



The Confederation of
Co-operative
Housing

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Bushbury Hill

How TMO's can build & manage new homes





At a glance

- **Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board is a TMO managing a large estate in Wolverhampton with a fully tenant-led board that has been in operation for 23 years**
- **Manages 900 homes for the council and 125 homes for a housing association without a base in Wolverhampton**
- **Estate is a large 1920s housing estate made up of mostly three-bed homes with some two-bed homes and a handful of one-bed homes**
- **Created a partnership with Wolverhampton City Council and its ALMO (Wolverhampton Homes) to develop new homes on a vacant site, the Magic Gardens, and a number of infill sites**
- **Planned new units are dormer bungalows (bungalows with a second bedroom up a flight of stairs for occasional use) so that people already living on the estate can downsize**
- **The current plan is to build eight of these bungalows on the Magic Gardens site and one on a vacant corner plot. Also two houses on infill sites where existing houses sit on double plots**



Photos





Overview

Bushbury Hill EMB is a long-running TMO in Wolverhampton that manages a large 1920s housing estate. It has developed a proposal to build nine new two-bed bungalows on the estate, in partnership with Wolverhampton Council and their ALMO, to provide an option for older people to downsize while remaining on the estate. It also plans to build two houses on infill sites.

As a TMO, Bushbury Hill EMB has been led by a tenant board under the Right to Manage since 1998. The 12 members are elected for a three-year term by shareholders, with a third of the board up for election each year. Any adult who lives on the estate can become a shareholder in Bushbury for 10p and 80% of Bushbury Hill properties have at least one resident shareholder. The board makes strategic decisions and decides policy while the employed officers run the operations.

Around a third of Bushbury Hill tenants are of pensionable age and most of these older people are long-term residents who live in large family homes. The current housing stock on the estate is predominantly large three bedroom houses with large gardens and includes very few options for people wishing to downsize and remain on the estate. There is therefore a significant amount of under-occupation on the estate which contributes to a lack of available homes for new families. Bushbury Hill EMB is seeking to address both these challenges in part through the development of ten affordable rent two-bed 'dormer' bungalows on the estate. Through chain lettings, the proposed new homes will serve the needs of the community beyond their immediate occupants.

The general allocations policy for the estate states that one-in-four homes are reserved for households with a local connection. As a key component of its new development scheme is to make more family homes available on the estate, Bushbury Hill has arranged with Wolverhampton Council to increase this to 100% for the new builds on the first let and 50% on the re-let. Family homes made available in this process will be let according to the general allocations policy.

The new development offers residents an opportunity to move to a new home which meets their changing mobility needs and allows them to stay on the estate. The two-bed 'dormer' bungalow design, with one bedroom up a set of stairs and the rest of the rooms in the house on the ground floor, was chosen to be attractive to current residents who might be reluctant to leave their larger homes for a one-bed flat or bungalow. The two-bedroom design provides more space and the option of having guests or a younger relative live with the residents.

The proposed scheme will build nine bungalows across one main site, one vacant corner plot and two infill sites, all within the current boundaries of the estate. Eight new bungalows will be built on the site of a former community facility, which was demolished some years ago and the site left unused. One bungalow will be built on a vacant corner plot and the other two new homes will be built on infill sites where current homes sit on a double plot. These homes will be prefabricated as much as possible to minimise disruption to the neighbouring homes. The infill solution is possible because some of the homes in Bushbury Hill, already with large gardens as standard, were built on double plots and have exceptionally large amounts of garden for each home.

The proposed development will be financed with a mix of grant funding from Homes England and Wolverhampton Council. It is intended that a large proportion of the capital costs of building the new homes will come from the second phase of the Community Housing Fund, though confirmation of allocation is pending. Wolverhampton Council has committed to fund the remainder of the development through their HRA

borrowing capacity. The homes will be owned by Wolverhampton Council after development in a way which mirrors the current arrangements on the estate. The proposal received initial funding from the Community Housing Fund to undertake pre-building work on the new development, such as consultation, site surveys and securing planning permission.

The proposal for the new development involves a partnership between Bushbury Hill EMB, Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton Homes, the council's ALMO. Bushbury Hill EMB initiated the proposed development by approaching the council to discuss options for using the fund. The organisation was alert to the opportunities to build on land within the estate, as it had recently collaborated with a housing association on a new development on the site of an old pub. Therefore, when the Community Housing Fund was announced it was ready to develop a proposal for it. Bushbury Hill EMB is providing the land and is the point of contact with the community. It is also able, as a community led housing organisation, to access grant funding that the other partners are unable to. Wolverhampton Council will finance the development costs not covered by the Community Housing Fund and take ownership of the completed properties. Wolverhampton Homes is conducting the development work as the team has experience working on small infill sites. The ALMO is contributing this on a no-cost basis as part of its commitment to developing new council homes on small sites in the city. The proposed new homes will be an asset gain for Wolverhampton Council, who are keen to build new stock, and a creative way for Bushbury Hill EMB to meet the needs of the community.



Quotes

“I think the strength of a TMO is, you already exist. I looked at the process for the Community Housing fund and the first part of it is, you know, set up a legal organisation in order to make the bid. Well, a TMO is already a mile down that road, you already exist, you have a legal form that the government understands. And you’ve got offices, you’ve got a board so you’re in a really strong position and you can bid for grants, and you have relationships with your local council with their housing department and their ALMO.”

“And you may have sites either within your estate or adjacent to your estate that could be developed. Every area is unique, but if there’s spare land on the estate, whether you make it by persuading people, or that happens to be a derelict site, which there’s a lot of in different areas, then you’ve got the ingredients. And most local authorities if they’ve still got housing stock, are keen to build...”

“So I say to anybody, if you’ve got potential sites then approach your council because what you bring is the ability to persuade the community to have the housing built - it was a no brainer because our community already said they wanted additional housing. We had consulted them on that previously. And, that’s your strength, you know, you are the community effectively, and your members are the community. So, if you want to build housing in your area, then you can take that to the council. And if there is another round of community housing you have the potential to bring in additional funding, which helps the council to pay for it. So now you’ve got everything you need to make it happen. And you’ve got a good pitch to your local authority to add to its housing stock.”

Bill Heywood

Tenancy Manager, Bushbury Hill EMB



Learning points

- **TMOs are in a good position to move quickly on community led housing opportunities**
- **Large estates may provide opportunity for infilling new development**
- **Developing properties outside of existing stock portfolio can better meet the needs of some tenants and provide an opportunity for chain-lets benefiting the community more widely**
- **Some councils may be willing to undertake new development with a TMO as a way of increasing their own housing stock**



Confederation of Co-operative Housing

Registered office: 19 Devonshire Road, Liverpool, L8 3TX

Telephone: 07940 448 014 | Email: info@cch.coop

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