

Between Policy and Practice

The Role of Municipal Size in Collaborative Governance for Senior Housing Development in the Netherlands

Master Thesis

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The role of municipal size in collaborative governance for senior housing development in the Netherlands

by

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Preface

In 2019, my academic journey began with the bachelor's programme in Architecture at TU Delft. At that time, my focus was mainly on designing spaces that shape how people live. Over time, this focus gradually shifted towards an interest in the process behind development, in particular who decides what gets built, for whom, and why. This shift formed the basis for continuing in the master's programme Management in the Built Environment at TU Delft, with a stronger interest in the societal impact of the built environment.

Housing has never been an abstract topic. Living in the Netherlands has made the housing shortage visible in everyday life, with friends struggling to find a home, and family members living in unsuitable housing. These experiences created the motivation to understand the mechanisms behind the housing crisis.

Initially, I experienced the housing crisis mainly from the perspective of first-time buyers, by seeing friends struggle to find an affordable home. But over time, I began to understand how closely this connected to senior housing. Seniors who want to move but cannot find suitable housing stay in homes that no longer fit their needs, while younger households are unable to access those homes. The more I looked into this dynamic, the more I became interested in why senior housing development is lagging behind, and what role municipalities play in that gap. This thesis examines how municipalities, developers and housing associations collaborate to realise senior housing, and how municipal size shapes those collaborative processes. The aim is to gain a better understanding of the starting conditions under which collaboration takes place, and to provide insights that can support more effective collaboration in senior housing development in practice.

This research would not have been possible without the support of several important people, and I would like to take a moment to acknowledge them here. I would like to thank my supervisors Marietta Haffner and Harry Boumeester for their guidance, critical feedback, and support throughout the process. I am also grateful to my colleagues at WPR. They provided a supportive working environment, helped facilitate connections for interviews, and were always available to discuss and reflect on the topic. I would like to thank all interviewees for their time and willingness to share their experiences. Their contributions were essential to this research. A final word of thanks goes to my parents for their continuous support during this process. Their encouragement and willingness to think along when things became difficult meant a lot to me.

Finally, looking back on this process, there were moments of doubt and setbacks, but they were also valuable learning experiences. Overall, I look back with pride, and I hope this makes a small but meaningful contribution to a housing market that works better for everyone.

Milou Wolf
Delft, June 2026

Abstract

The ageing of the Dutch population has increased the demand for suitable senior housing, whereas the development of such housing has not kept pace with national policy ambitions. While municipalities are expected to play a central role in facilitating senior housing development, implementation largely depends on collaboration between multiple actors, including municipalities, developers, and housing associations. Existing research provides limited insight into how differences between municipalities, particularly in terms of size and capacity, shape these collaborative processes. This study addresses this gap by examining how municipal size influences the starting conditions and early dynamics of collaborative governance in senior housing development in the Netherlands.

The central research question is: *“To what extent do municipal size and starting conditions shape the collaborative process between municipalities, housing associations, and private developers in the development of senior housing in the Netherlands?”*

A qualitative research design is employed, combining a literature and policy analysis with multiple case studies. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with municipal staff, developers, and housing associations involved in senior housing projects. The interview data were transcribed and analysed using qualitative coding in ATLAS.ti, guided by the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008).

The findings show that municipal size influences the collaborative process indirectly, through its effect on organisational capacity and the availability of steering instruments. Larger municipalities tend to have more specialist disciplines involved and more developed steering frameworks, while smaller municipalities rely on a more limited set of instruments. Starting conditions shape the collaborative process in consistent ways across the cases studied. Prehistory of cooperation or conflict affects how trust develops, incentives for participation influence the character of commitment, and knowledge asymmetries shape shared understanding between actors.

The findings contribute to academic discussions on collaborative governance by providing empirical insights into the role of municipal size in shaping collaboration. From a societal perspective, the study provides practical recommendations for municipalities and market actors to improve collaborative practices in senior housing development and support the local implementation of national housing ambitions.

Keywords – Collaborative governance, housing policy, municipal size, municipalities, senior housing, starting conditions

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1. Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

The Dutch population is ageing. In 2009, approximately 15% of residents were aged 65 or older, and this proportion is projected to increase to nearly 26% by 2040. This implies that by 2040, roughly one in four inhabitants will belong to the 65-plus age group (Van Loo, 2020). As the number of older adults rises, the demand for healthcare is also expected to grow. In addition, the need for appropriate housing will also evolve.

A key factor in the current housing crisis is the limited relocation of older residents from larger to smaller dwellings. According to the majority of municipalities interviewed by NOS in 2021 regarding the housing crisis, the limited mobility of older residents from larger to smaller dwellings is considered as the primary contributing factor (Monster, 2024). Research indicates that seniors in the Netherlands tend to occupy large amounts of residential space: individuals aged 35 to 40 make use of approximately 45 square metres per person, whereas individuals aged 75 to 80 occupy around 80 square metres (CBS, 2021). Facilitating the relocation of older adults to more suitable housing typologies could therefore release larger dwellings for family households, thereby mitigating pressures on the housing market, according to Marja Elsinga, Professor of Housing Policy at TU Delft (KRO-NCRV, 2025).

However, the relocation of older adults to suitable housing is currently limited, partly as a result of the limited availability of adequate senior housing, despite the ambitious targets set by the Dutch government (KRO-NCRV, 2025). By 2030, the Ministry of Housing and Spatial Planning (VRO) aims to realise 290,000 dwellings for seniors. This includes 170,000 step-free dwellings, 80,000 clustered housing units, which are grouped residences with shared communal areas, and 40,000 nursing dwellings as alternatives to traditional care. Despite these set targets, the pace of the development of senior housing development has been limited. According to Cobouw (2024), only 1.4% of the planned senior dwellings had been completed, indicating that the 2030 objectives are unlikely to be achieved.

At the local level, municipalities play a crucial role in translating national ambitions into concrete development projects. However, municipalities rarely enforce the construction of senior housing. A survey conducted by Pointer across the big municipalities in 35 building regions in the Netherlands revealed that none of the municipalities reported requiring senior dwellings in their local development plans. The absence of binding requirements provides little incentive for developers to prioritise the construction of senior housing. Developers also report that local authorities place limited emphasis on this type of housing, focusing primarily on affordable dwellings instead (KRO-NCRV, 2025). This suggests that the development of senior housing is not merely a matter of policy intent, but the outcome of interactions between multiple actors, including municipalities, developers, and housing associations.

Although limited availability of suitable dwellings constrains the relocation of older adults, studies demonstrate that mobility decisions are also shaped by other factors, such as higher anticipated housing costs and strong attachment to the familiar living environment (Boelhouver & Van Der Heijden, 2022). While these factors are acknowledged, this study focuses specifically on the limited development of senior housing as a structural barrier that emerges from governance and collaboration processes.

While national ambitions for senior housing are clear, local implementation depends heavily on municipal action. Municipalities play a key role in the development of new areas and the redevelopment of existing neighbourhoods through spatial planning and the Environmental Planning Act. Although they have authority to influence the number and type of housing constructed, in practice municipalities do not build homes themselves. Developers and housing associations are responsible for planning and construction (Broenink, 2022). Instead, municipalities guide developments by setting requirements and prioritising housing types, based on negotiations with stakeholders. Their ability to do so, however, may vary; larger municipalities typically have more specialised staff that establish processes, whereas smaller municipalities are more likely to face resource constraints. These differences may affect the initial distribution of resources, expertise and bargaining power among actors, thereby shaping the so-called starting conditions under which collaboration takes place (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In addition, the effects of ageing vary across municipalities. According to CBS (2025), the percentage of older adults is the highest in municipalities located on the periphery of the Netherlands, see Figure 1. However, the absolute number of older adults is often lower in these areas due to smaller populations. These variations in demographic composition underline the need for context-specific approaches to senior housing development, tailored to local demographic and urbanisation characteristics.

Ouderen per gemeente, 2025

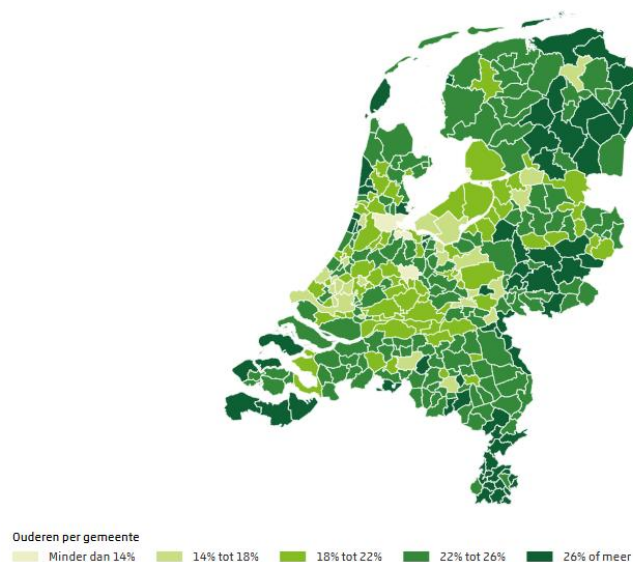


Figure 1. Percentage of residents aged 65 and over per municipality (CBS, 2025)

Because these starting conditions may differ across municipalities, municipal size and capacity can influence how private and semi-public actors engage and how collaborative processes are initiated. To analyse these dynamics, this study draws on the Collaborative Governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008). This framework provides a well-established conceptualisation of collaborative governance, highlighting how public and non-state actors interact in collective decision-making processes. Its process-oriented perspective is particularly suitable for this research, as it focuses on how collaboration unfolds, rather than solely on outcomes. Within this framework, the study specifically emphasises starting conditions, which Ansell and Gash (2008) identify as critical for shaping collaborative governance processes. Focusing on starting conditions is especially relevant here, as municipal size is expected to affect these conditions through variations in capacity, resources, and existing networks, thereby influencing the initiation and effectiveness of collaboration in senior housing development.

1.2 Research questions

Based on the problem statement outlined above, the following main research question has been formulated to guide this study and address the key issues identified.

Main research question:

“To what extent do municipal size and starting conditions shape the collaborative process between municipalities, housing associations, and private developers in the development of senior housing in the Netherlands?”

The main research question is further specified through the following sub-questions, which focus on distinct aspects of municipal steering, starting conditions, and collaborative governance following the framework of Ansell and Gash (2008).

Sub-questions:

SQ1: *What forms of municipal steering in senior housing development are identified?*

SQ2: *In what ways does municipal size shape the starting conditions for collaboration in senior housing development?*

SQ3: *In what ways do starting conditions shape the early outcomes of collaborative governance in senior housing development?*

The key concepts in this research are defined as follows:

- Older adults/seniors: for this research the target group consist of people aged 65 and over.
- Stakeholders: individuals or organisations that are directly involved in or affected by senior housing development projects.
- Small municipality: a municipality with up to 40,000 residents (CBS classification)
- Medium municipality: a municipality with 40,000 to 100,000 residents (CBS classification)
- Large municipality: a municipality with 100,000 residents or more (CBS classification)
- Senior housing: dwellings that enable older adults to live independently. For this study the focus is on:
 - Step-free dwellings: dwellings that are internally and externally accessible without the need to use stairs (including homes equipped with a stair lift) (ABF Research, 2025)
 - Clustered housing units: step-free dwellings for older adults within a residential complex (ABF Research, 2025)

The key concepts that frame this study, municipal steering, starting conditions for collaboration and collaborative governance are further defined and operationalised in Chapter 2.

1.3 Scientific and societal relevance of the research

Considerable research has been conducted about the housing preferences of older adults and the willingness for older adults to move. Furthermore, many studies are available on collaboration between stakeholders and municipalities (Pu & Zou, 2024; Ulibarri & Scott, 2016; Velotti et al., 2012). However, limited attention has been paid to how differences in municipal size are associated with the conditions under which such collaboration takes place, and how this may relate to the development of senior housing in the Netherlands. While collaboration among public and private stakeholders is essential for housing development, the conditions under which municipalities can initiate such collaboration may differ. This gap in knowledge is particularly relevant in the context of the ongoing housing shortage in the Netherlands. As the demand for suitable housing for older adults is expected to increase in the coming years, there is a growing need to better understand governance and collaboration strategies that may support the development of senior housing.

This research is relevant for multiple audiences. For municipalities, it shows how organisational capacity and context influence collaboration with developers and housing associations, helping them improve governance strategies and better guide collaborative processes. Developers and housing associations can use these insights to better understand municipal approaches to collaboration, adapt their strategies to local conditions, and improve coordination in project development.

1.4 Structure of report

To answer the research question of this study, Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framing of the study, how the key concepts of the Ansell and Gash (2008) framework are defined and operationalised. Chapter 3 presents the qualitative research methodology, followed by Chapter 4, which describes the case selection process. Chapters 5 through 7 present the findings for the three case studies. These findings are compared in Chapter 8, followed by a conclusion in Chapter 9 and a discussion in Chapter 10.

2. Framework of analysis

This chapter presents the conceptual model and key concepts that guide this study. It provides the theoretical foundation for the research by reviewing relevant literature on collaborative governance, municipal steering capacity, and starting conditions. The chapter begins with presenting the conceptual model, which visualises the relationships between the main concepts. Each concept is then discussed in more detail. Finally, the proposed relationships between the key concepts are outlined and a detailed conceptual model is presented.

2.1 Conceptual model

Figure 2 presents the conceptual model, which is a visualisation of the main concepts in the research questions. The model illustrates how municipal steering capacity, municipal size, and starting conditions interact to shape collaborative governance in senior housing development.

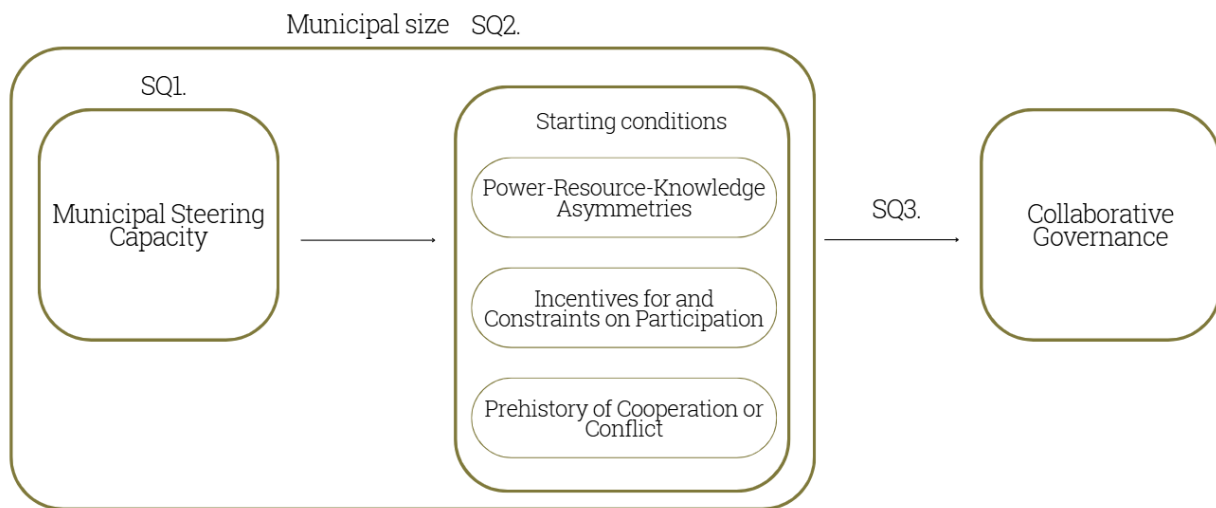


Figure 2: Conceptual model (own work)

Note: SQ refers to subquestions of this study

On the left-hand side, municipal steering capacity is the starting key concept in this study. Municipal steering capacity represents the ability of municipalities to guide and influence housing development projects. Municipal size is positioned above the model, reflecting its expected influence on both steering capacity and starting conditions. At the centre of the model, starting conditions are highlighted as an important factor for collaborative governance. These include three interrelated dimensions; power-resource-knowledge asymmetries, incentives for and constraints on participation, and the prehistory of cooperation or conflict among stakeholders (Ansell and Gash, 2008).

The subquestions in the model correspond to the study's subquestions. SQ1 addresses the first sub-question: *What forms of municipal steering in senior housing development are identified?* SQ2 addresses the ways in which municipal size shapes the starting conditions as addressed in the second sub-question: *In what ways does municipal size shape the starting conditions for collaboration in senior housing development?*

Finally, the arrow labelled SQ3 focuses on the effect of starting conditions on the early outcomes of collaborative governance in the context of senior housing by addressing the question: *In what ways do starting conditions shape the early outcomes of collaborative governance in senior housing development?*

This conceptual model highlights the central role of starting conditions in shaping how municipal characteristics, particularly size, affect steering capacity and collaborative governance outcomes. The remainder of this chapter describes the key concepts in more detail.

2.2 Collaborative Governance

In recent decades, researchers have identified a transition from traditional forms of government towards governance. This shift reflects a reconfiguration of the state's role, whereby public authorities no longer act as the sole decision-makers but instead share responsibility for policy development and implementation with a range of public and private actors. This transformation is evident across multiple policy domains, including housing and residential development. Institutional changes have contributed to a growing influence of property developers. Whereas municipalities previously controlled most land ownership and provided social housing themselves, these roles have since fundamentally changed. Although local governments often continue to pursue active land policies, they now operate alongside private developers who play an increasingly central role in housing production (Buitelaar & De Kam, 2009).

Within this context, attention shifts to the institutions and rules that shape interactions between organisations rather than processes occurring within individual organisations. These arrangements are commonly referred to as governance structures and originate from the field of new institutional economics. Governance structures describe the institutional frameworks through which coordination, decision-making, and exchange between actors are organised. These structures determine how responsibilities, risks, and resources are allocated among public and private actors, influencing the way collaboration takes place in complex policy settings such as housing development (Buitelaar & De Kam, 2009). According to Kenis and Provan (2008), such networks are characterised by three or more organisations that work together to achieve a shared goal.

As governance increasingly takes place through collaboration, public decision-makers and managers more often rely on network-based forms of governance to address complex public problems. In such collaborative arrangements, public agencies work together with non-governmental actors in the development and implementation of policies and programmes. Collaborative governance is defined as: "*A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or asset*" (Ansell & Gash, 2008). These collaborative processes are not just about reaching decisions, they involve building trust among participants, creating a shared understanding, and require leadership to sustain engagement. Research on collaborative governance shows that outcomes emerge from these dynamic interpersonal and interorganisational interactions. To gain a clear understanding of the early outcomes of collaborative governance, it is therefore important to focus on how the process unfolds and how its key features shape collaborative outputs and outcomes (Ulibarri & Scott, 2016).

This study adopts the collaborative governance framework developed by Ansell and Gash (2008) as its theoretical foundation. The full framework, which outlines the key components and processes of collaborative governance, is presented in Figure 3. This framework is particularly suitable for this research because it provides a clear and established conceptualisation of collaborative governance, focusing on how public and non-state actors interact in collective decision-making processes. Its process-oriented perspective aligns with the aim of this study to understand how collaboration in senior housing development unfolds, rather than focusing solely on outcomes. While this framework also includes institutional design and facilitative leadership as factors influencing the collaborative process, these elements fall outside the scope of this study and are therefore not examined in further detail.

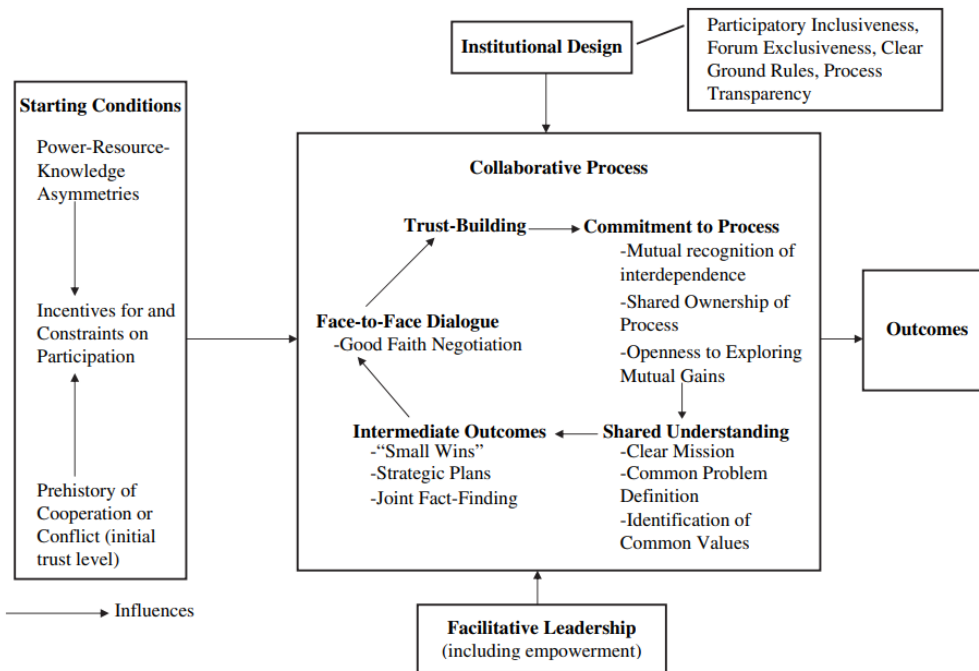


Figure 3: Framework of Collaborative Governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008)

Within this framework, the study specifically focuses on starting conditions. Ansell and Gash (2008) identify starting conditions as key factors for shaping the collaborative governance processes, as they influence the initial context in which actors engage. This focus is particularly relevant given that municipal size is expected to affect these conditions, for example through differences in capacity, resources, and existing networks.

2.3 Municipal steering capacity

Municipalities operate in urban development processes involving multiple public and private actors, in which they depend on others to realise policy objectives. According to Buitelaar and De Kam (2009), steering capacity can be defined as the ability of municipalities to guide or steer the actions of other actors, such as housing associations and property developers, in a particular direction.

To further understand how municipalities can exercise this capacity, Verheul and Heurkens (2025) introduce the multiple steering model (see Figure 4). This model distinguishes between different forms of steering that can be applied alongside one another and is structured as a quadrant framework based on two dimensions.



Figure 4: Multiple steering model (Verheul & Heurkens, 2025)

The first dimension relates to the degree of proximity in steering, ranging from more distant forms of steering, in which municipalities set general frameworks, to more direct and interactive forms, in which they engage closely with other actors. The second dimension distinguishes between soft and hard forms of steering. Soft steering refers to communicative and relational approaches, such as coordination and interaction, whereas hard steering relies on legal and financial instruments (Verheul & Heurkens, 2025).

By combining these two dimensions, four types of steering can be identified. Directional steering involves influencing or guiding the decisions of other actors through communicative instruments. Regulatory steering involves the use of legal instruments. Connective steering focuses on interaction, bringing actors together and facilitating coordination between them. Finally, stimulatory steering aims to encourage desired behaviour through financial or other incentives (Verheul & Heurkens, 2025).

Municipal instruments on development

Table 1 provides an overview of the policy instruments that municipalities can apply, which can be mapped onto the four quadrants of the multiple steering model. Local governments can use communication instruments, by informing and raising awareness among stakeholders. This type of instruments falls under the quadrant of directional steering. Examples of these instruments include policy visions, spatial frameworks, design studies, and active information provision about municipal policy, public ambitions, and applicable regulations.

In contrast, cooperation corresponds to the quadrant of connective steering. Instruments in this category include organising partnerships or working groups. These instruments aim to strengthen collaboration, coordination, and the self-organisation of actors in order to collectively address development challenges (Verheul & Heurkens, 2025).

Municipalities can also rely on enforcement instruments, such as zoning regulations, building codes, environmental visions (omgevingsvisies), or mandatory requirements to ensure that development projects align with broader social and urban planning objectives. These instruments are examples of regulatory steering, where municipalities use legal or formal mechanisms to prescribe or restrict behaviour and ensure that development projects comply with broader objectives (Verheul & Heurkens, 2025).

Financial incentives can be applied to stimulate certain outcomes, for example through subsidies, or tax benefits for projects that meet policy priorities. These instruments are an example of stimulatory steering and are designed to encourage desired behaviour through rewards (Verheul & Heurkens, 2025).

By combining these instruments, municipalities can actively steer on urban development (Brinke et al., 2022). While some of these instruments are more regulatory in nature and others rely on cooperation or incentives, they all operate within an indirect steering logic, as municipalities typically depend on other actors to realise development outcomes.

Table 1: Municipal policy instruments (Brinke et al, 2022)

Policy Instrument	Definition	Examples	References
Communication & Cooperation	Using education and communication to inform adaptation behaviour and cooperating with private actors to enhance mainstreaming	Education, information, partnerships	Henstra (2016)
Enforcement	Using authoritative power to enforce mainstreaming by means of law and regulations	Laws, policies, regulations	Henstra (2016), Mees et al. (2013)
Incentives	Using financial incentives for creating additional benefits that induce mainstreaming	Subsidies, financial support	Henstra (2016), Mees et al. (2013)

2.4 Starting Conditions

Ansell and Gash (2008) emphasise that the conditions at the start of a collaboration strongly influence how collaborative processes develop. These starting conditions can either enable cooperation between stakeholders or create barriers, for example when there is a history of conflict between the stakeholders. Therefore, they highlight the importance of starting conditions in collaborative governance. These conditions relate to differences in power, resources, and knowledge between stakeholders, the incentives that stakeholders have to collaborate, and their prior experiences of cooperation or conflict.

Power/Resource imbalances

Differences in power, resources, and capacities between stakeholders often complicate collaborative governance processes. When some stakeholders lack the resources, capacity, or influence to participate on an equal footing, stronger actors may dominate the process. This can undermine trust and reduce commitment to collaboration. These imbalances are especially problematic when stakeholders lack the organisational capacity necessary for meaningful representation in collaborative governance arrangements.

In addition, some stakeholders may face challenges that go beyond organisational capacity. For example, certain stakeholders may lack the technical expertise required to contribute to discussions on highly complex issues, while others may be constrained by limited time, energy, or freedom to engage in lengthy collaborative processes. Although these challenges can hinder collaboration, they are not necessarily unmanageable. Previous research has suggested various ways to support weaker or underrepresented stakeholders. From a contingency perspective, when significant imbalances exist, collaborative governance is most effective when it actively seeks to empower and include stakeholders who might otherwise be marginalised. (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Incentives to participate

The incentives for participation in collaborative governance vary across stakeholders and contexts. Power and resource imbalances between stakeholders can influence their motivation to participate. Willingness to engage in collaborative governance is strongly influenced by their expectations about the potential effectiveness of the process. Participation is more likely when stakeholders believe that their contribution can directly lead to tangible and meaningful policy outcomes. Conversely, the incentive to participate decreases if stakeholders view their role as largely symbolic or advisory. Furthermore, participation is more likely when stakeholders cannot pursue their goals elsewhere and must cooperate with others involved (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Prehistory of cooperation or conflict

The prior history of interactions among stakeholders can significantly influence the prospects for collaborative governance. Although past conflict can create mistrust and low commitment, high levels of antagonism do not automatically prevent collaboration. A history of conflict can create 'us versus them' dynamics, resulting in low trust, manipulative strategies, and negative stereotypes, which may hinder collaborative efforts. At the same time, a history of successful cooperation can build social capital and trust, fostering a positive cycle that supports collaboration.

Collaborative governance is therefore less likely to succeed in contexts of past antagonism unless stakeholders are highly interdependent or deliberate measures are taken to rebuild trust and social capital. Strong interdependence and trust within smaller groups can, however, sometimes reduce the willingness to engage in broader collaboration across a wider set of stakeholders (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

2.5 Key concepts in collaborative governance

Although starting conditions influence the context in which collaboration begins, understanding collaborative governance also requires examining the core elements that shape how stakeholders engage with one another. Based on the framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), this study identifies five key concepts within collaborative governance that are central to understanding how collaboration unfolds: trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and face-to-face dialogue. These concepts provide a lens to analyse stakeholder interactions and to assess how starting conditions influence the early phase of the collaborative process.

The remainder of this section elaborates on each of these concepts, and outlines how they are interpreted in this research.

Trust-building

A lack of trust is a common starting point in collaborative governance. Collaboration requires not only negotiation but also actively building trust, particularly when stakeholders have a history of conflict. Trust is essential for open communication and risk-taking, and developing it is time consuming, requiring long-term commitment and sufficient resources (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Commitment to process

Commitment to process refers to the extent to which stakeholders actively engage in collaborative governance and dedicate time, effort, and resources to achieving joint outcomes. It goes beyond initial motivation to participate and involves a belief that good-faith negotiation is the best way to reach desirable results. Commitment includes shared ownership of the decision-making process, a willingness to accept outcomes that may not fully align with individual preferences, and long-term dedication to sustaining collaboration. Trust, clear procedures, and mutual recognition among stakeholders are critical to fostering such commitment (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Shared understanding

The degree to which stakeholders develop a common perception of what they can achieve together, including aligned goals, objectives, and relevant knowledge. Shared understanding goes beyond simply aligning on specific outcomes; it involves developing a collective vision or mission, clarity on the problem to be addressed, and recognition of each stakeholder's perspective. It develops as part of a broader process of collaborative learning, requiring active engagement and interaction among stakeholders (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Intermediate outcomes

Tangible or visible results that emerge during the collaborative process, often referred to as 'small wins.' These outcomes help build momentum, reinforce trust and commitment among stakeholders, and support the ongoing development of collaboration. While small wins are particularly valuable in contexts with prior conflict, they may be less relevant when stakeholders pursue ambitious goals that cannot be broken into intermediate steps, in which case early exploration of the overall collaborative value is critical (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Face-to-face dialogue

Direct interaction between stakeholders that enables intensive communication within collaborative governance processes. It allows stakeholders to explore opportunities for mutual gain and helps to break down stereotypes and communication barriers that may hinder collaboration. Although face-to-face dialogue does not automatically lead to successful collaboration and may, in some cases, reinforce tensions, it is widely regarded as a necessary condition for effective collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Together, these five process elements provide an analytical lens to examine how collaborative governance unfolds. While starting conditions shape the initial context in which actors engage, the evolution of trust, commitment, shared understanding, dialogue, and intermediate outcomes reflects how collaboration develops in practice. By analysing these elements, this study is able to assess how differences in municipal size and starting conditions influence the early phase of the collaborative process.

2.6 Proposed relationships between key concepts

The relationships between municipal steering capacity, municipal size, starting conditions, and collaborative governance processes form the core of this study's conceptual framework. Municipal size is expected to influence both steering capacity and starting conditions: larger municipalities often have greater resources and organisational capacity (Groetelaers et al., 2006), which can enhance their ability to apply various forms of steering. This could be particularly relevant for more resource-intensive forms, such as connective, directional and stimulatory steering, whereas the influence on regulatory steering may be less significant.

The different forms of municipal steering identified in the multiple steering model, as described in the previous section, are expected to shape the starting conditions for collaborative governance in distinct ways. Directional steering, through communicative instruments, primarily influences stakeholders' perceptions, expectations, and incentives to participate by providing clarity on policy goals and strategic direction. Connective steering, which focuses on interaction and coordination between actors, is particularly relevant for shaping the prehistory of cooperation, as it can foster trust and network relationships over time. In contrast, regulatory steering is more likely to affect power and resource asymmetries, as the use of legal instruments may strengthen the position of municipalities relative to other actors and define how and under what conditions stakeholders are required to participate. Finally, stimulatory steering is assumed to affect stakeholders' incentives by encouraging desired behaviour through financial or other rewards.

This relationship is expected to operate in both directions. Where significant asymmetries exist between collaborative partners, these may also constrain the extent to which municipalities are able to apply different forms of steering effectively. For example, when a market actor holds considerably more knowledge or resources than the municipality, this may shift the balance of influence in the collaboration, limiting the municipality's ability to actively steer the process. This suggests a dynamic interaction in which starting conditions not only result from, but may also shape municipal steering practices.

The starting conditions are expected to shape the collaborative process in specific ways. According to Ansell and Gash (2008), a prehistory of antagonism or cooperation is likely to be reflected in initial levels of trust. While past conflict may result in low levels of trust and consequently weak commitment to the process, prior experiences of successful collaboration can strengthen trust and stimulate a reinforcing cycle of collaborative engagement. Power and resource asymmetries are expected to similarly influence the process. When significant imbalances exist, stakeholders with limited capacity may struggle to participate meaningfully. These imbalances can create distrust and hinder effective collaboration. Finally, incentives to participate shape stakeholders' motivation and engagement. Stakeholders are more likely to invest time and effort when they believe that the collaborative process offers real influence over decision-making and requires mutual cooperation to achieve their goals. This is likely to strengthen commitment to the process, whereas the presence of alternative pathways or a limited sense of interdependence may weaken engagement and reduce the effectiveness of early collaboration.

Together, these relationships illustrate how municipal steering capacity and municipal size shape starting conditions, which in turn influence the dynamics of the collaborative process and its early outcomes. These expected interdependencies provide the basis for the detailed conceptual model presented in the following section.

2.7 Detailed Conceptual Model

In conclusion, the conceptual model presented in Figure 5 integrates the insights from the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008). The model integrates the key process elements of collaborative governance: trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and face-to-face dialogue. The model also recognises that the collaborative process is inherently iterative, and therefore it is represented in the model as a cycle. In addition, the model proposes a bidirectional relationship between steering capacity and starting conditions. As elaborated in section 2.6, existing asymmetries between actors may not only result from municipal steering capacity, but may also constrain the extent to which municipalities are able to apply different forms of steering. This dynamic interaction is reflected in the model. By highlighting these interconnections, the model provides a focused lens to examine how interactions among diverse stakeholders influence the collaboration, offering a foundation for analysing multi-actor governance dynamics.

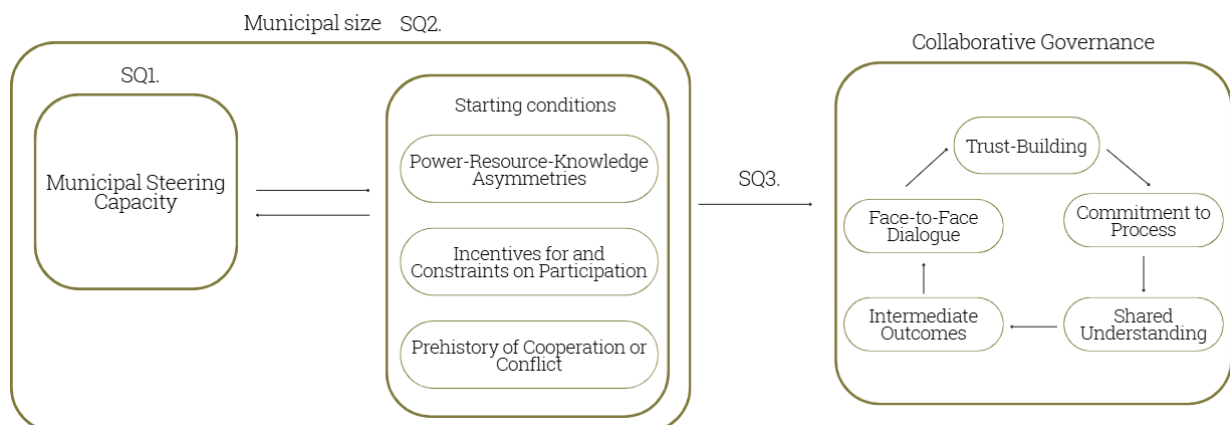


Figure 5: Detailed conceptual model (own work)

Note: SQ refers to subquestions of this study

3. Research methods and ethics

This chapter outlines the research design, methods, and ethical considerations applied in this study. It describes how the qualitative research is structured, how data were collected, analysed, and managed, and how participants' rights and privacy is protected throughout the research process. It further explains the approach taken for data collection, including desk research and interviews, and the procedures used for data analysis to ensure reliability and transparency. Together, these measures ensure that the research is conducted responsibly, transparently, and in line with regulations.

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of collaborative governance processes in senior housing development. The research integrates desk research and empirical case study research to address the complexity of collaborative governance processes in senior housing development. The focus of the study is on understanding how municipal size and starting conditions influence collaboration between municipalities and other stakeholders in development projects. This qualitative approach is particularly suited to exploring governance processes, actor interactions, and contextual conditions in depth.

The primary objective of this research is to gain insights into how collaborative governance unfolds in senior housing development under different municipal contexts and to identify how starting conditions shape early collaborative outcomes.

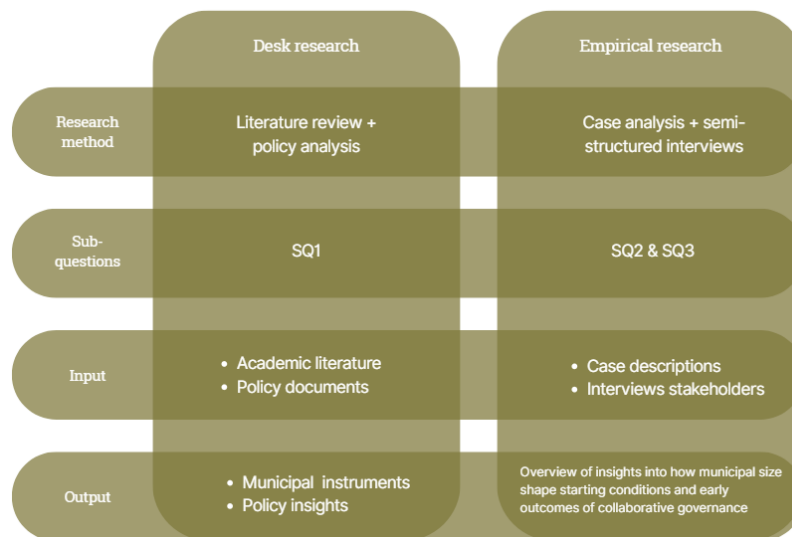


Figure 6: Methodology (own work)

The research is structured into two interconnected phases, as illustrated in Figure 6. The desk research phase consists of a literature review and policy document analysis focusing on municipal steering for senior housing. Policy documents from nine municipalities in the South Holland region, three small, three medium, and three large, are analysed to investigate how municipalities of different sizes steer on senior housing development in practice.

The South Holland region was selected not only because it contains a wide diversity of municipalities in terms of size, but also because of its significant role in the national housing targets. Up to 2030, the province is expected to contribute nearly 250,000 dwellings, accounting for approximately a quarter of the total national housing production (Provincie Zuid-Holland, n.d.). Given this substantial share, municipal steering in this region is of particular importance, as local approaches to housing development are likely to have a disproportionate impact on achieving national housing objectives.

In addition, focusing on a single provincial policy and governance framework ensures comparability across municipalities and facilitates the feasibility of conducting interviews for the empirical phase. This desk research phase results in an overview of municipal steering approaches and instruments, forming a contextual foundation for the empirical research.

The empirical research phase adopts a multiple case study approach. Three housing projects with senior housing are selected, one in a small municipality, one in a medium-sized municipality, and one in a large municipality previously included in the desk research phase. These projects serve as the cases for an in-depth analysis. The key stakeholders involved in each project, including the municipal project leader, developer(s), housing associations, and other relevant actors, are interviewed using semi-structured interviews. This phase examines how municipal size shapes these starting conditions and how they, in turn, influence the collaborative process.

The findings from the desk and empirical research are integrated using the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008). The data collected to answer the sub-questions are analysed to answer the main research question. A cross-case comparison highlights similarities and differences in collaborative processes across municipalities of different sizes, enabling practice-oriented recommendations to be formulated for municipalities and developers involved in senior housing development.

3.2 Data collection

This section describes the data collection strategy for this research, as summarised in Figure 7. First, information for the contextual and literature review is gathered from a variety of sources. The literature is collected through searches on Google Scholar, ResearchGate, Scopus and the TU Delft repository, with additional support from the AI Tool Labs in Google Scholar to search for relevant publications. Furthermore, official statistics are collected from sources such as Rijksoverheid and Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS). In addition, policy documents are collected from municipal websites. The collected sources are systematically analysed to identify municipal steering approaches for the first sub-question.

	Method	Data collection	Data analysis
SQ1: What forms of municipal steering in senior housing development are identified?	Literature review Case study	Scientific articles and reports Policy documents and websites of municipalities	Systematic literature analysis Content analysis
SQ2: In what ways does municipal size shape the starting conditions for collaboration in senior housing development?	Case study Semi-structured interviews	Case documents Expert interviews, recorded and transcribed	Content analysis Thematic coding
SQ3: In what ways do starting conditions shape the early outcomes of collaborative governance in senior housing development?	Case study Semi-structured interviews	Case documents Expert interviews, recorded and transcribed	Content analysis Thematic coding

Figure 7: Method and data collection

For the second and third sub-question, semi-structured interviews are conducted with stakeholders involved in selected housing projects. The sample method for both case selection and the interview participants is purposive, as the cases and the interview participants are chosen intentionally based on their relevance to the research objectives (Berndt, 2020). Three projects are selected as case studies, located in a small, medium, and large municipality. The case selection is based on predefined criteria (see Table 2), including municipal size, project characteristics, and time period. The selected projects involve housing developments of a moderate scale (approximately 50-250 dwellings), include senior housing, and have been initiated within the past five years, allowing the study to focus on collaboration processes during the initiation or planning phase.

Table 2: Case selection criteria for SQ2 and SQ3 (own work)

Size municipality of development	Three cases are selected to compare a large municipality (>100,000 inhabitants) a medium sized municipality 40.000 to 100.000 inhabitants, and a small municipality (<40,000 inhabitants), allowing for analysis of differences in steering capacity and collaboration.
Type of development	The cases involve housing projects with different types of homes, including senior housing, which allows for a focus on municipal steering and collaboration.
Project size	50-250 dwellings, are small enough to be feasible in all municipality sizes, yet large enough to involve multiple stakeholders. Their moderate scale also keeps project timelines manageable, facilitating interviews.
Time Period	The selected projects were developed within the past 5 years, ensuring that sufficient policy documents and stakeholders are accessible while keeping the process recent enough to study the initiation or planning phase

For the semi-structured interviews, the number of interviews per case varied, with the aim of including perspectives from the key actor types involved: the municipality, developer, and housing association. Where possible, an additional perspective from the same organisation was included to avoid relying on the view of a single individual and to enhance the reliability of the information collected. The final number of interviews per case was determined by whether sufficient insights were obtained to answer the research questions, while remaining feasible within the scope of the study. The participants were mainly contacted through the network of the internship company, WPR, via email or telephone. They received an invitation explaining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and the expected time commitment. If it was considered relevant, additional participants were included through a snowball approach, based on recommendations from previously interviewed stakeholders (Berndt, 2020).

The interviews followed a semi-structured protocol, which is provided in appendix I. The questions are designed to explore the key concepts and the relationships outlined in Chapter 2, including municipal size, starting conditions, and collaborative governance processes. Specifically, the interviews aimed to identify how stakeholders perceive municipal influence on collaboration, and how starting conditions affect the collaborative process.

All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed thematically to explore how municipal size shapes the starting conditions for collaboration and how these conditions influence early governance outcomes. All interview data were anonymised to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

3.3 Data analysis

The dimensions of the starting conditions, as identified by Ansell and Gash (2008), were operationalised based on the literature review to guide the analysis of the interview data. The interview transcripts were analysed using ATLAS.ti through a thematic analysis to identify patterns, recurring themes, and relationships regarding collaborative governance processes, with a focus on how municipal size shapes starting conditions and early outcomes of collaboration. The interviews were coded in ATLAS.ti, and the codes were grouped into broader themes to enable a cross-case comparison. An overview of all codes used in the analysis is provided in Appendix VI. All interview data were anonymised to protect participants' confidentiality.

3.4 Research ethics and data management

Protection of research participants

The research is based on semi-structured interviews with professionals involved in senior housing development, such as municipal staff, developers, and representatives of housing associations. Participation in the study is voluntary. All participants are informed in advance about the purpose of the study, what participation involves, and their right to stop participation at any time without any negative consequences. Before each interview, participants are asked for their informed consent, see Appendix II.

The participants' privacy is protected by anonymising all interview data. Names and other identifying information are removed from transcripts, and interviewees are not identifiable in the final report. Audio recordings and transcripts are stored securely and only accessible to the thesis supervisors. The data were used solely for academic purposes and handled in line with the data protection regulations.

Scientific integrity

Scientific integrity is ensured through a transparent and systematic research design. The semi-structured interviews are conducted using an interview protocol aligned with the research questions and conceptual model. Interview data are transcribed and analysed using qualitative coding in ATLAS.ti. All steps in data collection and analysis are documented to ensure reliability, transparency, and consistency.

Societal impact

This research addresses a socially relevant issue, namely the growing demand for senior housing in the Netherlands. By analysing collaborative governance processes between municipalities and market actors, the study provides insights that may support more effective collaboration in practice. The results aim to contribute to improved decision-making and coordination in senior housing development, thereby supporting the local implementation of national housing ambitions. No negative societal impacts are expected, as the research focuses on professional practices rather than vulnerable populations.

Ethical review procedure (HREC)

Before the actual data collection started, the research is submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). This procedure ensures that ethical aspects are properly addressed (see Appendix IV). Ethical approval was obtained under application number: 6838.

Data management

All research data were securely stored and managed as described in the Data Management Plan (see Appendix III). Participants' privacy was protected by anonymising all personal information. All files were stored on the TU Delft OneDrive and access remains restricted to the research team. Audio recordings were deleted once all interviews had been transcribed.

4. Selection of the case studies

This chapter presents the findings of the desk research conducted to select the three case studies for data collection.

4.1 Selection procedure

The South Holland region was selected as study area because it encompasses a diverse range of municipalities in terms of size and plays a significant role in achieving national housing targets. By 2030, the province is expected to deliver nearly 250,000 dwellings, accounting for approximately a quarter of the total planned housing construction in the Netherlands (Provincie Zuid-Holland, n.d.). Given this substantial share, municipal steering in this region is deemed particularly relevant, as local approaches to housing development are likely to have a significant impact on achieving national objectives.

To reach a selection of municipalities and projects suitable for answering the research question, all municipalities in South Holland were first listed and categorised according to population size: small (<40,000 inhabitants), medium (40,000-100,000 inhabitants), and large (>100,000 inhabitants). From each category, three municipalities were selected at random by the researcher, resulting in a total of nine municipalities.

The selection criteria were established to ensure that the municipalities included provide meaningful variation in municipal steering capacity and the conditions for collaboration in senior housing development. Demographic composition, specifically the proportion of residents aged 65 and over was included to identify municipalities where the urgency of senior housing demand is highest, and thus where steering efforts are more likely to be visible. The realised housing construction between 2015 and 2024 indicated practical experience in housing delivery and ensures that a sufficient number of housing projects had been developed to enable the identification of suitable case studies. Policy documents were analysed to determine whether municipalities have established specific targets, defined dwelling types, or proposed instruments to guide senior housing development. This serves as an indication of directional and regulatory steering, showing how municipalities attempt to guide development outcomes. Finally, the structure of the municipal executive board was analysed to assess how housing and care responsibilities are organised institutionally. When both policy domains are assigned to a single alderman, this is expected to facilitate coordination between departments, increasing the likelihood of interaction and joint decision-making. This reflects a form of connective steering, as it may strengthen internal collaboration and focus on the integration of housing and care.

In line with the above selection criteria, multiple sources of data were collected and analysed for each municipality. Firstly, demographic and housing stock data were gathered, including total population, the proportion of residents aged 65 and over, the composition of the housing stock (single-family versus multi-family dwellings), and realised housing construction between 2015 and 2024. These indicators provide insight into the structural context in which municipal steering takes place.

Secondly, municipal policy documents were examined, including environmental visions (omgevingsvisies), housing visions (woonvisies), and other relevant policy reports. Attention was paid to how senior housing is framed, whether specific targets or dwelling types are defined, and which instruments are proposed to guide housing development. A comprehensive overview of these documents has been provided in Appendix VIII.

Thirdly, the portfolio distribution within the municipal executive board (college van B&W) was analysed to assess how housing and care responsibilities are organised institutionally. This provides an indication of the extent to which these policy domains are aligned within the municipality.

Alongside the selection of municipalities, specific housing projects were identified as concrete case studies. The selection of these projects is based on several criteria to ensure they provide meaningful insights into municipal steering and collaboration in senior housing. The housing projects must involve dwelling types suitable for older adults. Furthermore, the project size is considered, this ensures that projects are small enough to be feasible in municipalities of different sizes, yet large enough to involve multiple stakeholders and collaborative processes. A further requirement is that projects are developed within the past five years, ensuring that policy documents, planning procedures, and stakeholders remain accessible while keeping the development process recent enough to study its initiation or planning phase. These criteria ensure that the selected projects are both relevant for the research and feasible for empirical investigation.

Based on this selection procedure, one municipality from each size category was selected for the empirical research phase, in which case studies are conducted. The remainder of this chapter presents an overview of how the nine municipalities scored on the selection criteria and describes the process used to select the cases for the empirical research phase.

4.2 Contextual data

For the selection criteria related to demographic composition and realised housing construction, the demographic and housing characteristics of municipalities were analysed. Tables 3 and 4 present an overview of key indicators, including total population, the share of residents aged 65 and over, housing stock composition, and realised housing construction between 2015 and 2024. These indicators were used to assess differences between municipalities and to support the identification of suitable case studies.

Table 3: Demographic and housing characteristics (own work, adapted from *waarstaatjegemeente.nl*)

Municipalities	Housing Stock (2025)	Total population (2023)	65 + (2023)	Percentage 65 + (2023)	Percentage single-family dwellings	Percentage multi-family dwellings	Annual growth of housing stock (compared to previous year)
Small municipalities							
Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	15,273	36,565	7,720	21.11%	79.6%	20.4%	0.6%
Midden-Delfland	8,145	19,360	4,190	21.64%	76.3%	23.7%	0.5%
Voorschoten	11,650	25,625	6,275	24.49%	64.3%	35.7%	0.6%
Medium municipalities							
Leidschendam-Voorburg	37,861	78,225	18,270	23.36%	38.5%	61.5%	0.3%
Pijnacker-Nootdorp	22,893	57,930	9,310	16.07%	75.7%	24.3%	1.0%
Ridderkerk	21,966	47,720	11,605	24.32%	55.6%	44.4%	1.1%
Large municipalities							
Rotterdam	328,409	670,465	105,520	15.74%	25.3%	74.7%	1.2%
Leiden	65,079	130,070	20,985	16.13%	39.1%	60.9%	1.9%
Dordrecht	57,537	122,060	24,420	20.01%	55.3%	44.7%	0.5%

Table 4: Housing stock development (own work, adapted from *waarstaatjegemeente.nl*)

Municipalities	Housing stock start of 2015	Housing stock start of 2024	Newly built dwellings(2015-2024)
Small municipalities			
Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	13,824	15,181	1,624
Midden-Delfland	7,578	8,103	656
Voorschoten	11,090	11,576	430
Medium municipalities			
Leidschendam-Voorburg	36,383	37,746	1,180
Pijnacker-Nootdorp	19,721	22,656	3,099
Ridderkerk	20,747	21,737	1,679
Large municipalities			
Rotterdam	311,324	324,597	16,783
Leiden	55,231	63,853	8,370
Dordrecht	54,548	57,276	3,075

4.3 Policy document analysis

For the selection criterion related to municipal policy frameworks, policy documents were analysed to assess the extent to which municipalities actively steer towards senior housing development. This includes environmental visions, housing visions, and other relevant policy reports. A complete overview of the policy analysis is provided in Appendix VIII. The aim of this analysis is to identify municipalities that demonstrate the most concrete and active approaches to senior housing.

The analysis revealed variation in how municipalities address senior housing, both in terms of objectives and the instruments they use. Smaller municipalities such as Bodegraven-Reeuwijk and Midden-Delfland tend to formulate concrete targets for senior housing, for example specifying percentages of ground-level units or types of dwellings to be realised, which reflects a form of regulatory steering. In one case, active land acquisition was used to directly influence housing outcomes. Medium-sized and larger municipalities generally apply a broader set of instruments and have more developed directional steering frameworks, reflected in more specific policy documents. In addition to a general housing vision and environmental vision, these municipalities often have a separate housing and care vision, allowing for a more detailed articulation of senior housing ambitions. They also more often apply forms of connective steering through collaboration with housing associations, care providers, or market actors. However, compared to the smaller municipality of Bodegraven-Reeuwijk, their directional steering tends to be less prescriptive in terms of quantitative targets for senior housing specifically.

Overall, the review of policy documents provided a clear indication of which municipalities are most active and concrete in their approaches to senior housing, which guided the selection of cases for further empirical investigation.

4.4 Governance analysis

The selection criterion related to the institutional organisation of housing and care responsibilities was assessed by examining the governance structure of municipal executive boards. Specifically, the allocation of portfolios among aldermen was examined to determine whether housing and care are combined within a single portfolio, which is expected to facilitate more coordinated attention to senior housing. The overview of the portfolio allocation is provided in Table 5.

The analysis revealed variation across municipalities. Among small municipalities, Bodegraven-Reeuwijk and Midden-Delfland combine housing and social affairs within one portfolio, suggesting a more integrated approach to these policy domains. In medium-sized municipalities, housing and care responsibilities are typically separated, as in Leidschendam-Voorburg, Pijnacker-Nootdorp, and Ridderkerk. Among large municipalities, only Dordrecht integrates housing, care, and older adult policy within a single portfolio, while in Rotterdam and Leiden, responsibilities are distributed across multiple aldermen or could not be determined from publicly available sources.

Table 5: Allocation of housing and care among aldermen (own work)

Municipalities	Alderman	Political Party	Housing	Social affairs/care	Policy on older adults	Integrated housing and care
Small municipalities						
Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	Dirk-Jan Knol	CDA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Midden-Delfland	Fred Voskamp	CDA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Voorschoten	Hans van der Elst		Yes	Yes	No	No
Medium municipalities						
Leidschendam-Voorburg	Bianca Bremer	GBLV	Yes	Yes	No	No
Pijnacker-Nootdorp	Bart van Straten	VVD	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Ridderkerk	Kees van der Duijn Schouten	SGP	Yes	Yes	No	No
Large municipalities						
Rotterdam	Chantal Zeegers	D66	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Leiden	Julius Terpstra	CDA	Yes	?	No	?
Dordrecht	Wim van der Kruijff	CDA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

4.5 Case selection

Based on the desk research, municipalities were evaluated to identify suitable cases for further empirical investigation. Four selection criteria were considered: (1) the specificity of municipal senior housing policies, (2) the proportion of the population aged 65 and older, (3) the volume of newly built dwellings between 2015 and 2024, and (4) the institutional organisation of housing and care responsibilities within the municipal executive board.

Each municipality was assessed for these criteria using a relative scoring system: ‘++’ for high or strong, ‘+’ for moderate, ‘+/-’ for mixed or average, and ‘-’ for low or weak (Table 6).

Table 6: Assessment of municipalities for case selection (own work)

Municipalities	Policy	Percentage 65 + (2023)	Newly built dwellings(2015-2024)	Integrated housing and care
Small municipalities				
Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	++	+/-	+	+
Midden-Delfland	+	+/-	+/-	+
Voorschoten	-	+	+/-	-
Medium municipalities				
Pijnacker-Nootdorp	+	-	++	-
Leidschendam-Voorburg	+/-	+/-	+	-
Ridderkerk	+	+/-	+	-
Large municipalities				
Rotterdam	+/-	-	++	-
Leiden	-	-	+	?
Dordrecht	+/-	+/-	+/-	+

Based on this assessment, three municipalities were selected as potential cases: Bodegraven-Reeuwijk, Pijnacker-Nootdorp, and Dordrecht.

Bodegraven-Reeuwijk represents a small municipality with strong senior housing policy objectives, an average proportion of older adults, a moderate volume of newly built dwellings, and integrated housing and care responsibilities.

Pijnacker-Nootdorp was chosen as a medium-sized municipality with moderate policy objectives, a relatively low share of older adults, a high number of newly built dwellings, and separated housing and care portfolios. It was selected over Ridderkerk, which has a higher current share of older adults, because the volume of newly built dwellings was considered more relevant for studying senior housing development. Newly built housing provides greater opportunities to implement targeted policies. Although Pijnacker-Nootdorp currently has relatively few older adults, demographic projections indicate significant aging in the coming years (Gemeente Pijnacker-Nootdorp, 2020), making it a strategically important case for examining how municipalities anticipate and address future senior housing needs.

Dordrecht represents a large municipality with average policy objectives, an average proportion of older adults, an average volume of newly built dwellings, but integrated housing and care responsibilities. It was selected over Rotterdam, which has a higher amount of newly built dwellings but does not combine housing and care in a single portfolio.

Based on the selection criteria, these municipalities were chosen as the most appropriate for further investigation, providing a solid foundation for selecting specific projects as concrete case studies.

Following the selection of municipalities, specific housing projects were identified within each municipality to serve as concrete case studies. The selection of these projects was guided by additional criteria to ensure their relevance and feasibility for empirical analysis.

The selection criteria for the specific projects include the type of development, project size, and time period. The cases involve housing developments that include different dwelling types, with explicit attention to senior housing. In addition, the projects have a moderate scale, ranging from 50 to 250 dwellings, which is considered feasible across municipalities of different sizes while still involving multiple stakeholders. Table 7 provides an overview of the selected cases and the values of the selection criteria. The three selected cases, Dordts Geluk, Casa Vita and Nieuw Dronen, form the basis for the empirical analysis presented in Chapters 5 through 7.

Table 7: Overview of the selected cases (own work)

Municipality	Projectname	Amount of dwellings	Target group	Time period
Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	Nieuw Dronen	214	Suitable for all ages, from young to elderly	Sales start in summer 2026
Pijnacker-Nootdorp	Casa Vita (tender)	101	Suitable for all ages, from young to elderly	Completed in June 2025
Dordrecht	Dordts geluk (tebder)	142	For all stages of life	Sales start mid-2026

5. Case A – Dordts Geluk

This chapter presents the empirical findings from Case A, the Dordts Geluk project in Dordrecht. As described in Chapter 4, Dordrecht has 122,060 inhabitants, representing the large municipality category in this study. The chapter is structured as follows. The first section introduces the project and the interviewees of the semi-structured interviews conducted. Section 5.2 analyses the municipal policy context and steering capacity based on desk research. Sections 5.3 and 5.4 form the core of the empirical analysis, examining the starting conditions and the collaborative process in line with the detailed conceptual model presented in Chapter 2. Section 5.5 discusses the interviewees' perspectives on how municipal size influences the collaboration. Finally, section 5.6 presents the conclusion.

5.1 Project Introduction

Dordts Geluk is a mixed-use residential development located on the Spuiboulevard in central Dordrecht. The project involves the realisation of 141 dwellings, of which 51 are social rental housing managed by the housing association. The project was initiated through a tender organised by the municipality of Dordrecht. The municipality owned the land, and the housing association was involved in preparing the tender, as the housing association was already designated to acquire 51 social rental dwellings. The tender attracted multiple developer parties. Developer A1 and Developer A2 formed a partnership and ultimately won the tender. Developer A1 served as the lead coordinating developer, while Developer A2 contributed construction capacity and co-investment.

Interviewees

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted for this case study. Table 8 provides an overview of the interviewees and their roles.

Table 8: Overview of the interviewees for Case A (own work)

Code ¹	Role	Case
Interviewee A1	Municipal Project Manager	Case A - Dordrecht
Interviewee A2	Housing Association Project Manager	Case A – Dordrecht
Interviewee A3	Developer Project Director (Developer A2)	Case A – Dordrecht
Interviewee A4	Lead Developer (Developer A1)	Case A – Dordrecht

¹ All interviewees consented to participation in this study under the condition that personal identifiers are removed. Project names and professional roles are retained to provide sufficient context for the empirical analysis

5.2 Municipal policy context and steering capacity

Dordrecht is a large municipality in the South Holland region with approximately 122,000 inhabitants, of whom 20.0% are aged 65 or over. The housing stock of approximately 57,500 dwellings is relatively balanced between single-family (55.3%) and multi-family dwellings (44.7%). Between 2015 and 2024, approximately 3,075 new dwellings were constructed, representing a moderate production rate compared to other large municipalities in the South Holland sample, as shown in Chapter 4 (waarstaatjegemeente.nl, n.d.).

The desk research assessment of Dordrecht's senior housing policy yielded a score of '+/-', as established in Chapter 4. The municipality's housing vision (woonvisie) acknowledges the need for life-course resilient housing and asks market parties to contribute to its ambitions through their development activities. However, the municipality does not set concrete numerical targets for senior housing types. The approach is therefore primarily communicative in character. It sets out the challenge and invites market parties to contribute to the municipality's objectives without prescribing specific outcomes. This reflects what Verheul and Heurkens (2025) describe as directional steering, guiding through policy vision rather than binding instruments.

In Dordts Geluk specifically, no explicit senior housing target group was defined beyond the standard programme split. The municipality's senior housing ambitions were not translated into project-specific requirements in the tender documents.

In addition to this policy approach, the municipality also made use of financial incentives in the Dordts Geluk case to support project feasibility. This involved a subsidy from the Woningbouwimpuls, which represents a form of stimulatory steering as discussed in Chapter 2. This instrument functioned as a financial steering tool aimed at enabling housing development. However, it was not used as a targeted mechanism for steering specific housing groups, such as senior residents, but rather as a general means to facilitate housing production.

Housing, care, and older adult policy are combined within a single alderman's portfolio, an arrangement that potentially facilitates more coordinated decision-making between these domains than is possible in municipalities where responsibilities are split.

Overall, the policy context of Dordrecht reflects a combination of directional steering and the use of incentives instruments. While the municipality primarily relies on communicative policy instruments to engage market parties, it does not translate its senior housing ambitions into binding targets at the project level. Instead, financial incentives such as the Woningbouwimpuls are used to support housing production. Overall, this indicates a steering approach that focuses on facilitating development rather than directly steering specific housing outcomes.

5.3 Starting conditions

This section analyses the starting conditions present in Dordts Geluk, as identified through the interviews. Following the framework of Ansell & Gash (2008) as elaborated in Chapter 2, three dimensions of starting conditions are examined: power/resource/knowledge asymmetries, incentives for participation, and the prehistory of cooperation or conflict.

Power/resource/knowledge asymmetries

One interviewee identified a power asymmetry rooted in the design of the tender process as a key factor shaping the starting conditions of the collaboration. The housing association was not included as a formal voting member of the tender jury, despite being the designated social housing partner for 51 of the 141 dwellings. The formal tender selection was conducted by the municipality, with the housing association in a consultative rather than decisive role. This structural position was described by Interviewee A4 as:

“De corporatie had eigenlijk de voorkeur voor een ander plan... Wat mij betreft had je het kunnen oplossen door die corporatie daadwerkelijk in de jury te zetten. Nu zaten ze als een soort op de bagagedrager bij de gemeente en mochten ze wel wat vinden, maar was het allemaal niet doorslaggevend.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

This power asymmetry meant that the developer was selected through a process in which the housing association's preferences were advisory rather than binding. When the housing association later raised objections to the floor plans, it was doing so without formal leverage to enforce changes.

This power asymmetry was reinforced by a knowledge asymmetry in the tender documents. The Programme of Requirements (PVE) from the housing association, which set out its floor plan standards, dated from 2014 and was only available through a non-prominent link in a document.

“Er zat een PVE in uit 2014. Ja dat is dan totaal verouderd.... En dat was nog eens een keer een bijlage van een bijlage, die alleen maar ergens vaag aanwezig was.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

These two asymmetries reinforced each other. The power asymmetry meant the housing association could not influence which developer was selected, while the knowledge asymmetry meant the selected developer did not have clear information about the housing association's requirements. Together, they created a situation in which the floor plan conflict that followed was partly a consequence of a procurement design that did not fully address these gaps before the collaboration started.

A third asymmetry concerned a difference in technical and product knowledge between the municipality and the housing association. Interviewee A2 observed that municipal staff tend to be primarily process-oriented, while housing associations hold more specific expertise in housing construction as a technical product. This reflects a more general pattern rather than a situation specific to the Dordts Geluk case:

“Maar wat ik wel merk en dat is gewoon bij elke gemeente, als je toch over het algemeen hebt, is dat bij gemeenten vaak mensen werken die wel heel erg procesgericht zijn. Maar op product en dan zie ik een woningbouw als technisch product, even daar de expertise missen.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

This gap was further increased by the fact that the turnkey model was new to both the municipality and the housing association. Interviewee A2 noted that neither party had prior experience with this procurement approach, which meant they had limited ability to anticipate where issues in the documentation might later arise.

“Voor iedereen was het eigenlijk nieuw. In ieder geval voor de gemeente en voor [Corporatie1]... We hebben ook heel veel geleerd. Hoe we het ook ja anders kunnen doen of beter.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

A fourth asymmetry was related to the subsidy instrument. The municipality held a Woningbouwimpuls subsidy with a start-of-construction deadline, which introduced a strong time constraint into the project and transferred part of the delivery risk to the developer. The housing association project manager reflected that this led the municipality prioritise planning targets over process quality.

“De gemeente was heel erg blind gefocust op die subsidie.... Binnen deze planning moeten alles ja te realiseren zijn.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing association Project Manager

This indicates that the presence of the subsidy not only shaped the timeline of the project, but also influenced the balance of power within the collaboration. By holding the subsidy and its associated deadline, the municipality gained additional leverage to prioritise its own planning targets, which shifted the distribution of decision-making influence between the actors.

The analysis of the asymmetries shows that the starting conditions in the Dordts Geluk case were shaped by a combination of institutional design choices, limited prior experience with the procurement model, time constraints, and power dynamics introduced by the subsidy instrument.

Incentives for participation

All four interviewees described strong incentives for participation, although the underlying motivations differed between the actors.

For the municipality, the incentive was mainly shaped by the subsidy deadline and the political priority given to the Spuiboulevard Area development. Interviewee A1 explained that motivation within the municipal team increased as the project became more concrete. The years of area development planning finally reaching a visible stage led to strong engagement within the municipal project team.

The housing association's involvement was primarily mission-driven. The need to increase the supply of social housing in Dordrecht was framed as a core organisational priority. At the same time, the broader housing shortage meant that withdrawing from the project was not a realistic option, even during difficult phases of the design process.

“We hebben die woningen ook gewoon nodig. Er is gewoon woningtekort in Nederland, dus wij willen gewoon dat die woning gebouwd worden.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

In contrast, Interviewee A4's motivation was more strongly linked to financial responsibility. As a co-owner with direct financial exposure, the urgency to keep the project on track was high:

“We zijn financieel verantwoordelijk en we zitten zelf echt aan de bal”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer / Co-owner

Interviewee A3 further confirmed a clear divergence in urgency between the parties. The developers faced greater time pressure due to planning delays, indexation, and holding costs. This difference was not only perceptual, but also reflected the parties' different financial positions, and influenced how each responded to the delay caused by the floor plan dispute.

Prehistory of cooperation or conflict

All four interviewees highlighted the importance of prior relationships in shaping the relational starting conditions of the collaboration.

The housing association and the municipality had a long-term working relationship built through years of collaboration. This familiarity made communication more open and informal, as described by Interviewee A2:

“Iedereen kent elkaar wel bij de gemeente. Je hebt ook vaak met dezelfde personen te maken, dat maakt het ook wel makkelijker. Wat informeler om dingen te bespreken en wat eerlijker in elkaars gezicht te kunnen zeggen van hoe je erin staat of wat je ervan vindt. En dat werkt heel fijn.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

This informal familiarity was an important collaborative resource, as it makes open communication easier and reduces hesitation when discussing difficult issues. At the same time, Interviewee A2 noted that staff changes at the municipality could disrupt this dynamic, as knowledge was often embedded in personal relationships rather than documented within the organisation.

The municipality's prior collaboration with Developer A1 also played a role. Interviewee A1 described this earlier experience as an important reference point for approaching the collaboration:

“Mijn ervaring met de samenwerking binnen dat project is gewoon heel goed en constructief. Ja, een professionele partij die echt wel gaat voor kwaliteit.”

Interviewee A1 – Municipal Project Manager

Although this prior relationship did not formally influence the tender process, it did shape informal expectations. Interviewee A4 confirmed that the municipality deliberately reassigned the project manager from the previous successful collaboration to the Dordts Geluk project.

“Er zat een projectleider op, maar die is ingewisseld voor de projectleider van [Projectnaam], omdat de samenwerking daar zo goed is gegaan.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

Interviewee A3 added that earlier positive collaboration can provide a small advantage in the relationship, but does not determine the outcome of the project.

“Als de samenwerking gewoon goed is, dat het daarmee ook wel weer een klein plusje oplevert... op zo'n moment werkt dat net lekker.”

Interviewee A3 – Developer Project Director

Overall, the prior relationships between the parties provided a relational foundation that supported open communication and trust from the start of the collaboration.

5.4 Collaborative process

This section analyses the collaborative process in Dordts Geluk, as identified through the interviews. Following the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), the analysis focuses on the dynamics of collaboration over time, including trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and face-to-face dialogue. Each element is examined based on the empirical findings from this case.

Trust-building

Interviewee A4 described trust-building as something that was actively invested in at moments when it was not strictly necessary for the project. Interviewee A4 illustrated this through the basketball court example. After being awarded the project, the municipality's public space design included a mini basketball court, which the developer felt could negatively affect the residential character of the project. Instead of rejecting the idea immediately, which could have created tension early in the collaboration, Interviewee A4 proposed a participatory process with future buyers and wrote a formal memo setting out conditions and alternatives. The municipality eventually decided to drop the plan. Interviewee A4 described the outcome:

“Slot van het liedje? Het komt er niet, maar ik ben wel vrienden met iedereen. Nou, dat is natuurlijk super fijn.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

By responding in a constructive way to an issue where the developer had a concern, Interviewee A4 built relational credit that could be used later when the more important floor plan dispute arose. Interviewee A4 explained this directly:

“Als ik nou met een voorstel kom... dan ga ik natuurlijk wel zeggen, jongens ik ben heel coulant geweest in die situatie met de corporatie... dus dan verwacht ik van jullie ook wel enige coulance.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

Interviewee A4 also introduced an extra step before the VO phase: a schematic design (SO) review with both the municipality and the housing association. The municipality agreed, and all the municipal departments reviewed the design. At this stage, the housing association raised its floor plan objections. Although this was better than finding the issue later at the VO stage, it also meant the municipality faced a problem it had partly helped create. Interviewee A4 described this as:

“De gemeente die realiseerde zich gelijk dat ze boter op haar hoofd had, want die had ons plan gekozen en de opmerkingen van de corporatie dus eigenlijk een beetje in de wind geslagen.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

From the housing association’s perspective, Interviewee A2 interpreted the developer’s continued design iterations as a sign of commitment to quality. This is important because it shows that the floor plan process was not only about solving a technical issue, but also about showing over time that the developer was a reliable partner who took the housing association’s requirements seriously. Interviewee A2 described this:

“Dat zij toch wel die ruimte en moeite hebben genomen om toch zoveel moeite te steken in het doorontwikkelen van die plattegronden.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

Interviewee A3 described the developer’s approach to transparency under pressure when the planning delay became clear, the developer proactively communicated this in writing to the municipality.

“We hebben een paar keer wel gemaild van beste gemeente besef, we hebben nu vertraging. Dat heeft deze gevolgen, puur ook om onszelf in te dekken daarmee en daar is wel vanuit de gemeente ook weer netjes een reactie gekomen.”

Interviewee A3 – Developer Project Director

This suggests that transparency in the collaboration served both as open communication and as a way for the developer to formally manage its position in the process. The municipality’s constructive response helped preserve a cooperative tone despite the delay.

Finally, Interviewee A1 suggested that the collaboration’s overall quality was not dependent on the floor plan dispute:

“Ik denk eigenlijk dat de samenwerking zeg maar net zo goed zou zijn zonder die discussie.”

Interviewee A1 – Municipal Project Manager

Taken together, the findings suggest that that trust-building in the Dordts Geluk case was not based on the absence of conflict, but on how parties responded to issues as they arose. Small gestures of goodwill, transparency, and procedural cooperation contributed to maintaining trust throughout the collaboration.

Commitment to process

Commitment to the process was present across all four parties, but it took different forms depending on their roles and incentives.

The housing association remained involved despite not being fully satisfied with the design outcome. The housing association ultimately accepted a solution that did not fully meet its initial requirements. Interviewee A2 described this as follows:

“Als het dan voor 90% kunnen voldoen in plaats van 100 is het ook goed.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

This shows that commitment was not based on achieving perfect design quality, but on prioritising the delivery of social housing. Accepting a lower level of design was part of staying engaged in the project rather than withdrawing or blocking the process.

The municipality’s commitment was reflected through continued involvement throughout the complex process under time pressure created by the subsidy deadline. Interviewee A1 described how the project team’s motivation grew as the project became concrete, but also linked this to the broader difficulty of housing development:

“Er zijn ongelooflijk veel eisen en wetten en regels en tijdsdruk waar iedereen mee heeft te maken, dus je moet ook wel heel gemotiveerd zijn, want het is eigenlijk makkelijker om het niet te doen.”

Interviewee A1 – Municipal Project Manager

This highlights that commitment is not self-evident in this context, but requires sustained effort under institutional and procedural constraints.

Interviewee A3 described the developer’s perspective on commitment. In a softening housing market, a delay could in theory have been beneficial, as it would have allowed adjustments to the business case as costs changed. Despite this, continued delivery was described as the shared goal that kept all parties engaged:

“Iedereen heeft zijn eigen belangen die hij of zij vertegenwoordigt in deze. Alleen het belang is van alle 3 dat die woningen er gaan komen en in ons geval wij moeten gewoon bouwen, omdat we anders en geld kwijt zijn en noem het allemaal maar op, waarbij wij nog best wel even een vertraging zouden kunnen willen bij wijze van.”

Interviewee A3 – Developer Project Director

This shows that commitment was not automatic, but the result of aligning different interests around a shared goal. Each party had its own reasons to stay involved, but all worked towards the same outcome of delivering the housing.

Shared understanding

At a general level, all four interviewees described alignment around the main goal of delivering the housing project. However, at a more detailed level, differences in understanding were present on several issues. A significant difference concerned the floor plan typology. The housing association had a strong internal preference for the 'doorzon' typology, which the programme of requirements described as a 'preference' rather than a strict requirement. Interviewee A2 reflected on the ambiguity this created:

“Daar stond een voorkeur, een sterke voorkeur zo stond het omschreven... Het was een voorkeur. Maar intern leeft hiervan nou ja, het is eigenlijk niet te bespreken. Het is voor ons eigenlijk wel een eis, maar het stond niet zo zwart op wit.”
Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

This shows that shared understanding was limited by unclear translation of internal preferences into formal project documents. What was seen internally as a requirement was not communicated as such to the other actors.

A second point concerned the sense of urgency. The parties did not share the same understanding of how pressing the timeline was. Interviewee A3 described the developer's position:

“Ik denk wel vanuit ons dat er wat meer haast wordt bevonden dan de andere partijen, maar dat komt meer omdat wij natuurlijk in eerste instantie tegen de Q4 26 aanlopen te hikken en wij worden er op vastgespijkerd.”
Interviewee A3 – Developer Project Director

According to Interviewee A3, delays had direct financial consequences for the developers, while for the municipality and housing association, the urgency was experienced as less immediate.

Intermediate outcomes

The intermediate outcomes in Dordts Geluk were mainly linked to key moments in the design and decision-making process. Interviewee A1 identified the signing of the cooperation agreements as the first moment when real progress could be made. This only became possible after the floor plan dispute had been resolved:

“Maar het echte moment wat gevierd kan worden, is als je dan daadwerkelijk de overeenkomsten met elkaar hebt getekend en je dus echt van start kan gaan met de ontwikkeling. Nou, dat was wel ook al een mijlpaal, omdat de andere partner, zeg maar de woningcorporatie, achteraf toch nog wel wat aandachtspunten had in het winnende ontwerp van [Ontwikkelaar] en dat dat heeft nog wat discussie opgeleverd zeg maar.”
Interviewee A1 – Municipal Project Manager

This shows that intermediate outcomes were not only formal steps in the process, but depended on resolving key disagreements between parties. The signing of the agreements therefore marked a shift from uncertainty to alignment.

After this point, the process became more focused on moving the project forward. Interviewee A2 described how, once the agreement was reached, efforts shifted towards completing the preliminary design:

“Ja, dan gaan we de planning gewoon niet meer halen en het is nu al krap. Maar we zijn er uitgekomen en sindsdien ja is er vol gas gegeven op het ontwikkelen van het VO. Wat nu bijna afgerond gaat worden.”

Interviewee A2 – Housing Association Project Manager

This suggests that resolving the dispute enabled the parties to move from negotiation to implementation, allowing the project to progress.

Face-to-face dialogue

Communication in Dordts Geluk was organised across multiple levels, combining both in-person and online meetings. Most actors expressed a preference for face-to-face interaction, especially for more complex discussions. Interviewee A4 described a structure with monthly in-person core team meetings and biweekly management meetings, which were often held online. Attending the core meetings in person was seen as an intentional investment in the relationship:

“Kernteam is altijd fysiek... ik rijd daarvoor graag naar Dordrecht en dat wordt ook gewaardeerd.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

Interviewee A1 confirmed that in-person meetings were preferred by the municipality, particularly because they made it easier to collaborate and solve problems. At the same time, Interviewee A3 emphasised efficiency and noted that online meetings were sufficient for more routine topics. This shows that preferences for communication formats differed between organisations, depending on the purpose of the interaction.

A more complex dynamic emerged when many municipal disciplines were involved in the same meeting. Interviewee A4 described a session after the awarding involving around thirty municipal stakeholders:

“Overleggen waar denk ik wel 30 mensen aan tafel zaten. Er waren 30 verschillende mensen die iets van dit project mogen vinden. Ja dat is toch niet normaal.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

These meetings brought together many different municipal disciplines, each focusing on their own area of expertise. As a result, discussions often became highly detailed and fragmented. Interviewee A3 described a similar experience:

“Nou dat dat was niet te doen, zoveel mensen. Dat was echt absurd. Maar wat dat betreft vanuit de gemeente, dat dan ook wel weer een compliment waardig, heel erg betrokken. Ze snappen hoe het gaat... het blijkt wel gewoon goed georganiseerd.”

Interviewee A3 – Developer Project Director

This highlights a key tension: while the large number of participants made meetings less efficient and sometimes difficult to manage, it also reflected a high level of engagement and a well-organised municipal structure.

5.5 Interviewees' observations on the role of municipal size

This section presents interviewees' reflections on the role of municipal size in the collaboration. All interviewees were asked whether they considered the municipality's size to have played a role in the collaboration. Their responses provided insights into their perspectives on the size question within this case.

Interviewee A3 argued that municipal size played a clear role, mainly due to the presence of multiple specialised disciplines within the organisation:

“200%. Ik denk wel dat dat aan de orde is, mede omdat dus kabels en leiding is een aparte discipline. Stedenbouwkundig is een aparte discipline. Duurzaamheid is een aparte discipline... dan merk je wel dat er gewoon omdat iedere discipline daarna gaat kijken dat het wat langer duurt.”

Interviewee A3 – Developer Project Director

From this perspective, specialisation within larger municipalities can slow down decision-making because multiple departments are involved in reviewing the same issue. However, Interviewee A3 also noted that similar outcomes can be observed in smaller municipalities, and emphasised that collaboration quality depends more on the people involved than on municipal size itself.

Interviewee A4 added a perspective that addressed both the relational and organisational dimensions of municipal size. According to this interviewee, smaller municipalities may benefit from closer working relationships and faster decision-making due to less internal fragmentation. Larger municipalities, in contrast, tend to have more specialised knowledge but also more complex internal coordination:

“Ja, want in kleine gemeentes zijn er minder mensen die hechter met elkaar samenwerken en elkaar persoonlijk ook gewoon goed kennen. Ja, dan denk ik dat dat makkelijker gaat. Sterker nog, als er één persoon meer verantwoordelijk is voor meerdere van die disciplines en dan kan die zelf al daar besluiten over nemen.”

Interviewee A4 – Lead Developer

Interviewee A1 broadened the discussion beyond the specific case and reflected on how municipal size may influence policy capacity, particularly in relation to steering on target groups. Larger municipalities were seen as having more resources and instruments to develop targeted policies:

“Ik denk wel dat de omvang van de gemeente een rol speelt in de mate waarop er wordt gestuurd op doelgroepen. Ik weet niet of dat de waarheid is, maar mijn visie is wel dat zeg maar, grote gemeentes vaker iets meer capaciteit hebben, om beleid te maken en specifiek te sturen. Ja grotere gemeentes hebben dan vaak toch wel echte specifieke programma's voor bijvoorbeeld senioren of andere aandachtsgroepen, bijvoorbeeld starters en ze hebben misschien ook wat meer instrumenten en capaciteit om daarop te sturen.”

Interviewee A1 – Municipal Project Manager

Together, these perspectives suggest that municipal size influences collaboration in different ways. Larger municipalities may have greater policy capacity and expertise but also more internal complexity, which can slow down processes. Smaller municipalities may benefit from more direct communication and faster decision-making, but have fewer specialised resources. At the same time, interviewees emphasised that municipal size alone does not determine collaboration quality, as outcomes also depend on organisational practices and the individuals involved.

5.6 Conclusion

The Dordts Geluk case reveals a collaboration in which the starting conditions were shaped by a combination of asymmetries operating at different levels of the process. The analysis points to a power asymmetry and a knowledge asymmetry in the tender design as potentially significant factors. The housing association had no formal decision-making role in the jury, and its programme of requirements was outdated according to the developer. Together, these gaps meant that the developer entered the collaboration without adequate knowledge of what the housing association required, while the housing association had limited formal leverage to enforce its preferences. This created the conditions for the floor plan dispute that followed, which was driven more by gaps in the procurement design than by conflicting interests between parties.

Existing working relationships helped to mitigate these challenges. The long-term cooperation between the municipality and the housing association, as well as earlier positive collaboration between the municipality and Developer A1, provided a relational foundation that supported interaction when difficulties emerged.

Trust was actively maintained through proactive behaviour, as illustrated by the basketball court example and the sketch design review. Commitment to the process took different forms across the parties, but all were aligned around the shared goal of delivering housing at the Spuiboulevard in Dordrecht. The main difference between the parties concerned their experience of urgency. The developer faced higher financial risk from delays than the housing association, which shaped how each responded to the setbacks in planning. Shared understanding was strong at the overall goal, but there was less alignment on more detailed aspects such as the floor plan typology.

In addition, interviewees reflected on whether the municipal size played a role in the collaboration. Their perspectives suggest that municipal size may have influenced the process in different ways. Larger municipalities were associated with slower decision-making due to internal specialisation across multiple disciplines, but also with greater policy capacity and more targeted steering instruments. Smaller municipalities, by contrast, were seen as potentially enabling faster and more direct collaboration due to closer interpersonal relationships and more integrated roles. At the same time, interviewees emphasised that these effects are not deterministic, but depend on the people involved and the specific organisational context.

Overall, this case suggests that existing relationships and open communication can help sustain collaboration even when difficulties arise. It also shows that starting conditions should be understood in relation to the broader organisational context, including municipal size and other contextual factors. The extent to which these conditions are shaped by municipal size or by project-specific factors is further discussed in Chapter 8.

6. Case B – Casa Vita

This chapter presents the empirical findings from Case B, the Casa Vita project in Pijnacker-Nootdorp. As described in Chapter 4, Pijnacker-Nootdorp has 57,930 inhabitants and is classified in the medium municipality category in this study. The chapter begins with an introduction to the project and the interviewees involved in the semi-structured interviews. This is followed by an analysis of the municipal policy context and steering capacity. The core of the chapter is formed by sections 6.3 and 6.4, which examines the starting conditions and the collaborative process based on the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. Section 6.5 then reflects on interviewees' perspectives regarding the role of municipal size, after which the chapter concludes in section 6.6.

6.1 Project Introduction

Casa Vita is a residential development for both first-time buyers and seniors, located in the centre of Pijnacker. The project consists of approximately 100 dwellings, combining social rental housing with owner-occupied housing, and is designed for mixed occupancy of seniors and starters. The developer was selected through a tender procedure organised by the municipality. The project includes several design elements that were not required in the tender, such as timber construction and a communal living room. These elements were introduced by the developer. During the development process, the originally planned housing association was replaced by another housing association due to financial capacity constraints.

Interviewees

Four semi-structured interviews were conducted for this case study with key stakeholders involved in the project. These included the municipal project manager, the developer's marketing manager, the developer's project leader, and the housing association's project leader. Table 9 provides an overview of the interviewees and their roles.

Table 9: Overview of the interviewees for Case B (own work)

Code ²	Role	Case
Interviewee B1	Municipal Project Manager	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp
Interviewee B2	Developer Marketing Manager	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp
Interviewee B3	Housing Association Project Director (Housing association B)	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp
Interviewee B4	Developer Project Manager	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp

² All interviewees consented to participation in this study under the condition that personal identifiers are removed. Project names and professional roles are retained to provide sufficient context for the empirical analysis.

Interviewees B2 and B4 both represent the developer, but from different roles within the organisation. Interviewee B4, the project manager from the developer, was responsible for acquisition, the tender process, and the overall development process. Interviewee B2 was involved from the early stages and worked closely with the project manager during the tender phase. This role included analysing the location and target group, contributing to the design process, and supporting the communication strategy. Interviewee B2 also took the lead in preparing the subsidy application for the communal living room. Together, Interviewee B2 and B4 provide a complementary but not identical perspective on the developer's role in the project. Interviewee B3 from the housing association B joined the project at a later stage, after the design concept, contractor selection, and programme had largely been completed. As a result, the housing association B had to engage with an existing framework rather than co-developing the project from the beginning. Interviewee B1, the municipal project manager, was involved throughout the entire process, from the start of the tender to project completion.

6.2 Municipal policy context and steering capacity

The housing stock of the municipality of Pijnacker-Nootdorp has grown from approximately 19,700 dwellings in 2015 to around 22,700 in 2025. This increase of roughly 3,100 dwellings reflects steady housing production over the period 2015-2024 (waarstaatjegemeente.nl, n.d.).

The desk research assessment of Pijnacker-Nootdorp's senior housing policy yielded a score of '+', as established in Chapter 4. The municipality combines a general housing vision (woonvisie) with a separate housing and care vision (woonzorgvisie). This policy framework includes a quantified objectives related to the expansion of multi-family housing. While these targets do not specifically define the number of senior housing units, multi-family dwellings are explicitly positioned as a housing type that can contribute to housing opportunities for older adults. Furthermore, in the housing and care vision the municipality describes an action plan for the realisation of senior housing. However, this action plan does not define specific targets for senior housing provision. Instead, it focuses on guiding principles and implementation direction, such as the inclusion of life-course resilient housing as a guiding principle in housing programming.

Responsibility for housing, care, and older adult policy is not integrated within a single alderman portfolio, but is distributed across different policy domains. This separation requires coordination across policy areas in the development and implementation of senior housing policy.

In terms of steering capacity, Pijnacker-Nootdorp's approach is mainly characterised by directional steering as defined by Verheul and Heurkens (2025). The municipality sets policy frameworks and articulates ambitions for senior housing primarily through communicative instruments, particularly the housing vision and the housing and care vision. The use of hard forms of steering, such as legal requirements or targeted financial incentives, remains limited in relation to senior housing objectives.

6.3 Starting conditions

This section analyses the starting conditions present in Casa Vita, as identified through the interviews. Following the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), three dimensions of starting conditions are examined: power/resource/knowledge asymmetries, incentives for participation, and the prehistory of cooperation or conflict.

Power/resource/knowledge asymmetries

The most significant asymmetry in the Casa Vita case was the disadvantaged position of housing association B when it entered the project. The developer had already developed the concept and selected the contractor. Interviewee B3 described this situation clearly:

“Dan kom je in aanraking met een plan wat al klaar is.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

This was not only a matter of timing. The fact that the contractor had already been selected limited the housing association’s ability to influence key project decisions:

“[Ontwikkelaar] had ook al een aannemer. Dat is ook al, dus ja, we hadden niet heel veel keuze, zal ik maar zeggen.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

This power asymmetry appears to result from the project sequence rather than deliberate exclusion. The original housing association A had withdrawn from the project due to financial capacity constraints, after which housing association B was approached as a replacement partner. Because housing association B joined at a later stage, its influence over early decisions was limited. The decision to accept this position was a strategic choice, as the organisation wanted to enter a new area and was willing to accept reduced bargaining power.

A second asymmetry concerned the limited knowledge about the timber construction. Timber construction was new for all actors except for the developer. The housing association indicated that it had no prior experience with timber construction.

“Wij hadden ook nog nooit houtbouw gedaan voor ons, ook hartstikke nieuw en een beetje eng misschien wel. Er was geen beleid binnen de [Corporatie] daarover. Dus ja, we hebben het maar gedaan en kijken wat er van terecht komt.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

This lack of knowledge about timber construction had practical consequences. For example, the housing association initially requested system ceilings, which would have covered the visible timber structure that was central to the design. Over time, this knowledge asymmetry decreased as the housing association learned from other organisations with experience in timber construction and developed internal guidelines during the project.

A third asymmetry concerned the municipality’s limited knowledge of the available subsidies. In this case, the developer took the lead in securing both provincial and national subsidies. Interviewee B4 explained that the initiative came from the developer:

“De rijkssubsidie is rechtstreeks naar ons toegegaan... de provinciale subsidie die is uitgekeerd aan de gemeente. Wij hebben het geïnitieerd.”

Interviewee B4 – Developer Project Manager

This situation is notable because the private actor had more knowledge and expertise about financial subsidy instruments than the public authority. As a result, the developer acted as the main knowledge holder in this area rather than the municipality.

Incentives for participation

The incentive structure in the Casa Vita case was mainly driven by intrinsic motivation. This appears to be shaped by the municipality's tender design. By assigning 80% weight to quality and 20% to price, the municipality aimed to attract a developer whose motivation was more focused on design quality than on financial considerations. Interviewee B1 described the intention as follows:

“Om de marktpartijen te triggeren, we gaan ons best doen, want de prijs is niet zaligmakend.”

Interviewee B1 – Municipal Project Manager

The developers' incentive to participate was rooted in two pre-existing strategic motivations. First, the developer had already developed a senior smart living concept and identified the location in Pijnacker as a suitable fit. Interviewee B2 described this as follows:

“We hadden al ons eigen woon senior smart living, woon en leefconcept. En we zeiden, ja, het is ideaal voor die plek in die gemeente als Pijnacker-Nootdorp. Daar staan allemaal eengezinswoningen. Ook daar vergrijst de bevolking de komende jaren en deze plek leent zich uitermate voor senioren en ook als starters, want die krijgen daar ook weinig ruimte.”

Interviewee B2 – Developer Marketing Manager

Second, the project offered an opportunity to gain experience with timber construction, which was an explicit internal strategic objective:

“Wij hadden de keuze gemaakt binnen [Ontwikkelaar] dat we graag ervaring op wilden doen met bouwen in hout, dus dat was onze keuze om hier te bouwen in hout.”

Interviewee B2 – Developer Marketing Manager

Together, these motivations indicate that the developer's participation was driven by strategic, non-financial considerations, which aligns with the municipality's tender design.

The housing association B's incentive was related to strategic portfolio expansion. The organisation's policy aimed to grow outside its home municipality, where investment opportunities had become limited. Interviewee B3 explained this as follows:

“Wij willen ons bezit uitbreiden en groeien in aantallen vanwege de beschikbaarheid van de doelgroep en dat dat willen we niet alleen in [thuisgemeente]... werden gewoon geen gronden ter beschikking gesteld. Dus zijn wij ook actief gaan zoeken in Pijnacker.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

The municipality's incentive was to add senior housing to a stock that is dominated by single-family owner-occupied dwellings, with the aim of increasing residential mobility. Interviewee B1 described what the municipality aimed to achieve through the tender:

“We wilden doorstroming mogelijk maken om woningen vrij te spelen, waar dan weer gezinnen in zouden kunnen terecht komen. En we wilden ook niet alleen ouderen, maar ook jongeren, ja sociaal financieel minder daadkrachtige mensen de ruimte bieden om hier te wonen. “

Interviewee B1 – Municipal Project Manager

Overall, the incentive structures show a mix of policy-driven and strategic motivations across the key actors. Despite differences in specific goals, there is a clear partial convergence of interests shaped by the tender design.

Prehistory of cooperation or conflict

In the Casa Vita case, there was no meaningful prior history between the parties. Housing association B had not previously worked with either the municipality or the developer. The developer had completed a project in Pijnacker-Nootdorp approximately fifteen years ago, but this was too long ago to be relevant for the current relationship. Interviewee B1 described this lack of prior cooperation as follows:

“We hadden nog niet eerder met [Ontwikkelaar] gewerkt en ook nog niet eerder met de [Corporatie1] die als corporatie ingeschakeld is, dus dat was in beide gevallen nieuw.”

Interviewee B1 – Municipal Project Manager

This lack of prior cooperation suggests that the starting conditions were not shaped by established trust or conflict between the parties.

6.4 Collaborative process

This section analyses the collaborative process in Casa Vita, as identified through the interviews. Following the framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), as described in Chapter 2, the analysis focuses on the dynamics of collaboration over time, including trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and face-to-face dialogue. Each element is examined based on the empirical findings from this case.

Trust-building

As previously described, no prior relationships existed between the parties in the Casa Vita case, meaning that trust had to be developed during the project itself. This trust-building process emerged through a combination of clear roles, sharing knowledge beyond what was required, and dealing with challenges together.

A key mechanism in this process was the municipality's deliberate decision not to intervene in the negotiations between the developer and housing association B. Rather than acting as an intermediary, the municipality maintained a more distant position. As Interviewee B1 explained:

“Wij willen eigenlijk niet als partij tussen ontwikkelaar en corporatie knel komen te zitten. Handen vrij houden en dat is zeg maar als het geëscaleerd moest worden, dat dan men naar ons toe kon.”

Interviewee B1 – Municipal Project Manager

This approach was supported by experience from other projects:

“De ervaring leert ook bij andere projecten op het moment dat wij er tussenuit blijven en de ontwikkelaar en de corporatie samen moeten optrekken dat dat in de regel leidt tot een kwalitatief beter hoogwaardiger product.”

Interviewee B1 – Municipal Project Manager

This was not a practical choice, but a clear strategy. By staying out of the negotiations, the municipality allowed the developer and the housing association to work together directly and kept its own neutral position.

Trust was further supported by voluntary engagement from the municipality. Its presence at participation meetings, even when not formally required, was perceived as meaningful involvement. As Interviewee B4 noted:

“Ik denk dat toch de kleinere dingen dus het bereikbaar zijn, maar ook het aanwezig zijn bij participatie momenten. De betrokkenheid als wij een avond organiseren met de omgeving en de gemeente die is daar ook aanwezig, dat betekent best wel wat. Dan bouw je met zulk soort dingen bouw je wel echt vertrouwen. Dus niet de dingen die moeten, maar de dingen wat mag, waar een gemeente zelf kan kiezen ben ik er wel of niet bij aanwezig?”

Interviewee B4 – Developer Project Manager

In addition, the legal challenge from a competing bidder created a moment of shared pressure, which strengthened rather than weakened the collaboration. As described by Interviewee B4:

“En toch ga je dus met de gemeente kijken, ok hoe kun je dat dan? Waar kunnen wij een steentje bijdragen? Uiteindelijk waren wij ook bij de rechtszaak aanwezig. Dus dat helpt ook zulk soort dingen, dus het is een opstapeling van ja positieve en ook negatieve dingen.”

Interviewee B4 – Developer Project Manager

Overall, trust was described as strong from all perspectives and as something that developed over time through both positive interaction and shared handling of challenges:

“Vertrouwen was er ja, het was heel groot, vind ik van alle kanten. Dus wat het ook makkelijk maakte om bij tegenslag elkaar op te zoeken, te kijken van hoe lossen we het op.”

Interviewee B2 – Developer Marketing Manager

Commitment to process

Commitment to the process was high in the Casa Vita case. At the same time, this commitment was temporary: after the developer had sold the dwellings and handed over the project, its involvement clearly decreased. This indicates that the involved parties had different time horizons.

During the project, the developer's effort went beyond contractual obligations. According to Interviewee B4 this included organising seven participatory sessions with the neighbourhood, collaborating with local welfare organisations, hosting online expert sessions on timber construction, and preparing two subsidy applications. In addition, the developer opted for pile-pressing instead of pile-driving to reduce vibrations impacts on neighbouring properties, which was positively received by the neighbourhood.

The housing association also demonstrated commitment by accepting additional costs to improve the quality of the dwellings for future tenants. The two main changes were removing walls to create larger living spaces and replacing the heating system with its own heat pump system. Both decisions were based on what the housing association considered better for tenants, rather than cost efficiency. Interviewee B3 explained:

“Wij hebben als corporatie een van de doelstellingen is om onze bewoners zo min mogelijk woonlasten te laten betalen, en bij [naam] dat zijn commerciële partijen hebben hier nooit de volledige garantie dat zij op woonlasten letten. Zij kijken alleen maar naar zoveel mogelijk opbrengst... Onze kosten werden hoger en voor onze huurders lager.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

Commitment to collaboration was also visible in moments of disagreement, where parties did not hold on rigidly to their own positions but instead focused on finding joint solutions:

“Dus dan ga je met elkaar kijken, ok, hoe kunnen we toch, of moeten we het weghalen, of moeten we het anders vorm gaan geven? Dus op die manier zijn we daarna gaan kijken, maar echt met elkaar, samen.”

Interviewee B4 – Developer Project Manager

At the same time, the limits of the developer's commitment became visible after the handover. The housing association remained involved in the long-term management of the project, while the developer's engagement decreased substantially once its contractual role ended. As Interviewee B3 explained:

“Het grote verschil is dat wij hier een heel langdurige relatie met die gemeente opbouwen en de is een ontwikkelaar die is weg. En die komt ja als hij gelukkig is, mag hij nog een keer terugkomen.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

This illustrates a clear difference in time horizons: the developer's commitment was primarily project-based, while the housing association, in cooperation with the municipality, maintained a long-term involvement beyond project completion.

Shared understanding

In the Casa Vita case, shared understanding was primarily built around the developer's project concept, which served as the main reference point throughout the process. A central element in this concept was health, which informed both the emphasis on community building for wellbeing and the use of timber construction as a way to express these values.

Overall, this shared framing remained stable during the development phase. As Interviewee B1 indicated, expectations defined at the start were consistently met and continuously confirmed during the process:

“Ik denk dat we aan de voorkant heel goed onze verwachtingen in een programma eisen hebben beschreven en [Ontwikkelaar] heeft ons gewoon door het project heen meegenomen in het laten zien dat ze daaraan bleven voldoen.”

Interviewee B1 – Municipal Project Manager

At the same time, shared understanding was not complete on all aspects of the project. A clear point of divergence emerged around the housing allocation rules. Although the tender documents included a preference for senior residents, the applicable municipal housing regulation did not allow age-based priority in allocation. This created a mismatch between policy intentions and implementation rules during the design phase. This issue was resolved through direct coordination between the municipality and the housing association, resulting in a mixed allocation model in which half of the dwellings were prioritised for seniors and half for starters. This adjustment illustrates how shared understanding gradually developed during the project rather than being fully established at the start.

Interviewee B2 placed this issue in a broader perspective on how housing programmes are developed in practice, noting that the translation from target groups to concrete allocation choices often remains underdeveloped:

“De slag naar voor wie doen we dat dan en sluit je met dat programma aan op de lokale woonbehoefte, dat blijft laat ik het zo zeggen een ondergeschoven kindje”
Interviewee B2 – Developer Marketing Manager

Overall, shared understanding in the Casa Vita case was largely based on the developer’s project concept, but was further refined during implementation where policy constraints required clarification.

Intermediate outcomes

A first important milestone was the successful outcome of the legal challenge from a competing bidder in the tender process. Beyond this legal relevance, this moment also contributed to trust-building, as both the municipality and the developer were focused on safeguarding the continuation of the project at an early stage of collaboration.

A second milestone was the securing of both provincial and national subsidies for the communal living room, initiated by the developer. This provided early financial certainty within the project and suggested that proactive knowledge-sharing about subsidies within the collaboration can lead to concrete outcomes.

Another key outcome was the full allocation and sale of all dwellings before construction was completed. This indicated strong market demand and commercial success of the project. No objections were raised by neighbouring residents during the process. As Interviewee B4 noted:

“We hebben eind 2022 de vergunning ingediend. En dat ging heel snel, we hebben 100% kunnen toewijzen van de woningen.”
Interviewee B4 – Developer Project Manager

In addition, the project introduced several elements that were relatively new in the local context, including development during the COVID-19 period, a mixed tenure model not previously applied in the municipality, and a construction method that was unfamiliar to most involved actors. Despite these conditions, the project progressed successfully.

Taken together, these outcomes indicate that the collaborative process was able to deliver tangible results under relatively complex and unfamiliar conditions. As Interviewee B3 summarised:

“Het is ook meteen een gemeenschap geworden. Tussen huurders en kopers onderling en die gezamenlijk heel veel dingen ondernemen, dus ja, we zijn eigenlijk hartstikke blij met het plan.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

Face-to-face dialogue

The dialogue in the Casa Vita case was mainly shaped by the municipality’s decision to stay out of the negotiations between the developer and the housing association. As a result, direct interaction mainly took place between these two parties, while the municipality remained accessible but less actively involved in the negotiations between the developer and housing association. In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most meetings were held online.

Despite this context, communication between the parties was experienced as direct and accessible. Interviewee B4 described the ease of contact with the municipality as an important element of the collaboration:

“We waren in ieder geval altijd bereikbaar voor elkaar. Dat en dat is heel vaak anders bij gemeentes.”

Interviewee B4 – Developer Project Manager

This accessibility was also recognised by the housing association, which highlighted the ability to contact municipal staff directly and receive quick responses, especially compared to other municipalities:

“Bij deze gemeente kan je de projectleider of die kan je gewoon bellen en dan krijg je ook een antwoord. Ze waren veel toegankelijker... In [thuisgemeente] wordt echt alles nog steeds een stapje hoger. Dat levert heel veel ergernis op bij partijen.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

Despite the limited amount of face-to-face interaction due to COVID-19, dialogue in this case was characterised by direct communication lines and efficient exchange between the main actors.

6.5 Interviewees’ observations on the role of municipal size

All interviewees were asked whether they considered the size of the municipality to have influenced the collaboration. Their responses provided insights into their perspectives on the size question within this case.

Across the interviewees from the Casa Vita case, a consistent observation is that larger municipalities tend to have more hierarchical layers and coordination requirements. According to interviewees, this affects both the speed of decision-making and the access to decision-making. As a result, collaboration is perceived to depend more on formal procedures and internal alignment than on direct interaction. As Interviewee B1 noted:

“Bij een grotere gemeente heb je vaak verschillende directeuren... je krijgt wat meer lagen, wat meer afstemming. Het wordt wat stroperiger. Nou 10% gaat dan door en 90% verzandt in allemaal risicoanalyses.”

Interviewee B1 – Municipal Project Manager

From previous experience in a large municipality, Interviewee B3 similarly highlighted how this difference is experienced in practice, particularly in terms of accessibility. Communication is described as moving through more hierarchical layers, which can reduce responsiveness and create frustration for stakeholders.

“Bij deze gemeente kan je de projectleider of die kan je gewoon bellen en dan krijg je ook een antwoord. Ze waren veel toegankelijker... In [thuisgemeente] wordt echt alles nog steeds een stapje hoger. Dat levert heel veel ergernis op bij partijen.”

Interviewee B3 – Housing Association Project Director

These observations suggest that in smaller and medium-sized municipalities, decision-making is more closely situated at project level, which increases direct accessibility for actors. In larger municipalities, decision-making tends to be more distributed across organisation levels, which can affect both speed and perceived responsiveness.

6.6 Conclusion

The Casa Vita case shows a collaboration characterised by an initial power asymmetry, in which housing association B entered the project after the concept, structure, and the contractor had already been determined by the developer. This resulted in a situation in which the housing association had limited influence on the core design decisions at the start of the process. Despite this asymmetry, the housing association was still able to realise a number of substantive changes. This suggests that although initial power was unevenly distributed, the collaboration still allowed for negotiation and some degree of influence on project outcomes over time.

Because there was no prior relationship between the parties, trust and shared understanding had to be developed during the project. This was supported by two factors: the developer's project concept, which functioned as a shared reference point, and the municipality's decision to stay outside the negotiations, which preserved its neutral position and enabled direct interaction between the housing association and the developer.

The collaborative process was characterised by a high level of commitment during development, including efforts beyond contractual obligations. However, this commitment declined after handover, when the developer's involvement decreased while the housing association and municipality remained responsible for ongoing issues. This reflects different time horizons among the actors.

In addition, the case suggests that municipal size may have influenced the collaboration. Interviewees associated the medium-sized municipal organisation with direct access to decision-making and short communication lines, which supported responsiveness. This contrasts with larger municipalities, where additional organisational layers can slow down coordination and reduce direct access to decision-makers. In this case, the organisational scale appears to have enabled quicker alignment and more direct interaction.

Overall, the case shows that collaboration can develop despite initial power asymmetries, but that this requires clear roles, direct communication, and both the willingness and ability to adjust during the process.

7. Case C – Nieuw Dronen

This chapter presents the empirical findings from Case C, the Nieuw Dronen project in Bodegraven-Reeuwijk. As described in Chapter 4, Bodegraven-Reeuwijk has approximately 36,565 (2023) inhabitants and is classified as a small municipality in this study. The chapter starts with an introduction to the project and the interviewees who participated in the semi-structured interviews. This is followed by an analysis of the municipal policy context and steering capacity. The main part of the chapter consist of section 7.3 and 7.4, which analyse the starting conditions and the collaborative process using the conceptual framework introduced in Chapter 2. Section 7.5 reflects on interviewees' perceptions of the role of municipal size, after which the chapter is concluded in section 7.6.

7.1 Project introduction

Nieuw Dronen is an inner-city residential development in the centre of Bodegraven, a small municipality. The project originated from a private land ownership initiative by a combination of three developers, who together owned neighbouring plots in the area. Developer C1 owned the largest plot in the area. The municipality of Bodegraven-Reeuwijk held no land position in this development area, and was not the project initiator.

An intention agreement was made between the municipality and the developer consortium to formalise the cooperation. A disagreement about the interpretation of the programme of requirements led to the withdrawal of one developer from the consortium. The remaining developers (Developer C1 and Developer C2) continued the development under a revised project name, with a clearer separation in practice between their responsibilities, while still cooperating on shared infrastructure and carrying out a joint BOPA procedure at the municipality's request.

Developer C2's project included 61 dwellings: 20 affordable owner-occupied homes, 12 mid-market owner occupied homes, and the rest free-market houses. The plan also includes some senior housing. At the time of the interviews the presale was scheduled for May and June 2026.

Interviewees

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted for this case study. Table 10 provides an overview of the interviewees and their roles.

Table 10: Overview of the interviewees for Case C (own work)

Code ³	Role	Case
Interviewee C1	Municipal Project Manager	Case C – Bodegraven-Reeuwijk
Interviewee C2	Developer Project Director Developer C2	Case C – Bodegraven-Reeuwijk

³ All interviewees consented to participation in this study under the condition that personal identifiers are removed. Project names and professional roles are retained to provide sufficient context for the empirical analysis.

Interviewee C1 is an experienced project manager hired by the municipality specifically to restart the collaboration at the time of the dispute. Interviewee C2 joined the project about three to four years before the interview took place, after taking it over from a colleague.

A limitation of this case is that no housing association and no second developer were interviewed. However, the two interviews still provided an overview of the collaboration in this project.

7.2 Municipal policy context and steering capacity

The desk research findings presented in Chapter 4 show that Bodegraven-Reeuwijk receives a ‘++’ score on senior housing policy, which is the highest score among the three studied municipalities. The municipal housing vision includes the requirement that 40% of new dwellings in suitable development projects should be ground-floor accessible. In addition, the municipality has developed a public information programme aimed at informing older residents about suitable housing options and encouraging mobility.

Responsibility for housing, care and older adult policy is combined within a single alderman portfolio. This integrated arrangement may support better alignment between these policy domains compared to municipalities where these responsibilities are divided across multiple portfolios.

In term of steering capacity, Bodegraven-Reeuwijk combines forms of directional and regulatory steering (Verheul & Heurkens, 2025). Through its environmental vision and housing vision, the municipality sets out ambitions for the development of senior housing, which reflects directional steering by communicating policy goals and ambitions. In addition, the requirement of 40% of new dwellings should be ground-floor accessible is the only binding, senior housing-specific regulatory instrument identified across the three cases.

However, in the Nieuw Dronen case specifically, the municipality had no land position, which meant it had fewer direct means to enforce its policy objectives at the project level, making it more dependent on negotiation and cooperation with private actors.

It should be noted that the application of the 40% requirement in the Nieuw Dronen project was not discussed in the interviews and was also not explicitly addressed. As a result, this study cannot determine to what extent this requirement was actively applied at the project level.

7.3 Starting conditions

This section analyses the starting conditions present in the Nieuw Dronen case, as identified through the interviews. Following the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), three dimensions of starting conditions are examined: power, resource and knowledge asymmetries, incentives for participation, and the prehistory of cooperation or conflict.

Power/resource/knowledge asymmetries

A first asymmetry concerned the structure of the developer consortium. Developer C1 owned about three times more land than Developer C2, which gave Developer C1 a leading position in the consortium. As a result, Developer C2 had no direct contact with the municipality for about one to one-and-a-half years. Interviewee C2 described this power asymmetry:

“Een projectleider van [Ontwikkelaar C1] zat namens de samenwerkende partijen rechtstreeks aan tafel met de gemeente. Dus we hebben de eerste periode zelf niet direct aan tafel gezeten met de gemeente om overleg te voeren.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

A second asymmetry concerned the municipality's role as a facilitating party without owning land or controlling a tender. Without a land position, the influence of the municipality on the programme before the planning agreement (anterieure overeenkomst) was limited. Its main steering instruments were the planning agreement, the spatial planning, and permitting process.

A third factor concerned the municipality's limited organisational capacity at the start of the collaboration. The project had not progressed as intended, and the municipality brought in Interviewee C1 externally to restart the collaboration.

Incentives for participation

The incentive structure in Case C was primarily shaped by structural dependency rather than intrinsic motivation.

The main incentive for Developer C2 was its long-term land investment. Interviewee C2 described that the land had been owned for about twenty years, which made it very costly to withdraw from the project. The only realistic alternative was keeping the site as a business location, but this was not attractive to any of the actors. Interviewee C2 explained this as follows:

“Eventueel de locatie bebouwen met nieuwe bedrijfsruimten conform het huidige bestemmingsplan i.p.v. nieuwe woningen wil niemand. De omgeving wil dat niet. De gemeente wil het niet, maar uiteindelijk ga je wel dat soort dingen als tweede scenario bedenken als de gemeente gewoon niet lijkt te willen of er te weinig voortgang wordt geboekt.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

The municipality's incentive was primarily driven by the need to increase housing supply. Interviewee C1 described this as follows:

“Het belang van woningbouw is groot.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

Prehistory of cooperation or conflict

The starting conditions in the Nieuw Dronen case were shaped by earlier conflict. When Interviewee C1 was appointed to lead the project, trust had already been affected. Interviewee C1 described their starting point as follows:

“Op het moment dat er een geschil was tussen de drie ontwikkelaars. De ontwikkelcombinatie bestaat uit drie partijen en de gemeente. Waarbij ze niet verder kwamen en het woord vertrouwen met name een belangrijke rol speelde, toen ben ik daar ingestapt.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

From the developer’s perspective, Interviewee C2 explained that the three-party collaboration did not run smoothly from the start, and that after the third developer left, the plots were separated:

“Vanwege de beperkte voortgang heeft de derde samenwerkende partij de ontwikkeling op hold gezet. En toen hebben wij als [Ontwikkelaar C2] en [Ontwikkelaar C1] besloten om samen verder te gaan. Niet in een juridische samenwerking zoals bijvoorbeeld een CV-BV constructie maar in goed vertrouwen. We hebben tenslotte allebei onze eigen heldere locatie. We trekken dus wel samen op, maar we gaan geen formele samenwerking aan, iedereen doet gewoon zijn eigen plot.”

Interviewee C2 - Developer Project Director

This shows that the collaboration was already under pressure before the project was formally restructured. The lack of trust between the developers limited their ability to work together as a consortium. Rather than continuing as a fully integrated collaboration, the remaining developers chose to separate their responsibilities and proceed on their own plots. At the same time, they maintained limited form of coordination where needed, for example on shared infrastructure and procedures. However, despite this organisational separation, the project continued to be presented externally as a single development.

In terms of prior working relationships, in the Nieuw Dronen case these were limited. Interviewee C2 had not previously worked directly with municipality or with developer C1 involved in the consortium. Any earlier contact between the developer and the municipality dated from a long time ago, before Interviewee C2’s involvement:

“Ik heb niet eerder met [Ontwikkelaar C1] samengewerkt. Met de gemeente ook niet. Ja, wij als ontwikkelaar wel, maar dat dat is wel ver voor mijn tijd. Er zitten volgens mij mensen bij de gemeente die er ook al heel lang zitten. Dus het kan best zijn dat ze destijds ook betrokken waren, dat dat weet ik gewoon niet.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

Furthermore, Interviewee C1 noted that the municipality had a critical attitude towards Developer C1 due to earlier coordination problems in previous projects. Interviewee C1 entered the collaboration without prior relationships with any of the parties, which Interviewee C1 described as a neutral starting position:

“Er was vanuit de gemeente wel een kritische houding richting [Ontwikkelaar1]... Omdat daar nog wel eens wat in de realisatie nog wat afstemmingsproblemen waren. Ik heb dat op zich niet zo gemerkt, maar ja, ik had die ervaring niet. Ik sta er blanco in.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

7.4 Collaborative process

This section analyses the collaborative process in Nieuw Dronen, as identified through the interviews. Following the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), the analysis focuses on the dynamics of collaboration over time, including trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and face-to-face dialogue.

Trust-building

Trust had to be rebuilt from the point of the breakdown with the initial development consortium. The renewed collaboration started from a cautious position on both sides, where both parties had concerns, though of a different nature. Interviewee C2 described this as follows:

“Vanuit de gemeente, in mijn optiek, was het meer wantrouwen in zijn algemeenheid richting ontwikkelende partijen. Gaat het wel goed komen? En vanuit ons was het meer een zorg of we wel tot een overeenstemming konden komen zodat wij ook daadwerkelijk woningen kunnen gaan realiseren.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

In this early phase, the focus was not yet on solutions, but on understanding the situation and the underlying issues. Interviewee C1 described their first task as diagnostic, aimed at identifying the sources of mistrust and how the process could be restarted:

“Inventariseren en kijken van hoe kan ik dit proces weer op gang brengen? Waar liggen nou de vertrouwenskwesaties?”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

The approach to rebuilding trust from the municipal project manager's perspective was based on direct and transparent communication.

“Ik ben van de directe lijn. En dat kan bij sommige mensen wel eens verkeerd vallen, maar bij mij zal je niet zo gauw twijfelen aan wat ik bedoel en wat ik vind. Als iemand zaken niet realiseert, dan spreek ik hem erop aan, maar dan wel direct en dat verwacht ik ook van anderen naar mij toe.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

In addition to this communication style, a structural adjustment was made to clarify roles and decision-making within the project. The importance of separating operational and political levels within the municipality was emphasised. This was described in relation to earlier governance issues, where informal coordination between actors had bypassed the formal project organisation:

“Als de ontwikkelaar de wethouder opzoekt en vervolgens worden daar deals gemaakt waar de projectleider niks van weet, ja, dan gaat het project aan de haal.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

This suggests that rebuilding trust in this case was closely connected to improving communication and clarifying formal roles and decision-making so that responsibilities were clearly separated and followed in practice.

Commitment to process

The commitment in the Nieuw Dronen case was mainly driven by the fact that it was difficult for the parties to withdraw, rather than because they were strongly motivated. Interviewee C1 described the municipality's commitment as the need to deliver housing and the political pressure to do so. Hiring an experienced external project manager also showed commitment, as the municipality chose to strengthen its capacity rather than continue with the existing internal setup.

From Interviewee C2's perspective, commitment was mainly linked to the long-term land investment and the lack of suitable alternatives. The land had been owned for many years, which made withdrawing costly. Keeping the plot as a business location was not attractive for any of the parties. Interviewee C2 explained this as follows:

“Eventueel de locatie bebouwen met nieuwe bedrijfsruimten conform het huidige bestemmingsplan i.p.v. nieuwe woningen wil niemand. De omgeving wil dat niet. De gemeente wil het niet, maar uiteindelijk ga je wel dat soort dingen als tweede scenario bedenken als de gemeente gewoon niet lijkt te willen of er te weinig voortgang wordt geboekt.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

Another factor that kept the parties committed to the project was the public pressure. A petition from local residents asking for progress created political urgency when the collaboration was not moving forward. Interviewee C2 described this:

“Er ging zelfs een petitie vanuit de omgeving rond, dus er zat behoorlijk politieke druk op.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

Finally, Interviewee C1 noted that the roles of the actors also shaped their commitment. According to Interviewee C1's, the municipality works within its own policy frameworks to ensure careful implementation of those frameworks, and ensuring that housing is delivered in appropriately and that spatial planning procedures are handled carefully. The developer followed a more commercial logic. To Interviewee C1, this role was clear and expected:

“De ontwikkelaar is alleen maar uit op bouwen en weer verkopen, dus een stukje winst maken. Nou dat is helder, dat weet je, dus ja, dat is geen verrassing.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

Shared understanding

A key difference in the Nieuw Dronen case concerned how the municipality's programme of requirements was understood. One developer party saw them as new conditions added after the intention agreement, while the municipality argued that they were already existing policy. This disagreement became an important factor in the situation, as it created a fundamental difference in interpretation that ultimately contributed to one developer deciding to withdraw from the combination.

“Ik heb niks nieuws bedacht, ik heb alleen maar vastgesteld beleid en aangegeven dit is waar je aan moet voldoen. En toen zei één van de ontwikkelaars nou, daar ben ik het niet mee eens, want dat is nieuw voor mij en ik stap uit de ontwikkelingscombinatie”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

A second difference concerned what is normally expected in a development agreement. Interviewee C2 described the municipality's demands as going beyond what is usually done in similar cases. In Interviewee C2's experience, such agreements are normally made at a general level, while in this case a much higher level of detail was required before signing:

“Gebruikelijk is dat je in een anterieure overeenkomst met een gemeente afspraken op hoofdlijnen maakt en op basis hiervan de verdere ontwikkeling samen gaat doen. Zij wilden echter vóóruitlopend op het sluiten van de anterieure overeenkomst al veel meer uitgezocht hebben, en die onderzoeken al vóóraf laten doen.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

This difference shows that the two parties had different ideas about the purpose of this stage in the process. Interviewee C2 also linked this difference to how both sides viewed each other. From the developer's perspective, the main concern was whether agreement could still be reached and the project could move forward. From the municipality's perspective, the focus was on making sure all required information and documentation were properly in place before signing. At the same time, the municipality's more cautious approach was linked to a general level of mistrust towards development parties.

Once the new project manager from the municipality was in place and the developer combination had been restructured, shared understanding improved. This was supported by a stronger focus on moving the process forward and reaching the development agreement, driven by housing demand and the need to accelerate decision-making. As described by Interviewee C2:

“Projectleider van de gemeente is ingehuurd. Op een moment is vanuit de gemeente besloten om de projectleider van destijds te vervangen door een meer ervaren persoon om een betere voortgang te kunnen boeken en daarmee z.s.m. tot die anterieure overeenkomst te komen, want er is gewoon behoefte aan woningbouw.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

Intermediate outcomes

The signing of the development agreement was the main milestone of the collaboration. It marked the shift from a difficult phase in the process to an active development process. Interviewee C2 described this as a turning point:

“Ik denk dat we binnen een half jaar die anterieure overeenkomst met elkaar hebben georganiseerd en getekend. Dat is op zich heel goed gegaan.”

Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

An earlier milestone was the departure of the third developer and the decision of Developer C1 and Developer C2 to continue as separate projects, which simplified the collaboration structure by clarifying each party's responsibilities. Another important step was the completion of the joint BOPA procedure, which gave planning approval for both plots at the same time.

Face-to-face dialogue

The dialogue in the Nieuw Dronen case was initially limited and indirect, as communication mainly took place through Developer C1. For about one to one-and-a-half years, developer C2 had no direct contact with the municipality.

After the developer combination was restructured and Interviewee C1 was appointed as new municipal project leader, direct contact between the actors became possible again. This also made it easier to coordinate decisions and address issues more directly.

Interviewee C1 described a meeting rhythm of every two weeks with the developers, with a weekly internal project team meeting in between. The choice between physical and online meetings was made depending on the topic being discussed:

“Bij sommige discussiepunten kan je zeggen van nou, dan zou het beter zijn als we het fysiek doen en een paar tekeningen aan tafel hebben. Wat betekent het nou? Iedereen eromheen en dan oplossingen verzinnen. En dat lukt niet via teams.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

Interviewee C1 also described the communication style as direct and consistent. In this view, being open and clear, even if it sometimes led to disagreement, helped to create a more stable basis for cooperation and reduced misunderstandings over time:

“Soms wordt het wel eens even scherp, maar als je dan duidelijk open en eerlijk bent en duidelijk aangeeft wat er is, dan kan je wel eens een conflict hebben, maar dan moet je wel daar gezamenlijk uit te komen.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

7.5 Interviewees' observations on the role of municipal size

Both interviewees were asked whether they considered the size of the municipality to have influenced the collaboration. Their responses provided insights into how municipal size is perceived in this case.

Interviewee C1 identified a pattern often seen in smaller municipalities, where political and operational roles become more closely connected. This can lead to unclear lines of responsibility during the collaborative process, particularly when the available capacity within the municipality is more limited.

“Bij kleinere gemeentes is dat wel een grotere valkuil dat wethouder halve projectleiders zijn.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

According to Interviewee C1, this was also visible in the Nieuw Dronen case, where the developer negotiated directly with the alderman instead of through the project manager. This contributed to unclear roles and responsibilities. One of the first interventions was therefore to restore the formal structure, ensuring that operational decisions were handled at project level rather than at the political level.

Interviewee C1 also linked municipal size to differences in available expertise, noting that smaller municipalities more often rely on generalists instead of specialists:

“In een kleine gemeente heb je meer generalisten en niet specialisten. Dan kan de diepgang wel eens verschillend zijn.”

Interviewee C1 – Municipal Project Manager

However, Interviewee C2 did not directly relate the challenges in the collaboration to municipal size. Instead the emphasis was placed on the role of individuals and organisational culture:

“Nee, dat denk ik niet. Ik denk dat het meer afhangt van de mensen en de organisatie. Net als bij bedrijven hangt de samenwerking vaak samen met de mensen die er werken. Dat is belangrijker dan het bedrijf zelf ”
Interviewee C2 – Developer Project Director

The difference between these perspectives is relevant because it shows that municipal size is not interpreted in a uniform way across interviewees. Interviewee C1 drew on experience across multiple municipalities and identifies patterns related to municipal size, particularly in terms of governance. Interviewee C2 placed more emphasis on individuals and the organisational context based on experience within this project.

7.6 Conclusion

The Nieuw Dronen case shows a collaboration that first had to move past earlier difficulties before progress became possible. The starting conditions were identified to be shaped by two main factors: a power asymmetry within the developer combination, which meant that Developer C2 had no direct contact with the municipality for a long period, and a prehistory of conflict in which cooperation had already become difficult before Interviewee C1 was appointed. The departure of the third developer and the restructuring of the project into two separate plots simplified the collaboration structure, but also meant that the new collaboration started from a situation shaped by earlier problems rather than positive conditions.

The appointment of an experienced external project manager was an important turning point in the process. Interviewee C1 focused on restoring the governance structure between the developers and the municipality, improving direct and transparent communication, and working through the development agreement in a structured way. This helped to create the conditions for progress to resume and the development agreement was completed quickly after the appointment of an external project manager.

Commitment in this case was mainly driven by the lack of realistic alternatives rather than intrinsic motivation. Both the municipality and the developers had reasons to continue. The municipality continued because of political pressure and housing targets, and the developers because of long-term land investments that made an exit costly. Despite the formal split into two projects, the joint BOPA procedure shows that cooperation continued where necessary.

In addition, the case suggests that municipal size influenced the initial conditions of the collaboration. According to Interviewee C1, smaller municipalities tend to have a closer connection between political and operational roles, which was also visible in this case. At the same time, Interviewee C2 emphasised the role of individuals and organisational context rather than size. Together, these perspectives suggest that municipal size primarily shapes the structural conditions of the collaboration while the way these conditions play out in practice depends on the individuals involved.

The case demonstrates that recovery from problematic starting conditions is possible, but depends on active efforts to restore structure and clarity. It also shows that both structural conditions and individual actors play a role in shaping how collaboration develops over time.

8. Cross case comparison

This chapter compares the findings across the three case studies to examine how municipal size and starting conditions shape the collaborative process in senior housing development. The first section examines how municipal size shapes the starting conditions through its effect on both steering capacity and organisational capacity, and whether the proposed bidirectional relationship between starting conditions and steering capacity is supported by the empirical findings. The second section compares how starting conditions shaped the collaborative governance process across the five elements of the Ansell and Gash (2008) framework as explained in Chapter 2.

8.1 From municipal size and steering capacity to starting conditions

This section examines how municipal size shapes the starting conditions for collaboration through two mechanisms: its effect on steering capacity and its effect on organisational capacity.

Municipal size and steering capacity

The desk research findings, reported in Chapter 4 and the steering capacity sections of the case chapters, show that the availability of steering instruments differs between municipalities of different sizes. Larger municipalities generally have more developed directional steering frameworks, reflected in more specific policy documents, such as housing-care visions in addition to general environmental and housing policies. Furthermore, medium-sized and larger municipalities were found to more often apply forms of connective steering, in which they collaborate with market parties to support the development of senior housing. Smaller municipalities tend to rely on a more limited set of instruments.

In addition, as described in Chapter 4, one case shows that a small municipality applied active land policy to influence the inclusion of senior housing in development projects. However, there is no systematic evidence across the dataset to assess whether this type of instrument is more common in smaller municipalities or whether it is related to municipal size more broadly. As a result, this finding is considered an isolated observation rather than a general pattern.

Across all three cases, directional steering instruments form the main way in which municipalities seek to influence senior housing development. This is primarily expressed through policy frameworks and planning documents. In contrast, no forms of connective steering were identified in any of the three case municipalities. This differs from the broader sample of nine municipalities discussed in Chapter 4, where connective steering was observed in a few cases. Furthermore, only one example of stimulatory steering was found in the case studies. However, this was not specifically targeted at senior housing, but formed part of a broader municipal subsidy arrangement.

Municipal size and organisational capacity

Across the cases, interviewees consistently associated municipal size with differences in internal organisation, particularly in terms of specialisation, coordination, and accessibility. Larger municipalities are generally described as having more specialised expertise and greater policy capacity, but also more internal layers and coordination requirements.

This increases the need for alignment across departments, which can slow down decision-making and make access to decision-makers more indirect. In contrast, smaller municipalities are associated with more direct communication and shorter decision-making lines, as responsibilities are often concentrated in fewer individuals. This can increase accessibility and speed, but may also come at the cost of reduced specialisation and less clearly defined roles. In the smallest municipality, this was reflected in the closer interaction between political and operational roles, which in some cases led to ambiguity in responsibilities.

At the same time, interviewees do not interpret the role of municipal size in a uniform way. While some identify recurring patterns related to organisational structure, others attribute differences in collaboration more to the individuals involved than to municipal size alone.

How these mechanisms shape starting conditions

As proposed in Chapter 2, the different forms of steering are each expected to shape specific dimensions of starting conditions. The specific relationships between individual steering forms and particular starting condition dimensions are not consistently confirmed by the empirical findings, with one exception discussed below. How the two mechanisms steering capacity and organisational capacity are reflected across the three dimensions of starting conditions is examined below.

Regarding power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries, both mechanisms are visible. In terms of steering capacity, the use of a subsidy in Case A created a situation in which the municipality could impose stricter deadlines and more strongly steer the pace of the process, shifting the balance of decision-making power between actors. This suggests that stimulatory instruments can affect how power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries are structured within collaborative processes, although this effect is only observable in this specific case. In terms of organisational capacity, differences in municipal size are associated with differences in how knowledge and resources are distributed between the collaborative actors. In Case A, the large municipality had a relatively high level of specialised staff and internal expertise. This meant that knowledge was spread across many specialist departments, creating a situation in which other actors had to navigate a complex and layered structure to reach decisions. In Case B, the developer held more knowledge about available subsidy instruments than the municipality, creating a knowledge asymmetry in which the developer effectively guided the municipality on how subsidies could be accessed. In Case C, the small municipality showed signs of more limited organisational capacity, reflected in the appointment of an external project manager to support the process. This pattern is in line with the proposition in Chapter 2 that larger municipalities often have more specialised staff, while smaller municipalities tend to face greater resource constraints.

Regarding the incentives for participation, the cases show that these are primarily shaped by the design of the collaboration rather than by municipal size directly. In Cases A and B, participation was organised through a tender process, which meant that the developers actively chose to enter the collaboration within a competitive selection framework. In Case C, participation was structurally determined through the developer's land position, creating an incentive structure based on prior investment and limited exit options rather than project attractiveness. As a result, participation was less driven by choice and more by structural dependency.

Municipal size operates more as a background condition that shapes the institutional context in which collaboration design choices are made, rather than as a direct explanatory factor for participation incentives.

Regarding the prehistory of cooperation or conflict, differences across the three cases cannot be directly attributed to municipal size. In Case A, a long-standing working relationship between the municipality and the housing association provided a relatively stable foundation for cooperation. In contrast, in Case C, the collaboration emerged from a more conflictual starting point, shaped by earlier tensions between the municipality and the developers. In Case B, there was no prior relational history between the municipality and the actors involved, meaning that collaboration started without an established relational context. These differences seem to be mainly related to project-specific factors rather than structural characteristics of municipalities. The cases do not provide sufficient evidence to relate prehistory to municipal size or capacity, although connective instruments could in theory shape relational history, they did not play a role in any of the three cases.

The bidirectional relationship

There is no evidence that starting conditions influence municipal steering capacity, as was proposed in the conceptual model in Chapter 2. In Case B, the developer knew more about available subsidy schemes than the municipality. Instead of constraining the existing municipal steering capacity, this knowledge asymmetry meant that the developer took on a stimulatory role that the municipality could not fulfil itself. This is better understood as the developer replacing part of the municipality's steering capacity rather than as a confirmation of the proposed bidirectional relationship. The findings therefore suggest that steering capacity shapes starting conditions, but not the other way around.

Overall, the findings suggest that municipal size shapes starting conditions through two mechanisms. Through its effect on steering capacity, differences in instrument availability are associated with differences in starting conditions, although the specific relationships between individual steering forms and starting condition dimensions proposed in Chapter 2 are not consistently confirmed. Through its effect on organisational capacity, differences in specialisation and decision-making structure between municipalities are reflected in how knowledge and resources are distributed between collaborative actors, particularly in the dimension of power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries. The influence of municipal size on incentives and prehistory is more limited, as these dimensions appear to be shaped primarily by project-specific factors and the design of the collaboration. Finally, the proposed bidirectional relationship between starting conditions and steering capacity is not confirmed. Steering capacity appears to shape starting conditions, but no evidence was found that starting conditions influence steering capacity in return.

8.2 Starting conditions and the collaborative process

This section compares how the starting conditions in each case shaped the collaborative governance process across the five elements of the Ansell and Gash (2008) framework: trust-building, commitment to process, shared understanding, intermediate outcomes, and face-to-face dialogue.

Trust-building

Trust-building across the three cases was shaped most directly by the prehistory of cooperation or conflict as a starting condition.

Where a positive prehistory existed, as in Case A, less effort was needed to build trust. The existing trust helped the collaboration continue even when problems arose, because it acted as a buffer against conflict. Where no prior relationships existed, as in Case B, trust had to be built entirely through the process itself. This meant that the first interactions were very important and required more effort to create trust. Where the prehistory was conflictual, as in Case C, trust-building required active repair before any other collaborative work could begin. As a result, trust-building started from a position of mutual uncertainty and required rebuilding through interaction during the process.

This pattern suggests that prehistory does more than set the initial tone for collaboration, but also structures the early phase of the process by determining how much effort actors need to invest in building trust before meaningful progress can be made. In collaborations that start with a positive prehistory, this trust capacity is already present. In cases where no prior relationship existed or where the history was conflictual, this capacity first needs to be developed or repaired, which influences both the pace and nature of the collaborative process.

Commitment to process

Commitment to the process was primarily shaped by the incentives for participation, while power and resource asymmetries played a secondary role. The role of prior relationships relations was more indirect, mainly affecting the broader relational context rather than the commitment itself.

Where participation was driven by intrinsic motivation, as in Case B, commitment went beyond formal obligations and led to engagement that exceeded what was contractually required. Where commitment was supported by shared goals, financial investment and time pressure, as in Case A, actors stayed involved even when their short-term interests temporarily diverged. Where participation was mainly based on structural dependence, as in Case C, commitment was maintained, but without the same depth. Actors remained involved mainly because leaving the process would have been costly, rather than from a strong intrinsic motivation to engage in collaboration.

Power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries played a secondary role by shaping how easily actors could withdraw from the process. These asymmetries were especially clear in Case C, where land ownership created a form of lock-in that kept actors involved even without strong motivation to collaborate.

Overall, this suggests that the incentive structure at the start of a collaboration shapes not only whether actors commit, but also the quality of that commitment over time. Intrinsically motivated commitment proved more generative, leading to outcomes beyond formal requirements. Structurally dependent commitment proved to be more fragile, sustaining involvement without necessarily producing the same level of collaborative engagement.

Shared understanding

The gaps in shared understanding varied across the cases and can be mainly linked to the type of knowledge asymmetries present as a starting condition.

In Case A, the gaps were about how existing information was interpreted. Actors understood the overall project goal but had different views on how the requirements were formulated. This led to different expectations at the operational level. Where asymmetries concerned the alignment between the municipality's own policy ambitions and its existing regulatory framework, as in Case B, gaps emerged during implementation. The municipality aimed to prioritise senior housing, but its allocation rules did not allow age-based allocation. As a result, the intended outcome could not be achieved in the way that had been assumed. In Case C, the gaps involved different understandings of what had been agreed. Actors interpreted core requirements and expectations differently, which made it harder to stay aligned throughout the process.

These cases show that starting conditions related to knowledge asymmetries are linked to various shared understanding problems. When the asymmetries related to the interpretation of existing information, the gaps tend to stay at the operational level. Where policy ambitions cannot be directly translated into existing rules, gaps tended to occur during implementation. When they involve differing views on core agreements, shared understanding seemed to become more fragile and difficult to maintain.

Intermediate outcomes

Intermediate outcomes in the three cases primarily took the form of key transition points in the collaborative process, such as the resolution of conflicts, the completion of legal steps, and the formalisation of agreements between actors. These moments marked shifts from uncertainty or negotiation towards more stable phases of collaboration.

The analysis shows that different starting conditions relate to intermediate outcomes in different ways. The most direct link is found with the prehistory of cooperation or conflict. Where a conflictual prehistory was present, intermediate outcomes were centred on resolving earlier tensions and restructuring the collaboration before progress could continue. For example in Case C, the breakdown of the initial collaboration and the departure of a development party led to a reorganisation of the project structure and the appointment of a new project manager. In situations where no prior relationships existed, intermediate outcomes were more focused on the creation of alignment through formal agreements, instead of resolving earlier tensions.

Power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries do not show a consistent relationship with the form or timing of intermediate outcomes across the three cases. Incentives for participation also do not show a consistent direct relationship with intermediate outcomes across the three cases. However, Case B shows how strong intrinsic motivation can influence process dynamics. The developer took the initiative to explore subsidy opportunities, which contributed to concrete progress in the project.

These developments are considered intermediate outcomes. This suggests that incentives for participation may shape the way actors behave within the process, which can result in more extensive intermediate outcomes, although this cannot be clearly observed in all cases.

The results indicate that prehistory of cooperation or conflict is most closely associated with intermediate outcomes. Incentives for participation show a limited and case-specific influence, while power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries do not show a clear relationship with intermediate outcomes across the cases.

Face-to-face dialogue

Face-to-face dialogue varied across the three cases in terms of its structure and continuity. These differences observed appear to be shaped more by organisational characteristics of the municipality and the governance arrangements between actors than by the starting conditions themselves.

The most structured dialogue took place where the most specialised disciplines were involved. In Case A, the large number of municipal departments led to detailed and technical discussions, but it also required clear coordination to handle the complexity. In contrast, when fewer actors were involved and the organisational differences were less significant, as in Case B, the dialogue featured direct and informal contact with low barriers to communication. The most fragmented dialogue happened when the governance structure led to indirect communication, as seen in Case C. Initially, communication went through a single actor within the development group, but it became more direct after reorganising the governance structure.

Overall, the starting conditions did not show a direct and consistent link with how dialogue was organised across the cases. Instead of being shaped by asymmetries in power, resources, and knowledge, the way face-to-face dialogue was structured seemed to depend more on how the collaboration was set up and how many actors were involved. Prehistory did play a role, but in a more indirect way. Where actors already knew each other, they could build on that familiarity. Where no prior relationships existed, dialogue had to develop gradually through ongoing interaction during the process. This suggests that starting conditions mainly formed a background to the face-to-face dialogue rather than directly shaping it.

Together, the findings from section 8.1 and 8.2 show how municipal size, starting conditions, and the collaborative process are connected. Municipal size influences the starting conditions in two main ways. It tends to affect the steering capacity, and it shapes the organisational capacity and specialisation. These effects are most visible in differences in power, resources, and knowledge. Their influence on incentives and prehistory of cooperation or conflict is more limited. The expected bidirectional relationship between starting conditions and steering capacity were not confirmed.

Starting conditions then shape how the collaborative process unfolds. This can be seen across all five process elements. Prehistory plays a key role by influencing how trust develops and what kind of intermediate outcomes emerge. Incentives affect how strong and meaningful commitment is. Knowledge asymmetries determine where problems in shared understanding arise. The influence of starting conditions on face-to-face dialogue was more limited, with dialogue structure depending more on organisational characteristics and governance arrangements than on starting conditions themselves.

9. Conclusion

This chapter brings together the findings from the desk research, the three case studies and the cross-case comparison to formulate conclusions about how municipal size and starting conditions shape the collaborative process in senior housing development in the Netherlands. Section 9.1 answers the three sub-questions and section 9.2 answers the main research question.

9.1 Answers to sub-questions

SQ1: Municipal steering

What forms of municipal steering in senior housing development are identified?

Municipal steering capacity refers to the ability of municipalities to guide the actions of other actors in a particular direction. The desk research identifies four main forms of municipal steering, following the multiple steering model of Verheul and Heurkens (2025): directional steering, through which municipalities communicate policy goals and ambitions; regulatory steering, through which they use legal instruments and binding requirements; connective steering, through which they facilitate coordination and collaboration between actors; and stimulatory steering, through which they encourage desired behaviour through financial instruments.

In practice, the application of these forms to senior housing development is selective. Directional steering is the most prominent form, mainly expressed through policy ambitions, project requirements, and conditions in development agreements or tenders. However, these ambitions are only to a limited extent translated into binding, senior housing-specific requirements. Stimulatory steering is present but primarily in a general form, through housing production subsidies rather than instruments specifically targeted at senior housing development. Regulatory steering is largely limited, with one clear exception in Bodegraven-Reeuwijk, where a 40% ground-floor accessibility requirement functions as a binding senior housing-related condition. Connective steering is mainly visible in informal coordination between actors rather than as a structured steering strategy specifically aimed at senior housing development.

Overall, the findings show that steering on senior housing development in the three cases was mainly directional in practice. Regulatory, connective, and stimulatory steering exist within municipal steering more broadly, but their application specifically to senior housing development remains limited compared to directional steering.

SQ2: Municipal size and starting conditions

In what ways does municipal size shape the starting conditions for collaboration in senior housing development?

Starting conditions, as defined by Ansell and Gash (2008), refer to the conditions present at the start of a collaboration that shape how the collaborative process develops. These conditions can either enable cooperation or create barriers, depending on the prior experiences, resources, and incentives that actors bring to the collaboration. In this study, starting conditions include three dimensions: power, resource and knowledge asymmetries between actors; incentives for participation; and the prehistory of cooperation or conflict between the actors involved.

Municipal size influences both the steering capacity and the starting conditions of collaboration. In terms of steering capacity, the policy analysis shows that larger and medium-sized municipalities generally have access to more developed steering capacity, reflected in more specific policy documents and more often apply forms of connective steering by collaborating with market parties. Smaller municipalities tend to rely on a more limited set of instruments.

Municipal size matters mainly through its effect on organisational capacity and specialisation, which shapes how knowledge and resources are distributed between the collaborative actors at the start of the collaboration. This influences the power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries dimension of starting conditions. In larger municipalities, higher levels of specialisation are often accompanied by more layered organisational structures and more formalised decision-making processes, which can make access to decision-making less direct. This means that knowledge is distributed across more specialist departments, which can influence the initial balance between stakeholders. In smaller municipalities, more limited specialisation and more concentrated roles can lead to more direct communication, but also to a more concentrated allocation of knowledge and responsibilities at the start of the collaboration.

In contrast, municipal size plays a more limited role in shaping incentives and the prehistory of collaboration. Incentives are primarily influenced by the design of the collaboration and the project context, while prehistory is mainly determined by earlier interactions between actors rather than municipal size itself.

Taken together, the findings suggest that municipal size is mainly related to differences in power, resource and knowledge asymmetries and in the steering capacity, while its relationship with incentives and the prehistory of cooperation is limited.

SQ3: Starting conditions and collaborative governance

In what ways do starting conditions shape the early outcomes of collaborative governance in senior housing development?

Starting conditions shape early collaborative governance outcomes by structuring the type and amount of interaction required for collaboration to become functional. They do not determine whether collaboration occurs, but influenced how much work was needed before meaningful progress became possible.

The prehistory of cooperation or conflict shows a clear relationship with trust-building processes and intermediate outcomes. Where a positive prehistory existed, trust was already available and collaboration could build on existing foundations. Where no prior relationships existed, trust had to be constructed through repeated interaction. Where the prehistory was conflictual, active repair of trust was needed before progress became possible.

Incentives for participation mainly influence the character of commitment, determining whether engagement is driven by intrinsic motivation, structural dependence, or external constraints. Power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries shaped multiple collaborative elements. Power and resource asymmetries influences commitment by determining how easily actors could withdraw from the process, and shaped face-to-face dialogue by affecting whether direct communication between actors was possible. Knowledge asymmetries influenced shared understanding, because where knowledge asymmetries were greater, shared understanding must be actively built during the process.

Overall, early collaborative governance outcomes are best understood as the result of how actors respond to these starting conditions through interaction. Starting conditions do not fix outcomes in advance, but structure the early collaborative work required to make coordination possible.

9.2 General conclusion

“To what extent do municipal size and starting conditions shape the collaborative process between municipalities, housing associations, and private developers in the development of senior housing in the Netherlands?”

Municipal size influences both steering capacity and starting conditions. In terms of steering capacity, larger municipalities generally have access to more developed steering frameworks, reflected in more specific policy documents, and more often apply forms of connective steering. Smaller municipalities tend to rely on a more limited set of instruments. This difference in steering capacity partly determines the conditions at the start of the collaboration. In terms of starting conditions, larger municipalities tend to have more specialised staff and more layered decision-making structures, which affects how knowledge is distributed and how accessible decision-making is at the start of the collaboration. However, the findings show that the influence of municipal size on the collaborative process is indirect rather than direct. Municipal size shapes the context and starting conditions of the collaboration and thereby influences how the collaborative process unfolds, but this also depends on the specific circumstances and how actors respond to those conditions.

Starting conditions shape the collaborative process in consistent and traceable ways. They do not determine whether collaboration takes place, but they do influence how much effort is needed in the early phase and what form that effort takes. The prehistory of cooperation or conflict influences how trust develops between actors. Incentives for participation primarily influenced the depth and character of commitment, while knowledge asymmetries most clearly shaped shared understanding.

The relationship between starting conditions and steering capacity was proposed to operate in both directions. However, the empirical findings do not confirm this. Steering capacity appeared to shape starting conditions, but no evidence was found that starting conditions in turn influenced municipal steering capacity.

The extent to which municipal size and starting conditions shape the collaborative process depends on the specific context of a collaboration, including the starting conditions themselves and the way actors respond to them. Municipal size influences the collaborative process mainly indirectly through steering capacity and starting conditions, while starting conditions play the most direct role in shaping how collaboration develops.

10. Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relation to the existing literature, and the broader implications of the conclusions. The first section discusses how the findings relate to the existing literature and what their scientific relevance is. The second section presents the limitations of the study. The final section presents recommendations, first for further research and then for practice.

10.1 Discussion on research findings

This study was conducted to address a gap in existing knowledge about how municipal size influences collaboration in senior housing development. While the urgency of senior housing in the Netherlands is widely recognised and national targets are not being met, limited attention has been given to how differences in municipal size affect the way collaboration takes place. By analysing three cases in municipalities of different sizes, this study aimed to provide insights into these dynamics. The findings of this study are broadly in line with the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008), which highlights starting conditions as important factors shaping how collaboration develops. The study confirms that the three dimensions of starting conditions: power, resource, and knowledge asymmetries, incentives for participation, and the prehistory of cooperation or conflict, all influence how collaboration unfolds in different ways.

The multiple steering model of Verheul and Heurkens (2025) was useful for identifying and comparing the types of steering used across the three municipalities. The finding that directional steering is used most consistently, while regulatory, connective, and stimulatory steering are used more selectively, matches the broader observation in this study's problem statement that municipalities rarely directly enforce senior housing development.

The findings also show that municipal size is associated with differences in organisational capacity and specialisation, which is consistent with the assumption stated in the introduction of this study that larger municipalities typically have more specialised staff and more developed processes, while smaller municipalities are more likely to face resource constraints.

One finding that does not match the conceptual model is the proposed bidirectional relationship between starting conditions and steering capacity. As elaborated in Chapter 2, it was expected that existing asymmetries in power, resources, and knowledge could also constrain the steering capacity of municipalities. The empirical findings do not confirm this. In Case B, the developer held more knowledge about available subsidy schemes than the municipality. However, rather than constraining existing municipal steering capacity, this resulted in the developer taking on a stimulatory role that the municipality could not fulfil itself. This is better understood as substitution of municipal steering capacity than as confirmation of the proposed bidirectional relationship. Steering capacity therefore appears to shape starting conditions, but there is no evidence that starting conditions influence steering capacity in return.

In terms of scientific relevance, this study contributes to existing literature in two ways. First, it provides empirical evidence on the role of starting conditions in collaborative governance in a housing development context, which has received limited attention so far.

Second, it provides empirical insight into how municipal size shapes the conditions under which collaboration in senior housing development takes place, contributing to a better understanding of the relationship between municipal characteristics and collaborative governance.

Based on the empirical findings, the conceptual model can be refined, as illustrated in Figure 8. The proposed two-way relationship between starting conditions and steering capacity is not confirmed by the empirical data. The model is better understood as a sequential process in which municipal size influences both steering capacity and starting conditions. Steering capacity in turn shapes the starting conditions, which then influence the collaborative process.

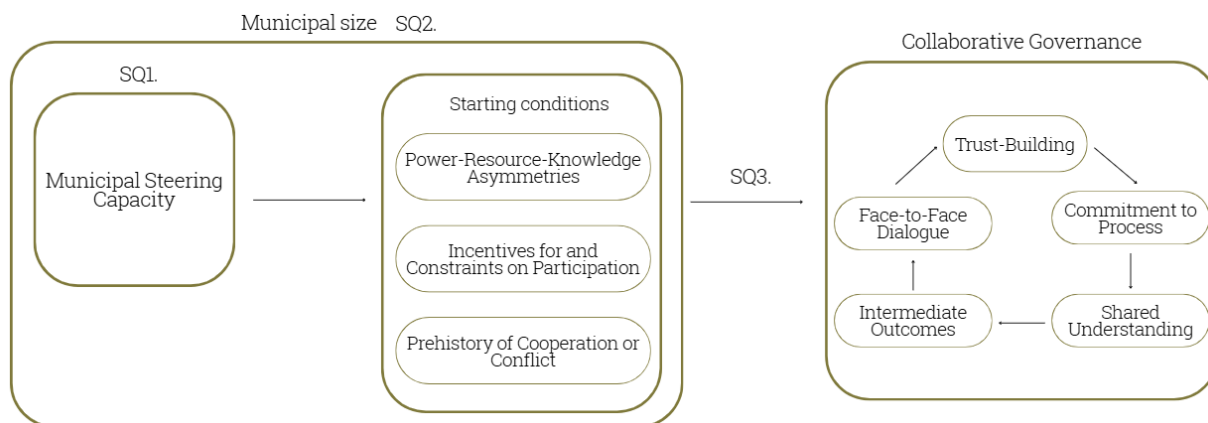


Figure 8: Revised conceptual model based on findings (own work)

10.2 Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. These limitations relate to the scope of the research, the comparability of cases, and the nature of the data collected.

This research is based on three case studies in the South Holland region, which limits the generalisability of the findings. However, several of the interviewees had experience working across multiple municipalities and often referred to this broader experience in their answers. This suggests that some of the patterns found in this study may also apply beyond the selected cases. At the same time, further research in other regions and municipal contexts is needed to confirm this. The cases were selected through a systematic process based on predefined criteria, including municipal size, contextual data, a policy analysis and a governance analysis. This careful selection aimed to ensure meaningful comparison across different municipal contexts. In addition, Cases A and B include perspectives from all key actors involved, municipalities, developers, and housing associations, which provides a relatively complete view of the collaborative process. In Case C, however, only two interviewees were included. As a result, the perspectives of a housing association and one of the developers are missing, leading to a less complete picture of this case.

Although these cases were selected to represent different municipal sizes, direct comparison between them is limited in two related ways. First, the CBS classification of municipal size does not fully capture how size is experienced in practice, as one interviewee illustrated by describing the medium-sized municipality as small in organisational terms.

Second, the cases differ in their development context, with Cases A and B following a tender-based approach and Case C started as a private land initiative. As a result, differences between cases may reflect not only differences in municipal size, but also to differences in context and how size is understood in practice.

In addition, the cases were not focused only on senior housing. In each case, senior housing was part of a broader residential development, meaning that the findings also reflect dynamics from the wider project context rather than senior housing alone. Furthermore, the analysis of steering capacity was based on publicly available policy documents. This provides a clear and systematic basis for comparison, but may not fully reflect how steering capacity is applied in practice at the project level.

Finally, this study applied the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008). This framework has demonstrated its value across various research fields. The fact that this framework appears to fit the dynamics observed in senior housing development in the Netherlands strengthens the analytical foundation of the study, even though the empirical scope is limited.

10.3 Recommendations

Based on the research findings and conclusions, this section presents recommendations for both further research and practice. First, recommendations for further research are discussed, followed by recommendations for practice aimed at municipalities and market parties.

10.3.1 Recommendations for further research

Effect of land ownership and development context

Further research could examine more systematically how municipal land ownership influences steering capacity and collaboration outcomes in senior housing development. In particular, it would be relevant to compare projects based on different development models, such as where market parties hold land ownership versus tender-based approaches, to better understand how these structural differences shape starting conditions, and the ability of municipalities to steer development in practice.

The gap between senior housing ambitions and operational requirements

The findings of this study show that municipalities consistently express ambitions for senior housing in their policy documents without translating these into binding project-specific requirements. However, this study does not explain why this gap exists. Future research could specifically examine the reasons behind this pattern. Understanding why municipalities do not convert senior housing ambitions into operational requirements could provide important insights for improving the local implementation of national senior housing targets.

Steering on target groups in housing development

One interviewee observed that target groups in housing development are in practice shaped by price categories rather than by explicit design choices. Price caps determine dwelling sizes, which in turn influences who ends up living there.

This raises a broader question about whether municipalities are actually able to steer on specific target groups such as senior residents, or whether market dynamics and financial feasibility ultimately determine who occupies newly built dwellings. Future research could explore this question further.

Effect of governance context

Future research could explore how national and regional policy frameworks shape municipal steering capacity and the room for local variation in collaborative governance. In particular, it would be relevant to examine how higher-level regulations, funding structures, and housing agreements influence the availability of steering instruments at the municipal level, and how this affects local decision-making.

10.3.2 Recommendations in practice

For municipalities

The findings show that municipal size is associated with governance risks that differ across contexts. Smaller municipalities should be aware of the risk that operational and political roles become intertwined. Larger municipalities should be aware that more specialist disciplines and more layered decision-making structures can reduce accessibility for collaborative partners, and are recommended to agree early on clear communication structures, such as a single point of contact to prevent fragmentation during the process.

The findings show that prehistory of cooperation or conflict between actors is an important starting condition for how collaboration develops. Municipalities are therefore recommended to invest in building relational foundations before a project starts. Investing in these connective instruments in advance may reduce the amount of trust-building work required during the process itself.

For developers and housing associations

The findings show that the context in which collaboration takes place differs across municipalities of different sizes, and that adapting to this context can support a smoother collaborative process.

When collaborating with larger municipalities, developers and housing associations should take into account that decision-making is often more layered and involves a wider range of specialist disciplines. This can result in longer response times and more fragmented feedback. It is therefore recommended to agree early in the process on clear communication structures, such as a single point of contact for bundling feedback, to prevent delays and miscommunication.

In addition, the findings show that starting conditions such as knowledge asymmetries and unclear expectations can affect the early stages of collaboration. Developers and housing associations may therefore benefit from investing in early alignment in roles, feasibility, and planning expectations to reduce friction in the process.

Finally, in cases where stimulatory instruments such as subsidies are used, developers and housing associations should be aware that these may come with more demanding procedural conditions, such as deadlines, which can influence the pace and structure of development processes.

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Use of AI Tools

OpenAI's ChatGPT was used to shorten, rephrase, and improve language in this thesis.

Appendix I – Interview protocol

Introductie

U wordt uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek genaamd: Shaping Senior Housing: How municipal contexts influence collaborative development processes. Dank u wel voor uw deelname aan dit interview. Mijn naam is Milou Wolf en ik ben momenteel bezig met het schrijven van mijn afstudeerscriptie van de master Management in the Built Environment aan de TU Delft. Daarnaast loop ik mijn afstudeerstage bij WPR.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is te begrijpen hoe gemeenten van verschillende groottes samenwerken met ontwikkelaars en woningcorporaties bij de realisatie van seniorenhuisvesting. Daarbij ligt de nadruk op de startfase van de samenwerking en op de invloed van contextuele factoren, zoals gemeentelijke organisatie en beschikbare capaciteit, op het verdere verloop van het samenwerkingsproces. Uw deelname zal ongeveer 45 tot 60 min in beslag nemen.

U wordt gevraagd om deel te nemen aan een semi-gestructureerd interview, waarin vragen worden gesteld over uw ervaringen en rol in het specifieke woningbouwproject, uw samenwerking met andere actoren en uw percepties over gemeentelijke sturing en samenwerking.

Uw deelname is volledig vrijwillig en u kunt op elk moment stoppen zonder opgave van reden. U bent ook vrij om bepaalde vragen niet te beantwoorden.

Als u vragen of opmerking heeft over dit onderzoek, kunt u contact opnemen met Marietta Haffner

Algemeen

1. Kunt u uw functie en rol binnen dit project beschrijven?
2. Wanneer bent u betrokken geraakt en wie waren in de startfase betrokken?

Voorgeschiedenis van samenwerking

3. Hebben de betrokken partijen voorafgaand aan dit project al samengewerkt aan andere projecten? Zo ja, met wie en wat waren de ervaringen?
4. Leidden deze eerdere ervaringen tot bepaalde verwachtingen voor de huidige samenwerking? Zo ja, voor uzelf, uw organisatie, of beide?

Projectverloop

5. Kunt u het verloop van het project in de startfase schetsen vanuit uw perspectief?
 - a. Doorvragen: wat waren belangrijke stappen of mijlpalen?
 - b. Doorvragen: waarom verliepen deze stappen op deze manier? En waren ze belangrijk voor de verdere verloop van het project?
6. Hoe verliep de samenwerking tussen betrokken partijen tijdens het project?

- a. Doorvragen: Hoe werd het contact onderhouden tussen de verschillende partijen?
 - b. Doorvragen: waren er momenten dat vertrouwen werd opgebouwd of op de proef gesteld?
 - c. Doorvragen: waren er in de startfase ook factoren die samenwerking bemoeilijkten?
 - d. Doorvragen: wat hield partijen gemotiveerd om actief deel te nemen?
 - e. Doorvragen: In hoeverre was er in de startfase een gedeeld beeld van doelen en verwachtingen?
7. Kunt u beschrijven welke rol de gemeente heeft gespeeld in dit project?
- a. Doorvragen: Waren er ook financiële middelen of instrumenten vanuit de gemeente beschikbaar?
 - b. Doorvragen: Was er vanuit de gemeente ook specifieke kennis of expertise over seniorenhuisvesting aanwezig en hoe werd dit gebruikt in het project?
 - c. Hoe verliep de interne besluitvorming binnen de gemeente in de startfase?
 - d. Doorvragen: Denkt u dat de omvang de gemeente hier een rol in speelde?
8. Wat waren volgens u de belangrijkste redenen voor de gemeente en andere betrokken partijen om deel te nemen aan het project?

Reflectie en vergelijking

9. Als u dit project vergelijkt met andere projecten waaraan u heeft gewerkt, wat viel u dan op aan de manier waarop de samenwerking was georganiseerd en waarom denkt u dat het op die manier verliep?
10. Denkt u dat deze manier van samenwerken ook zo had kunnen plaatsvinden in een andere gemeentelijke context? Waarom wel of niet?

Appendix II – Informed consent form

Toestemmingsformulier

U wordt uitgenodigd om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek genaamd: *“Shaping Senior Housing: How municipal contexts influence collaborative development processes”*. Dank u wel voor uw deelname aan dit interview. Mijn naam is Milou Wolf en ik ben momenteel bezig met het schrijven van mijn afstudeerscriptie van de master Management in the Built Environment aan de TU Delft. Daarnaast loop ik mijn afstudeerstage bij WPR.

Het doel van dit onderzoek is te begrijpen hoe gemeenten van verschillende groottes samenwerken met ontwikkelaars en woningcorporaties bij de realisatie van seniorenhuisvesting. Daarbij ligt de nadruk op de startfase van de samenwerking en op de invloed van contextuele factoren, zoals gemeentelijke organisatie en beschikbare capaciteit, op het verdere verloop van het samenwerkingsproces. Uw deelname zal ongeveer 60 min in beslag nemen.

U wordt gevraagd om deel te nemen aan een semi-gestructureerd interview, waarin vragen worden gesteld over uw ervaringen en rol in het specifieke woningbouwproject, uw samenwerking met andere actoren en uw percepties over gemeentelijke sturing en samenwerking. Gegevens worden geanonimiseerd en er zal geen persoonlijk identificeerbare informatie openbaar worden gemaakt. Alle informatie wordt veilig opgeslagen op versleutelde apparaten en is uitsluitend toegankelijk voor de onderzoeker.

Uw deelname is volledig vrijwillig en u kunt op elk moment stoppen zonder opgave van reden. U bent ook vrij om bepaalde vragen niet te beantwoorden. Indien u besluit uw deelname te beëindigen, zullen uw gegevens worden verwijderd, voor zover ze herleidbaar zijn en nog binnen de bewaartermijn vallen.

Als u vragen of opmerking heeft over dit onderzoek, kunt u contact opnemen met Marietta Haffner: M.E.A.Haffner@tudelft.nl of +31 15 27 83523.

Dank voor uw overweging om deel te nemen aan het onderzoek.

PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES	Yes	No
A: GENERAL AGREEMENT – RESEARCH GOALS, PARTICIPANT TASKS AND VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION		
1. Ik heb de informatie over het onderzoek gedateerd [DD/MM/YYYY] gelezen en begrepen, of deze is aan mij voorgelezen. Ik heb de mogelijkheid gehad om vragen te stellen over het onderzoek en mijn vragen zijn naar tevredenheid beantwoord.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ik doe vrijwillig mee aan dit onderzoek, en ik begrijp dat ik kan weigeren vragen te beantwoorden en mij op elk moment kan terugtrekken uit de studie, zonder een reden op te hoeven geven.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname aan het onderzoek de volgende punten betekent: een semigestructureerd interview dat wordt opgenomen, getranscribeerd en geanonimiseerd.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Ik begrijp dat ik geen financiële vergoeding ontvang voor deelname aan dit onderzoek.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Ik begrijp dat het onderzoek zal eindigen in juli 2026 en dat hierna dit formulier wordt verwijderd		
B: POTENTIAL RISKS OF PARTICIPATING (INCLUDING DATA PROTECTION)		
6. Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname de volgende risico's met zich meebrengt: mogelijk ongemak bij het bespreken van samenwerkingsproblemen of beleidsmatige uitdagingen. Ik begrijp dat deze risico's worden geminimaliseerd door vrijwillige deelname, het recht om vragen niet te beantwoorden of het interview te beëindigen en door anonimiteit en vertrouwelijkheid te waarborgen.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Ik begrijp dat mijn deelname betekent dat er persoonlijke identificeerbare informatie en onderzoeksdata worden verzameld, met het risico dat ik hieruit geïdentificeerd kan worden. Hoewel uw naam en organisatie tijdelijk worden vastgelegd voor het plannen van interviews, worden alle gegevens geanonimiseerd in transcripts en rapporten en worden de data veilig opgeslagen volgens de TU Delft-richtlijnen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Ik begrijp dat de volgende stappen worden ondernomen om het risico van een databreuk te minimaliseren, en dat mijn identiteit op de volgende manieren wordt beschermd in het geval van een databreuk: identificerende informatie wordt gescheiden van onderzoeksdata, transcripts worden geanonimiseerd en alleen de onderzoeker heeft toegang tot de originele bestanden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Ik begrijp dat de persoonlijke informatie die over mij verzameld wordt en mij kan identificeren, zoals naam en telefoonnummer, niet gedeeld worden buiten het studieteam.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Ik begrijp dat de persoonlijke data die over mij verzameld wordt, vernietigd wordt binnen een jaar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix III – Data management plan

Plan Overview

A Data Management Plan created using DMPonline

Title: Between Policy and Practice: The role of municipal size in collaborative governance for senior housing development in the Netherlands

Creator: Milou Wolf

Affiliation: Delft University of Technology

Template: TU Delft Data Management Plan template (2025)

Project abstract:

This thesis investigates how collaborative governance in senior housing development is influenced by municipal size, with a focus on starting conditions for collaboration. The study is conducted in the Netherlands and applies a qualitative research approach. Data are collected through a literature and policy analysis and semi-structured interviews with municipal actors, developers, and housing associations involved in senior housing projects. The interview data are transcribed and analysed using qualitative coding in ATLAS.ti, drawing on the collaborative governance framework of Ansell and Gash (2008). The results aim to provide insight into how differences in municipal capacity shape collaborative processes and inform recommendations for both municipalities and market actors.

ID: 194819

Start date: 13-01-2026

End date: 30-06-2026

Last modified: 08-02-2026

Between Policy and Practice: The role of municipal size in collaborative governance for senior housing development in the Netherlands

0. Administrative questions

- 1. Provide the name of the data management support staff consulted during the preparation of this plan and the date of consultation. Please also mention if you consulted any other support staff.**

The data steward from the faculty of Architecture, Janine Strandberg, has reviewed this DMP on [Date]

- 2. Is TU Delft the lead institution for this project?**

- Yes, leading the collaboration – please provide details of the type of collaboration and the involved parties below

The MSc graduation project is conducted as part of an internship at Waaijer Projectrealisatie. The research data are stored at TU Delft with access control.

I. Data/code description and collection or re-use

3. Provide a general description of the types of data/code you will be working with, including any re-used data/code.

Type of data/code	File format(s)	How will data/code be collected/generated? For re-used data/code: what are the sources and terms of use?	Purpose of processing	Storage location	Who will have access to the data/code?
Personally Identifiable Information (PII): participants' name, email, work address, company name, mobile number	.pdf, .xlsx	Contact information for participants taking part in interviews, received [from participant sign-ups, professional network, etc.] Informed consent forms are signed digitally and contain participants' name + email	For administrative purposes: obtaining informed consent and communicating with participants	TU Delft OneDrive	Master's student [Milou Wolf] + supervisor (s) [Marietta Haffner][Harry Boumeester]
Audiorecordings of interviews with participant	.mp3	Audio-recordings are made on an external device, before being moved to OneDrive Recordings are deleted after transcription	Capturing the opinions on collaboration from participants (for answering SQ2 & SQ3)	Temporary storage on my iphone + TU Delft OneDrive (primary storage)	Master's student [Milou Wolf] + supervisor (s) [Marietta Haffner][Harry Boumeester]

Anonymous transcriptions of interviews	.docx	Anonymous transcriptions created manually based on audiorecordings. Participants are asked to review the transcriptions of their interview before the transcript is finalised	Privacypreserving data on collaboration from participants	TU Delft OneDrive	Master's student [Milou Wolf] + supervisor (s) [Marietta Haffner] [Harry Boumeester]

II. Storage and backup during the research process

4. How much data/code storage will you require during the project lifetime?

- < 250 GB

5. Where will the data/code be stored and backed-up during the project lifetime? (Select all that apply.)

- Another storage system – please explain below, including provided security measures
- SURFdrive
-

TU Delft OneDrive

External recording device: Used as a temporary storage location for recorded on-site interviews. Interviews will be deleted from device as soon as they are moved to OneDrive.

III. Data/code documentation

6. What documentation will accompany data/code? (Select all that apply.)

- Data – Methodology of data collection

The dataset will not be shared in a data repository, but the methodology of data collection will be explained in the MSc thesis, which is made publicly available in the TU Delft Repository.

IV. Legal and ethical requirements, code of conducts

7. Does your research involve human subjects or third-party datasets collected from human participants?

If you are working with a human subject(s), you will need to obtain the HREC approval for your research project.

- Yes – please provide details in the additional information box below

I intend to apply for ethical approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee

8. Will you work with personal data? (This is information about an identified or identifiable natural person, either for research or project administration purposes.)

- Yes

The research data collected in the project will be anonymised, but processing of personal data is required for conducting the research project.

9. Will you work with any other types of confidential or classified data or code as listed below? (Select all that apply and provide additional details below.)

If you are not sure which option to select, ask your [Faculty Data Steward](#) for advice.

- No, I will not work with any other types of confidential or classified data/code

10. How will ownership of the data and intellectual property rights to the data be managed?

For projects involving commercially-sensitive research or research involving third parties, seek advice of your [Faculty Contract Manager](#) when answering this question.

The intellectual property rights are framed by a graduation agreement between Delft University of Technology, myself and Waaijer Projectrealisatie

11. Which personal data or data from human participants do you work with? (Select all that apply.)

- Proof of consent (such as signed consent materials which contain name and signature)
- Audio recordings
- Job title and/or employer
- Telephone number, email addresses and/or other addresses as contact details for administrative purposes

Names as contact details for administrative purposes

12. Please list the categories of data subjects and their geographical location.

Interview participants are experts in their workfield in the region of South-Holland in the Netherlands.

13. Will you be receiving personal data from or transferring personal data to third parties (groups of individuals or organisations)?

- No

16. What are the legal grounds for personal data processing?

- Informed consent

17. Please describe the informed consent procedure you will follow below.

The researcher will inform the potential participants about the goals and procedures of the research project. The researcher will also inform them about the personal data that are being processed and for what purpose. A digital copy of the information will be emailed to participants before the interview, and all participants will be asked for their consent for taking part in the study and for data processing by signing a digital informed consent form before the start of the interview

18. Where will you store the physical/digital signed consent forms or other types of proof of consent (such as recording of verbal consent)?

Digital informed consent forms and contact information are stored in the TU Delft OneDrive and encrypted separately from research data to minimise risk of re-identification.

19. Does the processing of the personal data result in a high risk to the data subjects?(Select all that apply.)

If the processing of the personal data results in a high risk to the data subjects, it is required to perform a [Data Protection Impact Assessment \(DPIA\)](#). In order to determine if there is a high risk for the data subjects, please check if any of the options below that are applicable to the processing of the personal data in your research project.

If any category applies, please provide additional information in the box below. Likewise, if you collect other type of potentially sensitive data, or if you have any additional comments, include these in the box below.

If one or more options listed below apply, your project might need a DPIA. Please get in touch with the Privacy team (privacy-tud@tudelft.nl) to get advice as to whether DPIA is necessary.

- None of the above apply

23. What will happen with the personal data used in the research after the end of the research project?

- Anonymised or aggregated data will be shared with others

24. For how long will personal research data (including pseudonymised data) be stored?

- Personal data will be deleted at the end of the research project

Audio-recordings of interviews are destroyed after completion of anonymised interview transcriptions. All other personal research data will be destroyed at the latest 1 month after the end of the project

25. How will your study participants be asked for their consent for data sharing?

- In the informed consent form: participants are informed that their personal data will be anonymised and that the anonymised dataset is shared publicly

V. Data sharing and long term preservation

27. Apart from personal data mentioned in question 23, will any other data be publicly shared?

Please provide a list of data/code you are going to share under ‘Additional Information’.

- I do not work with any data other than personal data

29. How will you share research data/code, including those mentioned in question 23?

Select all that apply and provide additional details below.

- I am a Bachelor’s/Master’s student at TU Delft and I will share the data/code in the body and/or appendices of my thesis/report in the TU Delft Repository

30. How much of your data/code will be shared in a research data repository?

- < 100 GB

31. When will the data/code be shared?

- As soon as corresponding results (papers, theses, reports) are published

32. Under what licence(s) will the data/code be released?

- Other – please explain below

The thesis is made publicly available in the TU Delft Repository under copyright. The data are not shared in a data repository with a data licence.

VI. Data management responsibilities and resources

33. If you leave TU Delft (or are unavailable), who is going to be responsible for the data/code resulting from this project?

Thesis supervisor, Dr. M.E.A. (Marietta) Haffner of Management in the Built Environment:

M.E.A.Haffner@tudelft.nl

34. What resources (for example financial and time) will be dedicated to data management and ensuring that data will be FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable)?

Research data are only shared within the MSc thesis: no additional resources are required.

35. Which faculty do you belong to?

- Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment (ABE)

Appendix IV – HREC Checklist

Delft University of Technology

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS

CHECKLIST FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

(Version January 2022)

IMPORTANT NOTES ON PREPARING THIS CHECKLIST

1. An HREC application should be submitted for every research study that involves human participants (as Research Subjects) carried out by TU Delft researchers
2. Your HREC application should be submitted and approved **before** potential participants are approached to take part in your study
3. All submissions from Master's Students for their research thesis need approval from the relevant Responsible Researcher
4. The Responsible Researcher must indicate their approval of the completeness and quality of the submission by signing and dating this form OR by providing approval to the corresponding researcher via email (included as a PDF with the full HREC submission)
5. There are various aspects of human research compliance which fall outside of the remit of the HREC, but which must be in place to obtain HREC approval. These often require input from internal or external experts such as [Faculty Data Stewards](#), [Faculty HSE advisors](#), the [TU Delft Privacy Team](#) or external [Medical research partners](#).
6. You can find detailed guidance on completing your HREC application [here](#)
7. Please note that incomplete submissions (whether in terms of documentation or the information provided therein) will be returned for completion **prior to any assessment**
8. If you have any feedback on any aspect of the HREC approval tools and/or process you can leave your comments [here](#)

PROJECT TITLE:	Between Policy and Practice: The role of municipal size in collaborative governance for senior housing development in the Netherlands
Research period: <i>Over what period of time will this specific part of the research take place</i>	February 2026 – July 2026
Faculty:	Architecture, Urbanism and Building Sciences
Department:	Management in the Built Environment
Type of the research project: <i>(Bachelor's, Master's, DreamTeam, PhD, PostDoc, Senior Researcher, Organisational etc.)</i>	Master's thesis
Funder of research: <i>(EU, NWO, TUD, other – in which case please elaborate)</i>	TUD
Name of Corresponding Researcher: <i>(If different from the Responsible Researcher)</i>	Milou Wolf
E-mail Corresponding Researcher: <i>(If different from the Responsible Researcher)</i>	m.wolf-2@student.tudelft.nl
Position of Corresponding Researcher: <i>(Masters, DreamTeam, PhD, PostDoc, Assistant/ Associate/ Full Professor)</i>	Masters
Name of Responsible Researcher: <i>Note: all student work must have a named Responsible Researcher to approve, sign and submit this application</i>	Marietta Haffner
E-mail of Responsible Researcher: <i>Please ensure that an institutional email address (no Gmail, Yahoo, etc.) is used for all project documentation/ communications including Informed Consent materials</i>	M.E.A.Haffner@tudelft.nl
Position of Responsible Researcher : <i>(PhD, PostDoc, Associate/ Assistant/ Full Professor)</i>	Professor

Research Overview

NOTE: You can find more guidance on completing this checklist [here](#)

a) Please summarise your research very briefly (100-200 words)

What are you looking into, who is involved, how many participants there will be, how they will be recruited and what are they expected to do?

contributing to both academic insights and practical recommendations for improving collaboration in senior housing development.

b) If your application is an additional project related to an existing approved HREC submission, please provide a brief explanation including the existing relevant HREC submission number/s.

Add your text here – (please avoid jargon and abbreviations)

c) If your application is a simple extension of, or amendment to, an existing approved HREC submission, you can simply submit an [HREC Amendment Form](#) as a submission through LabServant.

Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan

NOTE: You can find more guidance on completing this checklist [here](#)

Please complete the following table in full for all points to which your answer is “yes”. Bear in mind that the vast majority of projects involving human participants as Research Subjects also involve the collection of **Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** and/or **Personally Identifiable Research Data (PIRD)** which may pose potential risks to participants as detailed in Section G: Data Processing and Privacy below.

To ensure alignment between your risk assessment, data management and what you agree with your Research Subjects you can use the last two columns in the table below to refer to specific points in your Data Management Plan (DMP) and Informed Consent Form (ICF) – **but this is not compulsory**.

It’s worth noting that **you’re much more likely to need to resubmit your application if you neglect to identify potential risks**, than if you identify a potential risk and demonstrate how you will mitigate it. If necessary, the HREC will always work with you and colleagues in the Privacy Team and Data Management Services to see how, if at all possible, your research can be conducted.

			<i>If YES please complete the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan columns below.</i>	<i>Please provide the relevant reference #</i>		
ISSUE	Yes	No	RISK ASSESSMENT – what risks could arise? <i>Please ensure that you list ALL of the actual risks that could potentially arise – do not simply state whether you consider any such risks are important!</i>	MITIGATION PLAN – what mitigating steps will you take? <i>Please ensure that you summarise what actual mitigation measures you will take for each potential risk identified – do not simply state that you will e.g. comply with regulations.</i>	DMP	ICF

A: Partners and collaboration						
<p>1. Will the research be carried out in collaboration with additional organisational partners such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or more collaborating research and/or commercial organisations • Either a research, or a work experience internship provider¹ <p>¹ If yes, please include the graduation agreement in this application</p>	x		<p>As the research is conducted in collaboration with Waaijer Projectrealisatie, there is a potential risk of perceived or actual influence on the research design, interpretation of findings, or reporting of results.</p> <p>As the researcher is affiliated with the organisation as a working student, participants may feel a degree of professional obligation to participate or provide favourable responses.</p> <p>The collaborating organisation may expect access to research data.</p>	<p>The research design, data analysis and final conclusions remain under the sole academic responsibility of the student and supervising university staff.</p> <p>Participation will be entirely voluntary. Participants will be clearly informed that non-participation carries no consequences. Informed consent will be obtained prior to participation.</p> <p>All anonymised data will be stored on TU Delft OneDrive, a university-approved and secure data storage system. Waaijer Projectrealisatie will not receive access to identifiable data.</p>	x	

				<i>If YES please complete the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan columns below.</i>		<i>Please provide the relevant reference</i>	
						#	
ISSUE	Yes	No	RISK ASSESSMENT – what risks could arise? <i>Please ensure that you list ALL of the actual risks that could potentially arise – do not simply state whether you consider any such risks are important!</i>	MITIGATION PLAN – what mitigating steps will you take? <i>Please ensure that you summarise what actual mitigation measures you will take for each potential risk identified – do not simply state that you will e.g. comply with regulations.</i>		DMP	ICF

2. Is this research dependent on a Data Transfer or Processing Agreement with a collaborating partner or third party supplier? <i>If yes please provide a copy of the signed DTA/DPA</i>		x			x	
3. Has this research been approved by another (external) research ethics committee (e.g.: HREC and/or MREC/METC)? <i>If yes, please provide a copy of the approval (if possible) and summarise any key points in your Risk Management section below</i>		x			x	
B: Location						
4. Will the research take place in a country or countries, other than the Netherlands, within the EU?		x			x	
5. Will the research take place in a country or countries outside the EU?		x			x	
6. Will the research take place in a place/region or of higher risk – including known dangerous locations (in any country) or locations with non-democratic regimes?		x			x	
C: Participants						
7. Will the study involve participants who may be vulnerable and possibly (legally) unable to give informed consent? (e.g., children below the legal age for giving consent, people with learning difficulties, people living in care or nursing homes,).		x			x	
8. Will the study involve participants who may be vulnerable under specific circumstances and in specific contexts, such as victims and witnesses of violence, including domestic violence; sex workers; members of minority groups, refugees, irregular migrants or dissidents?		x			x	

9. Are the participants, outside the context of the research, in a dependent or subordinate position to the investigator (such as own children, own students or employees of either TU Delft and/or a collaborating partner organisation)? <i>It is essential that you safeguard against possible adverse consequences of this situation (such as allowing a student's failure to participate to your satisfaction to affect your evaluation of their coursework).</i>		x			x	
10. Is there a high possibility of re-identification for your participants? (e.g., do they have a very specialist job of which there are only a small number in a given country, are they members of a small community, or employees from a partner company collaborating in the research? Or are they one of only a handful of (expert) participants in the study?		x			x	

			<i>If YES please complete the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan columns below.</i>		<i>Please provide the relevant reference #</i>	
ISSUE	Yes	No	RISK ASSESSMENT – what risks could arise? <i>Please ensure that you list ALL of the actual risks that could potentially arise – do not simply state whether you consider any such risks are important!</i>	MITIGATION PLAN – what mitigating steps will you take? <i>Please ensure that you summarise what actual mitigation measures you will take for each potential risk identified – do not simply state that you will e.g. comply with regulations.</i>	DMP	ICF
D: Recruiting Participants						
11. Will your participants be recruited through your own, professional, channels such as conference attendance lists, or through specific network/s such as self-help groups		x			x	
12. Will the participants be recruited or accessed in the longer term by a (legal or customary) gatekeeper? (e.g., an adult professional working with children; a community leader or family member who has this customary		x			x	

role – within or outside the EU; the data producer of a long-term cohort study)					
13. Will you be recruiting your participants through a crowd-sourcing service and/or involve a third party data-gathering service, such as a survey platform?		x			x
14. Will you be offering any financial, or other, remuneration to participants, and might this induce or bias participation?		x			x
E: Subject Matter <i>Research related to medical questions/health may require special attention. See also the website of the CCMO before contacting the HREC.</i>					
15. Will your research involve any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical research and/or clinical trials • Invasive sampling and/or medical imaging • Medical and <i>In Vitro Diagnostic Medical Devices</i> Research 		x			
16. Will drugs, placebos, or other substances (e.g., drinks, foods, food or drink constituents, dietary supplements) be administered to the study participants? <i>If yes see here to determine whether medical ethical approval is required</i>		x			
17. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants? <i>If yes see here to determine whether medical ethical approval is required</i>		x			
18. Does the study risk causing psychological stress or anxiety beyond that normally encountered by the participants in their life outside research?		x			
19. Will the study involve discussion of personal sensitive data which could put participants at increased legal, financial, reputational, security or other risk? (e.g., financial data, location data, data relating to children or other vulnerable groups)		x			x

Definitions of sensitive personal data, and special cases are provided on the TUD Privacy Team website.					
20. Will the study involve disclosing commercially or professionally sensitive, or confidential information? (e.g., relating to decision-making processes or business strategies which might, for example, be of interest to competitors)		x			

			<i>If YES please complete the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan columns below.</i>	<i>Please provide the relevant reference #</i>		
ISSUE	Yes	No	RISK ASSESSMENT – what risks could arise? <i>Please ensure that you list ALL of the actual risks that could potentially arise – do not simply state whether you consider any such risks are important!</i>	MITIGATION PLAN – what mitigating steps will you take? <i>Please ensure that you summarise what actual mitigation measures you will take for each potential risk identified – do not simply state that you will e.g. comply with regulations.</i>	DMP	ICF
21. Has your study been identified by the TU Delft Privacy Team as requiring a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA)? <i>If yes please attach the advice/ approval from the Privacy Team to this application</i>		x			x	
22. Does your research investigate causes or areas of conflict? <i>If yes please confirm that your fieldwork has been discussed with the appropriate safety/security advisors and approved by your Department/Faculty.</i>		x			x	
23. Does your research involve observing illegal activities or data processed or provided by authorities responsible for preventing, investigating, detecting or prosecuting criminal offences		x			x	

<i>If so please confirm that your work has been discussed with the appropriate legal advisors and approved by your Department/Faculty.</i>					
F: Research Methods					
24. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (e.g., covert observation of people in nonpublic places).		x			x
25. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? (For example, will participants be deliberately falsely informed, will information be withheld from them or will they be misled in such a way that they are likely to object or show unease when debriefed about the study).		x			x
26. Is pain or more than mild discomfort likely to result from the study? And/or could your research activity cause an accident involving (non-) participants?		x			x
27. Will the experiment involve the use of devices that are not 'CE' certified? <i>Only, if 'yes': continue with the following questions:</i>		x			
• Was the device built in-house?					
• Was it inspected by a safety expert at TU Delft? <i>If yes, please provide a signed device report</i>					
• If it was not built in-house and not CE-certified, was it inspected by some other, qualified authority in safety and approved? <i>If yes, please provide records of the inspection</i>					
28. Will your research involve face-to-face encounters with your participants and if so how will you assess and address Covid considerations?	x		Not relevant anymore		
29. Will your research involve either :		x			x

a) “big data”, combined datasets, new data-gathering or new data-merging techniques which might lead to re-identification of your participants and/or						
			<i>If YES please complete the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan columns below.</i>		<i>Please provide the relevant reference</i> #	
ISSUE	Yes	No	RISK ASSESSMENT – what risks could arise? <i>Please ensure that you list ALL of the actual risks that could potentially arise – do not simply state whether you consider any such risks are important!</i>	MITIGATION PLAN – what mitigating steps will you take? <i>Please ensure that you summarise what actual mitigation measures you will take for each potential risk identified – do not simply state that you will e.g. comply with regulations.</i>	DMP	ICF
b) artificial intelligence or algorithm training where, for example biased datasets could lead to biased outcomes?						
G: Data Processing and Privacy						
30. Will the research involve collecting, processing and/or storing any directly identifiable PII (Personally Identifiable Information) including name or email address that will be used for administrative purposes only? (eg: obtaining Informed Consent or disbursing remuneration)	x		The storage and processing of directly identifiable personal data entails a potential risk of data security incidents that could expose participants’ identities. There is a potential risk that identifiable information could inadvertently be linked to research data.	Identifiable data will be deleted once it is no longer required for administrative purposes. Identifiable data will be stored separately from research data and will not be linked during analysis.	x	
31. Will the research involve collecting, processing and/or storing any directly or indirectly identifiable PIRD (Personally Identifiable Research Data) including videos, pictures, IP address, gender, age etc and what other Personal Research Data (including personal or professional views) will you be collecting?		x			x	

32. Will this research involve collecting data from the internet, social media and/or publicly available datasets which have been originally contributed by human participants		x			x	
33. Will your research findings be published in one or more forms in the public domain, as e.g., Masters thesis, journal publication, conference presentation or wider public dissemination?	x		As the thesis will be published in the TU Delft repository, there is a limited risk that participants could be indirectly identifiable through contextual information.	All data will be anonymised prior to inclusion in the thesis. Findings will be presented in aggregated form, and no identifiable details will be included.	x	
34. Will your research data be archived for re-use and/or teaching in an open, private or semi-open archive?		x			x	

H: More on Informed Consent and Data Management

NOTE: You can find guidance and templates for preparing your Informed Consent materials) [here](#)

Your research involves human participants as Research Subjects if you are recruiting them or actively involving or influencing, manipulating or directing them in any way in your research activities. This means you must seek informed consent and agree/ implement appropriate safeguards regardless of whether you are collecting any PIRD.

Where you are also collecting PIRD, and using Informed Consent as the legal basis for your research, you need to also make sure that your IC materials are clear on any related risks and the mitigating measures you will take – including through responsible data management.

Got a comment on this checklist or the HREC process? You can leave your comments [here](#)

Signature/s

Please note that by signing this checklist list as the sole, or Responsible, researcher you are providing approval of the completeness and quality of the submission, as well as confirming alignment between GDPR, Data Management and Informed Consent requirements.

Name of Corresponding Researcher (if different from the Responsible Researcher) (print)

Signature of Corresponding Researcher:

Date: 1-02-2026

Name of Responsible Researcher (print)

Signature (or upload consent by mail) Responsible Researcher:

Date: 12 February 2026

Completing your HREC application

Please use the following list to check that you have provided all relevant documentation

Required:

- **Always:** This completed HREC checklist
- **Always:** A data management plan (reviewed, where necessary, by a data-steward)
- **Usually:** A complete Informed Consent form (including Participant Information) and/or Opening Statement (for online consent)

Please also attach any of the following, if relevant to your research:

Document or approval	Contact/s
Full Research Ethics Application	After the assessment of your initial application HREC will let you know if and when you need to submit additional information
Signed, valid Device Report	Your Faculty HSE advisor
Ethics approval from an external Medical Committee	TU Delft Policy Advisor, Medical (Devices) Research
Ethics approval from an external Research Ethics Committee	Please append, if possible, with your submission
Approved Data Transfer or Data Processing Agreement	Your Faculty Data Steward and/or TU Delft Privacy Team
Approved Graduation Agreement	Your Master's thesis supervisor
Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA)	TU Delft Privacy Team
Other specific requirement	Please reference/explain in your checklist and append with your submission

Appendix V – Interview overview

Code interviewees ⁴	Role / description	Case	Date	Duration
Interviewee A1	Municipal Project Manager	Case A - Dordrecht	15/04/2026	40:02
Interviewee A2	Housing Association Project Manager	Case A - Dordrecht	23/04/2026	1:05:29
Interviewee A3	Developer1 Project Director	Case A - Dordrecht	24/04/2026	56:37
Interviewee A4	Developer2 Project Director	Case A – Dordrecht	6/05/2026	1:06:54
Interviewee B1	Municipal Project Manager	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp	28/04/2026	1:13:37
Interviewee B2	Developer Marketing Manager	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp	8/04/2026	53:03
Interviewee B3	Developer Project Director	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp	29/04/2026	48:17
Interviewee B4	Housing Association Project Manager	Case B – Pijnacker-Nootdorp	9/04/2026	31:34
Interviewee C1	Municipal Project Manager	Case C – Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	21/04/2026	45:52
Interviewee C2	Developer Project Director	Case C – Bodegraven-Reeuwijk	21/04/2026	1:01:22

⁴ All interviewees consented to participation in this study under the condition that personal identifiers are removed. Project names and professional roles are retained to provide sufficient context for the empirical analysis.

Appendix VI – List of codes (ATLAS.ti)

Code Manager

<input type="checkbox"/> Name ⋮	⋮	Groups ⋮
<input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to process	●	<input type="text" value="Commitment to pro"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face dialogue	●	<input type="text" value="Face-to-face dialog"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Incentives to participate	●	<input type="text" value="Incentives to partici"/> <input type="text" value="Starting conditions"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate outcomes	●	<input type="text" value="Intermediate outcoo"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Power/resource/knowledge asymmetries 🔖 3	●	<input type="text" value="Power/resource.kno"/> <input type="text" value="Starting conditions"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge asymmetry	●	<input type="text" value="Power/resource.kno"/> <input type="text" value="Starting conditions"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Power asymmetry	●	<input type="text" value="Power/resource.kno"/> <input type="text" value="Starting conditions"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Resource asymmetry	●	<input type="text" value="Power/resource.kno"/> <input type="text" value="Starting conditions"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prehistory of cooperation/conflict 🔖 2	●	<input type="text" value="Prehisotry of cooper"/> <input type="text" value="Starting conditions"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistory of conflict	●	<input type="text" value="Prehisotry of cooper"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistory of cooperation	●	<input type="text" value="Prehisotry of cooper"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Shared understanding	●	<input type="text" value="Shared understandi"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Trust-building	●	<input type="text" value="Trust-building"/>

Appendix VII – Policy analysis

