

Housing Our Millennials: Affordable Homes for Generation Rent.



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Preface

About the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (www.wcmt.org.uk) is the UK's national memorial to Sir Winston, and each year the Trust awards Travelling Fellowship grants to UK citizens in a range of fields to enable Churchill Fellows to carry out research projects overseas. These projects are designed to exchange ideas and best practice, and build greater understanding between peoples and different cultures, in order that professions and communities in the UK can benefit from these shared experiences.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for the opportunity to travel to Holland, Germany and Australia to visit many inspiring organisations and projects. I am indebted to all of the individuals involved in the research, who gave their time so generously. In particular I would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who hosted and welcomed me in Australia, Germany and Holland. A full list of all these is attached in appendix 2. I also wish to thank United Communities, my employer at the time, who supported me in applying for a WCMT Fellowship and allowed me the time to undertake my trips.

About The Author

I have worked in the social housing sector

for most of my career spanning nearly 40 years. I have always believed that a safe and secure roof over your head is the very foundation from which other life opportunities will be nurtured to grow and take root.

Throughout my career I have had the privilege to lead organisations that take their values and drive from the residents and communities that they serve. This has included pioneering new forms of community led housing such as self build and piloting the co-production of resident services, located within specific geographic communities. Projects range from large scale social housing schemes that have helped to regenerate communities, through to small scale self help such as the Bristol Community Land Trust.

As the Chief Executive of Bristol based housing association, United Communities, at the time of my WCMT Fellowship, I was able to bring my experience and learning directly back to my organisation with the development of a prototype community for young people- LaunchPad. Eighteen months after my travels I took up a new role as CEO of a social care charity and housing association, Brunelcare. Here I have been able to contribute knowledge gained on my travels of intergenerational housing to redesign the future of some of our sheltered housing schemes.

Insights from my research continue to inform my approach and to generate ideas about how to include young people in the design and mixture of new affordable housing provision in a way that includes and empowers them.

Executive Summary

This research has been prompted by the challenges associated with housing for young people who are just starting out on the housing ladder, only to find that the rungs have been taken away.

Millennials are defined as young people born between 1981 and 1997, sometimes known as 'Generation Rent', often not poor enough for social housing, but too poor for home ownership.

A lifetime of renting from private landlords lies ahead of them. This is a change from their parents' generation, who largely, if they had a reasonably decent job, expected to be able to buy their own home by their late 20's.

I first applied for a Churchill Fellowship in 2016, because I was concerned about the wider societal implications of locking an entire generation out of the housing market. I wanted to look at international responses, to see if there were both practical and policy ideas that could be translated to a UK setting.

The conversations and projects that I visited inspired me to go beyond theoretical observations to propose developing an innovative pilot housing project aimed at millennials which could act as a prototype and be replicated elsewhere. This pilot is called 'LaunchPad' and is aimed at housing young people from a range of backgrounds. It was completed in 2019 and the journey and lessons learnt in developing it are set out in Part Three.

The report is divided into three main sections:

Part One describes the research background and methodology.

Part Two includes detailed case studies and lessons learnt from twelve housing models in Australia and Europe and are grouped as:

- A. Compact Homes in Australia, Holland and the UK**
- B. Self Organised Housing in the UK, Australia and Germany**
- C. Developer led, private sector models in Australia and London.**
- D. Innovative partnership solutions in Australia and Holland.**

Part Three sets out how these models informed the development of **LaunchPad**. It charts the detail behind the development of the project and evaluates its replicability and the lessons learnt from its development and its relevance for young people.

Findings and Recommendations

Analysis from the research highlights four key elements that should be considered when developing and planning homes for millennials.

- 1. Young people are not homogeneous.** They need the same variety of housing options that were available to their parents' generation. Affordability has significantly reduced these options, such that they are ready to live at home well into their 20's and to consider compact homes such as LaunchPod and the Collective which are explored in the case studies.

2. Co-housing and community living can be attractive to young people, particularly those just starting out or without a stable family to fall back on. However the time and financial resources required to invest in these options, such as Bauugruppe and self build will preclude those most in need.

3. Many housing developments aimed at young people eg. student accommodation are often detached from the wider community. Whilst this is acceptable for short periods, the case studies examined, and review of LaunchPad, demonstrate the **value of bringing different generations together** to create a more sustainable mixed community.

4. Greater recognition should be given to the **social value of innovative models of housing** that help to bring forward otherwise stay vacant. The housing crisis for young people is here now, not in the three to five years that it typically takes for all the development hurdles. Land and sites quickly that would a conventional development to get through all the development hurdles.

Concluding Ideas

The ideas and principles that can be translated to homes and communities for millennials more broadly include:

- Building mixed communities which do not segregate people based on their age or social class.
- Using modern methods of construction to speed up development and make use of temporary sites.
- Adapting existing business and finance models to support innovation in housing for young people who do not have the assets to invest.
- Developing a new form of short term finance with slightly higher margins to facilitate low risk but high social value. housing projects.

Part One: Introduction

Millennial Madness

Whilst intergenerational inequalities are not a new phenomenon, in the 21st Century, the most apparent is the question of housing. Across all income groups and in all parts of the country, young people believe they are on the receiving end of a poorer housing experience than previous generations.

Home ownership levels in western economies have been falling dramatically over the last 10 years with a [global housing crisis](#) recognised as a barrier to economic growth. Combined with de-regulation in the private rented sector (PRS), millennials have found themselves living longer at home or in insecure, expensive and often substandard accommodation well into their 30's. The housing options for younger generations have reduced significantly as is brought into sharp focus by this short film by [Sean Burke](#) in 2020.



Press Headline in Sept 2018.

In 2108 '[A New Generational Contract](#)' a major three year investigation by the *Resolution Foundation* into intergenerational fairness in Britain found that:

- One in three of Britain's millennial generation will never own their own home, half would be renting in their 40s and that a third could still be doing so by the time they claim their pensions.
- The proportion of families headed by a 25- to 34-year-old that own their own home has more than halved in some regions, showing that the crisis goes far beyond London.
- Millennials are now spending an average of nearly a quarter of their net income on housing, three times more than the pre-war generation, now aged 70 and over.
- Their living space is also declining. Each person living in the private rented sector now has on average eight square metres less space than they did in 1996.
- The number of young adults living with their parents has soared by more than a quarter in two decades, increasing from 2.7m in 1998 to 3.4million in 2017.

These reduced housing choices have implications beyond the individual, with young people putting off starting families, spending a significantly higher proportion of their income on housing and deciding to move out of major cities to find an affordable home. All the main political parties have recognised the political value of housing to the young voters they are

hoping to attract. In the 2017 General Election, private renters swung to Labour, particularly in the key marginals. (['How Britain Voted 2017'](#)).



Prime Minister, Boris Johnson has talked about the failure of his party to build enough houses for the under-40s and announced major changes to the planning system in August 2020 because of the generational divide between 'those who are homeowners and those who are not'. [Planning Overhaul 2020](#).

International Comparisons

Intergenerational housing inequality is not unique to the UK, with most global cities experiencing a similar housing crisis as outlined by the [World Economic Forum](#) in their 2019 report to their annual meeting.

In Australia the "great Australian dream" of owning their own home is no longer realistic with a 2019 report on [Attitudes to Property](#) by property analysts CoreLogic, finding that 63 per cent of Australians who are still living with their parents saying they cannot afford to move out of home.

Australia's house prices are amongst the highest in the world ([Australian Housing Affordability](#)), with Sydney and Melbourne ranking in the top ten cities for purchase

and rent. There was outrage in 2016, when Bernard Salt in 'The Australian' wrote that he had seen "young people order smashed avocado", arguing that they should be saving to buy a house. This became an emblem of the housing crisis internationally, with young people responding that even if they gave up avocado toast, it would still take about a decade to save for a home



deposit. ([BBC Article on Avocado Row](#))

Emblem of millennial housing crisis in 2017.

Berlin has also experienced rocketing house prices and rents and in 2019 saw the highest price rises in property values in the world with rents doubling. Millennials were faced with paying half their salaries on rent. Following many protests, the Berlin City Council agreed to freeze rents for five years from Jan' 2020.

In the Netherlands, long famed for its more enlightened approach to social housing, they are also experiencing a housing emergency. With investors buying up homes to rent, there are fewer homes available for people starting out on the housing market. In 2019 25 percent of all sold homes went to first-time homeowners, compared to 47 percent in 2014. 40% of Dutch young people do not expect to be able to buy a first home, five percent higher than the European average. This picture of rising rents and house prices, squeezing out younger people is mirrored in the US, Canada, India and South America. In

conclusion we do not have a national housing crisis, we have a global one, worthy of attention by international bodies such as the UN and World Economic Forum (WEF) who cited in their 2019 report [Making Affordable Housing a Reality](#) that

90% of cities around the world do not provide affordable housing or of adequate quality and that '*A world in which only a few can afford housing is not sustainable*'.

Methodology and Itinerary

Research Aims

The original intention of the research was to explore a variety of housing options which might be relevant for millennials in responding to the housing crisis.

The overall aim of the research was to examine;

- a) **Replicable funding and management models for attractive, fundable and ethical housing that could be developed by UK housing associations for 'Millennial's'.**
- b) **Produce a summary of potential Millennial housing funding and delivery models, and relate them to a UK setting.**
- c) Produce a summary and evaluation of the essential elements of a core service and management offer.
- d) Establish what appetite there is for social investment and explore whether philanthropy can play a role in millennial housing development
- e) Apply outcomes of research to a 150 home, mixed tenure development that my organisation is developing in Bristol, as well as new developments in the pipeline.
- f) **Develop relevant elements of the research into a potential housing prototype. eg. what works.**
- g) Establish an international 'ideas' network of organisations pioneering practical housing options for millennials.

These aims proved to be too wide in focus to gain a deep understanding in the time available as well as the resource it was reasonable for me to expect from my hosts. I had also underestimated the depth of the housing crisis outside of the UK, and the widespread absence of systemic

government responses.

In the course of my travels I therefore adapted my expected outcomes to focus on a, b, f, with a significant focus on building an actual housing prototype - LaunchPad.

The process of developing LaunchPad as a real life project has enabled many aspects of my research to be tested practically. It has also acted as a learning example to help guide other organisations wanting to explore new types of housing for young people. Since it was completed in Autumn 2019 it has been nominated for and secured a number of design and innovation awards. It is also being replicated as a housing solution within the context of the pandemic.

Research Approach

Identifying the sites to visit was informed by online desk research and calls with experts within the UK and Australia to help identify the organisations to visit. Research was gathered through site visits which included:

- Semi structured interviews with representatives from the case study organisations.
- Tour and observation of the activities
- Roundtable meetings- organisations and academics
- Interviews with the press and radio which included [Sydney Morning Herald Interview Dec 2017](#) .
- Attending and speaking at an international AHURI conference in Sydney.

Location	Projects	Date
Amsterdam	Startblok Riekerhaven Self Build- City Council. International Social Housing Conference.	06/17
Deventer	Humanitas	06/17
Sydney	Community Housing Associations- NSW, St Georges, Hume, Bridge. Universities of Sydney and UNSW Home Share Youth Foundations	11/18
Melbourne	Melbourne City Council. Kids Under Cover Big Issue Nightingale Bendigo HA Launch Housing.	11/17
Byron Bay, NSW.	KO:HO Byron Bay CLT	12/7
Brisbane	Tiny Homes YIMBY	12/17
Berlin	Spreefeld Housing Co-op Frankie and Johnnie Baugruppe Projects	05/18
London	The Collective Richmond Housing Partnership	07/18

Research reflections and changes

During the course of my research I refined the original objectives as it became clearer that there were few examples of systemic examples of models that could be replicated on a large scale,

My reflections on the research methodology were that to maximise the opportunity of travelling overseas, a significant number of organisations were visited. Whilst this was beneficial for learning about different models and for comparison, it was harder to gain an in-depth understanding of the organisations.

Some of my immediate reflections were published via a blog [Housing our Millennials Blog 2](#) [Housing our Millennials Blog 1](#) [Housing our Millennials Blog 3](#) .

Part Two: Case Studies

Housing Typologies from Europe and Australia

There are a vast array of housing typologies which demonstrate the efforts by communities and organisations to find solutions to the housing crisis for young people. It should be stressed that these are often an attempt to fill a gap not being met by conventional housing providers. Because of their innovation and relative small scale they can absorb disproportionate resources and set up costs.

These responses do not mitigate the need for a systematic response by Governments to properly fund and resource affordable housing solutions. Young people consistently told me that they just wanted the opportunity that I and my generation had. It wasn't complex or peculiar to their generation; good quality homes to buy or rent at affordable prices.

On the following pages there are case studies of specific projects aimed primarily at young people.

These are divided into four themes as follows:

- A. Compact Homes in Australia, Holland and the UK**
- B. Self Organised Housing in the UK, Australia and Germany**
- C. Developer led, private sector models in Australia and the UK.**
- D. Innovative partnership solutions in Australia and Holland.**

All the projects helped me to shape the design and implementation of LaunchPad, the project that was inspired by my visit.

A. Compact Homes

There is a fierce debate about the move to develop smaller and smaller homes. Planning guidelines in the UK set a minimum space standard of 39m² for a 1 bed 1 person flat, with a more common 1 bed 2 person flat at 50m². (*Technical Housing Standards: 2015: DCLG*). Attempts by developers to reduce these, are met with understandable opposition from planning authorities concerned about a 'race to the bottom'.

Six of the projects that I visited have thought deeply about these issues and have developed prototypes that help to mitigate these concerns for particular reasons, most notably because the homes are conceived for short term use or during a particular phase of a young person's life. For example leaving college or care or as a first temporary home. The projects I visited all exemplified this.

A1. Tiny Homes - Brisbane

I visited Lara Noble in her Tiny Home in a suburb of Brisbane. Lara and her partner, Greg, had come to realise that 'the Australian dream *'didn't seem to include them'*. With a young baby they were still living in shared houses being forced to move every six months as their tenancies ended. Both of them had design and building backgrounds, and so they decided to take control. They designed a prototype Tiny House, and negotiated with a housing collective to site it in a back garden. Lara told me about the difficulty of being able to afford to buy land for a permanent home.

The key to the Tiny House idea is the flexibility that comes from separating house from land. The homes are on wheels, which

means they are regarded as mobile homes and fall outside planning controls. Designed to accommodate the Australian climate, it is energy efficient with an outdoor veranda which increases the living space.



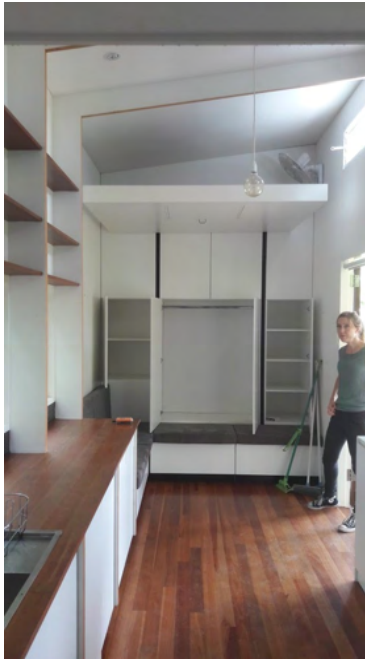
Lara and her Tiny Home

Despite being just 18m², the incredibly efficient design means that it appeared spacious. With width limited to facilitate movement on roads, they had opted for height, which helped to give a sense of space. The retractable bed had 3m of headroom by night and floats over a 2.4m lounge space by day. Controlled wirelessly by remote, it needed no folding or packing away. They had also included a lot of storage space.

Lara had loved living in their Tiny Home, feeling at tune with the environment. She felt that younger people generally needed less 'stuff'. They were out a lot and didn't need a big home. Furthermore, the price tag of \$80k as opposed to the \$300k average to buy a house in Brisbane, was affordable, given that as a designer she was on a volatile income. However as their baby was becoming a toddler, they were now looking to move on to build a shared house with friends.

Lara was a firm advocate of Tiny Homes in

the Australian climate and for single people or couples, but wondered how they might work in a colder climate or for families.



Tiny Homes are now an international movement, with many different versions meeting a range of needs including on in my home city; [Tiny House Community Bristol](#). They can be an individual response to a desire to live 'off grid' but also for communities wanting to shape and design their own homes

Some charities have suggested tiny house communities as a form of combating chronic homelessness [Social Bite Villages](#). For many Tiny House advocates, finding affordable land that can be used for long enough to justify the initial investment, still remains a major obstacle. Whilst Tiny Homes could be a good short term solution for some millennials, there would be concerns if they became a long term option. It is unlikely that they could be scalable in the UK, because of the barriers in locating suitable land and locations.

A2- LaunchPod- London

Richmond Housing Partnership (RHP), are a pioneering housing association in SW London. In 2017 they piloted a modular 26 sqm one bedroom flat called Launch Pod. I met Tom Way, their innovation lead. He explained the concept of Launch Pod. Their aim was to incorporate many of the features of a much larger flat as well as private external space in the form of a front terrace or a balcony. They are beautifully designed, incorporating a full spectrum of technological innovations and energy saving devices. [LaunchPod prototype](#)

LaunchPod are aimed principally at millennials in London who had a yearly income range of £15,000-£55,000, who don't qualify for social housing but are priced out of the private market. Residents would pay 80% of the market rent. RHP's research suggested they were particularly attractive to young people who had had enough of shared houses and wanted somewhere more stable and private. They were prepared to forgo space to be able to live closer to work and to have a place of their own.



LaunchPod prototype in Teddington, London

LaunchPod are built in a factory and transported on lorries. They can make use of temporary sites and can be relocated. However, their cost at approx £70k, means

that they would require a long lease on land to make them financially viable, so 'temporary' would need a minimum lease of 20 years.

RHP had recognised the digital awareness of millennials who wanted their homes to be as 'easy' as possible. They had incorporated technology into the LaunchPod homes that enabled all health and safety compliance to be tested remotely so that residents did not need to be in or take time off work. This extended to any communication with them as a landlord, so that all transactions could be carried out digitally.

However, RHP were not able to persuade planners in the Greater London Authority, that the space standard of 25m², was acceptable. They fell well below the minimum space standard of 39m² and the GLA were concerned that LaunchPod would create a precedent that could be replicated by less scrupulous developers. RHP were reviewing the concept of Launch Pod to see how it could be adapted eg. by creating a larger shared unit or by including shared communal space. The pilot has not yet moved to a stage where it can be replicated at scale.



A3 Harris Homes - Launch-Melbourne

I met with Tony Keenan, CEO of Launch Housing, the leading Melbourne based charity working on homelessness. Tony told me about how frustrated they had become about the available options for homeless people. I was surprised by the high levels of street homeless, which was higher per capita than even London. The levels of homelessness amongst women was a growing concern.

In response, Launch were pioneering a project to build 57 tiny homes on land reserved for road widening by Vic Roads,

the state transport agency which had been left empty for many years. Launch was looking for a solution to house people quickly. Tony explained how the absence of State funding for homelessness has meant that they have had to develop long term partnerships with local philanthropists, who wanted to support charities like Launch.

At the time of my visit, Tony and his team were already working with Geoff and Brad Harris of Harris Capital. Launch had approached them with the idea which has become known as 'Harris Homes'.

Combined with funding from the Victorian Property Fund, they had managed to persuade VicRoads to lease them nine small parcels of land on a short term lease at a peppercorn rent. They needed to be constructed quickly and to be able to be relocated at the end of the lease. Because of this they opted for prefabricated homes,



The first Launch- Harris Homes in Melbourne

Each of their none sites fits 6-12 homes to create small communities, so that residents can support each other to provide the stability people need to rebuild their lives and break the cycle of homelessness. As well as a new home, residents, are supported by Launch as can be seen in the short film ; [Deborah's Story](#).

As with any pilot project, everything took longer than they had originally imagined and so it was two years after my visit, that the first homes were finally completed.

The Harris Homes homes are 20m² and were designed by Schored architects. The first homes were completed early in 2019 and have already won national awards. They can be relocated an unlimited number of times. All the homes have a secure courtyard, balcony, kitchen and bathroom, so provide safe space but with opportunity to mix with neighbours too.

The idea of using temporary sites and being able to relocate the buildings became a key factor in LaunchPad.

A4 Startblok Riekerhaven- Amsterdam

I visited Startblok, on the outskirts of Amsterdam, having read about the project in the UK press. Strakblok is a housing

project for young refugees who have recently received their residence permit (status-holders), as well other young people and students. It is a exemplar project that has gained international attention, principally because of the way it builds community cohesion. I visited Startblok with colleagues from housing agencies in Bristol. We wanted to look at whether their approach could be replicated in Bristol. It became the catalyst and inspiration for LaunchPad.

Startblok consists of 565 modular housing units for 18-28 year olds. The studios are 23m² and have their own facilities such as a small kitchen and bathroom. Each cluster of 12 studios has a communal living space for social activities.

Self-management is a core part of the project: social management and general management. Social management focuses on forming a community and social cohesion whilst the general management is responsible for the day to day management of the project. The scheme was developed by De Key, a large housing association in partnership with Amsterdam City Council, on land that was awaiting redevelopment. De Key were given a 10 year lease on the land and had relocated modular student housing they had used on another city centre site.



One of the Startblok blocks of 565 studios

It was evident from our visit that the mix of refugees and students had led to connections and shared activities including sports and other cultural events. The young refugees talked about learning Dutch and about the local culture , *'how things were done'*. This was helping them to feel at home and begin a life in their new country. The young Dutch people said they were learning about other cultures which increased their understanding of the world, but fundamentally felt it was about building friendships, based on what they had in common , rather than what set them apart.

Rents were affordable and the five year tenancies gave residents security, so that they didn't have to leave as soon as they left university. This also helped to create a mixed community.

As with other forms of collective housing, there were sometimes tensions about cleaning and noise. There was an acknowledgement that refugees' experience of trauma could lead to poor mental health and there could be language barriers too. All the residents we spoke to talked about the importance of social activities in bringing people together.



We left inspired by our visit, particularly the ease with which the young people were able to self manage their housing and form a cohesive community. At 500 homes, we knew that this scale may prove difficult to replicate in Bristol, but as a model of integrating rather than isolating young people, we felt it had much to commend it and we aimed to replicate many of its features in LaunchPad.

A5. Frankie and Johnnie, Berlin

Frankie and Johnnie is a student village of 420 container modules on three levels. I met its architect, Phil Peterson a founder of Holzer Kobler Architects, who showed me around and explained the design and construction approach. The village was the brainchild of a private entrepreneur.



One of the Frankie and Johnnie student blocks.

At the beginning they had used shipping containers and converted them into 40m² self contained units. However there were numerous construction challenges in achieving good thermal insulation as well as a safe fire design. So in the second and subsequent phases they had changed to a modular construction, still the same size and using steel. The units were larger than at Strarkblok and Launch, but as they had the same dimensions as a shipping container they were long and narrow, which meant the middle section was quite dark. The construction challenges had resulted in units were actually more expensive than for

a conventional build and couldn't be moved easily. Phil had integrated wide walkways which acted as informal open space and landscaped areas which gave the development an attractive aspect.

The scheme was popular with students as it created a community with many opportunities for social interaction. The scheme helped me to identify some of the technical disadvantages of converting existing shipping containers and led to a change of approach with LaunchPad, moving to bespoke modular construction.



Compact Homes - Key Lessons

My main research findings from the five Compact Homes case studies visited were:

- Modular build can unlock temporary land which might otherwise stay unused.
- Land owners are more likely to permit temp use of their land
- Compact homes are best suited for short term use rather than as permanent homes.
- Whilst not cheaper to produce per m2, their ability to be used on temporary sites, can significantly reduce total costs because of the exclusion of land value.
- Converting shipping containers is technically difficult and produces homes that are less usable.
- Compact homes in the UK would need an element of communal space to avoid planning restrictions and provide an opportunity for social interaction.
- Mixed communities of help to promote social sustainability and build resilience.

B. Self Organised

Frustrated by the shortage and access to affordable housing, individuals have long joined forces to form community led housing groups. These date back to some of the early housing associations, housing co-ops and more recently community land trusts. I visited a number of community led housing schemes in Bristol, Baugruppe in Berlin and Nightingale in Melbourne. I wanted to see if they offered opportunities for millennials to self determine their housing choices.

B1. Bristol Community Land Trust - Bristol

CLTs are a form of community-led housing, set up and run by groups of people to develop and manage homes. They originated in the US and have spread across the world.



Members of BCLT hard at work

The Bristol Community Land Trust (BCLT) was formed in response to the lack of access and control over housing choices, principally amongst young people and young families. I was one of the inaugural board members of the Bristol Community Land Trust (BCLT) in 2011. My interest arose from my long held involvement in community led housing as

well as my experience of working in housing associations.

BCLT's first development was at Fishponds Rd in Bristol and includes 7 homes for shared ownership and 6 for affordable rent. The residents were fully involved in the design and also the self finish of the homes. Originally intended to be a self build scheme, constraints with funding conditions and health and safety meant that the group reverted to only starting their building work once the homes had reached a stage known as 'second fix'. They completed the fitting out of kitchens, flooring, some carpentry and the landscaping. The finished homes all now look very individual and the communal garden is used by residents as a focal point and communal play and social space.

Spurred on by this, BCLT commenced their second and more ambitious 50 home development at Shaldon Rd, Bristol in 2019. Again the difficulty in raising development finance, meant they had to work with housing association, United Communities, where I was CEO, as the lead developer.

BCLT worked tirelessly to find the private finance they needed to supplement public grant, but this was unsuccessful. The 50 homes are due for completion in early 2021 and will now be owned by United Communities. However 50% of the mix of rented and shared ownership homes as well as a communal building will still house BCLT members. The intense scrutiny and involvement of residents in the design of Shaldon Rd has helped push the standards both of design and sustainability. It will also achieve a very varied social mix and range of different housing types.



Fishponds Rd- BCLT First Project

Experience from BCLT demonstrates the considerable level of input required by a voluntary board over a long period of time. It has taken ten years to develop the two schemes, and the board and members have had many setbacks and false starts. Despite enthusiasm to support the BCLT, funders were not prepared to take a risk with an organisation with a limited track record and no assets as security. The BCLT had no option but to rely on United Communities, which inevitably led to a dilution of control and ultimately ownership.

Despite this the BCLT have found a new role in managing the [West of England Community Led Housing Hub](#) which now advises other community led housing groups, so that they can learn from BCLT's experience and expertise. BCLT are also aiming to develop smaller projects which funders are prepared to invest in.

B2- Baugruppe Spreefeld- Berlin

Baugruppen (“building groups”) are a form of co-housing in which households get together to collectively finance and build a development. They can take many forms and are common across Germany and particularly in Berlin. It can be a group of families or friends who come together or sometimes people are connected to each other by third parties, often architects. They are usually high density with shared spaces and are more affordable because there is no

developer profit. Most of the early Baugruppen were owner occupied but a number of schemes have tried to include affordable homes for rent too.

I visited one of the largest Baugruppen schemes on the banks of the river Spreefeld, in Berlin, the Spreefeld Housing Co-operative.



A rooftop view of Spreefeld

I met with Nicola Boelter who showed me around and also explained how the scheme had been developed. The founder, Christian Schöningh, had a vision of creating a development based on membership, where individuals could not profit. Membership fees (rents) are based on the size of flats and everyone shares the cost of community spaces. A cross-financing principle is used to finance apartments for lower-income families.

Located within fashionable Kreunsberg in East Berlin, the site had been vacant for decades and was originally in a low value area. Spreefeld took five years to develop and had to overcome many hurdles before completing in 2008. The area has gentrified considerably and is now regarded as being in a very fashionable part of Berlin.



Spreefeld is zero carbon and generates its own electricity on the site. The design of 64 apartments includes six cluster units for 4 to 21 people who share their living space and eat together. The residents are multigenerational and share laundry and fitness rooms, as well as rooftop terraces. The ground floor is largely open to the public, with a catering kitchen, studios, daycare center, and a co-working space. There is no car parking and the gardens are open and can be used by the local community.

The scheme was kept affordable in a variety of ways :

- Purchasers could buy a 50% stake in their flats, paying rent on the other 50% on a m2 basis.
- Those who didn't have enough equity could carry out construction work to reduce their costs.
- Rents are staggered and based on residents' incomes.
- Purchasers only paid the actual

development costs rather than the value.

- Costs were kept down by the use of basic but durable materials and creative design solutions such as the open staircases as well as a simple grid system design.
- Residents can not gain from any increase in value of their flats. When they move out they will only get the value of what they initially paid.

The residents self manage the co-op and meet once a month. Nicola was frustrated that it can be hard to motivate people to make a contribution. This is a common issue in community housing, where it is often a small group who carry most of the responsibilities. Nicola said another problem was that the age mix was becoming less balanced as residents loved living there and so didn't move out, meaning that access for younger less affluent residents was restricted. With this area of Berlin now very fashionable, Nicola doubted if Schöningh's vision would be achieved now, because of the high land values.

Despite this Baugruppen does have the potential to create more affordable multi generational homes in a UK setting. The key ingredients are access to affordable land and a simple design where residents can easily self finish their own apartments. Spreefeld has been allowed to grow organically and because the design and building materials used are basic, it can easily be adapted for different uses as needs change.

The East London CLT have also pioneered an ownership model that is based on a maximum sales value of three times income and where owners have to sell at their initial purchase price thus keeping flats affordable, as in Spreefeld. One community group in Bristol are currently negotiating an option on land from Bristol City Council with the intention of promoting the first Baugruppen scheme in the UK.

B3 - Nightingale- Melbourne

The Nightingale model was partly inspired by Baugruppe and so rather than community led, has been led principally by architects. House prices in Melbourne are amongst the most expensive in the world with large condominium developments dominating the skyline. Nightingale's founders Jessie Hochberg-Summons, herself a millennial and Jeremy McLeod, an architect, wanted to do something to redress the balance by developing higher density, well designed and more affordable developments that wasn't driven by maximising developer profit. They wanted Nightingale to be socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable.

I met Jessie as Nightingale was just completing its second development - 20 apartments at Nightingale 1, Florence Street, Brunswick, in 2018. She said that they had learnt hugely during the development of their first two schemes, which hadn't achieved their original ambition. She said that the key to unlocking the model had been attracting land owners prepared to sell their land at favorable values, because they were supportive of the Nightingale approach. One example was a local store owner who wanted local people to be able to stay in the neighbourhood and to retain mixed uses.



The Commons, Brunswick

Jessie talked about the tension between design quality and affordability. Integral to the model was a covenant on resale to

ensure affordability is passed on. However the lack of any public subsidy in Victoria had meant that the flats were all 100% ownership and typical values were still high at \$420-\$640 with a 20% deposit. They were in the process of agreeing an innovative funding deal which would help to reduce finance costs. The high environmental specification, with no air conditioning, also meant running costs were 60-70% lower than standard apartments. There is no car parking and wherever possible spaces are shared such as laundries and the roof terrace, to create a village model. Jessie said that new residents were already sharing child care and offering other support.



Nightingale One, Brunswick.

Nightingale flats were allocated via a ballot and successful applicants could contribute towards the design and the overall management. Jessie told me that 50% of residents were millennials and that Nightingale particularly appealed to them, partly because of the collective concept but also the high environmental standards and their location within the Inner City, close to employment and local cafes and shops.

Jessie questioned the concept that millennials need a different type of housing, feeling very strongly that millennials want what older generations had. Decent affordable homes that they can make their own.

Nightingale have now completed four developments in Melbourne with its largest

scheme in planning for a new Brunswick Village as well as franchising the Nightingale approach in other cities across Victoria and Western Australia. Nightingales are unique in the Australian housing market and have taken the Baugrupe concept and adapted it for an Australian setting. It's relevance to the UK, is the approach to high density living in terms of the standard of design and sustainability, as well as the way that value is locked in via covenants on the lease's. It doesn't offer a truly affordable option for millennials starting out, but it does provide for millennials who are able to raise some equity and want to live in a different and more sustainable urban way.

Self Organised Housing- Key Lessons

My main research findings from the three Self Organised Housing schemes visited were:

- The lack of mainstream funding and finance models means that community led housing is constantly having to try to source adequate funding.
- Community led housing requires significant voluntary input from its members and can take many years by which time the original members looking to solve their own housing needs, often run out of time and have to find other solutions.
- There is an unresolved tension between achieving high quality design and sustainability and affordability of the completed homes.
- The Baugruppen model could be replicated in the UK, and is relevant to millennials, who are not eligible for social housing, but wish to live in adaptable, higher density homes with shared facilities.
- Self organised is time consuming but in Melbourne and Berlin, it is popular and offers an alternative to developer led models

C. Developer Led.

There are relatively few examples of private sector led initiatives focused on millennials. The [We Live](#) concept in New York, offers a high end housing model with shared communal facilities, where you can rent rooms from a few days or months. [Pocket Homes](#) in London is aimed at helping young, middle earning Londoners buy their first home for at least 20% less than the market value.

I visited two projects set up by entrepreneurs in Byron Bay, New South Wales and in London, to discover what had driven the developer to develop them and how their model worked.

C1 KO:HO- Byron Bay, NSW.

KO:HO is a small developer set up by Adam Bennett-Smith in his home town of Byron Bay. I met Adam on a perfect summer's day. After we met he was planning to head across to the beach for his daily surf. Real estate in Byron Bay rivals Sydney prices and Adam had become increasingly concerned about younger people being priced out of town.

He could see that the town would become the preserve of the rich with local people who worked there having to commute long distances. His concept was to build 1 bed houses as well as work-live apartments, so that residents could run their businesses too. The homes were let at affordable rents on long tenancies to give more security.

Adam had worked for over 20 years as a foreign exchange trader in Sydney and London. But had chosen to follow his passion for design and social enterprise by creating housing for people of all abilities

and financial means.



The kollektive- Byron Bay.

His project , 'The kollektive', in Kendall Street, Byron Bay, comprised 12 x 2 bedroom apartments with workshop and retail space for creatives on moderate incomes let on 12 month leases. Another project, 'Sunrise' is 20 x 1 bedroom detached loft homes, again let as affordable rental housing for singles and couples on 12 months residential leases.

There was no other long term rental housing in Byron Bay and almost no social housing. Adam's financial background meant he had been able to set up a Property Unit Trust, but he had still struggled to raise debt finance and his company was contributing 65% of the equity required. He thought this and the lack of government public funding was the reason that other developers shied away from developing rental schemes.



Adam Bennett-Smith outside the kollektive.

Despite this Adam was determined for KO:HO to expand in Byron Bay and was committed to finding new sites in the area. His approach demonstrated to me the role that individual entrepreneurs can play in helping to change and invest in their own communities. His model of live work accommodation is also highly relevant for the post Covid world with home working.

C2. The Collective- London

The Collective was the brainchild of entrepreneur Reza Merchant. Similar to the 'We Live' concept, Reza has developed co living for young professionals in London. His first scheme was the conversion of an ex BT office block in Old Oak, North London. Consisting of over 550 rooms, the concept is very small individual living spaces of 12m², but a large amount of shared spaces, including kitchens , gym, cinema room, workplace etc.

The mostly young residents pay fairly high rents in exchange for a lifestyle where they can get to know other people and find their feet in the City. It can act as a launch for young people who may have just got their first job but don't yet have friendship groups. Almost like a post university hall of residence.

I was concerned that the rooms are very small and rents are expensive, which

means they are probably only suitable for a limited time, until residents form friendship groups which mean they can move on to a shared house or other options. However, the large amount of communal space means there is no shortage of space for residents to either work or meet up with friends. Building on the success of his first project, Reza has expanded the concept to other locations in London and New York.



The Collective at Gospel Oak, London.

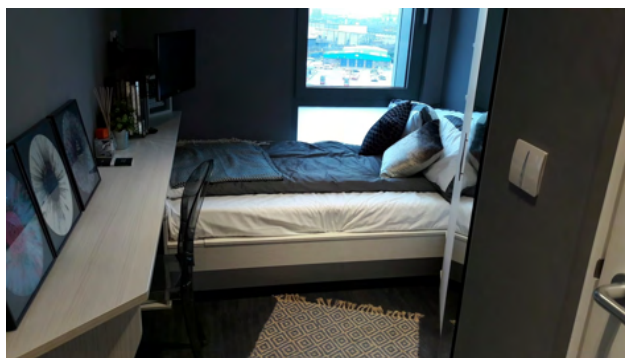
On the day I visited, I was shown around by a resident who also works for the Collective. He was very positive about living there, saying that the social life was great as well as all the amenities. He acknowledged that having so many people living there did create tensions , particularly with things like rubbish, the use of kitchen and noise late at night. In many ways reminiscent of shared houses and student halls.

There is a critical mass behind the financial success of the Collective. It needs to be large enough to support all the shared spaces and amenities and support staff required. It also needs to have high occupancy levels of 95% + and be in an area that can support high market rents. Large sites in good locations and close to public transport links are important factors

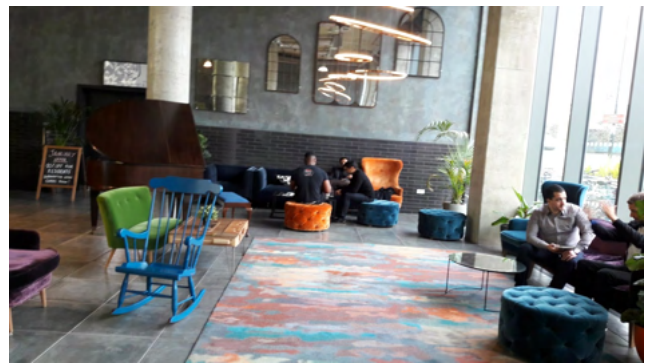
for this client group.

The appeal of the Collective in Old Oak, was that it wasn't very high end in its finish and use of materials. Many of the fixtures and finishes were recycled and had a trendy bohemian feel. Whilst I can see it translating to large cities with a young and transient population, such as Sydney and Berlin, it would probably struggle in second cities in less economically successful areas.

Nonetheless I do think there is a role for this type of accommodation for millennials in major cities, not purely as a housing option, but also as a way of combating isolation. How the essential shared aspects of the schemes will work in a post Covid world, may prove challenging and undermine the ethos and perhaps profitability of the concept.



One of the single rooms in the Collective



Developer Led Housing - Key Lessons

My main research findings from the two Developer Led Housing schemes visited were:

- The Collective is a model that could be replicated in major UK cities but to be viable it requires scale, high occupancy and rent levels at a high enough level to match the initial capital investment
- Longer term and secure rental models such as KO:HO would be in high demand in the UK. The emerging Build to Rent investment model may fill some of this demand.
- KO:HO fulfills a demand for affordable creative work space as well as a home, which may be particularly relevant in a post Covid world.
- In Australia entrepreneurs and developers are trying to fill the gap left by low public sector investment in affordable housing

D. Innovative

In my research to look at different housing typologies for millennials I discovered a number of innovative projects which didn't easily fit within traditional approaches. However they did present an interesting approach which could be replicated and adapted within the U.K.

D1 Intergenerational homes - Humanitas, Deventer

Humanitas is a residential home for older people in the Netherlands. They had invited six university students to live rent-free alongside the elderly residents in an attempt to bring a bit of variety into the community.



Members of Bristol visiting party to Humanitas

Students are asked to spend at least 30 hours per month acting as “good neighbors”. I had organised for a group of housing professionals to visit from Bristol. We met with Peter Daniels, who was careful to let us know that the young people weren't expected to provide any caring roles. Their role was one of friendship and to help create an environment that better reflected mainstream society, where different generations live in close proximity.

Their focus is on happiness, “care” is secondary. The students share activities such as watching sports and TV, and some

outdoor activities. There are no set contracts and both the older and younger residents said it is all ‘about relationships’. By creating connections and interest in each other's lives, isolation and loneliness is reduced. I was impressed by the way that Humanitas focused on this at its core.



Bridging the generation gap

There was very much a two way connection, with the students valuing the conversations and perspectives of the older residents as much as vice versa. The students have stayed on average for four years, but they can stay longer. There is a fixed weekly communal meal and Peter talked about how these and other activities spark laughter and a ‘twinkle’ in people's eyes. Rules are kept to a minimum and have largely been found to be unnecessary.

[Short film of Deventer Humanitas](#)

Encouraged by this, Humanitas have started a partnership with a local learning difficulties charity. Young people, who don't live on site, visit daily to help out in the garden and kitchens and form friendships and connections becoming an integral part of the community.

Humanitas's philosophy is ‘open doors’ and their approach is simple and could be easily replicated in sheltered or extra care housing schemes and some care homes in

the UK. Barriers would include any lost rent for the providers and they would need to be in locations where students or young people want to live. The nature of the care home would also be important, as it would be inappropriate in care homes looking after the most vulnerable.

There is huge interest in intergenerational housing amongst policy makers and politicians. Humanitas offers one small scale solution which would be relatively easy to adopt. I have been able to take this approach to my new role as CEO at Brunelcare and to the remodelling of several of our older sheltered housing schemes. Furthermore the importance of building bridges and relationships between the generations should be an underlying principle in new housing developments too.

D2 -Kids Under Cover- Melbourne & Staying Put- Bristol

[Kids Under Cover](#) is an organisation, based in Victoria, which focuses on preventing youth homelessness by providing studio accommodation in family backyards. I visited Jo Swift, KuC CEO, in their office in Melbourne. KuC's approach is really unusual in the homelessness field, in that they aim to keep families under pressure together by providing safe space within the family home in the form of a demountable studio. The studios have their own en suite and provide the space for young people to get away from their family and any tensions, when they need to, but be close enough to get support too. The young person can stay connected to their family or carer, thus reducing the risk of them being forced to leave home prematurely.



The studio in a back garden in Melbourne

The studios remain in place for as long as it's required and can be relocated up to four times during its lifetime. Studios are prefabricated, with its entire kit, flat-packed with pre-assembled frames and transported via truck to the installation location. Erected and fully fitted within 10 days, they are demountable and able to be flat-packed for re use elsewhere with, on average, each studio staying in situ for 4.7 years and being moved 4 times. They are 11m² and can fit into small backyards. All the service connections can be above ground and the average costs is approx £40,000 (£67k).

The volatility of public funding had led KuC to move away from depending of grants and commissioning towards raising all their funding themselves through charitable donations and fundraising campaigns.

Jo and her colleague Martin took me to visit one of the families who had recently been supplied with a studio.



Sherrie and Jo outside the KuC new studio

The family had been under extreme pressure due to the older daughters, who were 15 and 17, having to move out of their family home when their mother was in crisis. They had moved in with their father's new family, but with two toddlers, the house had become very overcrowded and tensions had become overwhelming. The studio had enabled the older sister, Sherrie to have her own space, and crucially her own bathroom to escape to. A family who had been on the brink, were now able to live together again.

A simple yet rigorous application process ensures young people get the help that's appropriate to them.

I was really taken in by this simple approach, which was managing to prevent the long term consequences for young people being taken into care. KUC have been operational for 25 years and have amassed evidence of the success of their approach. For every £1 invested, they had saved £4 for the public purse. KuC take referrals from Children's Services and in this way can be sure that they are reaching the young people most in need.

I felt that this model would translate well to the UK, understanding that it will not fit everywhere. On my returning to the UK I started discussions with Bristol City Council (BCC) and 16:25 Independent People. Both

were enthusiastic about the concept and thought that studios could also help with creating additional space for fostering families, where there was a severe shortage. The average UK [Children's home weekly cost 2020](#) is a staggering £3,960 per week. Whilst the studios would perhaps only be appropriate for a limited number of children in care, the initial capital investment does offer excellent value in social and financial terms.

At the time of writing 16:25 IP were carrying out research into the level of demand in the area. I had also started work on adapting the KuC prefab studio design to suit space and climate conditions in the UK. A modular studio which could be craned into rear gardens is likely to be more economic and easier to install. A steering group has been set up to develop the first KuC pilot in the West of England in 2021.

In the meantime, a BCC Children's Services manager, Rosie-Mai Iredale within BCC had been inspired by the KuC concept. She developed a pilot called 'Staying Put' where studios were located in the grounds of existing Council children's homes. The purpose was to enable young people leaving care to stay close to the support and links with the Children's Home. This enabled them to make steps towards an independent life, with the security which comes from the backup and proximity of the Children's Homes.

Innovative Housing - Key Lessons

My main research findings from the two Innovative schemes visited were:

- Both KuC and Humanitas had understood the value of building and sustaining mutually supportive relationships at the core of their ideas.
- Humanitas had not prescribed how these intergenerational relationships should work, allowing them space to grow and thrive.
- Older people schemes would need to forgo some income to introduce young people or students. Again a pilot scheme would help to identify any issues raised by regulators.
- A pilot scheme would be the best way to learn how the KuC model could be adapted to work in the UK, testing areas such as planning, construction, referrals and demand.
- Truly inclusive intergenerational living would need to be re-evaluated in the light of the risk of Covid.

Part Three - Pilot Project - LaunchPad

Introduction and Background

Returning from all my Churchill visits I wanted to put into practise some of the things that I had learnt. The critical ingredients were drawn from Starkblok in Amsterdam, Frankie and Johnnie in Berlin, Launch in Melbourne, Hummiatas in Deventer as well as LaunchPod in London.

These included;

- Using modular build so that young people could get access to a home quickly.
- Making use of temporary or 'pop up' sites, which might otherwise not be developed
- Mixing up residents to avoid social stigma and creating a community that reflected the wider society.
- Affordable homes for rent that meant that young people could afford the rent and still study or take a job.
- Inexpensive but a quality and aspirational design, that appealed to young people and allowed for social interaction.

With these broad objectives in mind, I began to develop an ideas for a pilot project which could be adapted for other groups of residents eg. key workers. I called this '**LaunchPad**'.

LaunchPad Concept

Informed by the case studies in Part Two, The ideas to design LaunchPad began to take shape:

- Make use of the speed of modular construction to provide a mixed

community of students, young people (18-30), and key workers on temporary sites.

- Find sites which would either be awaiting long term development or currently under utilised such as car parks, so they could be leased on a temporary basis at minimal cost.
- Offer longer term tenancies which would enable residents to stay for up to 2 years, giving young people more security than the private rented sector.
- Ensure young people would play an active role in managing their homes as in the Starkblok model.
- Key workers and non students would live with students to help to break down some of the barriers, whereby students are kept apart from other young people
- Non student young residents, who had not been to University would be able to access university facilities and amenities.

Partnership Approach

In developing the LaunchPad pilot I enlisted the support of a variety of partners to test if the concept was viable.

The key partners were:

- The housing association where I worked, **United Communities**, took the lead, providing the development expertise, governance, legal structure and access to funding.
- **Bristol University** agreed to provide some capital funding and critically to enable access to university facilities for all the residents, regardless of whether

they were Bristol University students.

- **Bristol University Student Union** provided advice and support and agreed to manage all the lettings and marketing.
- **16:25 Independent People** oversaw the design and project development as well as communications with future potential residents.
- **Bristol City Council (BCC)** agreed to provide temporary land and gap funding.

So the concept of LaunchPad was born: a mixed community to house students, key workers and young people with no experience of university, alongside one another, in a self managed community.

Scheme Mix and Design

Whilst initially there had been an ambition to develop a minimum of 50 homes, locating a suitable site that could be developed quickly, meant that this had to be scaled back. The search for an appropriate site needed to consider a number of key factors, which included: availability, ease of development and critically the suitability of the location for young people.

A number of Bristol City Council underused car parks were considered, and one at Alexandra Place in Fishponds soon became the front runner. The car park was adjacent to a school playing field and at the end of cul de sac. It was sparsely used and had been the location for some anti social behaviour in the past. The site could accommodate 33 studios and communal space within a three storey development. BCC agreed to lease the site for 10 years at a peppercorn rent.



The underused car park at Alexandra Pl.

Alec French architects were engaged to develop a scheme design. Initially the intention had been to utilise converted shipping containers. A combination of factors mitigated against this. This included restrictions on height and width, the long term durability of conversions, and the potential quality of the end product. My trip to Berlin further informed this. The Frankie and Johnnie student village had used converted shipping containers. Whilst the scheme was attractive and popular, its architects explained to me the difficulties of the conversions which had proved expensive and technically complex. The Launchpad project team agreed to change track and instead explored the use of modular construction or MMC.

The design was developed with some core principles:

- Each studio would be at least 23m², the same size as the Starkblok scheme.
- They should have space to study, a small kitchenette and en suite.
- A good floor to ceiling height to create a sense of space and storage space
- The communal common room would include a laundry to 'legitimise' the use of the space.
- An outdoor deck would enable social activities to take place.
- The total space per person, including the communal space, would equate to the national space standards of £37m².

- The design and fittings would be low tech to ensure low running maintenance costs and low service charges.
- The design and construction had to conform to all the required building and fire regulations.

The design was developed in consultation with the partners, including a focus group of young people. In the pre planning stage, planners requested a number of amendments, including a reduction in density. Planning was submitted in January 2019 and received a unanimous Committee approval just 9 weeks later.

Funding and Costs.

The short term nature of LaunchPad with its 10 year lease, had opened up the potential to use sites that would not otherwise have been available. However this created other challenges. The viability of the scheme would need to stack up and repay initial capital investment over the lease period of ten years.

Despite its 'temporary' status, building and planning standards were the same as for any permanent build with similar costs per square metre. The final LaunchPad costs were approximately £60,000, including fees and on costs.

LaunchPad, also required a non traditional funding approach. Funders would not accept the temporary lease on the land as security for debt finance. Approaches were made to social finance and non traditional funders, however whilst all were interested, they wished to see the pilot completed before they would consider financing.

Bristol City Council had agreed to provide grant funding in exchange for nominations of 8 units for 10 years and Bristol University provided a capital contribution in exchange

for nominations for 16 of the homes for ten years.



LandAid provided a charitable donation of £60k. This left a funding shortfall of approx £160,000 which United Communities agreed to fund on the basis that the scheme was viable and would be repaid over 10 years. Moreover they believed that LaunchPad, as a housing model, could be used in a variety of other contexts and to house other groups of residents including key workers.

Construction

The use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) for housing is still at a relatively early stage in the UK. The project team were helped by the [Bristol Housing Festival](#), a five year project set up by Bristol City Council to promote innovation in housing development and with a particular focus on MMC. Their 2018 Housing Exhibition brought a variety of innovative housing prototypes to Bristol. This allowed the project team to view a variety of potential house types, in situ, and helped to formulate our choices for LaunchPad.

The imperative was to find a low cost building method that could be constructed quickly and which could be moved to another site at the end of the ten year

lease. LaunchPad needed to be completed in time for the start of the academic year in September 2019. This meant that the planning and construction process had to take just 9 months, compared to the more usual 2 to 5 year plus end to end process for traditional builds.

The architect Nigel Dyke, from AFA , who were coordinating the design, reflected at the time “ *I was immensely proud to be part of it because it was innovative, but it was hard work. We were on a crazy programme and we were learning as we went along.*”



The first units arriving on site.

Having decided to use MMC and that the buildings would be relocatable, the choice of potential building companies who were able to meet this requirement was not extensive. Some of the companies with the most experience of temporary buildings, were not able to operate on the small scale that we required. Others could not meet our design and specification, and crucially our time requirements. However one company Integra, based in Hull, were prepared to work alongside us in developing a prototype. Integra had extensive experience in providing temporary buildings for schools and hospitals as well as for exhibitions. However, this would be their first residential venture and they were keen to learn and help develop our ideas.

The individual units would be constructed in Inetgra’s factory, fully fitted out and then transported via road to site. Groundworks to include drainage would be completed in advance so that the LaunchPad units could put in place as soon as they arrived on site.

The project team were learning about the differences in procuring modular buildings. For example payments for materials being fabricated in a factory setting have to be made in advance. The legal contract for the construction had to adapt to this and allow for the risks involved in transportation. Our legal advisors were having to advise us with very little precedent to call on. The same applied to VAT and contract administration.

The final construction methodology relied on two build contracts working side by side. One for the site preparation and one for the supply and placement of the LaunchPad units. This was less than ideal for the reasons set out in the evaluation below.

On site

With planning secured and contracts with the groundworker and Integra in place, production of LaunchPad in the Hull factory started in July ‘19. Six units were to be completed per week and installation was set for early August. Inevitability issues arose with the service connections and there were delays to the groundworks completing. All this was eating into our very narrow contingency of two weeks to ensure residents could move in by mid September. Meanwhile in Hull, problems with the exterior paint finish were also causing delays. Achieving our fixed completion date of Sept 19th, was looking less and less likely.

The first articulated lorries from Hull arrived

on site Hull on August 14th. Construction work could now begin in earnest, albeit two weeks behind schedule.

This was the first off site modular residential build carried out by United Communities and its professional team. The team had to rapidly respond to problems which could not have been anticipated and some that could.



The building taking shape

Foundations had been wrongly sited which could have been disastrous. Fortunately the structural engineer came to the rescue with a creative solution which proved workable. With safety uppermost in our minds, we had to rethink some of the fire safety solutions as well as site security and access. Weekly project team meetings were quickly replaced with daily conference calls.

Approvals from key statutory agencies including building regulations and water connections were being chased almost hourly. On a number of occasions we had to escalate issues to the City Mayor, Marvin Rees, to unblock issues. By late August it was apparent that we had eaten into our contingency and would only just make the completion date, allowing no time for any further delays. This was crucial because students were arriving for the start of term and some of the key workers were starting new jobs.

This short time sequence film charts the on site construction from the first units being

delivered to completion in under 9 weeks [LaunchPad film of construction Sept' 19.](#)

Completion Date

Completion of a new housing scheme is normally phased to allow residents to move in a planned way. With LaunchPad however, the plan was for all the residents to move in over 2 weeks, to align with the start of term.

BUSU and United Communities had designed a move in plan to allow this to happen and had coordinated this with all the new residents. At the eleventh hour, a week before handover, the critical water connection had still not happened. There was no alternative but to advise residents due to move in that week, that their new homes would not be ready. The project team had to think on their feet and between us house some of the residents in hotels, and offer others compensation.



The author and some of the project team on site

Just a week later than the original planned completion date, which had been set in March, and just 6 weeks since work had started on site, the first residents of LaunchPad started to move in. Many were starting a new life in Bristol, whilst others were moving on from supported housing with 16:25IP. United Communities and BUSU helped to settle people in and were

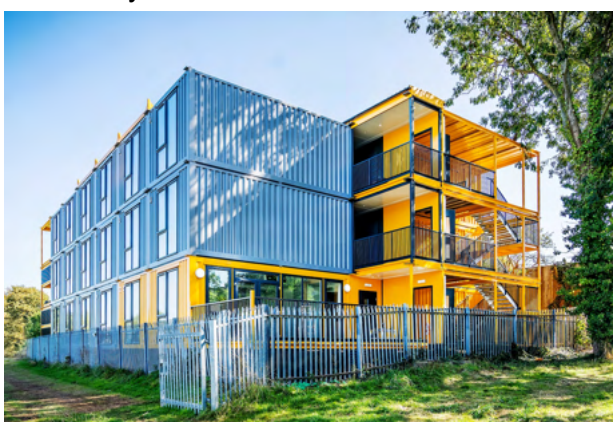
on site to offer support and to sort out any teething problems, such as lost keys.



Moving in day for the first residents

Shaping a Community.

Whilst the planning and construction work had been progressing, 16:25 IP and BUSU had set about recruiting residents to make up the new LaunchPad community. Adverts were placed across social media and other outlets with the aim of creating a balanced community.



A selection process was agreed between the partners with BUSU taking the lead in processing all applications. With the start of the academic year approaching all the

potential residents needed to be selected by late July.

LaunchPad had never been envisaged as just a housing scheme. The partners had agreed that supporting the formation of a mixed community of students, key workers and young people who had experienced or been at risk of homelessness, would benefit from a key worker. Nationwide Charitable Foundation had agreed to fund 16:25 IP for a part time post for three years. Ria Anderson was appointed and before and after move-in date, started to get to know the new residents. She set up 'meet up', and with money set aside to help the new residents to purchase and equip the communal lounge. Longer term her role was to help residents to set up self management of the scheme, organising cleaning rotas, social activities and mutual help.

The UoB SU said; *"We looked to select students who already demonstrated a community instinct, maybe had done some volunteering before, and wanted to live in the accommodation all year round as much as possible."*

The LaunchPad project was formally opened by Mayor Rees on 25th October 2019 as part of the Bristol Housing Festival's annual expo. Since opening, it has been shortlisted for and won a number of industry awards and continues to attract interest. [Bristol Evening Post Article](#)



Opening launch day- October 2019

One Year On.

Within six months of residents moving in, the pandemic struck. This had a big impact on the project. Many of the students left during Lockdown and some of the other residents were furloughed. This has meant that the aspirations for self management and communal activities have had to be curtailed.

However during the first 6 months, new residents had started to form a new community. A chess evening and a pool evening were set up, and once's week everyone ate together.

16:25 IP felt that the development was unique in offering a balance of personal and communal space, which was particularly important for care-leavers.

“If you’ve been in foster care or been homeless, in these shared living environments you never have your own

space. The risk is you then get all the space you’ve ever wanted in your own flat...The idea of LaunchPad is that you get your own space on those days you don’t want to engage with people, but when you’re feeling up to it and you feel that you want to mix you’ve got the chance of communal space as well. That combination of your own self-contained living accommodation with shared facilities is a really good option, a nice medium.”

One residents said:

“My reaction should have been recorded, because I was just shocked...that I had my own space and just the small things...that I had my own shower, my own sofa, a bed and a mattress. I was just grateful for the small things. The space was just perfect for me and it marked a new beginning for myself.”

[Interview with new resident Olivia](#) [Interview with new resident Reece](#)

The University of Bristol Student Union said:

“All the things we worried about...the location, was it a healthy location, the ability of the groups to get on with each other, the potential for people with additional challenges to bring too much of that into the community. All of that hasn’t materialised. We’ve typically had positive stories, with two- thirds of the young people engaging in some form of active community role.”

Glynis Morris, Housing Manager at United Communities, recalled the tremendous effort in moving all the new residents in by the beginning of October:

“ There were issues getting the community to work together, and by the time things were more settled we hit COVID! We had

our first possible COVID case in mid March which sent the site into panic but was handled well within the WhatsApp group with people offering to get medication and shopping for the person”

They started to see students returning home and a number giving notice. Glynis said they looked at all sorts of ways of letting the properties and spoke to the University about letting them short term to Key Workers and widening the groups. They have widened the criteria a bit and are currently full again. The good news is that a number of residents asked to stay into the new academic year. There have been relatively few repair issues too.

Evaluation

LaunchPad was the first of its kind in the UK. Based on similar models in Holland and Australia, it nonetheless had to navigate a different legal, financial and planning system.

The Bristol Housing Festival was commissioned to carry out an evaluation of the project [BHF LaunchPad Evaluation](#) This provides an in-depth analysis of many of the technical and design aspects of the project and so are not repeated here.



In May 2020, LaunchPad won the RICS 'Social Impact South West' for residential development. It also won 'Project of the Year' and has therefore been shortlisted for the national awards. The scheme was shortlisted for the Small Residential Development of the Year (less than 100 units) at the Insider South West Residential Property Awards 2020 and was the Off Site

Social Housing Project of the Year 2020.



Interior layout

LaunchPad - Key Lessons Learnt

There are some key lessons which might help further similar developments:

- 1. Scale:** Larger schemes as in Holland, enable development and production costs to be spread which will help to reduce overall unit costs. A larger community would also potentially help with forming a more sustainable community.
- 2. Partnership Working:** Working at speed and on a new prototype required the project team to have a good working relationship based on trust. Some, but not all, of the partners had worked together before, but all were prepared to dedicate resources and enable quick decision making within their respective organisations. One of the lead partners said “ It was such a fantastic group of people working together. The investment of time, the lack of funding, the question about how it sits on your asset book as a Housing Association...there were so

many reasons not to do it. It was just those people that made it happen, we really enjoyed working together.”

3. **Political Support** : Gaining political support, initially from the Local Authority Cabinet Member for Housing and latterly the Mayor, was critical. They helped to lever both support, funding, land and to assist with unblocking several technical statutory issues too.
4. **Procurement**: Working with one supplier who can provide the modular homes on a ‘turn key’ basis would reduce the risks caused by the interplay between two separate contractors with sometimes overlapping responsibilities.
5. **Longer Leases**: would help with financial viability, but might reduce the availability of temporary sites. Whilst the units could be moved to another site, this would be costly and any new site would require all the statutory approvals such as planning.
6. **Funding**: At the time of writing private funders are not prepared to provide debt funding for modular buildings such as LaunchPad. Similarly Homes

England will only grant fund permanent schemes. This will severally constrain their replicability. A form of short term funding that allows the completed homes to be used as security, even if margins were higher, would facilitate an expansion in similar schemes using MMC in underused temporary sites.

7. **Replicability**: The LaunchPad concept is replicable in a variety of different contexts. United Communities are in discussion with BCC about adapting them for homeless households. The North Bristol Hospital Trust also see their potential for NHS key worker accommodation on site. Care would need to be taken to ensure that there is thought and investment in the community shaping, so they do not become inferior temporary housing which could be seen as ‘warehousing’ those in need.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of the research was to explore a range of innovative and affordable housing solutions for millennials. This report has highlighted the choice of alternatives available as no one single model will work across the UK. The suitability of the different models will depend on the individuals involved and the local context.

Whilst it may not be possible or appropriate to adopt and implement all the case studies highlighted, this report has highlighted ideas and principles that can be translated to homes and communities for millennials more broadly.

These ideas have been discussed in the previous section and highlight the value of:

- Building mixed communities which do not segregate people based on their age or social class.
- Using modern methods of construction to speed up development and make use of temporary sites.
- Adapting existing business and finance models to support innovation in housing for young people who do not have the assets to invest.
- Developing a new form of short term finance with slightly higher margins to facilitate low risk but high social value. housing projects.

Essentially, whilst different housing models can work, as demonstrated from this research, they are no substitute for good strategic planning and government funding to significantly increase the supply of good

quality properly integrated affordable housing.

As many young people said to me: *“We just want homes like you had at our age. Places to put down roots in a community that we knew we could invest in”*. Pilot projects are not an answer to this, wholesale investment and building are.

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