**MAKING PROPERTY AND LAND AVAILABLE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Simon Cartwright, TNT & Fred Ratley, Thrive Together Birmingham**

**CONTEXT – SIMON**

**In 2021, a commission set up by Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby published a report titles “Coming Home: Tackling the Housing Crisis Together” which set out how the church could do more to help tackle the housing crisis.**

**The Coming Home report highlighted five core values that set a new standard and vision for what good housing should look like:**

* First, good housing should be **sustainable**: building homes which work in harmony with nature is an essential part of our calling as stewards of God’s good creation.
* Then good houses must be **safe**: every home should provide decent, secure accommodation and be a place where people feel protected against unwanted intrusion.
* Third, homes should be **stable**: good housing policy should provide affordable homes and secure tenancies, enabling people to settle for the long term and put down roots with their families.
* Good housing is also **sociable**: homes should be conducive to hospitality and fellowship, and providing shared facilities and meeting spaces encourages relationships between neighbours to grow.
* Lastly, good housing should be **satisfying**: communities are more than clusters of homes – the architecture, design and technology must work together to create places where people delight to live.

**The report concluded that the Church of England must make “widespread, generous and responsible” use of its own land to deliver affordable housing.**

The Church of England owns roughly 200,000 acres of land, making it one of the largest landowners in England, although not all of this land is developable.

So, in 2022, The Church of England announced plans to set up a national housing association

We believe the registration for a Housing Association gone in and good will and waiting for funding to get it going

The details of what this will look like will be confirmed by Archbishops Council in December.

In meantime, the Church Housing Foundation has been established to work with others who want to build or improve affordable housing.

**FRED PRESENTATION**

We tend to help people out of river, can we go up river and stop falling in.

Fred loved the Coming Home report, Birmingham formed the reference group – do need to do something - we need a Housing Association.

Gloucester already formed a Housing Association – Birmingham now partnered with them.

Birmingham alongside Chelmsford, Gloucester and Blackburn will be the pilot for the Church Housing Association.

Sites are now being identified, these include the following:

***Weoley Castle***

* Church building beyond repair
* Plan to move into the church hall
* Will lease the site to Century 21 on a long lease
* Developing 16 units for over 60s
* Possible remodel of the church as a new community hub

***Winson Green / Newbigin***

* Land in disadvantaged area - private sector developer will create the site
* If the Church Housing Association formed – developer is offering 120 units at cost offered to them to manage
* Working with a local church ran community project
* Challenge for allocations – do we add a bias for the local

***Druid’s Heath***

* Some land available to regenerate
* Church commissioners own part of the land
* Need a joint planning between the churches and housing project
* But challenge of two different authorities

**QUESTIONS AND CONVERSATION (25min)**

***Where is momentum coming from?***

Hope for a national structure

Looking to the national housing association and the development arm

Need for Entrepreneurial property manager

***National politics of this is fraught***

Problem is a brilliant report

But don’t have clout so real need is to give them the money

Need for the commissioners to release £12mill to get it moving

Prayer for the December Archbishops Council

***Housing Association***

Need to ensure that the Housing Association remains focused on the poor

The tempter is to fund local ministry

If the national housing association does not happen, but we need a local housing association

***Diocesan Board of trustees***

* Need to get the support from the local PCC first
* Need a diocesan champion here

***Charity Bank***

* CofE brought a stake in Charity Bank that may enable people to deliver this

***What can people get on with?***

* Get on with some local churches can get on with this
* Get things pro-bono – wealth expertise out there

***SUMMARY FOR PLENARY***

* Need to show a financial return – get the experts in first to show its viable
* Develop a close working relationship with the council who share our dreams
* Need a champion in the property department in your diocese
* Need a housing association to make this happen, can we work with an existing local housing association or look to ecumenical partners?
* Can we find another diocese to partner with?
* Would be good to have a network of skills from richer churches that can help the poorer churches to develop these projects
* YMCA can help this happen