

Feb 5 2019

Statement from CVCLT Trustees

Calder Valley Community Land Trust is enormously disappointed at the decision by Calderdale's planning committee today (Feb 5) to reject proposals for new affordable homes to rent in Hebden Bridge.



The not-for-profit proposal would have seen twenty new homes built on the site of the former High Street, a densely packed terraced area of the town bulldozed in the 1960s. The council's decision comes after more than three years of detailed planning for the new homes by the local member-based charity. The plans, as presented to planning, had been designed and refined following four well-attended public consultations in the town, as well as a drop-in exhibition session in Hebden Bridge Library.

The councillors on the planning committee went against their own officers' advice, which was to permit the Community Land Trust's development. They also went against verbal statements in support of the proposal, made at the committee by local ward councillors Cllr Sarah Courtney and Cllr Dave Young, and by Town Council leader Cllr Carol Stow. The land in question is scheduled for residential development under the Calderdale Local Plan (approved by Council and now with the Secretary of State).

Three councillors voted to reject the application, and two voted in favour. The sixth member of the committee, the Chair Cllr Sweeney, had withdrawn from the meeting since he himself is a CLT member.

Twenty-three members and supporters of the CLT were in the planning committee room, to listen to the councillors' discussions.

Simon Brearley, Chair, said: "We will consider carefully the decision of the planning committee. The trustees of the CLT will meet next Monday. As a member-run organisation, we will be listening very much to what our members and supporters think."

He stressed however that this setback will not prevent the CLT from continuing in its mission of creating low-cost quality affordable homes to rent in the upper Calder Valley. The builders of the CLT's first development, of six independent living bungalows at Walsden, are

scheduled to be on site very shortly. The CLT also owns the Fielden Hall community centre in Todmorden and is in discussions with Network Rail about the long-term conservation of the heritage Hebden Bridge Signal Box.

“Although this has been a highly disappointing afternoon, and the decision went against us by the narrowest of majorities, we want to thank all those friends who gave up their time to come along and join us for the committee meeting,” Simon Brearley added.