I think there's some very basic information that people assume CLTs know about and they don't necessarily.* (Sally, CLT)

A third community had a very clear idea of what they wanted to do and how. Their preference was for a female TA which at the time was not possible. The community spent some time working with a (male) TA but did not feel that their concept was fully understood.

#### 6.4.2 Consolidating and developing expertise

There is now in place an accreditation programme for advisors to try and ensure that they have the knowledge to provide the most appropriate advice to groups. The course consists of four modules each of which takes two days and is followed by a test of understanding. The course and is accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing. Currently, however, while attendance at the training has been good, relatively few people have become fully accredited to date<sup>7</sup>. A few participants are not convinced that the training does guarantee apposite advice. Comments included:

*Everyone can learn the information but many people have never worked with a group before. They're going through these modules and becoming accredited but the practical bit and the strategies and ways of working with different types of groups is currently missing. It can be taught. It has to be done in the field, with groups.* (Freddie, TA)

For Freddie (TA) training for TAs is important in order that there are established ways of doing things. However he adds that having completed the accreditation programme:

*I'm not sure that it's quite right. The best training I had was shadowing another TA for a day just to see how other advisors do it. And need some kind of quality control on the type of advice from more experienced advisors just to make sure the strategies are sound.* (Freddie, TA)

In addition to the highly valued advice provided by most TAs the support of the NCLTN was also mentioned a number of times, with one interviewee describing the Network as '*punching above their weight*'. (Gail, Sector)

Still, some participants consider that even now there are '*so many variables – sometimes I think it just comes down to luck!*' (Frances, Fund). Malcolm (CLT) also remarked that they had experienced a number of bits of good fortune including Parish Councillors '*being up for it*' in the first place, '*a number of people having encouraged us*' such as nearby CLT group, and local community housing enablers '*helping us put some pennies together*'. Crispin (CLT) also feels the process involves '*... an element of luck. There were only two sites of 20 houses each left over from the past ten years of development so we were able to latch on to those*'. It was:

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<sup>7</sup> Correct as of 2019.

*... unusual for new groups that we were able to do something because sites were available straight away. It was a matter of needing to act pretty quickly. Planning had lapsed for housing by a developer with no affordable housing and so needed to move quickly.* (Crispin, CLT)

## 6.5 A gap in support

Below the report examines whether participants perceive there to be the risk of a gap in future support and funding. The view is that there is now an infrastructure and better support available to emerging CLTs which *'probably wouldn't have happened if the SUF hadn't been in place for so long'* (James, TA). In addition it is considered that levels of funding are more realistic than previously and that this is *'the first time that the proper amount of funding has been made available'*. (Zac, TA).

Nevertheless there was a view from some participants that while there might not be a gap in funding there might be a gap in support at a critical point in the support lifecycle, and that the *'handholding aspect'* might be missing. The following section looks at the wider funding environment for community-led housing with a particular focus on Enabler Hubs.

### 6.5.1 Enabler Hubs

The initiative to set up Enabler Hubs around the country stemmed from the success of earlier Umbrella Hubs in the South West and the Lake District: sub regional sources of technical advice on a range of community-led housing models. Community Led Homes (CLH) and the NCLTN has promoted the Enabler Hub initiative, providing them with funding to *'help groups make informed decisions, think through some of these things, make a good application to the CHF, choose a site that has real promise'* (Stuart, Staff). Where an Enabling Hub doesn't exist, funding worth £6,000 is available for technical advice from an accredited advisor. In addition, groups can apply for seed corn funding of £4,000 for their miscellaneous start-up costs. However there is a difference of opinion about whether the Hubs will provide the close and deep support that communities valued through the SUF, described as *'handholding'* by several participants. Some respondents consider that the new way of working will deliver the necessary support and *'holding hands further along'* (Freddie, TA) but there is also a concern from some participants that the new approach will not meet Groups' needs, particularly in the very early stages of project development. Indeed it has been suggested that Groups are applying for funding in areas where Hubs exist precisely for that reason.

There also seems to be a general perception that the Enabling Hub regime is underpinned by a very different ethos. One interviewee suggested that, while *'things are heading in the right direction, the bureaucracy needs to be made smoother and friendlier'*. Another interviewee raised the issue that while a lot of people have accessed the website and ticked the eligibility checker, applications are not following through<sup>8</sup>. For him a key difference between the Enabling Hub regime and the SUF is the initial person-contact with communities. The system is now all website based and it is not possible for communities to ask questions and *'that's the bit that's missing'* (Zac, TA). He adds:

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<sup>8</sup> Correct as of 2019.

*A key contact is needed so that groups can talk things through. It's all about lay people taking on a complicated subject and if you can't provide a real human being for them to talk to you can't expect them to do anything. (Zac, TA)*

The human-side of the application process is also mentioned by James (TA) who says that *'just because the system is online and digital it doesn't mean that you don't need a human to support and manage the system'* because *'it's hard for a project to fit into boxes'*.

Richard (TA) picks up on the point that the problems communities encounter as they progress in the very early stages are not being overcome as quickly as they were with SUF support. For him:

*... the relatively informal approach of the SUF has been replaced by something which is highly systematised, online, highly bureaucratic with no handholding and I suspect that people in the Network would say 'Yep. We told you so'! It's that hand holding that gets people going and having that personal relationship with a TA is very important. That first day often turns into several days and being available on the phone. So groups at the moment don't seem to be getting that. It's much more rigid and groups don't always get the same person to talk to. [The SUF] was unique. The continuity is also really important." (Richard, TA)*

The expertise of the Technical Advisors is again referred to by an interviewee, Pat (TA), who says:

*The advisors had the expertise. They knew the overarching relevant pathway and so could flag the stages at which groups would have to make significant decisions regarding viability, allocations, policies etc and I don't think the new regime has that specific expertise. (Pat, TA)*

The handholding is also regarded as important by two other participants:

*Staff capacity increased to help groups think things through and to have a conversation between the visits so directly part of the support that CLTs got. It's very important to have that hand holding, to be able to look at a draft and to answer questions very quickly. (Stuart, Staff)*

*Having to ask for help and do a certain amount hand holding there are some groups that wouldn't have got off the ground if that support hadn't been available. (Susan, Fund)*

Felicity (Sector) picks up on the concern about continuity of support. She stresses that:

*A lot more support is necessary than just financial, and it's essential to ensure continuity of support. Enabling Hubs have a bit of money but they need to be there for a long time, not just the start up time. Groups who have the right support are turning around much more quickly than groups that don't have any funding from the outset. (Felicity, Sector)*

There is also a perception that groups will be expected to approach Enabling Hubs with a clear idea of which advisor will be right for them. As Zac (TA) explains:

*The applicants have to come up with their own providers whereas a strength with SUF was that advisors were nominated. With the current funding stream they have to go out and find an advisor. There have been issues with the advisors that they're coming up with and conflicts of interest are coming up, there's huge disparity in daily rates, lack of appropriate knowledge and experience. (Zac, TA)*

In addition to this, current provision of support is perceived as *'not uniform'*. As Rita (Staff) highlights, where Hubs have been working for a long time, groups will have improved access to support compared with places where Hubs are just getting started. Another participant stated that *'Hubs should provide more direct support'*:

*Groups are still struggling with issues of how they negotiate with HAs, working with banks, contracts ... which suggests there is a gap of support. If you're a lay person involved with a community group you're very reliant on external legal input and haven't necessarily got the depth of expertise at hand or experience to help you through that. On top of this, working with design teams, briefing architects and making sure you get what you want from a project before you're getting your price. Some groups are struggling to fill funding gaps where they have come in over budget. (Gail, Sector)*

As Rita (Staff) says:

*There is no resource for people to be able to answer questions and dealing with community groups is not the same as dealing with big Housing Associations. There are a lot of questions from groups. People asking questions about things that if you read the guidance the answers are in there but people want to ask a person to double check and want some reassurance that they are doing the right thing. (Rita, Staff)*

Victor (TA) draws attention to the variable support that communities currently receive from local authorities. He describes groups as being *'being messed around by their Local Authority'*. This particular LA has been given a huge amount of CLH money but *'they are refusing to give any small grants for setting up'*. This is complete contrast to another LA *'where they couldn't have been more helpful'*. This LA has made a significant amount of funding available for an advisor, architect's drawings and viability work:

*... all at risk so that the community group could talk to the landowner seriously, having a proper idea about what the site was worth and do a deal in terms of the land value and also to be in control of the project. So when they tendered to an HA could show them their scheme and choose a partner to deliver what they were looking for. Money provided by the LA knowing that the land deal could fall through. Because in a position could act quickly it's actually probably de-risked the scheme and now in a partnership with a HA and landowner accepted an agreement on land value and all because LA made revenue funding at risk. (Victor, TA)*

Enabler Hubs are required to offer advice on all forms of community-led housing, not just community land trusts. One participant described this as *'muddying the waters'*. Liam (TA) explains:

*The simplicity and clarity of the SUF ... it [the process] isn't as clear now. It's added to the confusion groups are struggling to understand and work through the different types of community-led housing ... co-housing, co-op, a CLT, self-build and custom build ... It's added a level of complexity. (Liam, TA)*

This perhaps underlines the importance of good early stage advice and support:

*We are getting some feedback from the Hubs that there may be a role for advisors to do some very early work. There may still need to be some upfront investment to help communities to think things through.*



*If Hubs are having to do that with every community might just become unsustainable for them. (Stuart, Staff)*

The NCLTN was also a part of the handholding and personal support in tandem with the advisors. Staff capacity increased to help groups think things through and to have conversations between the visits, all as part of the support for CLTs. Sally (CLT), for example, talks about how the accessibility of, and contact with, people at the Network was key. She says *'I've had worries about particular things. I've rung up and asked and they've always been able to help me. The Network has been fabulous'*.

Not only is there concern from some people that Enabling Hub might not be *'being used in the right way'* (Susan, Fund), particularly the perceived loss of person-to-person support, there is also significant disquiet about the long term future of community-led housing should funding come to an end. Susan (Fund) was one participant who voiced concern that there will be *'massive gaps in funding for community-led housing groups if it just disappears'*. Added to which *'All the momentum that groups have started to create – all wasted. It's not good if they're just getting started and then they get cut off at the knees'*.

Jane (Sector) also remarks that *'there is more national and region interest in community-led housing than ever before'* and, as Christopher (Sector) states, lots of grant funding is available, but *'that all assumes that you're already in the game'* and, as Zac (TA) observes:

*Funding came in really late, a short window of opportunity to start thinking about projects, which means a lot of projects won't get as far as applying for funding in such a short window of opportunity so the fund needs to be there longer. One of the key points is that it needs to be out there for a decent amount of time so that it actually reflects the development timetable. Because first of all there's a lot for groups to actually absorb and organise just to start thinking about doing things and then as things become more formal, these are open ended processes you don't have an expectation that get done in a certain amount of time so the longer the dung open the more chance will be accessed. (Zac, TA)*

The point about the funding coming in late was also made by James (TA) in relation to how this might impact on their ability to become financially sustainable in a relatively short amount of time. He observed that:

*All scoping is meant to be provided by the Hubs and they then recover their costs in order to maintain their financial sustainability. Whether they will or not is another question. The CHF grant has come so late in the day that it has given all the Hubs a very short period of time to invest grants, recycle them and become financially sustainable. If a project takes five or six years and they've only got two years of funding then it's clear that they're going to have a problem. There will be a gap between funding ending and them being able to pay back the grant they've invested. (James, TA)*

## **6.6 Strengths of the Start Up Fund**

This section of the report explores the perceived key strengths of the SUF and looks firstly at Advice and Support and then the Administration of the Fund.

### 6.6.1 Advice and Support

As discussed above the advice and support provided by the TAs was seen as a huge strength and a significant reason for groups' success, as the comments below highlight:

*Encouragement and access to expert advice ... It was exactly what we wanted when we wanted it (Malcolm, CLT)*

*Support with developing the vision and what route to go down and help with assessing what they want to do. And it helped communities develop clarity of purpose. (Louise, Hub)*

*Giving groups the confidence to begin. Where they were working with a TA it simplified the process and speeded up the set up. (Jane, Sector)*

*Contact with Network. I've had worries about particular things. I've rung up and asked and they've always been able to help me. Network has been fabulous. (Sally, CLT)*

### 6.6.2 Administration of the Fund

The way the Fund was administered was regarded as both a strength and a weakness. From a management point of view the process of applying for funding was described as '*clunky and long winded*' with three different stages which generated a lot of work for the organisation responsible for overseeing the Fund. It also led to over-estimating of funding needs due to groups having their day of advice but not necessarily progressing to establishing a CLT. Although the Network's practice of paying advisors directly was time-consuming, this is seen as being an important in making the SUF as enabling as possible for groups at the very early stages:

*Groups didn't need to have a bank account so they were allocated an advisor and didn't have to worry about how to pay them so from an admin point of view it was a lot of work but a huge advantage for groups not yet in a position to have a bank account or even have someone hold the funds for them. (Zac, TA)*

Flexibility in how the Fund was used by communities in the very early stages was also deemed a strength, and part of the enabling ethos underpinning the SUF which was '*about nurturing groups, not about making life difficult*', ensuring that communities '*could focus on what they do and not worry about unnecessary criteria and dos and don'ts and ineligible expenditure*' (Stuart, Staff). Liam (TA) feels that this flexibility has been lost because '*the big organisations can be very long winded and bureaucratic in their processes and SUF was flexible and fast with just one person administering it*'. His '*hunch*' is that this will slow things down because the process has become more bureaucratic (Liam, TA).

Harriet (Hub) also felt that the fact there was no clawback of the funds if the money had not been spent within six months was also a key strength because it meant that groups could develop at their own pace. Coupled with this flexibility the SUF was seen as relatively easy to access because groups:

*... didn't have to have a fully formed project to be able to access it. It was designed to help groups to begin that process. It really helped to spark things off and provide that reassurance and guidance to groups where they didn't know where else to turn and could have ended up going down a different path and making mistakes or giving up entirely. (Zoe, TA)*

A particular strength for another interviewee, Pat (TA), was:

*The way that it was staged so the scoping day could either be the beginning of something much larger or the beginning and end of it. (Pat, TA)*

The partnership between the funders was also regarded as very strong by all those involved and ‘a real positive of the scheme’. A funder agreed that they were ‘All on board from Day 1 and were always of an accord about what we’re trying to achieve’ even though they were potentially interested in ‘slightly different things’. The committee’s ‘understanding of what groups are dealing with’ was also considered a key strength. They ‘were very engaged, they wanted learn ... Everyone was very supportive and worked well together’.

## **6.7 Weaknesses of the Start Up Fund**

A few participants identified areas of the Start Up Fund which could have been better. Below the report examines the perceived weakness of the SUF. They are monitoring and evaluation, and the time limited nature of the SUF.

### **6.7.1 Monitoring and evaluation**

Firstly, while it is considered that financial controls improved over the period of the SUF there was a view held by a few that the aftercare might have been better. There was no ongoing monitoring so it was very difficult to find out what happened to groups beyond Stage 3:

*Having put money into supporting groups to navigate their way through the process there was little resource left to catch up and follow up over the next 3, 6, 9 months and find out more about what support they needed to continue navigating their next steps. (Rita, Staff)*

Moreover, ‘from an evaluation point of view to have had more ongoing monitoring would have given us more information and we would have been able to see how projects have translated into the pipeline’ (Stuart, Staff).

Linked to this another participant observed that the SUF was very good at getting groups beyond the start up phase, but not quite the pre-development stage. There is a view that this might be where groups are stalling (Gail, Sector). Frances (Fund) also observed that she ‘always imagined a much stronger pipeline of CLTs coming through the SUF getting the technical assistance and moving into pre-development and development and that didn’t happen’. She continues:

*There was always a gap. I think if you were with an umbrella, they were perhaps better at bridging that gap between the SUF and moving on to the investment side of things. It’s possibly just too big a step up from one to the other and there was some kind of intermediary point that was beyond the remit of the SUF and below the remit of the pre-development fund that we were never able to narrow that gap sufficiently to make it a seamless transition from one to the other. (Frances, Fund)*

However a few interviewees considered that the lack of consistent monitoring and evaluation has meant that it is tricky to identify precisely at which stage of the process the SUF was most useful and

whether it could have been better targeted. The results of this evaluation would seem to indicate that the initial Stage 1 funding was essential in most cases for groups to get started.

For another interviewee a further impact of the absence of established monitoring and evaluation systems was that the SUF was described '*not very accountable in the early days*' which, he argues, led to groups forming, using the SUF to incorporate but then deciding that a project was too big and so not progressing. He adds that there are now more options such as a lease with the HA which is '*lighter touch*' and no longer '*are you prepared to commit your soul to this process for the next five or ten years*' (Victor, TA). The perceived lack of accountability may go some way to explaining how the SUF '*got caught out*' (Lewis, Fund). In this case he feels that '*the CLT Network partly took their eye off the ball*'. At one panel meeting an increase in funding was requested but then at the following meeting the SUF had to be closed because a tranche of Stage 3 applications came in. He says '*There was good sound decision making with the information we had to hand and then suddenly we were blown out of the water*'.

### 6.7.2 Time limited nature of the SUF

The time limited nature of the SUF has been mentioned above and was regarded as a weakness by a few interviewees. As previously highlighted, communities can spend a considerable amount of time:

*... thinking about things, asking more questions, wanting to open it up from an initial group to a public meeting, and wondering about the different forms of community-led housing and then once you're into it there's an almost infinite support and advice that communities can ask for to stay on the path towards a project. And SUF didn't pay for that. It helps to shape ideas but not really the shaping of the project – identifying a site, negotiating with a landowner, engaging with the local authority on grant rates, working out the finances. (James, TA)*

This links to a point made by another participant who also highlighted the short-term nature of the SUF. In the very early days it was necessary to have a short-term intervention, one reason for this being that there were few TAs available at that time to provide support and a second being that the SUF did not provide grants beyond the pre development stage. However, for Zoe (TA):

*One of weaknesses is that it's just a short term intervention and what we know from other research in the sector is that where support is consistently provided by an advisor for the duration of the project - that's the most effective way to support a group ... From an advisor's point of view it was not entirely satisfactory to do a quick bit of work and then leave them, particularly because you can't possibly cover everything in such a short amount of time or build up that trusting relationship ... On the other hand this the best thing that could have been delivered in the circumstances at that time when not a lot of advisors around the country and groups just needed help to get going. (Zoe, TA)*

## 6.8 Challenges

This section explores the challenges that some participants came across during the process of working with the SUF. The challenges identified are community engagement and following advice.

### 6.8.1 Community engagement

Community engagement was identified as a key challenge. One interviewee for example emphasises how it:

*... takes a number of key individuals to hold the thing together. The ability to rally the community around a cause. It needs core people and how to keep whole community interested. (Lewis, Fund)*

Zoe (TA) also remarked that sometimes groups have to do a lot of work in order to justify their existence to the wider community. This was also highlighted by Crispin (CLT):

*It's always been quite hard work to engage the community because the site came up first and small group of people wanting to act so it's always been a struggle continuously trying to broaden our appeal and widen our membership. It's ongoing challenge to develop the community interest. Partly because there was a very negative reaction to the very large private developers and housing in general. (Crispin, CLT)*

However even having a core group cannot make up for apathy and lack of interest of the wider community. James (TA) asserts that while the need for flexible technical support is important:

*The most important quality for the groups is commitment to your community because these projects are quite difficult and unless you're heavily committed you don't have the determination to follow it through. Possibly more imp than building skills or legal skills because those can all be compensated for by tech advisors by TAs can never compensate for lack of commitment from the community. More important to get people who care rather than people with the right skills. (James, TA)*

One interviewee explained how he and a small group of committed individuals worked with a TA for a year to try and develop a CLT because they were worried about 'being obliterated by concrete'. However, the wider community were not interested in taking the project forward and there was a lack of people willing to help with the project. In addition the local council are putting together a five year plan for housing which has meant that there is hope that the need for appropriate and affordable housing will be met.

### 6.8.2 Following Advice

The hope is that the right advice from a Technical Advisor will result in groups being more likely to be able to progress. TAs can advise on the similar experiences of other groups such as how they consulted with their communities, established housing need, adopting terms of reference and so on. However, the evidence would seem to suggest that it is rarely possible to set a direction and keep to it; there are always diversions. Essentially though, as Susan (Fund) said, 'what the issues were and how they manifested themselves were all quite different in different areas which made structuring the support for CLTs quite tricky'. This, she adds, is the 'nature of community-led housing'. As an example she tells the story of a landowner who wanted to donate land to the group but after his death the family did not want to honour the deal. The challenge was 'bespoke and particular to that circumstance so to generalise is really difficult. They are so very different and specific challenges'. Victor (TA) commented that the uniqueness of each group's journey was related to their different levels of knowledge and experience, as well as to the circumstances of their projects:

*Hopefully with the right advice groups will take the right steps. But groups haven't done housing before so they need time to understand what the steps are – they don't necessarily follow the steps you want them to follow so have to work with them on that. (Victor, TA)*

James (TA) added that, as a TA, his team specifically avoids the use of template documentation in order to ensure that each iteration of a project is specific to its particular people and circumstances 'in a way that they feel is appropriate'.

The experience of another TA endorses this view that there is no established road which groups will unswervingly follow. Zac (TA) makes the point that groups interested in community-led housing can comprise a range of capabilities, from very inexperienced to very self-confident people:

*There are lots of different ways groups can ask for support and it won't be a predictable process. They'll put it together in a way that they feel is appropriate. (Zac, TA)*

Sometimes a community has a very clear idea of how they want to progress. Crispin (CLT) describes how the group he was part of already had experience of community-led housing as part of a housing coop. Having been through that experience they had the confidence that they could 'make things happen' but 'the last thing we were going to do was go through all that again and develop everything ourselves'. They:

*... felt strongly that wanted to ally with someone who already knows how to do this business and get them on board to deliver a scheme that meets our needs. We learnt a lot from one particular area with expertise in partnering about houses in perpetuity and avoiding the right to buy. (Crispin, CLT)*

One TA tells of how he advised a Group that they did not have to 'do this all themselves'. He explained the option of a leasehold agreement with a housing association but they 'point blank refused. They didn't even want to talk a Housing Association'. He adds:

*You never know the personality of each group. It's always different. They've got certain things that they will need to work through and at the same time they're going to have their own views about how to go about all of that. (Victor, TA)*

As the above highlights, one of the challenges of ensuring the most appropriate advice is that, although there may be some commonality of circumstance between Groups, it cannot be assumed that any two journeys will be the same. This underscores the importance of an experienced advisor with wide knowledge of different paths to success.

## **6.9 Broader impact of the Start Up Fund**

This section looks at the broader impact of the SUF beyond its original aims and objectives as discussed above. The broader impacts are: upskilling of technical advisors; wider community impact; and the wider funding environment.

### 6.9.1 Upskilling of Technical Advisors

One of the impacts of the SUF has been upskilling the Technical Advisors. The fund has been able to bring new people in with relevant experience, and has enabled the networking and sharing of learning and expertise from different parts of the country.

### 6.9.2 Wider Community Impact

The SUF has been vital in terms of getting groups going and giving them the confidence to get started on a project. Comments on the broader community impact included:

*Groups that coalesced around this work brought in wider skills and professional acumen and those groups became stronger in terms of their confidence and their belief in being able to do something.* (Jane, Sector)

Two representatives from CLTs highlighted that being able to develop affordable housing in their local area has enabled people with roots in a particular area to continue living there. George (Fund) comments that he hopes:

*They have enabled young families to remain in an area that they would otherwise have had to have moved out of. This will hopefully have impacted on school attendances so that rural schools stay open. It's also had a significant impact on local business and local shops and they've been able to maintain footfall where they otherwise might've closed.* (George, Fund)

Zac (TA) also feels that the SUF enabled groups to become empowered to take on other community projects. He feels that in high value areas where there a lot of second homes:

*... a lot of people in a community get forgotten and this is a way they can get energised about local issues. Sometimes it can galvanise actions which can overtake the housing project.* (Zac, TA)

Harriet (Hub) made a similar point about how the SUF can help to reinvigorate the local community:

*Development and planning can be areas where communities can feel quite alienated and 'done to' so SUF helps to reinvigorate the community and bring them back in to the engagement process, showing that they can have a say in what happens in their community. Communities can be very cynical at first but continued engagement and having their voices heard can lead to communities to realise that they do have an element of control and decision making power via the CLT.* Harriet, Hub)

The SUF has helped to build capacity in communities. As Jane (Sector) says:

*Groups that coalesced around this work brought in a wider group of skills and professional acumen and those groups became stronger in terms of their confidence and their belief in being able to do something.* (Jane, Sector)

Beyond the impact on communities of building houses George (Fund) considers that by enabling young families to remain in the local area instead of having to move away means which:

*... hopefully will have impacted on school attendances and rural schools will be able to stay open. And it will have a significant on local business and local shops by maintaining footfall where otherwise they might've closed. (George, Fund)*

### 6.9.3 The Wider Funding Environment

The significant majority of participants considered the SUF to have had a substantial impact on the wider funding environment. Indeed a number of participants remarked that without the SUF the community-led housing sector as a whole *'would be a lot further back than it currently is'*. Participants felt that there are a lot of homes *'coming out of SUF which otherwise wouldn't have happened'* and, most significantly, the SUF has been *'critical in evidencing the need and the value of having small revenue grants up front, and staged'* (Liam, TA). In addition:

*Without the SUF helping CLTs and the Network over the years without that combination would've been very difficult to secure the larger pot that's become available. (George, Fund)*

*Without groups starting and forming and incorporating then other funders wouldn't have been able to see the demand for community-led housing. (Zoe, TA)*

Moreover, through the SUF the sector has been able to demonstrate to government and other funders that there is *'good reason to invest in community-led housing'* (Christopher, Sector). As Zac (TA) states:

*It's been a burgeoning movement which has resonated with politicians ...The influence of the early Start Up Funds has given us a huge amount of political traction in terms of support for the community-led housing movement. (Zac, TA)*



## 7.0 CONCLUSION

This evaluation set out to answer the key questions about:

1. The landscape of funding and support for Community Land Trusts
2. The impact of the Start Up Fund in enabling supported CLTs to achieve their aims, and to explore the impact on local communities
3. The impact of the Start Up Fund on the wider CLT sector
4. The degree of success of the Fund in the programme's own terms, and in terms of achieving the longer term aims of the Fund
5. The total value of support being obtained by CLTs, including the proportion and relative importance of the Fund's contribution
6. The areas of strength and weakness of the Fund, and the key characteristics of the fund that contribute to their success or otherwise

Findings from the research seem to indicate that the current landscape of funding creates both opportunities and challenges. The opportunities have been created by increased funding for a network of Enabler Hubs which are designed to provide regional support on a range of community led housing models. However, there is a prevailing view from a number of participants that the way the Hubs are structured is missing the 'handholding' element from very experienced Technical Advisors which was a key constituent of the way the SUF worked. This element was regarded as a major strength and a significant reason for Groups being able to move forward successfully from a potential idea to becoming a legal entity with a business plan. The knowledge and experience of the Advisors was mentioned a lot. The training for TAs which is now available is welcomed. However, findings indicate that at this stage, the training needs to go hand in hand with experience in the field, mainly because of the diverse set of knowledge and skills that a TA requires in order to be able to respond effectively to diverse contexts.

Most participants consider the SUF had a significant impact on enabling CLTs to achieve their aims. The early stage support that the SUF offered resulted in communities being able to make informed decisions about whether and how they wanted to proceed much more quickly than would otherwise have been the case. The technical advice communities received was highly valued, and most groups felt that the support they received from their TA was critical in enabling them to move forward. There were two instances when the original advice was not viewed so positively. In one case a new TA had started work with the community and this is proceeding well. In the majority of cases the SUF has had a positive broader impact on communities, bringing people together and creating a sense of empowerment. Wider community apathy towards community-led housing would appear to be detrimental to a Group's progress, making it harder to successfully provide local community housing, and in one instance being the cause for a community no longer continuing.

Findings suggest that the SUF is perceived to have had a significant effect on the wider CLT sector and the community led housing funding environment. This is corroborated by the majority of participants. Indeed a number of participants remarked that without the SUF the community led housing sector as a whole would not be as advanced as it is and, very significantly the SUF has evidenced the need and value of funding for community led housing.

The main weakness identified by the evaluation centres on the absence of monitoring and evaluation systems and processes built into the SUF across its lifetime. This potentially meant that Groups were less accountable, particularly during the SUF's earlier iterations, and without consistent monitoring it is harder to identify where potential gaps in support lie.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Start Up Fund Survey

##### Introduction

The National CLT Network set up the CLT Start Up Fund to support emerging and newly formed CLTs across England and Wales. The programme first started in 2008 and came to an end in December 2018.

We are now carrying out an evaluation of the Fund. We would very much like to find out more about how successful the fund was in helping you achieve your aims, as well as your thoughts on what could have been done better, or differently.

We are also asking for some CLTs to participate in telephone interviews about the Fund. If you would be happy to be contacted please leave your name and contact details at the end of this form. *You are under no obligation to do this.*

**All data will be treated in the strictest confidence, and, where relevant, will be anonymised.**

We would be very grateful if you could complete the following questionnaire. Your comments will help us to plan the future work of the NCLTN.

**Many thanks!**

##### BACKGROUND

1. In what year was your CLT formed?

2. What is the approximate population of your 'area of benefit'?

3. Why did you decide to set up a CLT?

##### THE FUND

4. Please could you tell us about the funding you received?

##### 2008-2013

	<i>Please tick all that apply</i>
The Technical Assistance Fund	
The Feasibility Fund	

##### 2013 - 2018

	<i>Please tick all that apply</i>
a. <b>Stage 1:</b> Scope out the idea with a technical advisor, with one day of support worth £500	
b. <b>Stage 2:</b> If a CLT is an appropriate model and the plans show potential, Stage 2 provided a further 2 days of support with a technical advisor	
c. <b>Stage 3:</b> A grant of up to £4,000 to help get the CLT set-up and investment ready	

4a. Of any 'cash grant' received, what did you use this for?

**5. How many days of technical support did you receive, whether funded or voluntary**

	No. of days
A. Number of days funded by the CLT Start Up Fund (or the Technical Assistance Fund or the Feasibility Fund)	
B. Number of days funded from other sources	
C. Unfunded days eg through a technical advisor providing you with additional support on a voluntarily basis, or through suitably qualified and experienced volunteers with the community	
<b>D. Total number of days of technical support (A+B+C)</b>	

**6. What is the value of the CLT Fund in comparison to the total value of the project, including discounted assets such as land?**

	Value
E. Total value of technical support (number of days in D from above x £500)	£
F. Total cost of the project to date	£
G. Total value of discounts to land or property purchases (if any)	£
<b>H. Total value of project (E+F+G)</b>	£

**7. What did you find most useful about the support provided by the Fund?**

**8. Would you say that the CLT Start Up Fund was critical to your success?**

a) *Yes*      *No*      (Please tick one)

**8a. If yes, in what ways was it critical?**

**9. Within the funding provided, in what ways do you think the support could have been better or focused differently?**

**10. What challenges or difficulties did you experience while working with the Start Up Fund? (For example, local opposition, site finding, funding, capacity within your group, knowledge of the affordable housing world, planning, development costs)**

**11. If you were to initiate your project now, in your opinion, which funding sources would be most valuable?**

*(Please tick one only)*

- a    The Start-Up Fund
- b    Community-led Homes
- c    Enabling Hubs
- d    Other                      Please give further details: \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPACT**

**12. Please can you tell us about the homes you have delivered or have planned:**

	No. of homes
How many homes did you hope to deliver?	
How many homes have been delivered?	
How many homes do you have in the pipeline?	

**13. What projects have the CLT achieved to date?**

**14 What have been the main success factors in your achievement?** *(For example, the drive of the people in your group, the support of certain key partners or advisors, help from landowners)*

**15. What have been the wider impacts on the community of the CLT?** *(For example networks, coping with change, building confidence in the community)*

**16 What does your CLT hope to achieve in the next five years?**

**17. How would you value the support you received?**

*Please tick one box for each statement.*

Criteria	Excellent	Very good	OK	Not very good	Poor	N/A
Relationship with Technical Advisor						
Support from Technical Advisor						
Advice received from Technical Advisor						
Support received from the NCLTN						
Speed of the application process						
Feedback received from NCLTN						

**Many thanks for your time!**

**We would like to conduct telephone interviews with CLTs to find out more about your experiences with the Start Up Fund. If you would like to be interviewed, please supply name and contact details**

## **Appendix 2**

### **SUF Interview questions: Staff**

1. Please can you tell me your name, a bit about your background and your role with the NCLTN
2. Do you consider the Start Up Fund a significant source of support for emerging CLTs?
3. What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Fund?
4. What impact do you think the Fund has had on communities who have received support?
5. What impact do you see the fund as having had on the wider funding environment for CLTs?
  - a. What other support is available, from whom, who is it aimed at, and who is it reaching?

### **SUF Interview questions: Interested Parties**

1. Please can you tell me your name and your current role
2. Please can you tell me about your connection with the Start Up Fund
  - a. Do you think there are commonality of issues and challenges between groups
3. Do you consider the Start Up Fund a significant source of support for emerging CLTs?
  - a. If yes, why and how
  - b. If no, why not
4. What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Fund?
5. What wider impact do you think the Fund has had on communities who have received support?
6. Now that the SUF has ended do you feel there is a gap in the provision of support to emerging and newly formed CLTs?
7. What impact do you see the fund as having had on the wider funding environment for CLTs?
8. Is there anything you would like to add?

### **SUF interview questions: CLTs**

1. Please can you tell me how and why you came to apply to the Start Up Fund
2. How much did you apply for and how did you use the Fund?
  - a. Do/Did you have an ongoing relationship with the technical advisor?
3. What was good/bad about the application process?
4. What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the Fund?
  - a. What was most useful about the support provided by the Fund?
  - b. How important has been to your success as a group?
    - i. Could the group could have progressed without the Fund
5. What projects have you achieved so far?
6. What wider impact do think the Fund has had your on community
7. What future plans do you have as a CLT?
8. Is there anything you would like to add?

### Appendix 3

#### How the 'cash grant' was used

<i>Funding Received</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
2008-2013	
The Technical Assistance Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land purchase costs, lease costs, 106 agreement model rules</li> </ul>
The Feasibility Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Training</li> </ul>
2008-2013	
SUF Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoping Report by NCLTN Advisor</li> <li>Establishing the CLT and recruiting members from the community</li> </ul>
SUF Stage 1 and Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funds used to pay for incorporation and in developing proposals for some affordable housing</li> <li>Scoping days</li> <li>Advice</li> <li>Mainly for setting up the CLT (including marketing) and for support and guidance from an advisor plus solicitor costs</li> <li>Training</li> </ul>
SUF Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation and community engagement</li> <li>To date we have only used a small amount of funds received. Activity to date has been primarily focused on costs associated with engaging with local community (e.g. web costs, leaflets, banners, village hall hiring etc.)</li> <li>Legal formation</li> <li>Advice and fees for governance and legal issues: Assistance with business planning and support, accountancy support: Community engagement advice and support and publicity</li> <li>So far we have managed to conserve the majority of the £4000 start-up funding, as our launch costs, printing, room hire etc. and monthly steering group meetings have all been covered by Parish Council/village Hall and individual sponsorship amounting to approx. £1000 today. Having the funds available has enabled us to commit to site surveys, engagement of QS, Architect, site surveys etc., whilst we seek further funding from CHF &amp; District Council grant funding to cover professional fees etc. We are also seeking to raise at least £20,000 from local charities and fund-raising events in our villages through the excellent community engagement we have already experienced.</li> </ul>
SUF Stage 3 only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cash grant of £4,000 was used for the incorporation of The Trust, for attendance at events, for the revision of publicity material, including 'pull up' banners, for training purposes and for Away Days for Team Leaders</li> </ul>
The Feasibility Fund; SUF Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation as a Community Benefit Society and a contribution to the cost of the Housing Needs Survey</li> </ul>

## Appendix 4

	<i>Reason for establishing a CLT</i>
CLT1	We wanted to provide some affordable housing in an area where market housing is very expensive
CLT2	To provide almshouses
CLT3	Interest for self-building
CLT4	To respond to housing need of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers
CLT5	Like many rural areas in the South East, both young people looking to have a home of their own, as well as older persons looking to downsize are finding it very difficult to find suitable properties in their area that they can afford. This has meant families are becoming separated from their family support groups and the neighbourhood they grew up in. Accordingly, we are looking to build housing for rent that is locally affordable. We have already got outline permission for four affordable houses in the local area and are working with a local landowner to jointly develop a site in another village for twelve affordable units
CLT6	To deliver town centre regeneration proposals in Neighbourhood Plan including social housing
CLT7	CLT was formed because of the imminent development of the a local site. This site owned by the Anglican Community would have benefited from the development of mixed housing some of which would be held by the community. This development did not proceed
CLT8	We were concerned about the future and coming from a background of community-led education it seemed a natural progression
CLT9	At the community's request we purchased land in the village and following extensive consultation with residents it was decided to build housing on the site [Affordable housing]
CLT10	To bring affordable housing to our community
CLT11	To address the need for Affordable houses, and their current delivery through allocations within large speculative developments
CLT12	The CLT was set up with the aim of supporting a balanced community in terms of its demographics by retaining within in its community, as far as is possible, the family structures that are necessary to sustain inter- generational support and access. It will do this by providing the basic need of affordable housing to be accessed by people with a strong local connection to the local area and at truly affordable price based on income. In doing so the CLT will respond to residents' pleas for grown up children to remain in the local area. There is a clear aim of avoiding the local area becoming a dormitory town or retirement community. Gaps in housing provision, not covered by the market or local government, will be filled
CLT13	Local Demand for affordable houses
CLT14	There was a need in the community for affordable housing and the council weren't filling the need
CLT15	It's a good fit with our objectives around fuel poverty, better housing and climate change and we saw a gap in the market, with some opportunities for sites
CLT16	No other avenue available to meet local housing need
CLT17	[This area] has the lowest rating for social mobility in the UK and all the usual rural/coastal problems such as second home ownership. The age demographic is rising rapidly with West Somerset having the oldest population in the country. A group of activists were concerned that government funding for social housing was appearing randomly and with tight deadlines so we should prepare to have the mechanism to use this in the future. We did not have an intentional community but worked with the very fragmented affordable housing providers and groups in the area which is leading to a coordinated approach
CLT18	Sale of cottage hospital site to private developers - the community wanted to keep it for themselves either for GP surgery of affordable housing. Residents are concerned about lack of affordable housing and we have 380 members
CLT19	To purchase an area of land in the village and develop for the benefit of the community
CLT20	The CLT was principally set up to act as a vehicle to obtain affordable housing as a result of an S106 clause on a development project
CLT21	Community based living and affordable housing



**Appendix 5**

	<i>Projects achieved to date</i>
CLT1	Taken on the lease of the Parish Hall
CLT2	Decided not to proceed
CLT3	N/A
CLT4	Initiate a feasibility works with specialists
CLT5	Outline planning for 2X2bed houses, 2X3bed houses for affordable rent. Proposal to develop 12 affordable houses for rent in conjunction with local landowner. Discussions with a landowner over potential site for 2off affordable bungalows
CLT6	None. Still in first year since incorporation
CLT7	I am not sure what is meant by 'projects'. We are undertaking a scoping exercise currently as indicated previously. Other 'projects' include numerous meetings and networks including with a local Housing Association. What is so frustrating for all of us involved is the inability to find a site.
CLT8	A variety of projects including a community kitchen, garden and a housing co-op.
CLT9	24 other non housing projects to date. The Land Development project is the biggest one by far.
CLT10	Establishment and community support
CLT11	None
CLT12	First project currently being progressed
CLT13	Housing. Financial support of village facility, Village Hall, to enable the refurbishment of a facility that would be lost without support. CLT are also landlords to the Village Hall
CLT14	We have incorporated and are in the process of getting a housing needs assessment carried out, RIBA stage 0-2 report prepared, and the general business plan
CLT15	These projects take time to get everything in place with planning, land agreement, funding etc, and with new CLT it takes time to get things right, but first project is progressing with intention to deliver others.
CLT16	Still early stages - CLT not yet formally constituted
CLT17	N/A
CLT18	We have secured the cottage hospital site for the refurbishment as a GP surgery including £4m lift funding. It leaves us without a site but we have a good partnership with the council who are keen to work with us on two other potential sites.
CLT19	Did not establish a CLT
CLT20	We have the commitment to provide 12 affordable houses free of charge via an S106 agreement. Fund raising events have acted as a catalyst for community involvement.
CLT21	N/A

**Appendix 6**

	<i>Wider community impacts</i>
CLT1	Helping to sort out the future of the Parish Hall
CLT2	N/A
CLT3	N/A
CLT4	Creation of membership.
CLT5	The start of a local focal point within our village communities to deliver affordable housing, suitable for local needs. By so doing we are establishing a belief that we can continue to sustain lively, viable communities and provide homes for both young and old into the future.
CLT6	Greater awareness of CLTs and the ability of communities to take the lead for their own benefit. Slow understanding that we can improve our local environment and look after our own people by building accessible and appropriate homes with priority for local people even if not on the housing list.
CLT7	We are just getting started on this. We have monthly stands in the town centre, are leafleting libraries and institutions and maximising therefore our exposure.
CLT8	Participation of the local community in our various projects and the consequent building of relationships, skills, knowledge and confidence
CLT9	Volunteers and staff have learnt and are still learning about housing and all aspects associated with building a community-led scheme. This is leading to an increase in skills and confidence and if successful in gaining planning permission, once the homes are built, they will be a real asset and benefit to our community and people from outside accessing the scheme.
CLT10	Awareness of opportunity
CLT11	N/A
CLT12	The perceived ability of the community to address its own housing needs rather than be subject to remote and invalid deliberations and decisions
CLT13	Increased number of younger people with young children in a community that has an older population demographic and relatively expensive housing stock. Confidence that as a community we can work together to keep the village community vibrant. Networking across county and nationally to support and giving our advice
CLT14	It has brought the community together and made them aware that as a community we can make affective changes.
CLT15	Creating partnerships, but also considering wider community benefits of development and open spaces.
CLT16	N/A
CLT17	So far the main change has been better communication between local authorities (we have 2 planning authorities,) other providers and interest groups
CLT18	We are working with all key organisations in the area and the networking has been excellent.
CLT19	N/A
CLT20	There is a much stronger community awareness within the village. The community are beginning to identify projects which could be undertaken in order to improve the village.
CLT21	Neighbourhood plan done by local Parish.

**Appendix 7**

	<i>Critical to success</i>
CLT1	Funding was essential to get up and running. We have found that we need to exist in order to be able to take advantage of any opportunities as they arise. For one development where we might have been able to get involved we were too late. We are now ready for the next opportunity which we will start exploring shortly
CLT2	Early decision not to proceed to CLT
CLT3	N/A
CLT4	Organisational knowledge on housing CLT model
CLT5	It gave us 'our' place at the table to discuss how our community could help both ourselves and landowners to approach both local authorities and South Downs National Park Authority to agree to the creation of several Rural Exception Sites for affordable housing development.
CLT6	Gave us the confidence to identify the opportunity and establish a CLT. Through that became part of the national network with all the resource and advice available. Confidence that it can be done and that we are not alone!
CLT7	With limited resources (overall somewhere in the region of £13,000) the fund enabled us to start, to train volunteers and to create a group of team leaders. It has been difficult to maintain momentum, especially since a site has not yet been established that is suitable as a community project.
CLT8	N/A
CLT9	N/A
CLT10	Advice and funding
CLT11	Local experts were available to help the committee, and to answer difficult questions in community meetings
CLT12	Providing organisational credibility to our efforts. Without it we would have found it much more difficult to make the first steps.
CLT13	We had no start up funds. The fund enabled the aspirations of the CLT to be realised. 10 houses for rent at an affordable rent for local people.
CLT14	It helped legitimise the group into more than just a few people with an idea.
CLT15	Establishing feasibility and viability early on be able then to progress proposals to next stage
CLT16	Parish councils are new to enabled community housing, we would not have been able to get to the stage of confirming a site without the Fund's support
CLT17	We had no idea of where to start and having a clear pathway provided by NatCLT Network was transformative. The funding, backed by invaluable and friendly support from the staff at NatCLT Network got us through some difficult episodes.
CLT18	It was a starting point that got us off the ground quickly as the hospital site came about with little notice and we had to act very quickly - it meant we could rely on the fund to provide research, ideas and ways forward.
CLT19	N/A
CLT20	The most advice we received was from people who had undertaken what we were contemplating. Experience was crucial to our needs
CLT21	It helped to open up what was possible and have new ideas suggested

**Appendix 8**

	<i>What did you find most useful about the support provided by the Fund?</i>
CLT1	We would not exist without the funding
CLT2	Decision not to proceed to CLT
CLT3	Information
CLT4	Technical support and governance
CLT5	It gave us the confidence to engage with landowners to jointly develop plans for affordable housing in our villages.
CLT6	Enabled us to get started and leverage other funding and support
CLT7	The incorporation event was the single most expensive item. However, most useful was the interaction between HCLT and NCLT in modifying our expenditure in changed circumstances.
CLT8	The experience of the consultant in understanding the process of the building project and making new contacts who understand our project.
CLT9	Expert Advice from somebody with sound knowledge of this complex field
CLT10	Expertise
CLT11	It was essential to get us started.
CLT12	Absolutely essential in getting the project off the ground and thus providing valuable publicity
CLT13	Enabled the project to be viable in the time-scale, the window of funding that could be obtained from the Government sponsored grants needed
CLT14	It supported the group to come together early on with regular meetings and structured action plan.
CLT15	It was incredibly helpful in establishing feasibility, viability of the project to be able to get agreement to proceed and establishing the next steps
CLT16	Being able to access good, up-to-the-minute technical advice
CLT17	Funding for scoping, community engagement and publicity. Seminars on funding and the wonderful conferences. Personal contact at times of crisis
CLT18	The national CLT offered on-going telephone advice. But the input to the whole group from an Advisor was invaluable. The solicitors recommended were excellent and we set ourselves up within a month or so.
CLT19	Facilitating discussion with the community and informing us about what a CLT is
CLT20	Encouragement and direction
CLT21	Have a feasibility meeting and seeing what is possible from an expert.

## Appendix 9

<i>What do you consider to have been the key factors to your success?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The people involved in the CLT</li> <li>● The effectiveness of the funding is largely down to the drive/support achievable in the community</li> <li>● Voluntary support</li> <li>● Volunteer enthusiasm</li> <li>● The drive of the Steering Group initially supported by the Parish Councils, Village Hall committee and many other community groups e.g. Football club, Bonfire Societies, WI etc. We are blessed with very energetic communities in our villages, which we have been able to tap into to engage and obtain support for our proposals. All of this supported by local landowners' amazing generosity and wish to create sustainable communities for the long term.</li> <li>● Definitely commitment of trustees, support from Town and District Council and a local landowner. Also the Neighbourhood Plan has been critical</li> <li>● As yet, we cannot in all honesty, consider our CLT as a success. However, we now have a strategy with a series of objectives, involving the directors and members, that will determine whether or not HCLT will succeed or not. <i>We have a very committed Board of Trustees now.</i></li> <li>● The drive and vision of the people in the group.</li> <li>● Being in the lucky position to have acquired the land first. Community consultation led to developing a housing scheme. Community buy in and working with industry experts has led to gaining grant funding from Homes England to hopefully achieve planning permission for our vision.</li> <li>● It is too early to say, we are still engaging with community to assess / confirm the need.</li> <li>● Town Council support. Homes England grants. Thame Neighbourhood Plan call for sites for CLT purposes.</li> <li>● Determination of a committed group of village residents, giving time and expertise. Quality of advice and work on behalf of CLT in a) setting it up b) Steering group through the process. Key skill and contacts of certain members of the CLT board. The willingness of land owner to support the community aspiration - selling land at a discount. County Council. The co-operation of both NKDC and SKDC and their ability to work together. Timing availability of Government funding. The partnership with appropriate housing association to manage houses. LRHA</li> <li>● Support of the steering committee and since the NCLTN, the CLH.</li> <li>● Range of factors, but right skills, resources, land owner willing important. Also identifying gaps that need to be filled! Engaging with the community in the right way.</li> <li>● All those you mention - positive local steering group, parish council interest and support, advice from NCLTN advisor and also officers from the District Council, interest from private landowners</li> <li>● Support of key partners and advisors plus a change in the approach by LA</li> <li>● Energy and skills of the team, public support, plus advice</li> <li>● The individual commitment of a founding group. We also had invaluable assistance, advice, and support from [our TA]</li> </ul>

**Appendix 10***What challenges or difficulties the experiences while working with the Start Up Fund?*

## Engaging others

- Lack of drive from members
- All of our efforts to date have been to engage with the local community, to get their support, which is proving to be a difficult challenge.
- There was some local opposition from nearby residents, prior to seeing the plans
- The group was very transient initially and it was hard to keep momentum going. Outreach to the community was harder than expected.
- Our first publicity in the local press, produced some negative letters in the next issue of the paper. Although much of the ground work has been undertaken in establishing some expertise, we are only now focusing on sites within the city boundary. We have in the last month established a new strategy document in which targets have been set until the end of December. One of these targets is a scoping exercise, undertaken both voluntarily and professionally, in consultation with the City and County Council, so that specific sites can be investigated more fully. Funding is always an issue, but once a site is determined, we feel sure that we can establish a fund both by share issues and through Triodos bank. We hope to reach this destination by the end of December. We know implicitly that people are proud of the city, and is in need of 'sympathetic' developments ' for the people of the city. We note that locally there are two very poor districts of the county.

**Appendix 11**

	<i>Aims for the next five years</i>
CLT1	Construction of 40 homes
CLT2	Complete the delivery of at least sixteen new homes and establish plans for at least another twenty
CLT3	To have completed phases 1 and 2 of the 4 Stage development plan and be in the process of preparing Stage 3
CLT4	We hope to have two projects up and running. One in the city centre or its close proximity, focusing on a building or buildings within the centre itself and another more peripheral through links. We are already networking here.
CLT5	Integrated housing and city farm.
CLT6	Provide high quality, affordable homes for the over 55's including future proof housing appropriate for dementia sufferers and wheelchair users
CLT7	20 to 30 affordable homes in our community
CLT8	It is too early to state
CLT9	To reinvest proceeds from discounted sales into further housing projects and community facilities.
CLT10	Support the community held village facilities to ensure village maintains a community working together feel and not be dormitory area for towns nearby. That the village has a life.
CLT11	Procure the land and build the project.
CLT12	Deliver net zero carbon affordable housing scheme and go onto deliver others
CLT13	10 affordable homes for rent by local people
CLT14	A small build/ conversion providing secure, social rent homes to residents unable to access housing through traditional means
CLT15	New Early years youth and community centre; information/visitor centre and affordable homes scheme, a potential scheme in the north of the town to include community space
CLT16	The completion of the initial 12 affordable house. The completion of an initiative to take over 12 further existing houses as affordable properties. The retention of our endangered Post Office as a community run project. We are negotiating ways to provide a safe pedestrian access route to our local railway station. The acquisition of land to retain if for future use in providing affordable housing as need arises.
CLT17	
CLT18	
CLT19	
CLT20	Affordable homes for people young and elderly, to have a collaborative hub.
CLT21	