



'Homes for local people, affordable for ever'

Bridport Area Community Housing Ltd.

Business Plan

November 2020 – March 2022

Issue Version 2: 23rd March 2021

This ISSUE has been updated to include some minor changes and a new Section on Commitment & Policies.

As our set-up work progresses any development suitable for inclusion in this document will be added as an update to enable key management elements to be referenced in one place.

A full review of this document will be made after the Special General Meeting to be held on, or before, the 5th May.

Bridport Area Community Housing Ltd. is registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 as a Community Benefit Society.

Registration date: 4th November 2020, Registration number: 8493

Address: Mountfield, Rax Lane, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 3JP

Financial year-end date: 31 March

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1 Introduction

This Business Plan aims to provide members of the community in the Bridport area and other stakeholders with a clear picture of our organisation, its purpose and its intent.

It will enable those wishing to invest time and money in our endeavours to do so with confidence, and serves as a basis on which to measure our performance and effectiveness.

At the time of drafting this Business Plan, Bridport Area Community Housing Ltd. (BACH) is in the set-up phase of its business and therefore this Plan describes how activities and way of working will be shaped and consolidated to achieve an organisation able to sustain its support to the community.

Readers attention is drawn to the Rules of the Society which details the mechanics governing the way the business must be run.

2 Affordable Housing Background

The term affordable housing is used by the UK Government to describe housing made available to eligible households or families at a discount of the prevailing market rate, whether for sale or for rent. Eligibility is determined by local income and local house price comparisons.

Housing that falls under the affordable home label include (or have in the past included) Starter Homes, Shared Ownership, Affordable Rented, Intermediate Rented and Social Rented. The current proposed changes in planning requirements¹ includes changes in affordable home types and percentages.

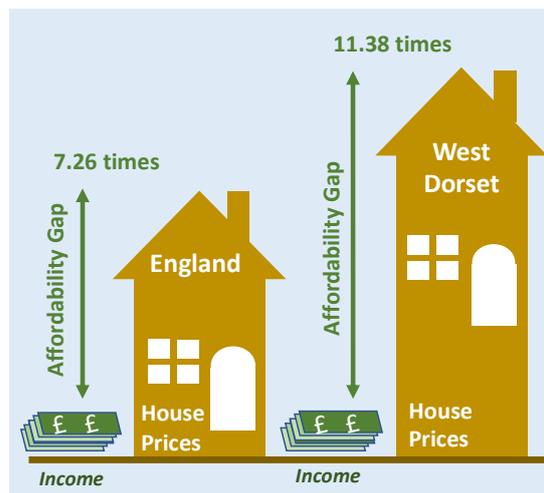
We believe that affordable homes should remain so in perpetuity, and will always put in place measures to ensure this for the housing that we or our partners create.

An affordable home to buy would be typically 80% (in theory it could be less than 80%, in practice this is rare) of the prevailing market rate. Affordable Homes to rent may be at a discounted rent of, typically, 80% of open-market rent, or a greater discount for social rented housing.

Bridport Area Community Housing apply the term 'affordable housing' to cover the government definition of such homes, coupled with the aspiration that homes we may develop would be genuinely affordable, in other words significantly less, for example, than 80% of market rates.

A Housing Needs Assessment provided the facts to support the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan². It demonstrated the affordability gap for those wanting to both purchase and rent by identifying that most households would need to triple their income to buy a modest house on a mortgage, and that to rent privately would take at least half their income. The figure opposite is taken from the Housing Needs Assessment.

There are over 400 households on the local authority's housing waiting list, with the most pressing need being for affordable rented homes. The consequences of prolonged Covid-19 restrictions will no doubt increase these numbers.



The housing need is clear: to improve the supply of homes both to rent and to buy which the young and less affluent can access.

Figure 1: Income and House Price Disparity³

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/planning-for-the-future>

² <https://www.bridport-tc.gov.uk/projects/neighbourhood-plan/>

Note that the Bridport Area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan covers Bridport Town (including West Bay) and the neighbouring parishes of Allington, Bradpole, Bothenhampton & Walditch, and Symondsburry.

³ Taken from the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment, Section 2.2

3 Our Mission & Vision

3.1 Mission Strapline

'Homes for local people, affordable for ever'

3.2 Mission

Our primary mission is to inspire and implement solutions to the provision of affordable housing for those members of the Bridport Area community in genuine need.

By doing so we aim to relieve homelessness and housing insecurity for people with local connections thereby positively contributing to our social and economic infrastructure and enable those benefitting from an affordable home to maintain and sustain local work, community and family relationships.

In addition to our primary mission, we will also seek opportunities to implement other housing related initiatives of benefit to the community. For example, through provision of energy-efficient measures to reduce home energy bills, support of novel building techniques, and support of programmes to train people and provide employment.

In order to achieve our aims, we intend to liaise with the local authority to seek planning approval, negotiate with land owners for purchase of development land and with architects and developers, including if appropriate, Registered Providers (Housing Associations) to construct and deliver the affordable homes. All discrete negotiated outcomes shall be subject to a formal agreement and contract.

We will undertake the ownership and stewardship of assets for the benefit of the local community.

We will operate on a not-for-profit basis, with all surplus being reinvested back into our work.

We intend to apply for grants to start-up and, where necessary, develop our work. When a project opportunity has reached an appropriate degree of maturity a Community Share Issue may be undertaken to raise investment.

3.3 Vision

Our Vision is that we become a trusted and indispensable port of call for the Bridport area community where matters of the delivery of affordable housing are concerned.

3.4 The Bridport Area Community

The Bridport Area Community can be broadly described as 'any person whose main place of residence, place of work, or business they own lies within the Bridport and its environs'.

The geographical boundary of the 'Bridport Area' is not specifically defined but definitely includes that area covered by the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan (Bridport and its neighbouring parishes) and may extend beyond. Any proposals for projects and initiatives shall be developed in consultation with the immediate community.

4 Addressing the Challenges

4.1 Housing Crisis Causal Factors

People of all ages are trapped in expensive and insecure private rented housing or have no choice but to stay in overcrowded homes. The causes leading to our community being faced with this housing crisis (refer Section Affordable Housing Background) are complex and will be challenging to overcome.

We see the main inter-locking contributing factors being:

- a) Acute housing inequality with much of the new housing that is expected to be built being sold at prices well beyond the means of people on typical local incomes (exacerbated by retirees moving to the area, and purchase of second and holiday homes).
- b) The planned delivery of affordable home numbers is frequently eroded due to developer lack of viability.

- c) Land with the potential to be built on is viewed as a speculative commodity and is over-priced.
- d) A crisis of livelihoods, characterised by low average wages and job insecurity, lack of access to skills training, and lack of support and resources to support the start up or expansion of local enterprises. The Bridport area has become increasingly reliant on tourism and other low paid service sector work.
- e) The ecological threat from, amongst other things, low-quality developments which may consume valuable open space, damage ecosystems and harm wildlife habitats. Agricultural practices have also had to intensify to survive, often to the detriment of the environment.

4.2 Our Approach and Role in the Community

There are a number of organisations present in the area which exist in order to benefit their immediate community and wider society by relieving housing need.

Of the Community Land Trust (CLT) organisations: We are already working closely with Symene CLT⁴ which developed the Edwards Close affordable homes, Bridport Co-housing⁵ are in the construction phase of their 53 affordable home development, Burton Bradstock CLT was formed in May 2019. There is also a self-build group established in the area.

Housing charities such as West Bay Housing Society (Harbour House), Abbeyfield and two Almshouse trusts who meet their eligibility criteria also provide homes to those in need.

The role of Housing Associations (also known as Registered Providers) in supporting local organisations is also critical to success.

As with these establish organisations BACH is also seeking opportunities to improve the lot of those in housing need.

As a community benefit society open to all we can act as a Community Land Trust and, as other CLTs in the area have, be able to hold land and property in perpetuity for the benefit of the community.

We can also work in partnership with others, e.g., Councils, housing associations, housing co-operatives to help deliver affordable homes.

This raises the question 'where does BACH differ from these other organisations?'

Our strategy will be to develop ways for the community to take a lead in seeking to achieve the provision of more affordable homes, with greater control over the built form for a wider range of tenure options that meet different types of local need.

This requires a mechanism for community participation, partnership and, where appropriate, control of delivery.

Firstly, we aim to undertake a diverse range projects, as described in more detail in the Section Prospective Projects, these include:

- As mentioned, the more traditional CLT role of providing new homes, initially via the Raise the Roof project.
- The purchase & refurbishment of properties to create affordable homes and, possibly, affordable work spaces.
- Positive involvement in the affordable home aspects of the Vearse Farm (a development of between 760 and 1,000 houses).
- Projects adopting less traditional approaches, including those of proven success such as Group self-finish with shared ownership and discounted re-sale, and Mutual home ownership through a co-operative.

Furthermore, we aim to adopt an integrated approach to project management and opportunity creation that takes account of the wider threat to the resilience and sustainability of communities.

For example, when developing the Raise the Roof project we have been motivated by these questions:

⁴ <http://www.symeneclt.org.uk>

⁵ <https://bridportcohousing.org.uk>

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- Can we build in such a way that we help maintain and create jobs within the local economy?
- Can we imagine new and creative designs and construction methods for the houses we want to build, and also ensure they are affordable?
- Can we draw on sustainable materials that flow out of regenerative forestry and agriculture?

To move towards the ultimate goal of holding land in trust, providing more affordable homes and strengthening community resilience we foresee a need to create change through, as a minimum:

- Further research into the housing crisis in order to map support provision requirements and thus improve efficiency and effectiveness of effort.
- Continued communication and promotion to raise public interest and awareness.
- Training and training support in the practical and administrative skills needed to support community housing.
- Targeted influencing of housing related policy and decision makers.

This approach is represented graphically in the figure below.



Figure 1: Our Proposed Approach

5 Our Organisational Framework

5.1 Organisational Relationships

Figure 2 shows the relationship between BACH as an organisation, and how it sits within the Bridport Area community.

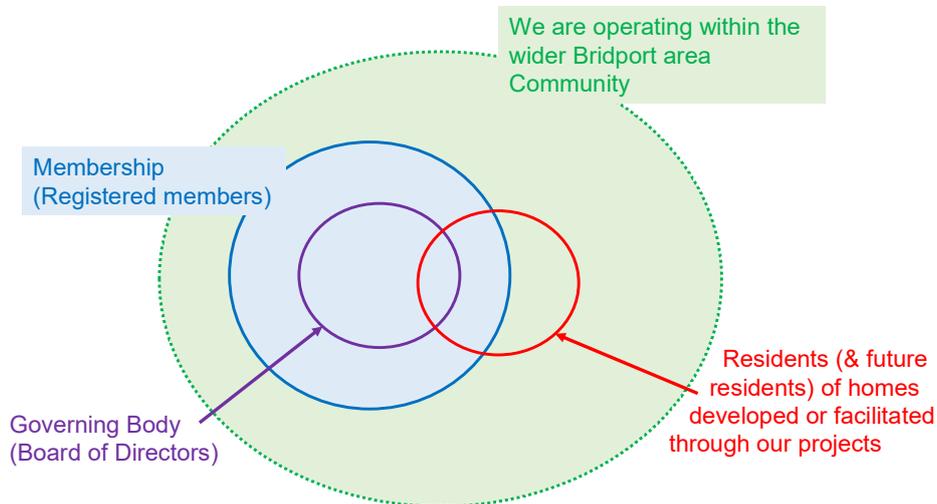


Figure 2: Organisational Relationship Diagram

Anybody with a local connection to the Bridport area can become a member of BACH (blue circle), including residents and potential residents of schemes (red circle). The Board of directors (purple circle) is elected from and by the members as described in more detail below.

This also reflects the formal meeting structure detailed below with Board Meetings being the purple circle, General Meetings the blue, and Open Meetings the green.

5.2 Board of Directors

BACH currently has four directors (the three founding directors and a co-opted Director taking on the role of Treasurer). Further directors will probably be co-opted before the Special General Meeting.

A Special General Meeting must be held within 6 months of registration, i.e. on or before 4th May, for which all directors must stand-down and may then stand for re-election. Other directors may also be elected at the SGM.

Thereafter directors are appointed by members at the Annual General Meeting.

There is no limit on the number of directors that may be appointed.

The directors are collectively responsible for managing the business of the society in accordance with the Society's Rules and may;

- Exercise any of the society's powers
- Delegate any of their powers to a committee (of 2 or more directors)
- Delegate any of their powers to a sole director
- Appoint any person to act as the agent of the society
- Co-opt board members.

Members can stand for election to the Board, but if elected may have to declare an interest when certain issues are discussed by the directors, as would any other director with a relevant personal interest.

5.3 Meetings

Directors' Meetings:

These will initially be chaired by one of the 3 founding directors and co-opted director(s) then, after the Special General Meeting, by the director voted in as Chair.

Directors' Meetings will be held on a regular basis with the initial primary objective of setting-up the Society and supporting the management of day-to-day business, including Projects.

Directors' Meetings may also be attended by co-opted members although such persons will not be able to vote.

Records of main points raised and actions arising will be made available to members except where confidentiality is required.

General Meetings:

These will focus on day-to-day issues and provide a forum for communication and discussion of progress and plans and coordination of activities.

Attending would be at least 2 directors, those registered members who wish to attend and, by invitation, those considering becoming members (who would not be able to vote).

Records of main points raised and actions arising will be made available to members.

Open Meetings

These are meetings open to the community chaired by a director and open to the public including members, the Bridport area community and the wider public.

Formal Working Groups

On an as-needed basis at the behest of the directors, Formal Working Groups may be appointed and tasked with undertaking discrete packages of work.

5.4 Key Roles with respect to Meetings

Chairperson (and Deputy if called upon):

- Prepare meeting agendas (with Secretary),
- Chair meetings
- Ensure, on behalf of the Directors, meeting decisions are carried out

Secretary:

- Holder of the Society's Seal
- Arrange meetings & Minutes
- Arrange ballots when called for
- Maintain:
 - Filing & records
 - Membership and contact details
- Deal with correspondence
- Oversee website & Facebook, deal with publicity
- Ensure the Society's Rules are adhered to.
- Responsible for Data Protection

5.5 Treasurer & Treasury Procedures

The Treasurer's key roles are:

- Set up accounting procedures and controls for approval by Directors and ensure these are applied
- Set-up and manage Bank Account(s)
- Record transactions, issue receipts
- Advise on financial aspects and plans to ensure financial resources match needs (budgets)
- Report financial status (expenditure versus budgets)
- Ensure financial legal compliance
- Ensure financial investments have been properly justified
- Monitor Accounting & Audit requirements
- Manage project Share calls, issues and register (and be able to demonstrate due probity).
- Manage any insurance cover needed

6 Our Place Within the Community

6.1 Stakeholders

An initial draft mapping of key stakeholders is shown in Figure .

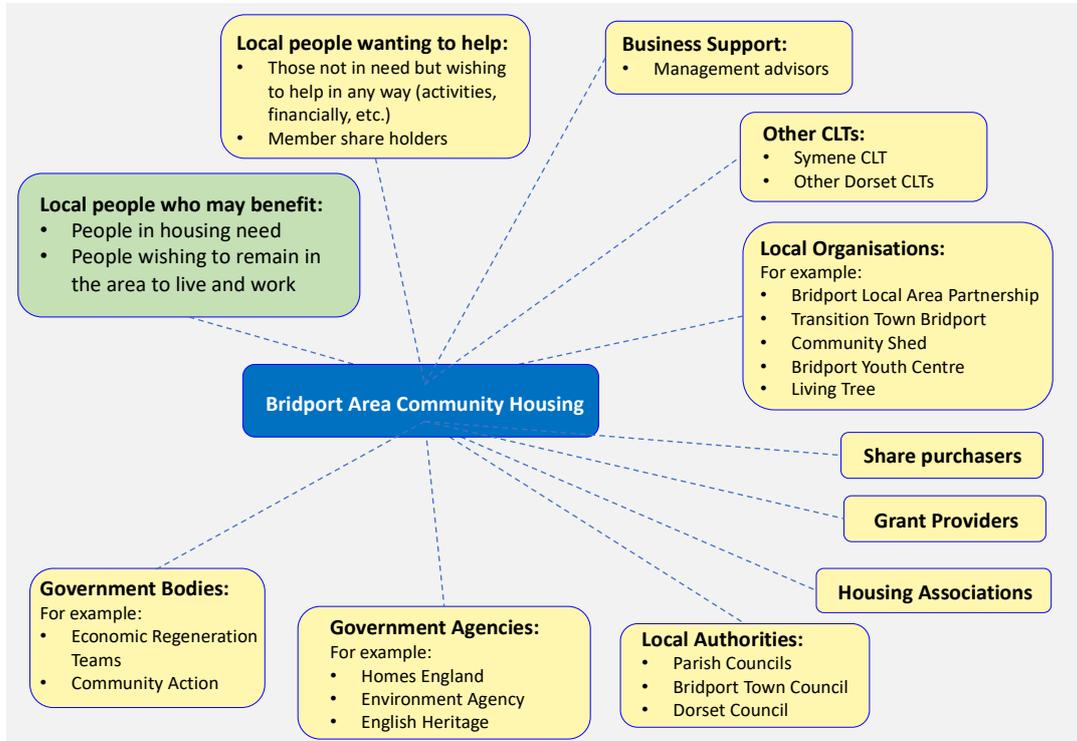


Figure 3: Stakeholder Mapping (Draft)

7 Our Commitment, Policies & Procedures

7.1 Overview

The management of BACH is governed by a set of doctrines which define our ethos and our modus operandi.

Of primary importance is the quality of management of aspects of our business that protect people and the environment.

Also important is the need to establish internal controls in areas such as finance and communication such that things run as intended.

As our business becomes more complex there is a need for operational controls commensurate with the emerging risks to be documented and implemented. To this end Risk Registers will be drawn up identifying controls necessary to ensure sustained business risk tolerability for both overall management and.

Statements of commitment, policies and procedures will be drawn up in separate documents based on the terminology and structure described in the next section.

7.2 Terminology & Structure

The table below will be BACH’s adopted terminology and hierarchical structure.

Name	Description	Comment
Commitment	<p>This says what BACH are committed to (our governance and management culture, how we are going to manage responsibly), for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing systematically (plan, do, check, feedback, etc.) • Complying with the Law as a minimum 	<p><i>Novel for many organisations but makes sense.</i></p> <p><i>Together with Policies this is basis against which Management are held to account by stakeholders/public.</i></p>
Policy	<p>These are the principles that govern BACH’s decision making and management.</p> <p>Each Policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented through control procedures or protocols.</p> <p>An example might be found in the Bridport Area Neighbourhood Plan. Policy H8 <i>Community Led Housing: Community Led Housing will be supported.</i> This does not say ‘how’ it will be supported; the action needed to provide support is not described.</p>	<p><i>Essential for the activities potentially involving people (members or wider public) outside of the management team, and for safeguarding the physical environment.</i></p> <p><i>Also valid for other business activities such as finance and project management.</i></p>
Procedures, Protocols, Notices <i>Sometimes also called Policies!</i>	<p>These describe, usually for a specific policy, how that policy will be implemented; the action needed. There may need to be more than one for each policy.</p> <p>Example: Our policy (put simply) is We adopt and apply GDPR. The Privacy Notice will tell how we do this and will be issued to reassure the public. The Procedure (or Protocol if non-BACH parties are involved) will say how we will do this internally in our organisation – the process, roles & responsibilities, records, tools, recovery action if errors, etc.</p>	<p>Essential for day-to-day running of the business.</p> <p>Note: Procedures & Protocols can be prepared independent of the need for a policy as driver, for instance, Risk Assessments may identify need for a documented procedural controls. (e.g., communication, finance).</p>

8 The Setting-up Activity Plan

Further setting-up work is required for BACH to become fully operational. The initial target is to be sufficiently prepared such that essential items are in place to be able to support a full launch of BACH and thereafter be in a position to comprehensively respond to responses from the community.

In parallel with this essential work the identification and progressing of Projects will continue as, without projects, BACH has little substance.

This approach is shown in the figure below:

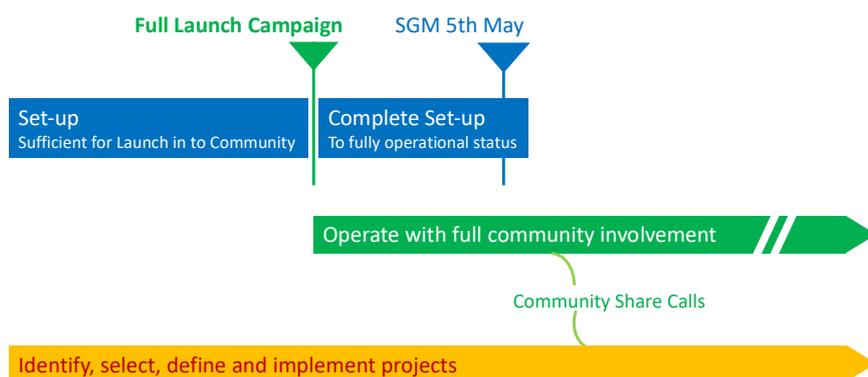


Figure 4: Outline Plan

A spread sheet has been prepared that details all foreseen setting-up activities and includes cost estimates.

Pre-Launch setting-up activities include:

- Prepare a Business Plan
- Join the National Community Land Trust Network, NCLTN (also to obtain insurance cover).
- Obtain start-up grant(s)
- Establish Bank Account
- Set-up administration system, procedures and protocols, Data Protection policy, Declaration of Interest process.
- Carry out an overall Risk Assessment and SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity and threat) analysis.
- Establish a website, and Facebook page
- Maintain contact with Bridport Town Council and Dorset Council
- Establish membership and associated share issue administrative paper and processes
- Prepare for formal launch including stakeholder specific messaging and printed material.

Key to success will be pitching messages such that they inspire the various stakeholders – this will require careful formulation.

9 Prospective Projects

9.1 Identified and Potential Projects

The four main projects routes identified to date are summarised as:

Vearse Farm: The Vearse Farm development has planning permission for the construction of 760 houses, commercial premises and other amenities. It is possible that a total of 1,000 or more houses will eventually be built there. BACH alongside Symene CLT and, possibly, other community-led housing groups intends to play a key role in the delivery of the affordable housing element of this development possibly taking on the provision of a number of affordable homes. BACH's interest has been logged with Dorset Council (housing enabling) and Bridport Town Council. Further discussions are planned to define BACH's role in this respect.

Raise the Roof: Raise the Roof is a partnership of local organisations developing designs for housing that benefit the local economy and the local environment.

The aim is to:

- Support the local economy through the creation of employment and training opportunities.
- Support local manufacturing through the adoption of modern off-site pre-fabrication processes.

- Support the environment through the cultivation and processing of sustainably produced local resources such as timber and “woody fibres” (hemp and flax).

The intent is to deliver structures that are rapidly assembled and then self-finished by a group of households working together. Self-finish includes internal carpentry and joinery, electrics and plumbing, as well as fittings, furniture, interior finishes, etc.

Bridport Town Council is exploring whether land that it owns could be used to pilot a “self-finish” development of affordable housing, through a partnership between BACH and Raise the Roof. This would be an opportunity to develop new designs and technical approaches, focused on a small row of 4 – 5 houses.

In the longer term the aspiration is to influence what happens on the aforementioned Vearse Farm development.

Purchase and Repair: Given the unfortunate likelihood of many more empty shops (often with flats above or the capacity to create flats) and offices post-Covid-19 BACH plans to explore the registering of interest in these properties with a view to creating affordable home and small business premises opportunities.

Other Project opportunities: With an increased involvement of members of the community and other stakeholders, further project proposals and novel project execution mechanism proposals will hopefully emerge.

For each Project a discrete Business Plan, including a dedicated Risk Assessment and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) Analysis, will be developed that can then be used as a basis for seeking funding, including through calls for Community Shares.

10 Budgets and Expenditure

10.1 Approach

Cost estimates for budgetary purposes will be prepared for the following phases and activities:

1. Setting-up to establish a fully functional organisation.
2. Day-today Operational costs necessary to maintain activities.
3. Project related on a stand-alone project-specific basis for each project.

Budget and Expenditure processes and procedures will be established.

10.2 Set-up and Operational Phases

The draft budget and forecast expenditure are shown below based on anticipated start-up and operational costs up to the end of the first full Financial Year.

Also shown are the Project related grants currently (Jan 2021) being applied for.



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Figure 5: Basis for initial Budget Formulation.

Acti- vity	Sub Activity	Set-up costs to 31/03/21	Op'l Costs 01/04/21 to 31/03/22	Projects - Capital Costs	Income	Comment
START-UP & OPERATING COSTS						
Business essentials						
	Join NCLTN & Members Plus Insurance	£350	£350			Incl. D&O Liability Insurance
	Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)	£40				Registration Fee paid by BTC - ? Ongoing
	Auditor		£100			Audit to 31/03/22 provisional accrual.
Bank Account						
	Opening account	£30				Printing & postage
	Bank Charges	£12	£72			
Adminsitration, procedures, protocols						
	Establish House Style for all docs etc.	£100				
	Secure Domain Name & email	£20	£20			
	Set up Dropbox					Assume free
	Set up ZOOM Account	£0	£144			
Establish & Maintain Website						
	Complete website	£500				Contingency if volunteer cannot complete
	Hosting Fee		£72			Commences July 2021 @ £7.95 per month
Establish & Maintain FaceBook						
	Maintain etc. as per Website					Assume free
GDPR Policy						
	Write policy	£100				May need legal advice
Printing & Postage						
	Membership Application Forms	£30	£120			
	Declarations of Interest					
	Share Certificate Management, etc					
Prepare Launch material						
	Prepare Artwork	£100				
	Print Posters	£30				
	Print Flyers	£200				
Room Hire & Refreshments						
	Quarterly Meetings		£240			Assume £60 per quarter, none pre-launch
Contingency sum						
						None included
INCOME						
Membership Fees						
	Membership Fees £1	-£20	-£80		£100	
	Donations (Incl. Membership Fees > £1)					No sum included at this time
Obtain Grant(s) - Start-up						
	Community Housing Hub (Agile Fund)				£1,000	Application in progress.
		£1,492	£1,038	£0	£1,100	
Obtain Grant(s) - (Ring-fenced for Projects)						
	Dorset Council					Application being discussed with DC
	Technical Aid Fund				£10,500	Appl'n in progress (Raise the Roof Project)
	Others?					Future grant applications
Note: Only grants for which applications are in progress are shown.						

10.3 Project Financing

Until a project has been initially defined advance budgeting is not possible. Instead, each Project shall be treated as a stand-alone entity, shall have its own budgeting and expenditure controls, and undergo a rigorous process of technical, social and financial risk assessments and viability checks.

The figure below provides a simplified picture of the typical process that will be adopted for each Project.

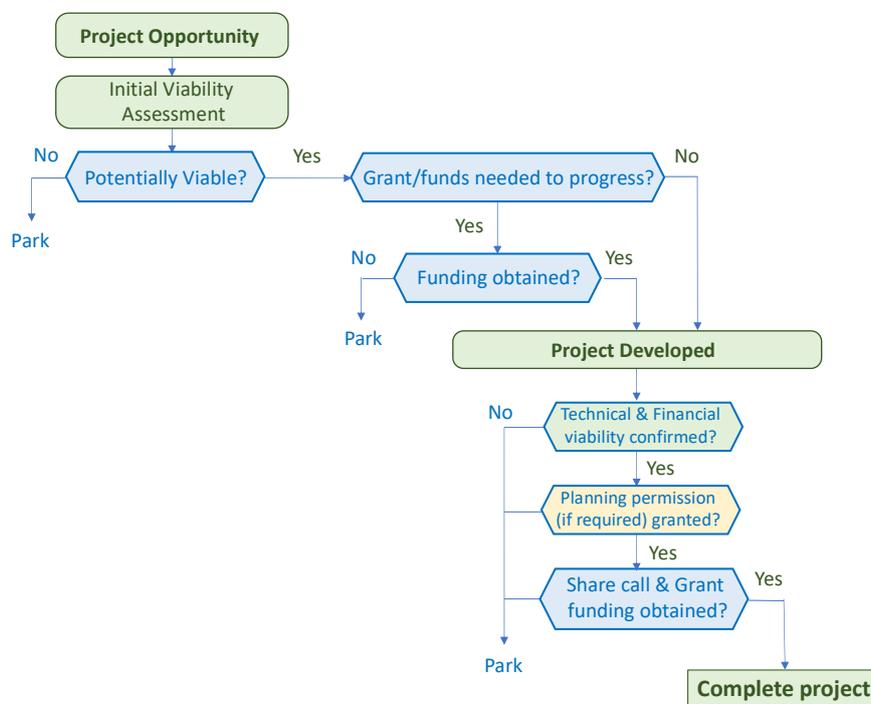


Figure 6: Simplified Project Process

10.4 Current Project Related Grants

The Raise the Roof project, refer the Section [Prospective Projects](#), is at the initial viability stage and a grant application well advanced, via the Wessex Community Housing Hub, for a Technical Adviser Grant. This grant is for costs associated with community-led housing projects where a community group acquires and retains the long-term ownership in the homes. Specifically, a sum of £10,500 has been applied for to enable architects and other specialists to progress design and construction material concepts. 3 potential sites for the pilot work have been identified. This work is effectively the first step in the practical implementation of the Raise the Roof concept.

11 Risk Assessments & SWOT Analyses

A full Business Risk Assessment is planned as part of the Set-up phase, as is a SWOT analysis.

As mentioned, each Project must undergo its own discrete Risk Assessment and SWOT analysis.

Possible risks to the success of this business plan are expected to include:

- Insufficient people to do the work. This could be mitigated through use of Steering and Working Groups and co-opting help from members who are not Directors. Funds permitting, outside resources may also be used.
- Lack of interest from the community. Mitigation will include use of social media, press, stakeholder support and promotion.
- Lack of funds. This will be addressed by systematic monitoring of funding sources, and firm financial governance. Projects will only be undertaken when secure funding is in place.
- Lack of viable Projects.

- External factors beyond our control, such as the change of Government Policy.

12 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

12.1 Routine

Monitoring and evaluation of progress and performance will be carried out by:

- Automatic inclusion and review in meeting agendas of:
 - (Critical) Action Items from previous minutes and reports
 - Financial reports
 - Working Group reports
 - Registers of Issues and Opportunities status, new items and priorities
 - Key issues and correspondence potentially impacting the Forum's activities
 - Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Steering Group Meetings, Working Group formal meetings, and AGMs.
- One off reports for specific projects undertaken.

12.2 Business Plan Maintenance

The Board is responsible for the Business Plan, monitoring and future revisions. This first Business Plan will be closely monitored to ensure that it meets the needs of the Society and the community.

It will be formally reviewed following the Special General Meeting to be held on or before the 4th May 2021.