

PRESS RELEASE

Community-led housing charity receives major grant for its 'Big Potential'

Calder Valley Community Land Trust has been awarded a major grant by Big Potential, a Big Lottery Fund grant fund which supports community organisations and social enterprises to improve sustainability, capacity and scale. The grant will provide resources to the value of £88,000 to enable Calder Valley CLT to develop its capacity and to attract investment for its proposed affordable homes developments in Hebden Bridge and Walsden.

Competition for support from the Big Potential scheme is intense and the decision to support Calder Valley CLT is a highly significant independent endorsement of the way that the Trust has developed in the three years since it was first established.

Calder Valley CLT, which was originally set up through the efforts of the two community 'town teams' Todmorden Pride and Hebden Bridge Partnership, aims to demonstrate that some of the much-needed affordable housing in the borough of Calderdale can be provided through direct community-led initiatives. The CLT is working on a development of six independent living bungalows in Walsden, in partnership with the local almshouse charity John Eastwood Homes, on land provided by Calderdale council. It is also currently undertaking feasibility and planning work with the view to creating homes once again in the High Street area of Hebden Bridge (off Heptonstall Road), where housing was demolished in the early 1960s, again on land which Calderdale council will make available. The new development is planned to be primarily housing at affordable rents for local young people in need of homes.

Andrew Bibby, secretary for the Community Land Trust, said: "This grant is enormously important to us, both for the resources it will offer us and because it is a clear statement of belief in what we are trying to achieve. Given the competition for Big Potential support, the news that we have been selected is a real pick-me-up."

Big Potential, managed by Social Investment Business, provides grants to voluntary organisations to access expert support from approved providers and Calder Valley CLT has chosen to work with the national charity Locality. Locality's input will enable the CLT to undertake detailed business planning work on the two developments and to find the capital funding it will need. The CLT will also receive around £34,000 directly which it will use primarily to access administrative and management support for the all-volunteer board of trustees.

John Dawson, Locality's Development Manager for the North, said: "Locality is delighted to have helped Calder Valley Community Land Trust secure this grant, which will greatly help them move towards their vision of creating quality community-led housing in the Calder Valley. Locality firmly believes in the power of common ownership and communities being empowered to find the solutions to local problems. This is why we are supporting a growing national network of organisations like Calder Valley Community Land Trust to develop local community owned solutions to the national housing crisis."

Calder Valley Community Land Trust is one of more than 170 similar CLTs across the country, ranging from small village organisations to inner-city regeneration initiatives. "The shared idea between all the CLTs is that communities are often in the best position to know what housing is needed locally. Rather than waiting for external developers to arrive with their own ideas and plans, community-led housing can ensure that the new homes which are built are those which local people really want to see," Andrew Bibby said.

Calderdale Council's Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Environment, Cllr Daniel Sutherland said: "We're delighted to hear of the Community Land Trust's success in attracting Big Potential support and we congratulate the CLT's trustees and members for the efforts they are taking to bring affordable housing to the Upper Valley. There is an urgent need for good quality affordable housing throughout Calderdale and we're working hard with partners, including community-led initiatives like the CLT, to get the homes we need."

Calder Valley CLT, which will celebrate its third birthday later this year, is a member-led community benefit society with charitable status. Around seventy local people have supported the CLT's work by becoming members. The CLT at present operates in Todmorden and Hebden Bridge, but is potentially interested in developing its work into other neighbouring communities. Its website is www.caldervalleyclt.org.uk.

Note for editors

Calder Valley CLT: www.caldervalleyclt.org.uk. Contact Andrew Bibby on 01422 844026

Locality: www.locality.org.uk

Big Potential: www.bigpotential.org.uk

1. Big Potential is a Big Lottery Fund grant fund, which will deliver approximately £20m of grant funding over 3 years to eligible VCSE organisations with the aim of improving the sustainability, capacity and scale of VCSE organisations in order that they may deliver greater social impact.

2. Social Investment Business provides loans, grants and strategic support to charities and social enterprises to help them improve people's lives.

They have helped hundreds of organisations become more resilient and sustainable so that they can grow and increase their impact.

Social Investment Business were one of the UK's first social investors and since 2002 have provided over £380 million of loans and grants to charities and social enterprises.

3. The Big Lottery Fund is the largest funder of community activity in the UK. It puts people in the lead to improve their lives and communities, often through small, local projects.

It is responsible for giving out 40% of the money raised by National Lottery players for good causes. Every year it invests over £650 million and awards around 12,000 grants across the UK for health, education, environment and charitable purposes.

Since June 2004 it has awarded over £8 billion to projects that change the lives of millions of people.

