



PEOPLE POWERED HOMES

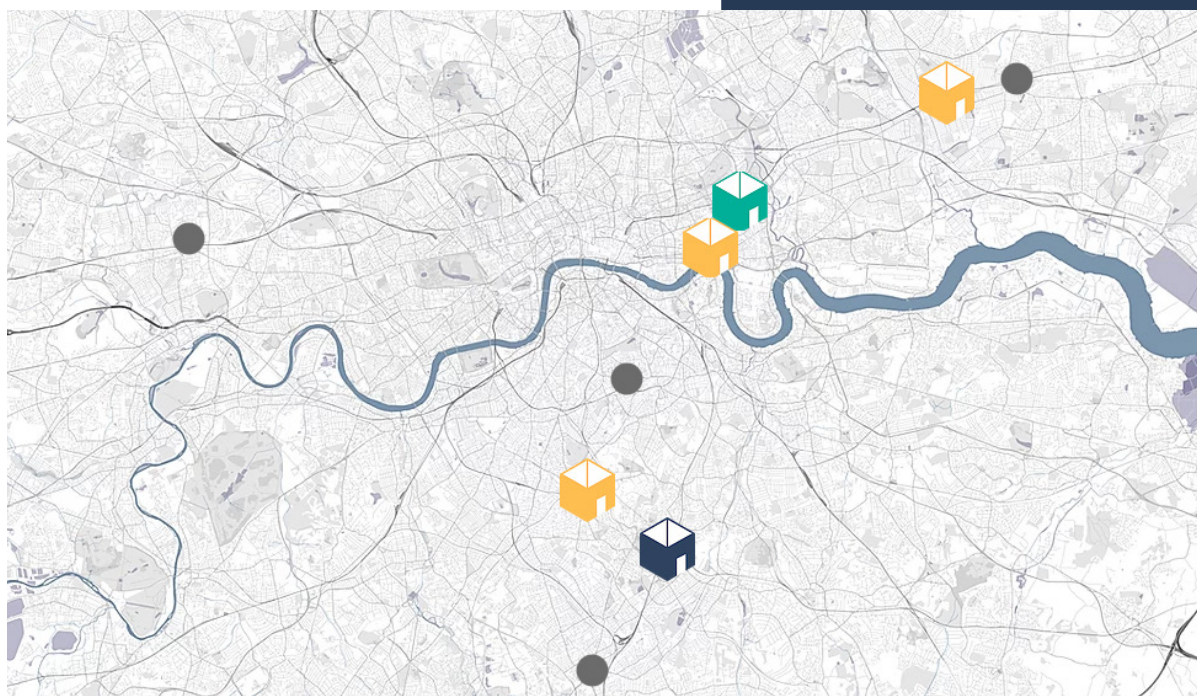
How London CLT and Citizens UK organise
to access land for affordable homes



LONDON CLT

London CLT has been organising to deliver genuinely and permanently affordable homes that are owned and run by local people since 2007. We moved our first residents into St. Clement's, London's first Community Land Trust (CLT), in 2017. Since then, we have campaigned alongside local London Citizens groups for more CLT homes in neighbourhoods across London, including Sydenham, Shadwell, Ilford, Croydon and Ealing. We are now on track to deliver at least 120 homes across 5 different sites by 2022. Over the last twelve years, we have learnt how to take effective political action to deliver CLT homes.

London CLT grew out of the community organising efforts of London Citizens, who have been building the capacity of people to participate in public life since the early 1990s. We continue to work hand-in-hand with organisers, community leaders and member organisations of London Citizens. Our shared approach is rooted in traditions of broad-based organising which remain central to all our strategies. Most of our CLT campaign groups are supported by a paid organiser, employed by Citizens UK, as well as London CLT staff. However, we believe that the relational way we work and the attention we put into the politics of CLT campaigning are relevant and useful to all community-led housing groups, including unstaffed campaigns.



- Campaign
- 🏠 Agreement on site
- 🏠 Planning received
- 🏠 Started construction
- 🏠 Residents moved in

A GUIDE ABOUT GETTING ACCESS TO LAND

This guide focuses on the politics of winning CLT sites and aims to share some of what we have learnt, with the hope that it may be useful to others who are working towards CLTs in their neighbourhood.

Land is a valuable commodity, especially in cities, and so convincing a landowner to gift or sell land to you is challenging. Understanding how to build and use the power you have to campaign effectively is crucial.

We have chosen a number of case studies and tools which demonstrate the political importance of the **people** leading and contributing to a campaign, how they build **power** to win land and the importance of knowledge and connection to the **place** where you are fighting for affordable homes.

OTHER RESOURCES

There are a number of resources available to support you develop the technical side of your CLT. A good place to start is the [National CLT Network](#), and your local [Enabling Hub](#).

LEARN MORE...

If you would like to learn more about community organising, we would recommend seeking out training with [Citizens UK](#). [London CLT's website](#) also includes a section of suggested reading about community organising.

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PEOPLE

Your team

What makes community-led housing different from affordable housing developments led by developers or by the council?

One answer is the number of people involved and the depth of their involvement. All community-led housing start with a core group of people who share an interest in getting affordable housing built, and can catalyse a wider campaign. Often these people are from the same neighbourhood and want to build housing based around geographical community, but sometimes groups form based around other types of community, like age or sexuality. London CLT's campaigns have emerged from groups of committed people involved in their local Citizens groups. These people tend to have ***two things in common.***

LOCAL CONNECTION

The first is that groups are connected locally, often through an institution like a school or mosque.

For example, our Lambeth CLT campaign has included people from youth movement The Advocacy Academy; from local Methodist and Anglican churches, from the local Women's Institute and from a local synagogue. This has been a strength in that those who have driven the CLT campaign have also been able to connect to wider networks - for example, inviting church congregants to planning workshops. This means that the core group driving forward the campaign can, from time to time, draw on the support of a wider group of people who don't have the time or interest to meet every month and get into the details of CLT, but are interested in occasional opportunities for involvement.

ANGER

The second is that they are angry. Anger can have negative connotations - people associate it with rage, even with violence. Organisers differentiate between ***hot anger and cold anger.***

Hot anger can make people act impulsively. Cold anger - a sense of what is wrong in the world but with a measure of restraint - can be a fuel which sustains long-term campaigning. This anger might be rooted in the housing injustice people experience in their own lives - the mother living in a one bedroom flat and wondering how she will cope as her son grows older and needs his own space; the charity worker who's had to move six times in five years, from houseshare to houseshare, as rents go up.



Some of the most powerful moments in London CLT's campaigning have come when, despite the stigma attached to poverty, people with lived experience of housing injustice have looked a politician in the eye and told their story.

Lambeth Citizens held an assembly shortly before the council elections where JP, a young man from the Lambeth campaign group, stood up in front of the Leader of the Council and spoke about his fears of having to move far from friends and family out of the neighbourhood he loved.



Other CLT campaigners may be secure in their own housing situation, but feel angry at the effects of unaffordable and inadequate housing on others - the teacher who sees pupils getting ill as a result of damp homes; the church goer who sees fellow congregants struggling under the pressure of rising rents; the hospital manager struggling to recruit and retain nurses because they can't afford to live locally.

There's a strength and diversity to teams which include people who'd benefit themselves from a CLT home; and people who care about affordable housing because of a broader concern about justice. You may be questioned too about whether your community-led housing really represents 'the community' - a range of people in your group gives you political legitimacy.

PEOPLE

Draw your team together

The most important point is to **go to where people are**, don't expect them to come to you. This means thinking about where people gather in your local area, and reaching out to them. It might mean a stall on the high street, it might mean speaking at a parents' coffee morning in a local school, it might mean a presence at the church fete. Stepping into spaces where people are comfortable and on their own familiar ground.

If you restrict your outreach to social media, or notices on noticeboards inviting people to a meeting, you will limit yourself to people who are confident enough to step out of familiar territory and go to a meeting where they don't know anyone - or people who know you already! This is not the path to a diverse and inclusive group.

Case Study LAMBETH FINDING THE COMMUNITY

When the Lambeth CLT group were looking to begin their steering group, they set aside five evenings to doorknock in the streets and estates near the site. In pairs, they knocked hundreds of doors and asked local residents if they were interested in coming to an event to plan for affordable homes on the derelict piece of land on the corner of Christchurch Road and Brixton Hill, leaving a flyer if no-one was in.

This was an opportunity to practice explaining clearly what a CLT is, and it reached people who knew the area well, were angry about the lack of affordable housing, but were not attached to institutions.



Workshop to set the community brief to the architects for the Christchurch Road site in Lambeth.



The CLT campaigners invited people to an upcoming workshop to set the community brief, which would be used to recruit an architect. This set a tone of real community control from the very start. At the workshop, held in a local church hall, the group circulated a sign-up sheet and invited people to leave their details and indicate if they would like to be part of a steering group, meeting monthly; or if they would like to be kept abreast of news and invited to occasional community events.

PEOPLE

Developing Leaders

London CLT's mission is 'Communities Creating Permanently Affordable Homes and Transforming Neighbourhoods'. As an organisation, we wanted to prioritise not just building houses, but also developing leaders, relationships and communities. We want a legacy not only of bricks-and-mortar homes, but, less tangibly, of people who have the networks, confidence and skills to continue to be involved in public life even after the CLT homes are built. What might developing people through CLT campaigning actually look like in practice? Here are some ideas..

- Spending time coaching someone in the group who hasn't chaired a meeting before to chair a meeting, rather than always having meetings chaired by the people in the room who are most confident to do so.
- Preparing for a negotiation with the council where everyone attending will speak, and has prepared what they are planning to say.
- Encouraging people in the group to consider what skills they want to develop through being part of the CLT campaign, and picking one or two to focus on. London CLT and London Citizens ask people to consider the following skills: turnout, taking action, learning, achieving change, investing in other people's development, storytelling and building power relationships.

This way of working - aka **community organising!** - means that it's not just the 'usual suspects' taking part in the community-led housing movements. This way of working also grows people's capacity to take action in public life and strengthens democracy. It may take longer than relying on people who are already confident with these skills. But in the longer term, your CLT group will be stronger and more resilient, with more people confident in playing an active part.

Tool THE ROUNDS

Citizens UK and London CLT make it a habit to open all our meetings with a rounds question. E.g...

- *Why does housing affordability matter to you?*
- *When is a time when you've felt powerful?*
- *What were you doing ten years ago?*
- *What's your favourite thing about living in Newham?*
- *When is a time you've felt part of a community?*

These questions allow people to remind everyone of their names (often we ask people to say their name and their institution as well, if they belong to one) and to share stories which can create the foundations of relationship between people. It makes it easier to understand each other, to understand one another's values and to see each other as rounded individuals with different biographies and interests.



Case Study RAZIA

BUILDING HOMES AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE

Razia lives opposite the Christchurch Road CLT group and joined our Steering Group after some CLT campaigners knocked on her door (see the case study above about the doorknocking campaign) and invited her to a workshop where we formed the Community Brief.



At that time, she was feeling quite isolated and was nervous about coming along. Since joining the group, Razia has joined the Board of London CLT and has spoken on stage in front of four hundred people as part of the South London Assembly.

She says: “As the weeks went by, attending the group meetings again and again, and joining the political sub group, I learnt about what CLTs are, what they’re achieving and the REAL need for this. It’s a model which is allowing people to take control, and to BE the change.”

“I want to be a part of that change. Stepping out into the CLT group inadvertently became a journey of my own self-discovery. It has encouraged me to go out and get active again. It’s given me a safe environment, to speak to strangers again, to be strong. The group has showed me ‘you’re not so bad around people!’ ”

“The group has also given me the courage to go back into the work environment. Last year, after ten years out of the work environment, I secured a job in an international property company CBRE”.

POWER

Building Power via turnout

How do you convince decision makers to work with you for community-led housing?

At a time when so many people see their area being changed without their consent; when luxury flats go up and areas gentrify without the involvement of the people living there, how do we increase the control we have over how our neighbourhoods change?

On their own, neighbourhood plans are not the answer; nor beautiful architectural drawings of what could be, nor eloquently argued objections on the council's planning portal. The answer is power.

Being intentional about how you build power is an important way to increase the chances of your CLT's success. Power can come from money, and having the money to secure land is how mainstream developers operate. Not many community-led housing groups have the money to operate like this.



Powerful Citizens turnout at a general election

Instead, community-led housing groups must source power from having organised people.

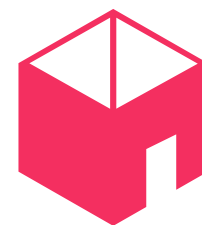
A key aspect of this is turnout. The Cabinet Member for Housing is far more likely to take you seriously if you invite her to a meeting with forty people who are committed to getting CLT homes built, rather than a meeting where there are ten people.

Case Study LEWISHAM

TURNOUT AT COUNCIL ELECTION

Angry at the number of people locally who were being pushed out of the area by rising rents and high house prices, Lewisham Citizens decided to prioritise a campaign to win a Community Land Trust.

Lewisham Citizens used the upcoming 2014 Council Elections as a way of cementing their relationship with the Mayor of Lewisham and increasing their power locally. They organised an Accountability Assembly, and based on



many conversations, leaders in Lewisham Citizens decided on a number of asks to make of the candidates. On the night, Janet Emmanuel, a headteacher of Sydenham Girls School, asked Mayor Steve Bullock whether, if elected, he would work with Lewisham Citizens to deliver CLT homes in the borough. He said yes!

Key to the success of this action was the fact that the hall where the event was held was filled with over 350 people. The presence of so many Lewisham voters in the room was important to generate the pressure on Steve Bullock, to commit to working towards a CLT.

How did Lewisham Citizens get so many people to attend?

Firstly, they assigned ***turnout captains*** - one person within each institution who volunteered to lead on turning out people for the Assembly. This person ensured that the announcements were made at the end of the service; or the item was included in the email newsletter; or the invite was included in the letter to parents. Turnout captains also approached people personally to ask them to be at the Assembly, phoning around key people. Turnout captains set themselves targets for how many people they'd bring and held each other accountable for this.

Another important method of filling the room was ***delegating*** lots of roles at the Assembly. As well as two co-chairs holding the event together, the final agenda included 25 people speaking from the stage; plus a timekeeper, plus a choir of twenty girls from Sydenham School. Once people had committed to a part in the evening and prepared, they were definitely attending - and often bringing friends and family too! Including multiple voices from across the borough also showed politicians the diversity of Lewisham Citizens.

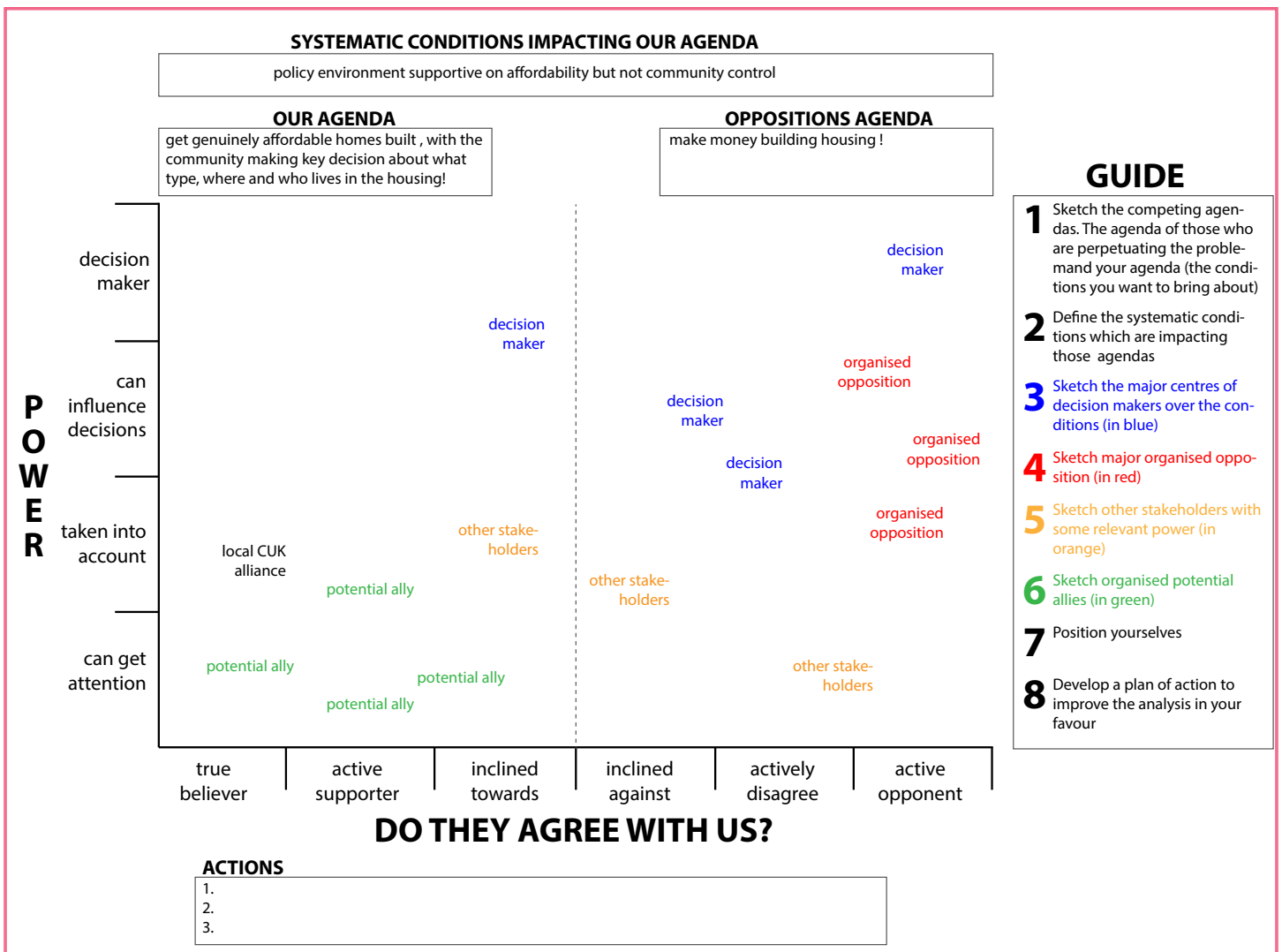
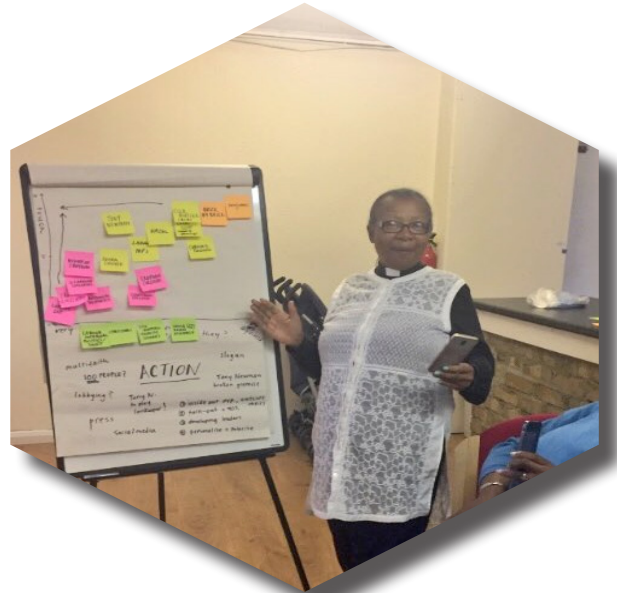
Following Steve Bullock's pledge to support a Community Land Trust in Lewisham, Lewisham Citizens organised a membership drive to generate further support. In 2014, over the course of a number of months, campaigners reached out to friends and members of their institutions. Nano, one of the core CLT campaigners, stood at the exit of her church (St William of York) and asked every congregant whether they would pay £1 and become a member of London Community Land Trust. With other volunteers, she also organised a stall at the church fete and signed up around 100 people there. The membership drive was also an opportunity for the CLT campaigners to practise explaining what a CLT is - the team got really good at their two-minute explanation of community land trusts!

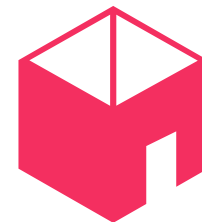
POWER

Power Analysis

Tool POWER ANALYSIS

One of the tools we use to map out where power lies and make a plan for action, is the power analysis. This allows campaigners to see what power they already have and to make plans to increase their power. The image to the right shows a local leader in Croydon - Mother Joyce - running a power analysis session. Below is one template we use for mapping out power.





Case Study SHADWELL

COMBINING LOCAL & AUTHORITATIVE POWER

The campaign for a Community Land Trust in Shadwell was driven by campaigning on two separate but complementary levels, the local level and the city level. The eventual securing of the site at Cable Street required a complex, multi-layered political approach with a clear understanding of who had the power to decide to make the site available for CLT homes.

The CLT campaign was initiated by St Georges in the East church, a church in Shadwell with a strong outward-looking culture based around community organising. St Georges in the East runs a number of local initiatives, including Open Table (feeding homeless people).

This site was first identified by local people during a number of site walks where around 50 people organised to campaign for affordable homes through a CLT. Those involved were largely a mix of local churchgoers and Bengali women, all with strong connections to the local area. After identifying a site, the local Priest managed to get the opportunity to outline the case for the site to be made available for CLT homes in the Guardian, raising the site's profile and the idea of its possible future use.

As the site was owned by Transport for London (TfL), a regional transport authority under the purview of the Mayor of London, city-wide organising efforts were required to help support local campaigners' demands for the site to be for CLT homes only. This is where being a member of Citizens UK gave the more local group power at the city level.

Through a series of conversations with key people inside TfL, and a major event held with 400 supporters and the Deputy Mayor for Housing, James Murray, members were able to secure a commitment from both the Greater London Authority (GLA) and TfL to put the site out to tender in such a way as to safeguard it for affordable, community-led homes while still allowing a competitive tender to take place. This was only made possible through a locally-rooted yet regionally supported campaign, built off the back of a clear-sighted analysis of power.

You are the expert in your neighbourhood - do not let anyone tell you otherwise!

Your CLT has the power to transform a neighbourhood, to build local power and to create relationships between people.

In development, when appraising the feasibility of a site, there are a lot of different things to consider. You'd probably look at the planning history of the site; at the sunlight and daylight; assess flood risk and check for any contamination in the ground.

In community-led development, it's not just about whether the development is

feasible in financial or planning terms, but also about considering whether or how the development will improve the wider neighbourhood; how it will relate to other institutions in the area; how the price of the homes will compare to the average house prices in that area.

Once your campaign has progressed to the point when you are considering particular sites, it's useful to begin mapping out where power lies in the area.

Some questions you might start with to define this could be..

- ◆ Who are the ward councillors for the area?
- ◆ Who's the MP?
- ◆ Are they publicly supportive of your campaign?
- ◆ What residents' associations are closest to your site?
- ◆ Are there any neighbourhood associations or parks which have a 'Friends of' group?
- ◆ When you look at planning applications that have been submitted for recent developments in the area, are there people or organisations who regularly respond?
- ◆ Or there might be informal power networks. Perhaps there's a name that keeps coming up when you doorknock, that person who knows everybody and whom everybody knows. Maybe it's the owner of the chip shop. Often ward councillors will have a sense of who holds power locally.



Tool SITE TOOLKIT

We developed this site toolkit as a way to assess potential sites for CLT homes, going out in small groups with a clipboard to find potential land. Not every site that catches your eye because they're derelict will be available - some may be banked by private landowners; some may already have homes planned on it. There are some resources available to assess land ownership, for example, the local authorities' brownfield register, or requests for Freedom of Information (FOI) made to the local council about what land they own.

However, it is usually most straightforward to work with your local council and ask them to tell you which publicly-owned sites they may be interested to work with you on for community-led housing. If they are serious about working with you for a community-land trust, this should translate into an openness about possible sites.

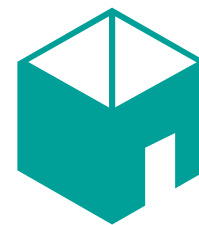
INFORMATION TO COLLECT

For each site which scores above 50 points it is useful to collect the following information to move the site forward to the next stage in investigation.

1. Take a photo of each side of the site, try to get as much in as possible
2. Take a picture of the entrance(s) to the site
3. Take a picture of any features on the site - i.e. power lines
4. Note the address and postcode below if known. If not, describe the location below.
5. Photograph any neighbouring buildings
6. Put all photos in a folder on your computer with the site number or address
7. Send this folder to the citizens organiser

Diagram showing typical things to photograph

Site Notes
e.g. next to church in Citizens membership, kids playing football, suggested by local business owner, what is the sites story?
Site 1:
Site 2:



SITE TOOLKIT – STAGE I



For each prospective site tick the box if the answer is yes. Points are awarded for each tick. For each site calculate the total number of points to decide which site to take forward. If marked **X** the site should be discounted. Sites scoring over 60 should be taken forward.

No.	Item	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3	Site 4	Site 5	Points
1.0	Is the site accessible from the road by a truck						10
	Is the site accessible by car only						5
	Is the site accessible by foot only						X
2.0	There are no existing buildings on site						10
	There is an existing building that is the site						10
	The building is in a state of severe disrepair						1
3.0	The site is closest to the size of:						
	A football pitch						10
	A block of flats						10
	A detached house						5
	A terraced house						X
4.0	There are power lines, telephone lines, electricity substation, trees etc. inside the site boundary.						1
	They are located on the perimeter of the site.						5
	There are none of the above on site						10
5.0	There are no roads across the site, gates or any obvious pathways.						10
	There are roads across the site, gates or any obvious pathways. Please note any signage related to these						5
6.0	The site is a playground, park, garden or pitch						X
	The site is part of somebody's property, garage, driveway or alleyway						X
	The site is ex industrial land (if known)						5
	The site is none of the above						10
7.0	There is water pooling on site						1
	There is a river or other body of water near the site						5
	No evidence of flooding						10
8.0	The site is flat						10
	The site is sloped						5
	The site is very steep or uneven						1
9.0	The site is square / rectangular						10
	The site is an unusual shape						5
10.0	There are no neighbouring buildings						10
	There are neighbouring buildings within 3m of the site						5
	There are windows directly overlooking the site						1
Total Score							100



Case Study CROYDON

CHOOSING A SITE - LOCALS KNOW BEST

Croydon Council offered Croydon Citizens a piece of land on the Shrublands estate, in the east of the borough. The group visited a number of times, and considered at length whether to accept and work to build a Community Land Trust in Shrublands.

They organised a stall, chatting to local people about potential plans with a map of the site and mince pies. They knocked on doors and spoke to residents about how they felt about affordable housing in the area. They met the chair of the local residents association.

After a great deal of discussion, the group decided to decline the offer of land on the Shrublands estate. There were two main reasons for this.

Firstly, after spending lots of time travelling to Shrublands, Croydon Citizens felt that this was not their neighbourhood. Croydon Citizens are mainly based in the North of the borough around half an hour by bus to Shrublands. They felt like they were coming in as outsiders.

Secondly, London CLT base the cost of our CLT homes on local median incomes. When we calculated how much we would sell CLT homes for, based on the median wage in Croydon, it was not very different from the cost of a home in Shrublands. Homes



*Local Leaders from Croydon
on a site walk*

in Shrublands are already genuinely affordable, so CLT homes would add little value in terms of genuine affordability; although would have been able to lock in affordability in perpetuity.

If just one of these had been an issue, the group might have decided to take on a CLT project in Shrublands and mitigate. But because there was concerns around both our connection to place and about whether we could offer homes that were significantly more affordable than average Shrublands homes, the group decided to step away and focus on acquiring a site in the North of the borough.

It took both desktop research (on local house prices and wages) and on-the-ground research talking to people to make this decision.

PEOPLE, POWER, PLACE

BEYOND ACCESS TO LAND

The case studies presented in this guide show that developing **people** to lead and contribute to a campaign, mapping out and making a coherent plan to build **power** and leaning on local **place** based knowledge, is a winning combination for getting access to the right land.

London CLT's process is also crucial for the organisation to achieve its goals beyond getting access to land which is only one (albeit a very important one) element towards building CLT homes.

That is, even after a campaign is won to get land, the people who have been developed that are passionate about the project continue to work towards getting CLT homes on the site and improving their neighbourhood for the wider good in line with the mission of London CLT.

Communities creating, permanently affordable homes and transforming neighbourhoods.

Case Study: Bethan **CAMPAIGNER TO RESIDENT TO BOARD MEMBER**

Bethan was living in a one-bedroom shared ownership flat with her son and daughter with no prospect of finding anything bigger in Tower Hamlets. She became involved with London CLT through her Church in 2006 when London Citizens pitched tents outside City Hall to demand a meeting with the Mayor about the first CLT. After years of campaigning she was offered a home for herself and her two children at London CLT's first site at St Clements.



"I applied for one of the homes and after a long, tense process, I was eventually offered a three bedroom flat! It was quite exciting seeing it all being built and it was looking like the plans – the new buildings looked beautifully sympathetic to the old buildings. It was incredible moving in to this beautiful, big, bright, spacious flat which was ours! Throughout the development there was a feeling that it was part of the community and the Shuffle Festivals really helped that."

Since moving into St. Clements Bethan has put her passion for campaigning to use by becoming a member of the London CLT board. In this capacity she has chaired our Annual General Meeting, sat on our strategic subcommittees, lobbied the Mayor of Tower Hamlets at a public campaign action to secure a community space on site and continues to lobby and chair at political assemblies.

