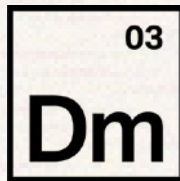


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Lessons from and pathways towards transforming management of large, housing-led sites in England and Europe

Summary version

Produced by the Community Land Trust Network of England and Wales, the European Community Land Trust Network and Dark Matter Labs

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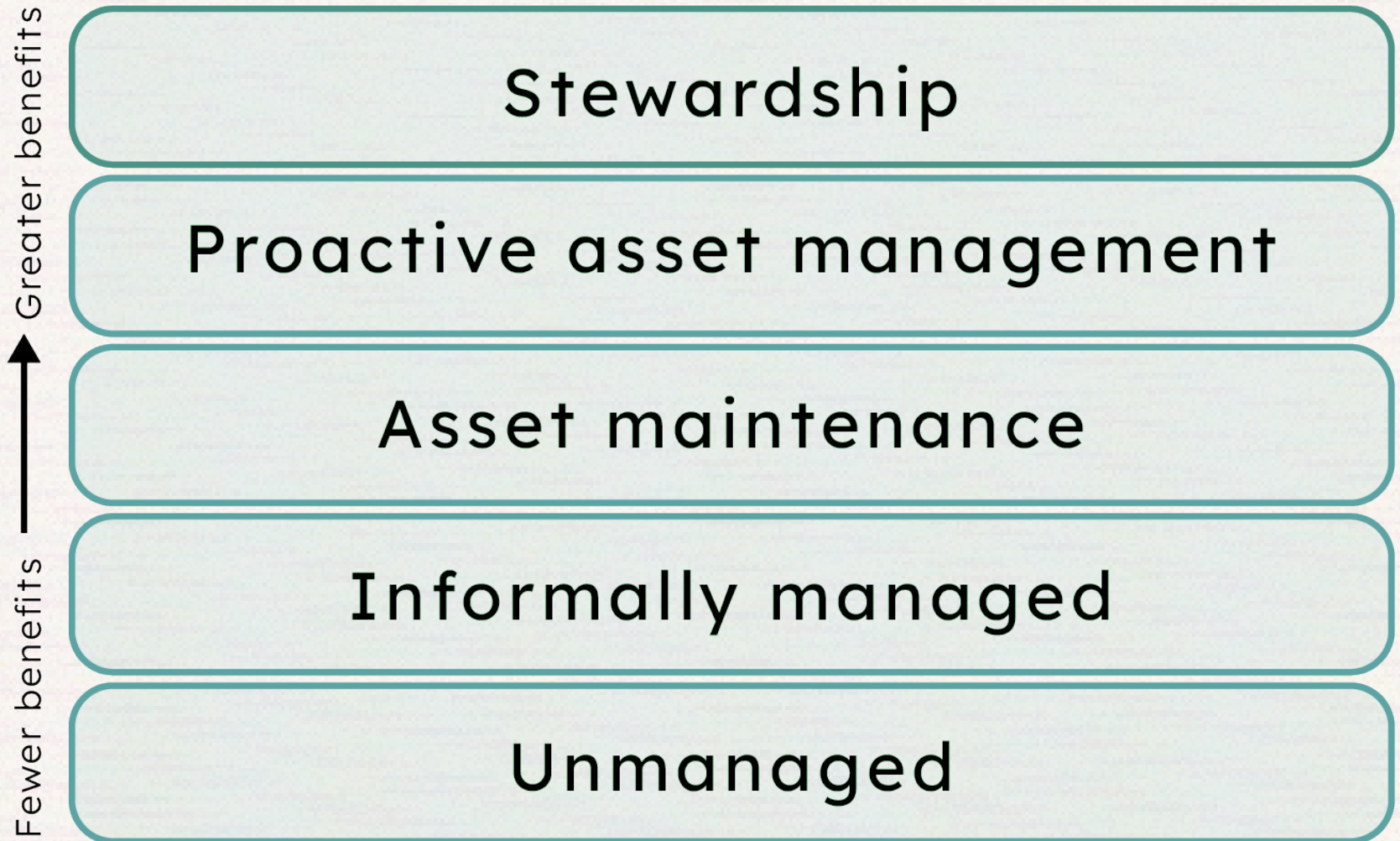
Why community-led place stewardship today?

- 87% of large, new housing developments have private management companies. Many such arrangements fail to provide value for money or adequate provision of quality services. (CMA Housebuilding Market Study, 2024)
- Most residents of privately managed estates have “exceptionally low levels of trust” in developers (2%) and local authorities (7%), as a category of governing body. (source: Grosvenor)
- New approaches are needed to build on the reforms contained within the Leasehold Reform Act 2024.
- Recent years have seen a rise in interest in new citizen governance models, such as Community Land Trusts.
- Place management needs to build in layers of resilience in light of the climate crisis and social crises increasingly facing communities.

Our research questions

- What can 5 trailblazing projects tell us about better forms of place-management for larger new communities?
- What might community-led stewardship — and Community Land Trusts in particular — offer to communities and other stakeholders?
- What are possible delivery scenarios? What are the leverage points in the development timeline?

From Place Management to Place Stewardship



What is place stewardship?

Selected components

Place Stewardship goes beyond place management to sustain and enhance a place's ecological, social, and economic value over the long term. It includes:

- The responsible management, care and renewal of physical spaces, particularly natural environments, urban areas, and community spaces
- Supporting human thriving through connection, cultural activities, wellbeing and mutual support
- Enabling long term resilience and adaptation to the effects of climate change and other crises
- Increasing sharing of assets and reduction in use of material resources and energy

Why Community Land Trusts?

- CLTs are an established community stewardship model.
- CLTs have the purpose of ‘furthering social, economic and environmental interests of a local community’.
- CLTs can take a variety of legal forms.

COMMUNITY: Those living in a new neighbourhood extending to natural geographies

LAND: To lock in assets for the long term

TRUST: Required to be democratically accountable

9 Myths relating to Community Land Trusts, and Counter-Evidence

Myth	Counter-Evidence
<p>Myth 1: CLTs are only for affordable housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The legal definition of a Community Land Trust does not include housing, but rather a CLT <i>is established for the express purpose of furthering the social, economic and environmental interests of a local community by acquiring and managing land and other assets in order -</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>to provide benefit to the local community</i> ▪ <i>to ensure that the assets are not sold or developed except in a manner which the trust's members think benefits the local community</i> 2) <i>is established under arrangements which are expressly designed to ensure that:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>any profits from its activities will be used to benefit the local community (otherwise than by being paid directly to members)</i> ▪ <i>individuals who live or work in the specified area have the opportunity to become members of the trust (whether or not others can also become members)</i> ▪ <i>the members of a trust control it.</i> <p>(Source: National CLT Network Introduction to Legal Formats)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordability is one important outcome, alongside improved social cohesion and less loneliness, better health outcomes for residents, more circular approaches to the built environment, profits for a range of stakeholders, better relationships with local authorities, and successful principle-guided management of community assets. ▪ The purpose of individual CLTs can vary, based on local group interests.
<p>Myth 2: The CLT model is only appropriate on small sites</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Large-scale CLTs have successfully managed extensive properties or multiple smaller sites under one organisational framework. ▪ CLTs have been part of larger urban redevelopment projects, effectively integrating community-led segments within broader development strategies. ▪ Large-scale CLTs are suitable to a range of contexts, from urban to rural, as evidenced by our case studies.
<p>Myth 3: Community-led stewardship of place is an innovative/new concept</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contemporary community-led cases exist in a lineage of similar structures in the UK, Europe and throughout the world. Today's business-as-usual reliance on large-scale private management companies is recent, and less proven in the long-run. ▪ Long-standing practices that are governed similarly to today's CLTs show how community stewardship has evolved with modern governance models, technologies, and societal changes.
<p>Myth 4: Community-led Stewardship inevitably costs more than other approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local management can reduce overheads and management costs. Communities can leverage local resources, partnerships, and grants more effectively than external entities. Community led approaches to housing have also been found to deliver medium to high value for public money. ▪ Impacts on expected timelines and required resources can be mitigated by new governance structures, knowledge-sharing within networks, and a long-term view of future revenue.

<p>Myth 5: Communities don't have the capability to run their own estates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There are thousands of estates of a variety of tenures already being managed by residents. The capability is there, it is just that many of the structures and business plans are hobbling their sustainability. ▪ With the right governance structures, training (in financial matters, property asset management, and regulatory compliance) and relationships with outside stakeholders, communities are the best group to run their own estates and retain value locally. These can build on different capabilities of different actors, as at Kennett CLT. Organisations including the CLT Network provide many opportunities for training, communities of practice, peer support, and other ways of building capacity within communities. ▪ Communities can recognise and address their needs and desires, while identifying gaps, aligned interests, and inefficiencies in business-as-usual systems. ▪ Community stewardship aligns with developers' usual intent to reduce involvement after the time of occupancy. Considered transition processes can create win-win outcomes.
<p>Myth 6: Community-led housing requires the community initiating, managing, and building a development (as well as all other associated activities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community housing is where community engagement and consent occurs throughout development, but the community can take a range of roles across a range of structures to provide this engagement and consent. ▪ Mutually supported partnerships with Registered Providers who own the freehold or leasehold of a site can support a breadth of ownership, management or stewardship arrangements, as elected by the community.
<p>Myth 7: Only large private management companies have the professionalism and economies of scale to deal with regulatory/compliance changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The scale and lack of local focus of private management companies leaves them less equipped to handle compliance than local organisations, which may be more flexible, agile, and attuned to place-appropriate measures. ▪ Clear structuring of roles, as well as training, can assist with this, enabling sharing of responsibilities across parties while making the most of the professionalism afforded by management companies. Professional service providers are able to assist and service the CLTs to enable operation at a scale of staffing to accommodate changes.
<p>Myth 8: Community governed entities are riskier than mainstream approaches</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community-led governance can dissipate risk factors through collective decision-making and involvement, bringing in additional funding sources and creating a calibrated local financial plan with local support. ▪ With calibrated involvement from developers and local authorities, this relationship can be more measured and less risky than today's standard approach. ▪ Business-as-usual approaches may fall short in the long run, even if near-term risks are well understood. Community commitment and local knowledge supports longevity of intent.
<p>Myth 9: Individuals aren't motivated to help with their community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ With the right opportunities, individuals and groups are motivated to make their neighbourhoods better places to live, and to foster community: their motivation is not profit. Processes and structures to garner meaningful community involvement need to be fostered: they will not spring up of their own accord. CLTs and similar structures offer opportunities to engage in community-building that encompasses lively events and forward-looking asset creation activities that go beyond obligations to oversee maintenance contracts, for example, thereby building motivation. ▪ Outcomes associated with community involvement include improved local services and place maintenance, enhanced social cohesion, and increased property values, benefitting a range of parties. Oakfield is a key example of community organising benefitting all parties.

From typical, current place management practices towards a regenerative future

	Typical current place management practice...	To a step change in place stewardship ...	Towards a regenerative custodianship.
Activities	Managing mainly physical assets	Management and ongoing development of a wider set of assets and key role in community social and economic development	Increased focus on circularity and long-term resilience
Power dynamics	Traditional hierarchical leadership - most residents lacking power and equity	Community control and power with inclusive and representative decision-making	Fair representation of wider and future communities
Organisational design	Standardised management models imposed. (post-rationalised)	Ongoing place-centred organisational design from the outset	Nested organisational design to allow for different activities at effective scales
Data design	Ad-hoc papers and data structures on paper or electronically	Secure open data and emergence of digital platforms	Establish data trusts to hold data and responsibly seek appropriate revenue streams
Networks	Atomised inward-looking management entities	Collaboration between stewardship entities through networks	Mutually-supportive ecosystem of organisations
Value metrics	Short-term financial metrics	Holistic, longer-term balanced scorecard	Cornerstone metrics
Financing streams	Management charge	Mixed funding streams	Token-based funding streams

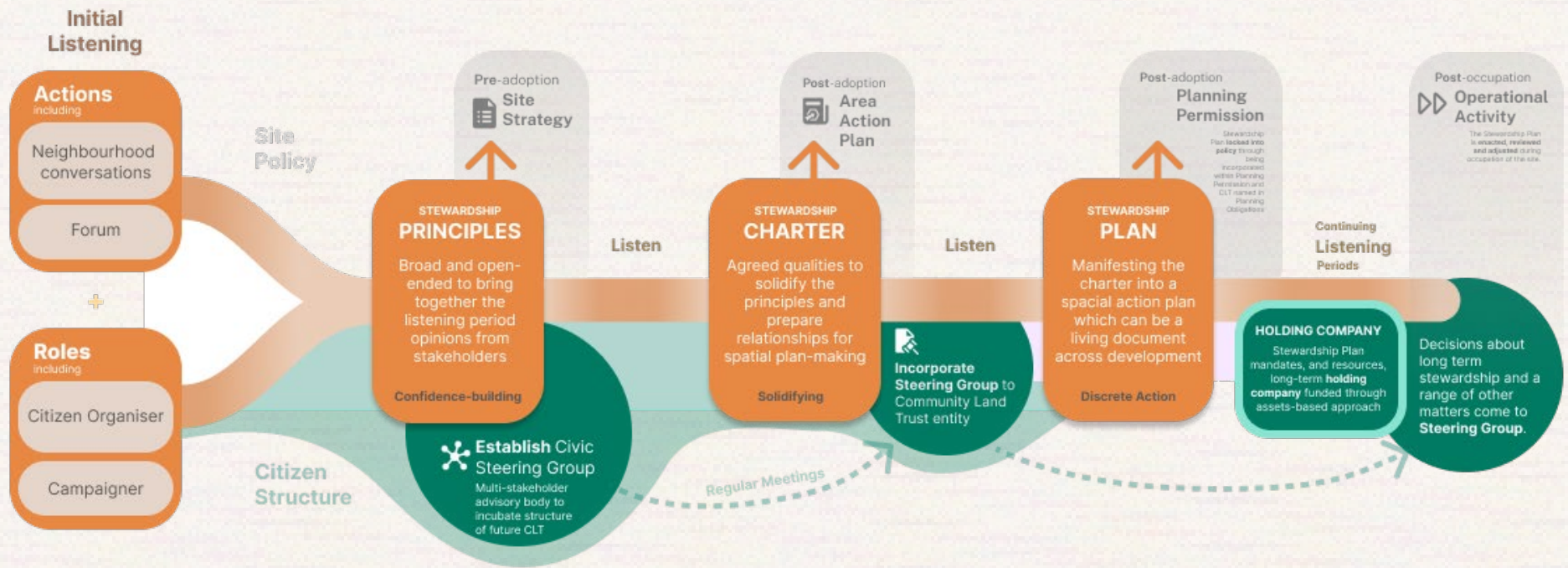
How to develop a Community-led Stewardship Model?

6 proposed requirements for the process

1. Stewardship organisational design from the outset
2. Maximising financial, planning, procurement and other support levers
3. Effective governance and stakeholder roles and collaboration
4. Diversified activities, metrics and financing of place stewardship entities
5. Support and knowledge infrastructure
6. Effective data and digital design

The Route to a Stewardship Plan

Reinforcing citizen engagement from an early stage



Three scenarios for community-led stewardship

- **Scenario 1** Purpose-led developer or landowner: best case scenario
- **Scenario 2** Local authority leadership
- **Scenario 3** Citizen campaign: most challenging scenario

Each scenario is broken down by **role** across different **phases** of development, and includes consideration of four elements in addition to stakeholders:

- Land
- Planning
- Finance
- Governance and participation

Scenario 1: Purpose-led developer or landowner

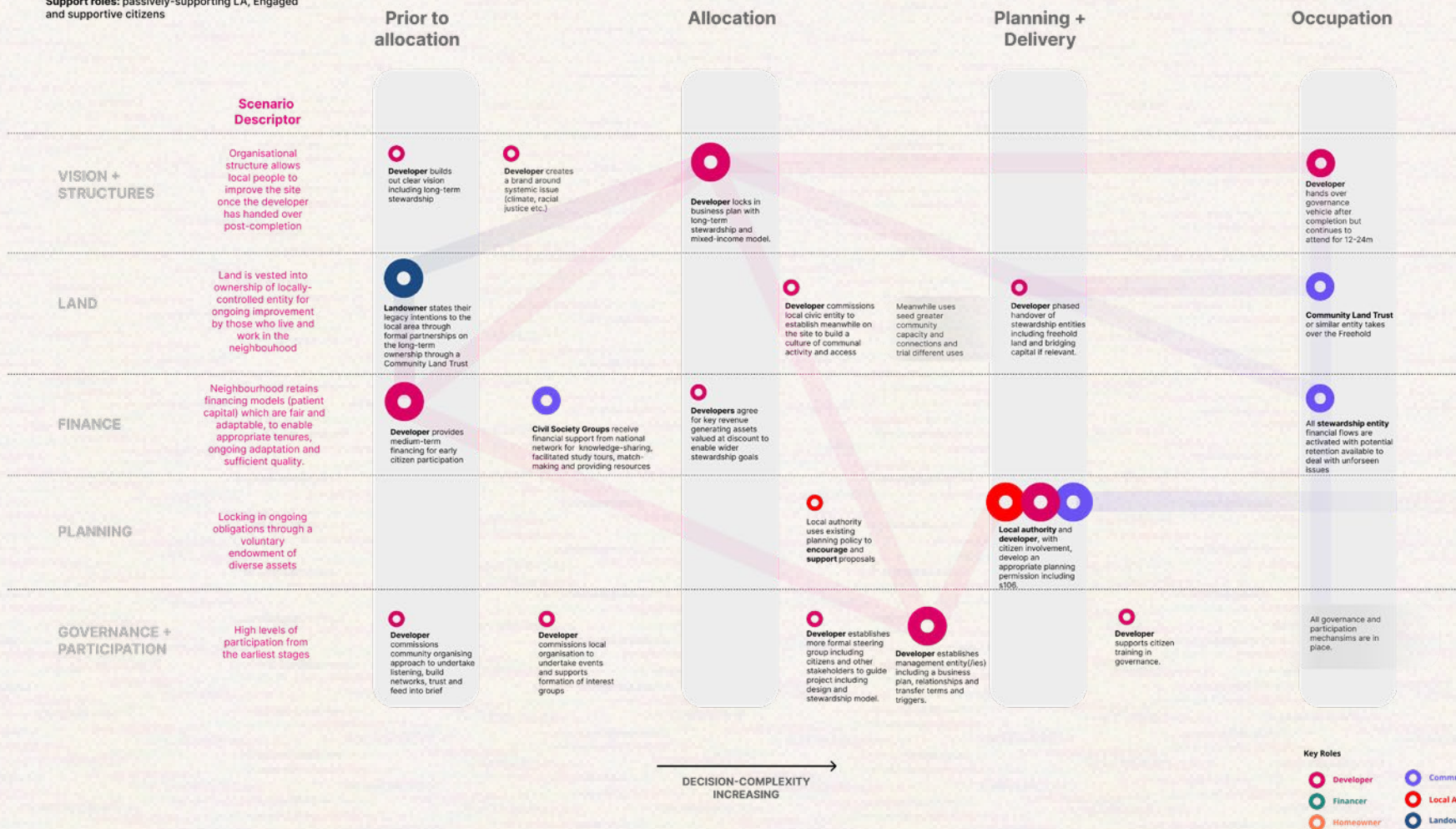
Best Case Scenario

Scenario 1

Legacy and Purpose

setting up legacy representation

Co-ordination Costs: Financial Lower Human Lower
 Key roles: Purpose developer, legacy landowner
 Support roles: passively-supporting LA, Engaged and supportive citizens



Key Roles

- Developer (Pink circle)
- Financer (Green circle)
- Homeowner (Orange circle)
- Local Authority (Red circle)
- Community (Blue circle)
- Landowner (Dark Blue circle)

Scenario 2: Local authority leadership

Scenario 2

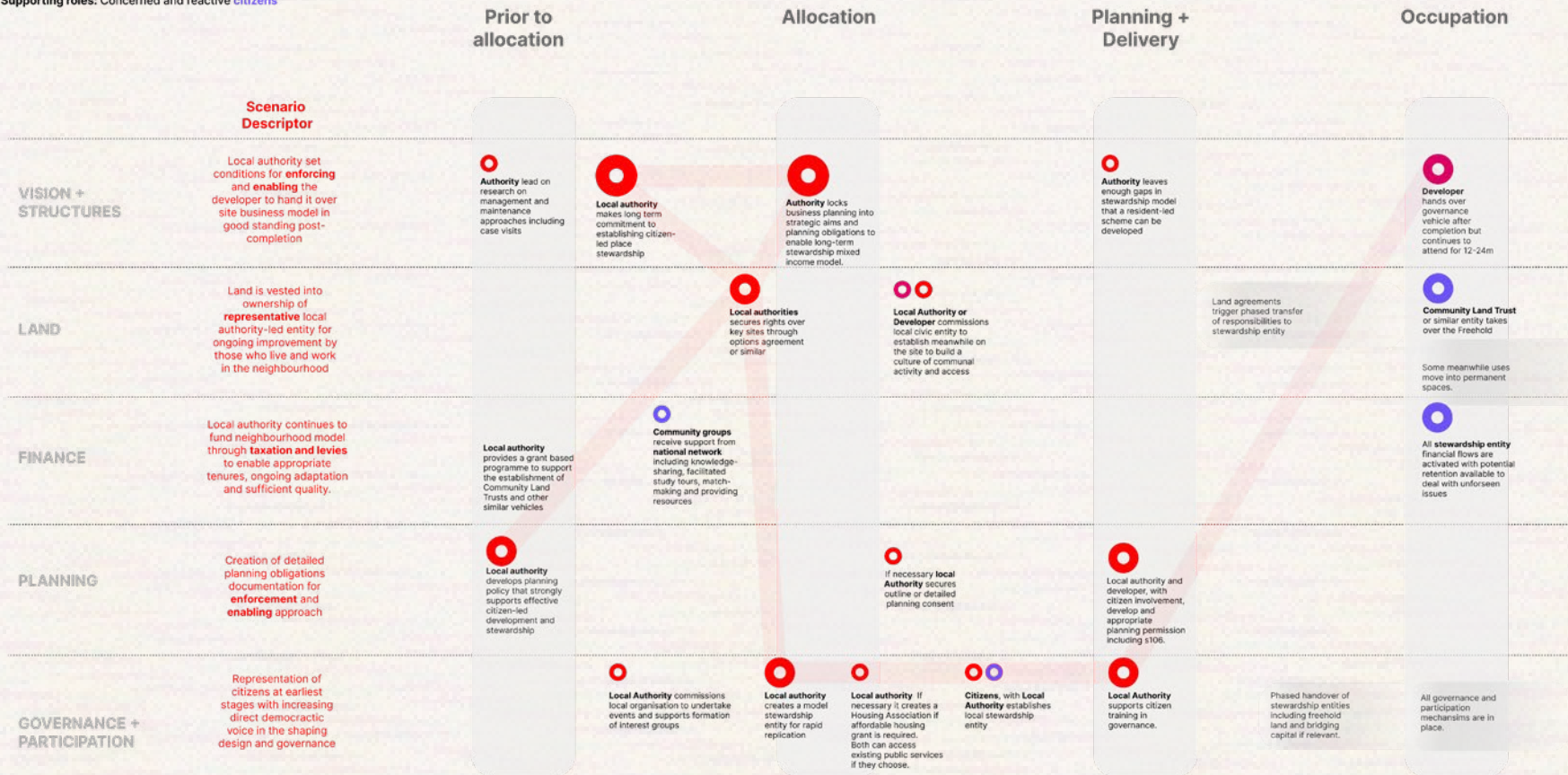
Local Authority Leadership

enablement enforcement representation

Co-ordination Costs: Financial Equivalent Human Standard

Key roles: Enforcing Local Authority

Supporting roles: Concerned and reactive citizens



DECISION-COMPLEXITY INCREASING →

Key Roles

- Developer
- Financer
- Homeowner
- Community
- Local Authority
- Landowner

Scenario 3: Citizen campaign

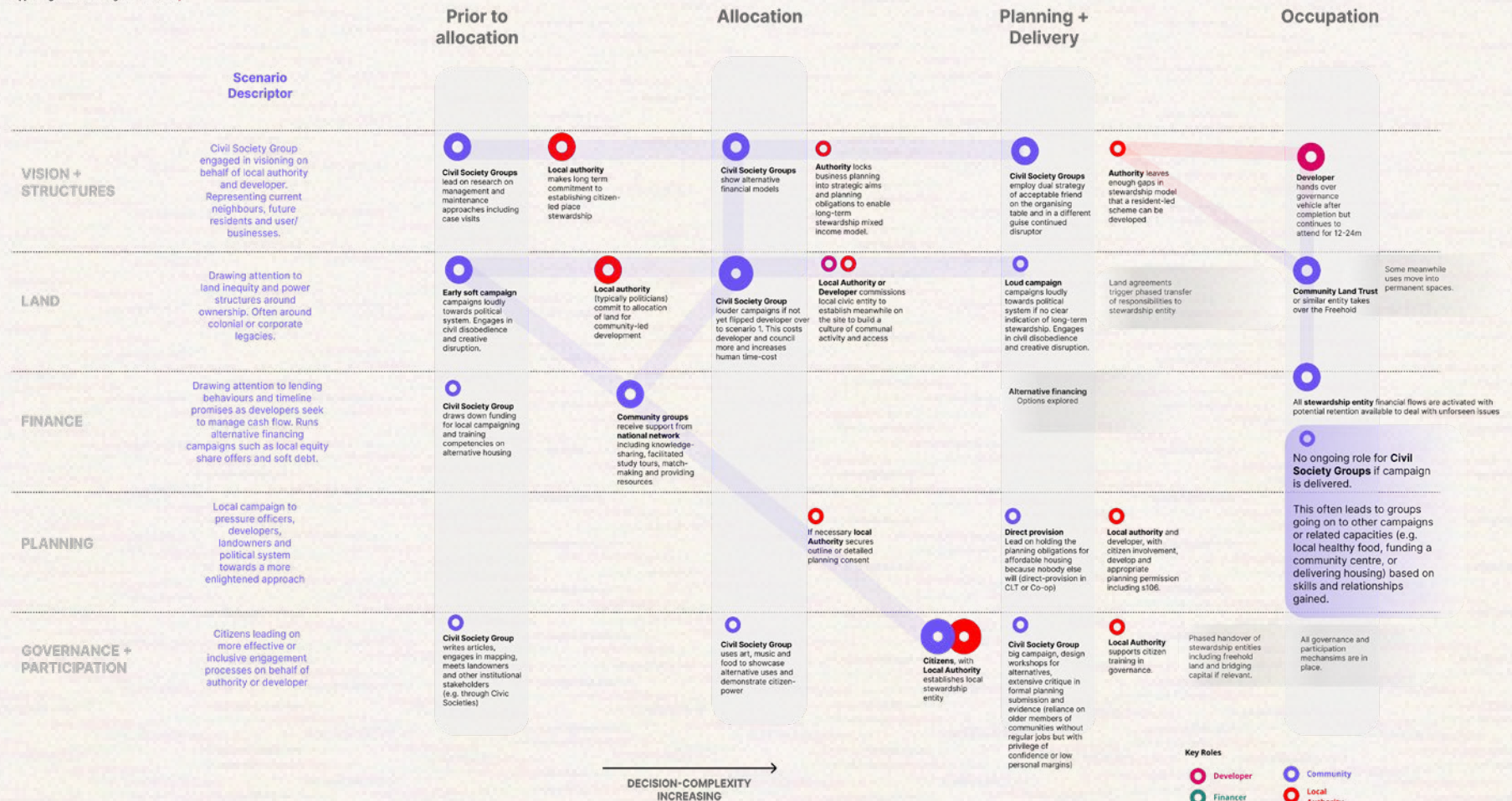
Most Challenging Scenario

Scenario 3

Citizen Campaign

campaigning political pressure

Co-ordination Costs: Financial High Human High
 Key role: Creative campaigning citizens
 Supporting roles: Enforcing Local Authority



DECISION-COMPLEXITY INCREASING →

Key Roles

- Developer
- Financer
- Homeowner
- Community
- Local Authority
- Landowner

Key indicators of better place stewardship

1. Equitable and fair power relations
2. Integrated value metrics and aligned decision-making
3. Networked stewardship entities and places
4. Effective data design
5. Effective organisational design
6. Diversified activities and funding streams associated with place-based values

Five trailblazing place stewardship case studies in England



- A** A climate-focused, mission-led developer with energy trading opportunity: **Leeds Climate Innovation District**
- B** A Supportive Council: **Kennett Garden Village**
- C** Institutional leadership and purpose-driven developer: **Oakfield, Swindon**
- D** Urban movement-building: **St Clements, London CLT**
- E** A multi-phase approach to community stewardship: **Chilmington Green**

Leeds Climate Innovation District

A climate-focused, mission-led developer with energy trading opportunity:

The [Climate Innovation District \(CID\) in Leeds](#) is a pioneering residential development project poised to be a leading eco-friendly urban neighbourhoods in the UK. Built by purpose-driven developer Citu along the South Bank area of Leeds, the land was bought without further lending which gave the developer strong control over the subsequent stewardship design processes. At Leeds CID, Citu established a Community Interest Company (CIC) which owns the site freehold and a utilities company for pooling energy generated on site and data lines.

- 2.40ha
- 1,000 homes total
- £800m project cost

Key learning: A purpose developer, Citu, setting up an early Community Interest Company can effectively integrate intentions around long-term sustainability and community involvement in urban development

How it operates in practice: The CIC will own the site freehold on completion of the final home. The CIC manages the freeholds, communal resources, and involves residents in governance through a structured transition process. Each home pays a bond of £3,500 for their shares in the CIC.

Kennett Garden Village

A Supportive Council:

Kennett Garden Village is a notable example of local authority leadership and strong civic commitment to place community stewardship at the heart of the housing growth agenda. The CLT is not only supporting the delivery and management of affordable housing while owning some of these homes and the public open space, but is generating meaningful, collaborative stewardship outcomes that align with a range of garden village principles. This is not an isolated example but part of a programme led by East Cambridgeshire District Council to support and build momentum around CLTs over the last decade.

- 40ha
- 500 homes, (60 out of 150 affordable units taken by the CLT)

Key learning: local authority leadership, in this case from East Cambridgeshire District Council, can drive successful community-led development.

How it operates in practice: The CLT owns a proportion of the affordable homes as well as the public open space, while managing these and other community facilities, funded by management fees from residents and supported by a commuted sum from the developer.

Oakfield, Swindon

Institutional leadership and purpose-driven developer:

Oakfield in Swindon is a development of 239 homes where Nationwide Building Society is invested in exploring a new model of house building that demonstrates the commercial and social benefits of long-term mutuality and climate-conscious design. Stewardship arrangements do not include a CLT, but very similar structures and roles within a conventional resident management company. Oakfield is notable for the focus placed on early and meaningful community engagement which enabled the overcoming of planning barriers and creation of community-driven initiatives as development and management continues.

- 5.23 hectares
- 239 homes

Key learning: significant investment in quality and sustainable housing can be achieved without seeking profit.

How it operates in practice: A Resident Management Company (RMC) oversees estate management, supported by community hosts and funded through resident contributions.

St Clements, London CLT

Urban movement-building:

St Clements is London's first new build Community Land Trust and demonstrates how active and tenacious campaigning can garner political support for the transfer of publicly owned land to be used to bring forward more democratic and (wage linked) genuinely affordable housing and place-stewardship. Beyond provision of affordable housing linked to local incomes, London CLT has a core aim of fostering a democratic culture that is distinct from centralised decisions made by government and the market and this is embedded in the place stewardship arrangements.

- 4.63 acres
- 252 homes with 23 discounted market sale through the CLT
- First CLT in London

Key learning: Grassroots advocacy can lead to significant political support for community-led housing and place-stewardship.

How it operates in practice: London CLT manages affordable homes, while a Resident Management Company handles broader site management, transitioning to resident control. A separate charitable trust provides funding for community activities from ground rents.

Chilmington Green

A multi-phase approach to community stewardship:

Chilmington Green is a large-scale development project with planning permission as part of the South of Ashford Garden Community (SAGC) in Kent. It is designed to be a self-sufficient community with its own local amenities, including schools, a high street, community centres, and parks. Significant investment is being made to ensure that the infrastructure supports the new development, including improvements to roads and public transportation links. This large housing development has included the creation of a charitable Community Management Organisation developed in partnership between developers, landowners, third sector and local authority, which will match the CLT definition when the development is complete.

- 405 hectares
- 5,750 homes
- Part of South of Ashford Garden Community

Key learning: Planning policy supported a better approach to viable and sustainable community-stewardship for large-scale developments.

How it operates in practice: The CMO, a charitable entity, manages community assets, funded by developer contributions, an estate charge and resident involvement in governance.

Comparative learnings from case studies

What's required for success?

- A** Leeds CID
- B** Kennett Garden Village
- C** Oakfield
- D** St Clements
- E** Chilmington Green

Early and ongoing commitment to place stewardship from a coalition of stakeholders:

Community

B D

Local Authority

B D E

Developer

A C

Landowner

A B C E

In addition to...

Effective governance

Financing + contracting

Knowledge infrastructure

Community-led stewardship at scale across Europe

Aspects of the European picture:

- Governance entities
- Municipal involvement
- Financing stewardship
- Appetite for experimentation

Three lenses for comparing European stewardship models with CLTs, and examples:

Community ownership at scale

Swiss housing cooperatives stand out from other European models by advancing community stewardship of assets through deeply embedded democratic governance, long-term affordability, and an integrated approach to managing both residential and non-residential spaces, underpinned by a strong focus on long-term affordability and sustainability.

Community governance at scale

Denmark's long history of tenant democracy in non-profit housing offers an example of what community involvement in governance can look like at scale. Non-profit affordable housing represents 20% of the Danish housing market – approximately 600,000 housing units in total – and provides homes for approximately 1 million people. The housing organisations are present in all 98 municipalities.

Affordability: focus on scale

The first of **France's Organismes de Foncier Solidaire (OFS)** was established in Lille in 2014. The OFS model was inspired by Community Land Trusts, and there are many similarities between the models, but there are key differences, ranging from the degree of government involvement, OFS' particular focus on mechanisms to support affordability, and their distinct legal structure.

Selected Recommendations

1. Principles and practices that support community-led place stewardship should be, incorporated into planning, procurement, financial and practice policies. This should be across all sectors but particularly in the commissioning of affordable housing programmes, new towns and development corporations or state support for new housing developments.
2. The development of a network to support emerging community-led practice should be established and encouraged.
3. A low-cost shared data-sharing or digital platform should be developed to support community interaction.
4. Updates to standard viability models and assessments to incorporate effective place stewardship approaches.
5. Further work should be commissioned to develop a design process for place stewardship and to further develop and expand the right to manage opportunities to allow similar practices to be adopted within existing housing developments.
6. Further research should be commissioned to support this agenda, including to understand the resilience of new housing areas, to explore how new forms of ownership could further these proposals, to further learn from, and work with emerging forms of stewardship across multiple countries.

Reflections: implications for industry

1. Mainstream industry needs better solutions created by legislative changes, increasing complexity and reputational risk.
2. A lack of commercial or regulatory drivers has led to this sector of the built environment industry lacking innovation and diversification.
3. Pioneers already working early versions (e.g. Igloo), but for mainstream still need to be nudged through policy or campaigning.
4. Digital platforms (Givemyview, Commonplace) and IOT technology (e.g. Material registries) could significantly expand from development to management phases of new projects.
5. Opportunities for civic - industry collaborations in both UK and EU.
6. CLTs represent a really good solution, with the right conditions they create sufficiently viable business models.
7. There is an opportunity to influence UK government but needs coalitions.
8. 'Right to manage' reform offers a massive opportunity.