



“Community-Led Housing is an example of bottom-up, active citizenship as its best, with the potential to put the humanistic perspective of housing provision centre stage, with communities and citizens at the heart of neighbourhood development, embracing the idea of homes as a social good.”

PRESIDENT MICHAEL D. HIGGINS

Roadmapping A Viable Community-Led Housing Sector For Ireland



PROJECT LAUNCH
Thursday 13th May 2021,
12-13:30pm

THE PROJECT - “ROADMAPPING A VIABLE COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING SECTOR FOR IRELAND”

Community-Led Housing (CLH) is a **ground-up approach**, which enables groups of people to pool their assets and collective resources to create homes and communities which meet their particular needs, whatever they may be, in a sustainable manner.

Supported by The Housing Agency, The Land Development Agency, Ó Cualann Cohousing Alliance and the Goethe Institut Irland, **SOA Research CLG** have coordinated a 12-month multi-stakeholder research project to roadmap a CLH infrastructure for Ireland.

The resulting publication, *'Roadmapping a Viable Community-Led Housing Sector for Ireland,'* comprises a series of handbooks on the subject of CLH, offering guidance in the areas of Policy, Finance, Land and 'Getting Your Group Ready'.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING AND WHAT IS ITS RELEVANCE FOR IRELAND?

Across Ireland, community groups are exploring ways to collectively create their own homes together.

There is an approach to housing creation - Community-Led Housing - evolving across Europe and the wider world, which empowers communities to develop solutions addressing their particular housing needs. **CLH provides a framework for cooperation in the creation and revitalisation of new and existing neighbourhoods.**

The unique feature of CLH is the **empowerment of future residents to meaningfully participate in both the design and long-term management of their homes.** Although no two CLH projects are the same, they all share a common goal of meeting specific local housing needs via collaboration, empowerment and mutual support.

CLH is premised on the conviction that a house is not just a building, or an asset, or a 'unit', **it is a home: a place to live.** As such, CLH approaches take a holistic view of housing and strive to ensure the social, environmental and economic well-being of inhabitants.

Irish CLH Groups

Inspired by the growing international Community-Led Housing movement, as well as traditional meitheal and cooperative approaches to community building in Ireland, people are coming together to take initiative in solving their local housing needs.

These needs require a multi-faceted approach, one that acknowledges that quality housing must address multiple factors, including long-term affordability. Social cohesion, innovative environmental design, self-help and skills training, empowerment of marginalised groups and addressing loneliness are just some of the concerns that these groups are striving to address on their own terms.

“What we’re aiming for here is neighbourhoods. It has partly to do with architecture, partly to do with geography, but it also has very much to do with human participation. Society is opening up to people living as active citizens in a participative society, and how are we going to embody that? How are we going to build that?”

Patrick Lydon



THE IRISH REGENERATIVE LAND TRUST, *Nationwide*

IRLT aim to address the climate crisis through community action, by placing land into ecological trust and democratic stewardship



ARTHOUSE, *Dublin*

A cooperative of artists and community workers whose aim is to provide affordable housing and community arts projects



HOPE & HOMES, *Galway*

Tackling the problems of homelessness and unemployment by constructing affordable housing in Galway City, and by providing support to its community



COMMON GROUND COHOUSING, *Bray*

Establishing the first Mutual Home Ownership Society in Ireland, to provide secure, affordable, and flexible housing for 27 households. Designing housing that is sustainable in every way

CLOUGHJORDAN COHOUSING

Developing a 'Climate-Smart Pocket Neighbourhood' as a model of cooperatively-owned cohousing in Cloughjordan Ecovillage



INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS, *Callan*

Addressing the integration of people with support needs and low incomes in neighbourhoods that actively support neighbourly relationships



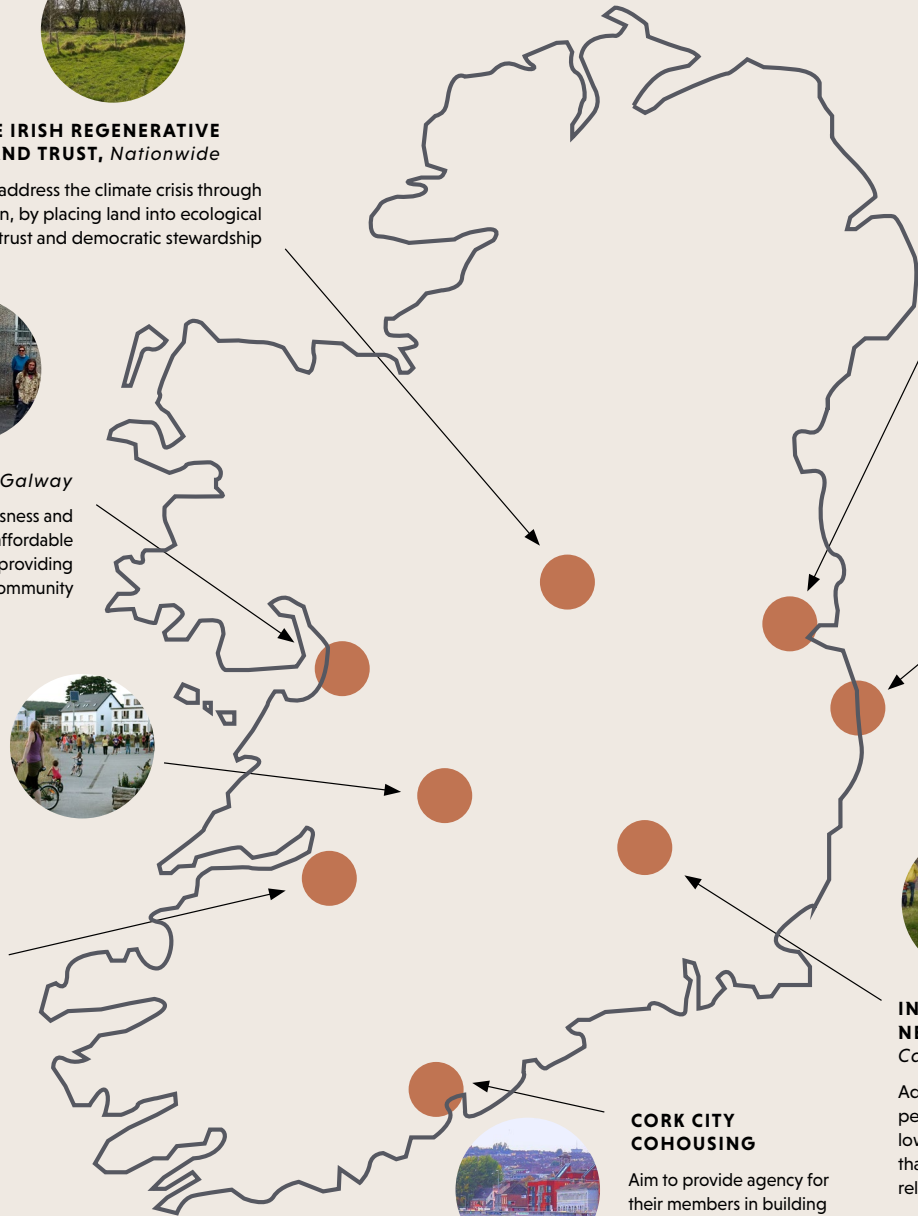
COLLABORATIVE HOUSING LIMERICK

Aim to be part of creating a collaborative housing solution for Limerick, with the belief that a community-led approach can address many more societal problems than housing alone



CORK CITY COHOUSING

Aim to provide agency for their members in building their own future, delivering perpetually affordable homes and offering an example to others as how to do this



Aims Of This Research Project

The goal of the project is the establishment of a Community-Led Housing sector in Ireland that supplements and augments existing routes to creating social an affordable housing in Ireland.

- The project aims to develop recognition of CLH as an approach that empowers low and middle income families to mobilise and develop housing that meets their present and future needs. It aims to develop a sector that **understands housing as a social good.**
- Recommendations are founded on comprehensive research of supportive policy for Community-Led Housing in the European Union and the UK. **Clear recommendations are made for policy development in line with international best practice and competition law.**
- The publication is intended to inform policy decisions which can facilitate a broad variety of approaches to CLH. The handbooks **identify current financial and legal roadblocks and suggest measures to address these.** They further explore existing policy instruments and mechanisms that could be utilised to enable the delivery of projects.
- A priority of the work has been to outline a basis for policy that will enable future civic partnerships between state and local authorities, communities and other stakeholders that **make the best use of state land for the long-term benefit of communities.**
- The handbooks serve as guidance and information to policymakers, Irish CLH groups, related stakeholders, and the wider public generally.

The Publications



PROJECT OVERVIEW
This handbook provides a broad overview of the project aims and findings. It is addressed to all who are interested in developing the Community-Led Housing sector in Ireland.



POLICY HANDBOOK
This handbook summarises the policy context which supports CLH in countries such as the UK, Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland. It recommends policy initiatives which can support the sector in Ireland, and is addressed most specifically towards Irish policymakers.



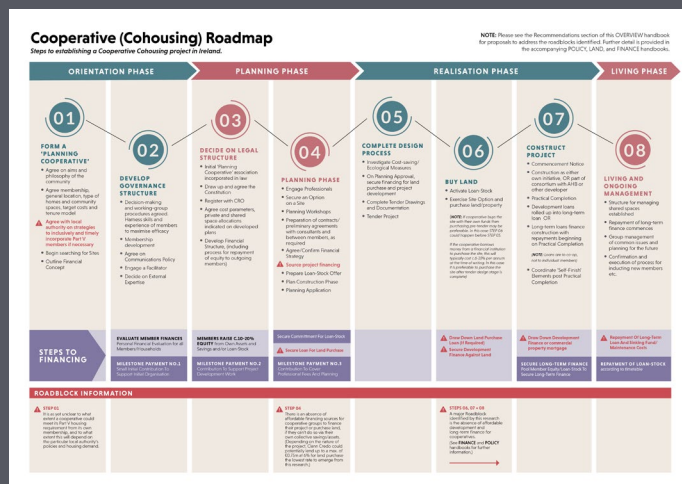
FINANCE HANDBOOK
This handbook examines available financial approaches for CLH in Ireland and recommends measures to ensure a viable sector. It is addressed most specifically towards Irish policymakers and financial institutions.



LAND HANDBOOK
This handbook describes sustainable approaches to land management which facilitate the creation of homes that are affordable in perpetuity. It is addressed most specifically towards Irish local authorities, land management agencies and other landowners.



GETTING YOUR GROUP READY HANDBOOK
This handbook provides an Early-Stage Guide to developing a CLH project, including practical guidance on key steps of the process. It is addressed most specifically towards Irish Community-Led Housing groups.



ROADMAPPING

Each handbook contains a roadmap or a series of roadmaps that set out in a simple infographic how a Community-Led Housing project might be developed in Ireland.

The **Overview** handbook contains three 'Master' roadmap diagrams, and each of the other handbooks contain detailed roadmaps specific to their subject matter.

Community-Led Housing in Ireland

WHAT ISSUES CAN COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING CONTRIBUTE TO ADDRESSING IN IRELAND?

- Community-Led Housing can deliver **neighbourhoods as well as homes**, while offering **genuine agency** to residents in the co-creation process.
- CLH prioritises community integration and **social cohesion**, addressing **loneliness and isolation**.
- CLH projects typically provide an ideal scale to **explore innovation in the design of environmentally sustainable housing** and neighbourhoods.
- CLH addresses **long-term affordability** in ways that other approaches cannot, and can provide homes for those who are currently locked out of the Irish housing system.
- CLH can be a powerful tool in addressing **town centre renewal** across Ireland. As evidenced internationally it is an **ideal vehicle to address dereliction and vacancy**.

A variety of European countries **provide significant support** for Community-Led housing approaches. There is strong evidence for the benefits of CLH in strengthening communities and delivering genuinely affordable homes, and much to be learned from existing infrastructures in the UK and EU.

COMMUNITY-LED HOUSING IN THE IRISH CONTEXT

The following description for Community-Led Housing in the Irish context has been proposed by the various stakeholders participating in this project. It is intended to support a common understanding of the essential and defining aspects of Community-Led Housing.

Community-Led Housing is a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable approach to housing, with the following features:

- 1. Meaningful community engagement and consent throughout the process. The community does not necessarily have to initiate and manage the development process, or build the homes themselves, though many do.*
- 2. The local community group or organisation owns, manages or stewards the homes in a manner of their choosing.*
- 3. Benefits to the local area and/or specified community are clearly defined.*



Next Steps / Call To Action

Irish groups are developing their projects despite significant challenges in Ireland for cooperative and community-led approaches to housing. The recommendations set out in this report are intended to support and accelerate community-led approaches to neighbourhood development in Ireland.

We invite consideration by Government and policymakers of the contents and recommendations set out in this publication.

SOA Research would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Government to introduce this research and discuss the possible steps towards implementation of its recommendations.