



## CASE STUDY

# Crosby Ravensworth, Cumbria

**This community led housing project was based in Crosby Ravensworth, Cumbria. The development comprised of 19 homes in total – 7 self-build plots, 2 homes for shared ownership and 10 homes for affordable rent.**

This community led housing project acted as a catalyst for a number of community asset developments in the Eden Valley, including the acquisition of the local pub, nursery provision and an anaerobic digester project. This project was not just about satisfying the affordable housing need in Crosby Ravensworth, it was also about addressing broader issues of derelict sites which impact on small communities.

**Location: Crosby Ravensworth, Eden District, Cumbria**

**Key aspects: 10 rented homes (2 and 3 bed) – affordable rent**

**Key finance points: Total scheme costs: £2,192,000**

## Background

**The Crosby Ravensworth community led housing project started with a community plan which had 41 action points, the second most important being affordable housing.**

The Lyvennet Community Plan Group (made up of communities from Crosby Ravensworth, Kings Meaburn, Maulds Meaburn and Reagill) then set up the Lyvennet Community Trust with the aim of delivering affordable housing in the area.

Eden District Council was a key partner and provided a loan to the project. The local authority part-funded specialist support from Cumbria Rural Housing Trust and carried out a housing needs survey which highlighted the need for up to 23 affordable dwellings.

A dedicated community land trust (Lyvennet Community Trust) was set up as a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The Lyvennet Community Trust secured Registered Provider status with the Homes and Communities Agency.

A large derelict industrial site was chosen as a potential location and, on the strength of a strong business plan, a loan of £300,000 was secured from Charities Aid Foundation.

The site was chosen not because of any financial value, but because it was a run-down eyesore which was having a significant negative impact on the community. It proved complex and costly to develop due to the demolition and remediation required but the community would not be deterred.

## Funding breakdown

Overall costs .....	£2,192,000
Land purchase .....	£255,000
Build costs .....	£1,481,000
Preliminary costs including planning, legal and interest charges and remediation .....	£456,000
Capital receipt from the sale of plots and houses .....	£817,000
Mortgage from Charity Bank .....	£650,000
Grant from the Homes and Communities Agency .....	£660,000
Local and national fundraising .....	£65,000



During development, Charity Bank provided £1.45m of cashflow funding with borrowing limited to 65% of the scheme value at any point in time.

The financial profiling relied on eight identified self-build plots selling quickly to release capital, but these were slow to sell due to the housing market recession. The local occupancy covenants applying throughout the site were also a contributory factor at that time.

Nonetheless the scheme was completed in July 2012 only three years after the CLT was formed.

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## Key points:

**One of the greatest strengths of the Lyvennet Community Trust was its commitment to community consultation.**

The Lyvennet Community Trust had to tailor the housing mix to meet changing needs and financial constraints. With the sales of self-build plots taking nearly four years, the initial interest in shared ownership evaporating and significant bridging finance required, the final mix became 10 affordable rent, 2 outright market sale and 7 self-build.

They were insistent that local occupancy restrictions were covenanted into the title of the homes and plots sold on the open market. The affordable rent properties were allocated using a policy developed and agreed with the District Council to ensure the homes were allocated to those in local need in perpetuity.

Despite being a Registered Provider, the Trustees wished to distance themselves from the day-to-day management of the properties and personal details of the tenants and therefore negotiated a service level agreement with Eden Housing Association to manage the project. The trustees were all local residents and volunteers which was the main driver behind this decision. The properties are now managed by Eden Housing Association in line with Lyvenette Community Trusts policies and procedures.

The rental properties were all let on the day of handover and there has been just four weeks of voids in the four years since completion.