

# Community-Led Housing: exploring the potential and raising awareness of pioneer projects in the North East

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## Introduction

Community-led development (CLD) is development with meaningful participation from local interest groups such as residents and volunteers. The UK has a relatively low level of CLD<sup>1,2</sup>, but interest and evidence of pioneer groups and projects has grown in recent years alongside 'new localism' in planning policy. This research was conducted in partnership with the North East Community Led Development Network (NECLDN), in which the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) plays an enabling role.

## Aims

- To better understand the extent of activity and uncover 'positive stories' of CLD in the NE
- To identify the motivations and disruptions experienced by pioneer groups and schemes, suggesting ways for the NECLDN to disseminate 'positive stories' as a means to expand the sector

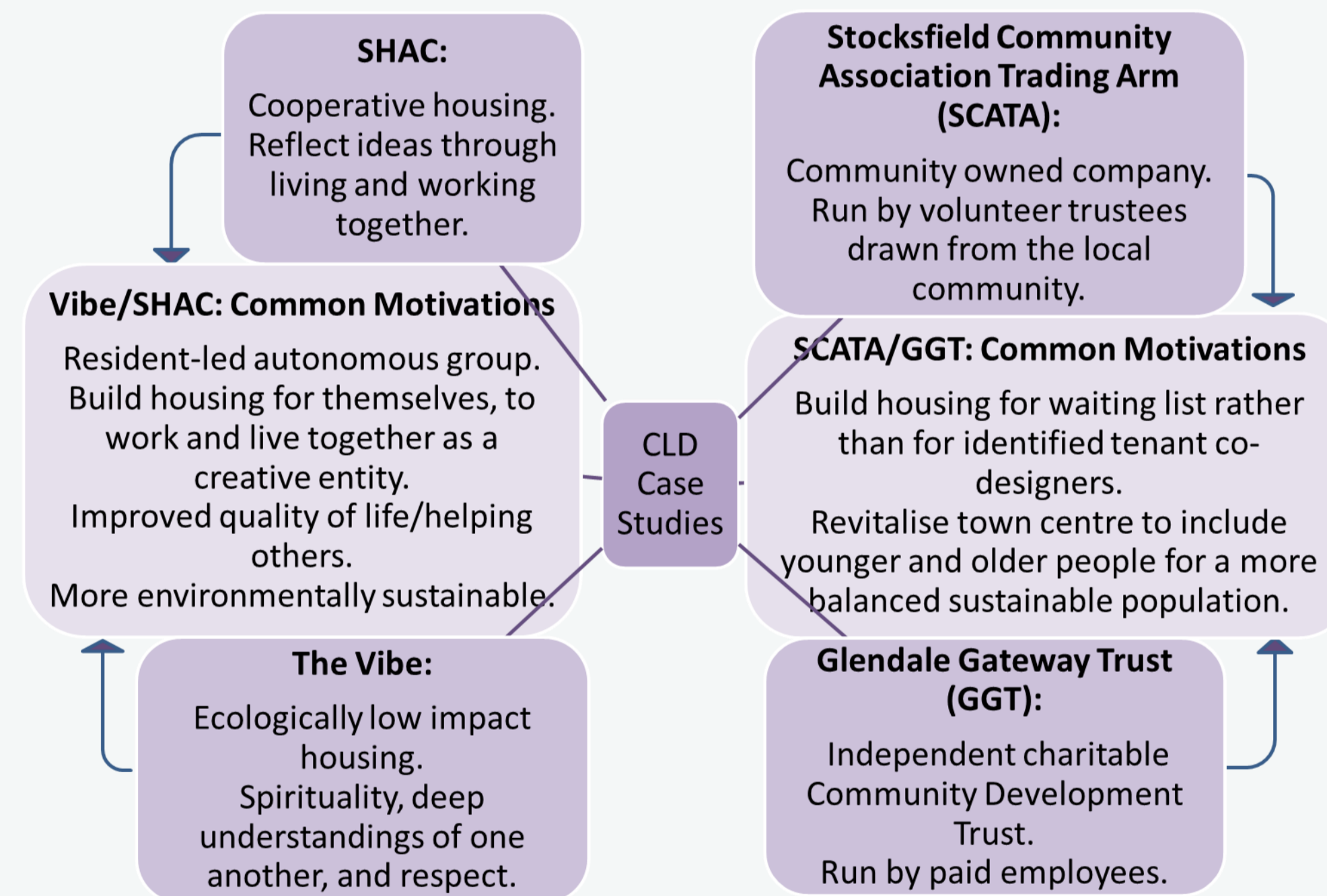
## References

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- Commission on Co-operative and Mutual Housing (2009) Bringing Democracy Home [Online] Available at: <http://www.cch.coop/docs/commission/bdh-commission-report.pdf> [Accessed: 3 September 2014]
- Interview with Professor Patsy Healey.
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## Methods

Data collection comprised a scoping study of existing and forming CLD groups/projects in the region, selecting 4 to study in-depth via a mix of site visits and interviews with key actors (10 in total). A time-line (Figure 2) was produced in each case and interviews transcribed and coded for key themes (as indicated in Figure 1).

Figure 1: A diagram showing the motivations, and overlapping motivations, of each case study



## Results

- Four aspects of CLD identified: the catalyst, the journey experienced, the overarching vision, and key motivations.
- Stories indicate the complex interplay of diverse capital; people, time, knowledge, vision, funding, land, leadership.
- Two discrete trajectories of CLD revealed; partnerships (such as GGT and SCATA) offering timely delivery and local representation, and autonomous groups (such as SHAC and The Vibe) with capacity for community-building and experimental CLD in the region.



GGT, work pod, Wooler



Guessburn site for 6 future properties, SCATA, Stocksfield

Figure 2: A timeline of the GGT's key milestones

Early 1990s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An impulse for change and development amongst residents.</li> </ul>
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Village appraisal identified a need for the vitality of the village to be improved.</li> <li>Glendale Gateway Trust (GGT) formed by 14 local activists.</li> </ul>
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheviot centre opened as a community resource centre.</li> </ul>
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 empty High Street shops purchased.</li> </ul>
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First residential property available for rent.</li> </ul>
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purchase YHA hostel to prevent closure, as well as another empty shop.</li> </ul>
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 more residential properties available for rent, along with 3 commercial properties.</li> </ul>
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 more affordable houses available for rent.</li> </ul>
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empty properties programme bid was successful and a site purchased.</li> </ul>
October 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Bond scheme implemented, worth £122,500 in 2014.</li> </ul>
December 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 new affordable rent residential properties are expected, totalling 18 residential properties.</li> </ul>

## Conclusions

- CLD operates in many different ways, expressing positive stories to a varying extent, according to the actors and emphasis entailed; e.g. strengthening community (empowerment) versus delivering new/affordable homes.
- Umbrella support for CLD in the NE has facilitated a growing number of partnership projects but more collaborative groups and experimental projects appear less well supported by a planning context emphasising conventional delivery: the suggestion is that CLD groups should remain 'focused but fluid'<sup>3,4</sup>. To be meaningful, all community participation requires adequate time and support.