

Community-led Place
Stewardship

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

A learning report 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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1. Summary

How our local neighbourhood is managed has a fundamental impact on our quality of life. This is becoming even more important with changes in working patterns, climate breakdown, increased costs of living and as our population ages.

This work sets out how we can and need to transform the current norm of privately-run management regimes. Through analysis of five trailblazing cases and interviews with experts from across the sector we show how we need to shift towards a place stewardship approach that provides longer-term, genuinely democratic ways of making our neighbourhoods more resilient, promoting community quality of life and wellbeing.

This is not a new idea. In the early 20th century the Garden City movement was as focused on the finances and governance needed for long-term stewardship of place as it was on urban design. Our approach takes this heritage and projects it forward, considering our current context and how we might flourish in our neighbourhoods in coming decades.



London CLT, ©lan Miles www.flashpointpictures.co.uk, commissioned by the Community Land Trust Network.

Our key findings:

Place management isn't working

Millions of households in the UK live on newly-built large housing estates. If current plans materialise, a further 1.5million households will by 2029. There has been a long-term transition away from local authority place management, with over 80% now run by a private management company. The Competition and Markets Authority's 2024 [Housebuilding Market Study](#) points to significant 'detriment' for households associated with the status quo, and widespread evidence that many such arrangements fail to provide value for money, are unaccountable and provide poor quality services.

The UK's Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 is a step in the right direction but doesn't meet the major social, economic and environmental challenges facing neighbourhoods today and in the coming decades. As we seek to build more housing quickly, there is a danger of millions more residents being trapped in a failing system. Housing is already a major political issue, and the current system has led to a lack of trust in both developers and local authorities (source: [Grosvenor](#)). New ways are needed.

New ways are needed, building on existing practices

There is an opportunity to build and enhance some of the better practices and existing capabilities to create stewardship and governance that places citizen wellbeing, collaboration, ownership and responsibility towards our planet at their heart.

Our proposals do not require a wholesale redesign of the industry. Community-led stewardship models can build on aspects of the structures and professional capabilities of private management companies which enable changes to regulations to be effectively managed, while incorporating better governance, a greater role for citizens and more effective ways of maintaining financial sustainability.

With a major shift in the political context both in the UK and wider Europe, now is the right time to set out new expectations for how our places should be managed; and to put the traditional engagement, planning and development processes under the microscope to discover the moments at which a new trajectory is possible.

Many better practices are already in place

The common thread behind the success of all case studies conducted in this research is the commitment to place stewardship that places the citizen at its centre. Community-led does not mean that residents have to do everything themselves. Rather, it means conditions where:

- Meaningful community participation and consent occurs at every stage of the development process. The community does not necessarily have to

initiate and manage the process, or do the place management activities themselves, though some may choose to do so.

- The local community-led organisation owns, manages or stewards place assets in a manner of their choosing. This may be done with support from professionals and/or from partner organisations.
- The benefits to the local area and/or specified community must be clearly defined and legally protected in perpetuity.

Given that these examples are often counteracting industry norms, our project cases were enabled through support from at least two of the following stakeholder groups: citizens, local authority, developer and landowner. We document how they used effective forms of governance, financing and contracting arrangements and suitable knowledge infrastructure.

This report provides stakeholders across UK and Europe with a clear set of recommendations on how to initiate, grow and maintain more resilient, sustainable and effective place management structures and governance including:

- Early establishment of stewardship plans at the outset of even considering a large housing development to build trust and including within financial viability.
- The critical role of network organisations to support, fund and facilitate community-led stewardship, including through shared services provision.
- Establishing digital systems for stewardship data to support effective resident and stakeholder participation, provide data securely and transparently, increase resident power and leverage future data-related revenue streams for common good.
- Effective, flexible and proactive governance that provides the 'golden thread' of trust and accountability through the long development process.
- Maximising contractual and policy levers such as procurement, local authority action in the land market and to include place management in post occupancy evaluation.
- Developing more straightforward pathways for existing settlements to retrofit stewardship beyond the provisions of the Right to Manage.
- Continuing research and innovation support in an area that lacks a deep evidence-base, yet has significant potential for improving the lives and financial wellbeing of millions of households in the UK and wider Europe.

Community Land Trusts are already forging better practices

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are not-for-profit organisations that own, steward and develop land for the benefit of their local community and offer an example of these better practices. They are run democratically by, and accountable to their members, and anybody who lives or works in their area can join. In its 2023 State of the Sector report, the Community Land Trust Network

set out the potential to scale these to steward 278,000 homes and related assets through five 'products', one of which was their inclusion in larger housing projects.

Four of the five UK cases in this report include CLTs, with two also responsible for place stewardship involving a Community Land Trust (CLT). All five include the CLT requirements of being democratic, having a long term stake in the place and creating benefits for their localities.

Despite many misconceptions, CLTs are not only suitable for delivery and management of affordable housing but are a flexible model that can also utilise a number of legal structures and bring a range of benefits including managing speculation and promoting inclusive engagement and power relations. It is clear that CLTs should be at the heart of future place stewardship practice, alongside other forms of governance.

Related entity types from across Europe demonstrate how community-led stewardship can prosper in a range of contexts, supported by different governance and political enablers. The diversity of models existing in Europe offer learnings for those working in the UK, while the established history of CLTs and similar structures in the UK can offer a longitudinal framework for those working on the continent.

We have shown how these new approaches can be delivered

Although each project will have its own delivery route, this work has used the case studies to develop three typical scenarios for building effective place stewardship based on a purpose-led developer/landowner, local authority leadership or citizen campaigning.

Each scenario demonstrates how developers and local authorities can work with citizens to create new neighbourhoods that have significant benefits for residents and local stakeholders as they move from initial allocation of land, through to hand over and long term management.

Community-led place stewardship provides benefits for all stakeholders.

For those who plan and deliver new, large, housing-led developments, there are [multiple benefits and opportunities](#) to a community-led approach to stewardship. These include generational health and wellbeing outcomes ([based on being more locally connected and greater feelings of agency](#)), system efficiencies that reduce waste and therefore costs, and the development of a greater intrinsic social and environmental resilience.

The long-termism of settled communities means decisions are weighed with a 'good ancestor' mindset, supporting value-creation beyond the rise-and-fall cycle of development. Above all, community-led stewardship starts to democratise and open up the process of 'development', allowing a diversity and

plurality typically missing from current private-management models. In some of the case studies this has meant a far smoother ride through planning.

As the debate over where and how to deliver new housing intensifies, developers and local authorities who recognise citizens as critical actors in the process will be rewarded. A productive long-term working relationship with citizens, local residents, civic groups and businesses, in a co-agreed model, can provide valuable local detail to inform design, generate community buy-in, and support the evolution of places over time to be as successful and as robust as they were on the day of completion. It allows for the smooth handover and stewardship of increasingly complex local assets from sustainable urban drainage to EV charging points with potential for better value for money.

Embedded community work gives a much higher chance of success. Not just for housing, but for large, mixed-use urban developments. There needs to be an ethos of communication and fairness, which is rare.

– a property advisor

2. Introduction

About this section

This section introduces essential contextual factors which underscores the necessity of this report, focusing on private management companies and resident sentiments about the bodies that govern their neighbourhoods. We go on to outline the questions this report sets out to address.

It concludes by setting out the primary audience for this report and the partners involved in its creation.

Why this report?

Millions of households in the UK live on newly-built larger housing estates, with over 80% of these run by a private management company. The Competition and Markets Authority's 2024 [Housebuilding Market Study](#) points to widespread evidence that many such arrangements fail to provide value for money or even adequate provision of quality services. A wide range of organisations (including the National Leasehold Campaign, Association of Residential Managing Agents, Leasehold Knowledge Partnership, Chartered Institute of Housing and Property Litigation Association), including within the housebuilding sector, recognise that new approaches are needed to build on the reforms contained within the Leasehold Reform Act 2024.

Land stewardship is a conscious practice that rests on an understanding that community building takes time and commitment over generations, with a slower return on investment. However, a longer-term perspective rewards the landowner/ developer with opportunities for greater dividends from growth in future capital receipts and rental income.

– *Place-making Two: A stewardship approach to creating communities*

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, to make the right decisions regarding their neighbourhoods (source: [Grosvenor](#)), and recent years have seen a rise in interest in new citizen governance models, based on a long-held appreciation that locals know their place best and value longer-term outcomes.

This is evidenced by the growth of [Community Land Trusts](#) (with 360 trusts in England and Wales), [Community Energy Groups](#) (495 groups in England) and [Community Supported Agriculture](#) (220 in UK) as well as other digital and analogue initiatives described and supported by the [New Citizenship Project](#)

among others. We have long known that newly-created communities are particularly [affected by](#) social isolation which itself is very [prevalent](#). And many lack the basic social infrastructure - for example, shared spaces - required to make a healthy and resilient community.

In addition, the management and stewardship of new places needs to build in extra layers of resilience to adapt to the multiple crises that are and will increasingly affect all of us: extreme weather, vulnerable food systems, and measurable environmental phenomena such as urban heat islands, poor air quality, and local flooding. As we become an ageing society there will be increased demand for viable care economies.

The ingredients of resilience (are) overlapping social and civic circles, filled with people who, by virtue of living in close proximity and sharing common spaces, know and take care of each other. The greatest danger in times of stress or threat is isolation. Finding ways of expanding public spaces and nurturing civic involvement is not just some woolly-headed liberal project—it's a survival strategy.

– David Roberts, environmental writer and analyst

There is significant [evidence](#) that strong social infrastructure and well-integrated communities provide critical networks of support at times of stress.

Bearing this context in mind, this research set out to answer the following 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?

This report is released as a new government has been formed in the UK, elected with a mandate to significantly increase the delivery of new homes and establish a number of new towns. This provides a significant and timely opportunity to embed better stewardship approaches in their delivery.

Although this work focuses on examples in England, it also explores some of the patterns across Europe.

The partners

Laudes Foundation is seeking to develop wider initiatives that challenge and inspire industry to build economies that work for the many and value a wide range of outcomes. In particular, Laudes Foundation wishes to interrogate our relationship between the built environment and its workers and residents, including the prototyping of inclusive models of ownership and management

Laudes —
— Foundation

that underpin a just and inclusive society. This work has been kindly supported by its funding, and in particular builds on the collaboration between Laudes and Dark Matter Labs in developing the [New Economic Thinking](#) report. The Built Environment team at Laudes have been most involved in this work. This team aims to enable the implementation of the built environment's transition roadmaps and legislation for an inclusive, climate and nature positive industry and support socially-inclusive business models that ensure workers, residents and communities are centred in the built transition.

This work addressed both these two aims by addressing an under-studied yet critical part of the built environment system: The long term management of residential neighbourhoods.



The Community Land Trust Network was formed by pioneering CLTs in 2010 to make the community ownership of land and affordable housing commonplace. Drawing on years of experimentation it has begun identifying scalable blueprints for CLTs, from rural CLT-housing association partnerships to suburban infill. Stewardship of large sites is one emerging opportunity, pioneered by CLTs like Kennett CLT featured in this report.



Across Europe, including the United Kingdom, there are over 500 Community Land Trusts delivering and stewarding thousands of affordable homes and other assets. The **European Community Land Trust Network** is the voice for Community Land Trusts in Europe and aims to enable their growth and maximise the impact. Community Land Trusts are a viable option for the mainstream delivery of affordable, inclusive, and sustainable land use and housing. The integration of CLTs into large site developments demonstrates one way in which CLTs are a scalable solution to land and housing issues in the UK and across Europe.



In a context of climate breakdown and technological disruption, **Dark Matter Labs** focuses on accelerating societal transition towards collective care, shared agency, systems approaches, long-termism and interconnectedness. We work on the 'dark matter' - the invisible structures responsible for producing the majority of the world around us, ranging across policy and regulation to finance and data, governance and organisational culture, identity and democratic participation. We undertake open work in collaborative partnerships to provoke alternative visions of the future, designing how they might look in practice, and experimenting in context. In short, Dark Matter is an autonomous, not-for-profit, public interest laboratory. This report builds on a number of DML projects including Enabling Water Smart Communities ([link](#)), [A Just Transition of Europe's Built Environment](#), Smart Commons (2019, [link](#)), Compendium of the Civic Economy and many others.

Method

This work is based on over 20 interviews with experts, including developers, senior local authority officers, planning consultants, property advisors, and community stewardship organisations, as well as in-depth analysis of five English case studies which are already implementing aspects of better approaches. Desk research supported these interviews in shaping this report.

A workshop with a range of stakeholders from across the field was conducted in July 2024, with central findings and components of this report shared and discussed. We are grateful for the input of those who joined us for this session; feedback from the workshop has guided subsequent iterations of this document.

Who is it for?

This report is aimed at developers of multi-phase, housing-led sites in England; at landowners keen to ensure community input is a core part of any new development on their land; local and combined authorities considering strategies for successful long-term housing delivery in their area; platform organisations, networks and intermediaries and local citizen groups, who want to understand successful examples of long-term collaboration with developers, including the management of newly-developed places.

How to use this report

This report is structured around the following sections. It is the authors' intent that sections 3 and 4 provide evidence and nuanced reflections supporting the case for the new stewardship model presented in section 5. Section 6 shifts the focus towards action by presenting interactive scenarios that invite readers to consider the conditions enabling the best practices identified in previous sections. Section 7 compares our findings in the UK with the conditions and practices in Europe, to identify possible synergies and contrasts. Section 8 concludes the report with recommendations for particular audiences.

- Section 3: contextual information and introduction to community-led stewardship
- Section 4: leading examples
 - Outline of five case studies of community-led stewardship in England
 - Kennett CLT
 - St Clements (London CLT)
 - Chilmington Green
 - Leeds CID
 - Oakfield
 - Introduction to the Community Land Trust approach
 - Myth-buster: debunking misconceptions about Community Land Trusts and similar stewardship models
- Section 5: Stewardship in mainland Europe
 - Examples of European stewardship models
 - European stewardship models and CLTs: governance, affordability and ownership
 - Case studies: Switzerland's cooperatives, Denmark's non-profit housing, and France's Organismes de Foncier Solidaire

- Comparing the UK with the wider European context
- Section 6: Place stewardship principles and the community land trust model
 - Key characteristics of CLTs pertaining to stewardship
 - Myths and counter-evidence related to CLTs
- Section 7: Proposition for a community-led place stewardship model
 - A vision of what this model might look like
 - Outline of main characteristics of this model compared to the status quo
 - Recommendations for characteristics of this entity
- Section 8: Scenarios for enabling community-led stewardship
 - Introduction to scenarios as a way of understanding optimal conditions and interactions supporting new stewardship models
 - Three scenarios
 - Scenario 1: Purpose-led developer or landowner
 - Scenario 2: Local authority leadership
 - Scenario 3: Citizen campaign
- Section 9: Conclusions
- Annex 1: History of large, housing-led programmes in the UK

This report is accompanied by a set of online resources that are linked throughout. Together with this report, they are available under [Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike 4.0 Licence](#).

With sincere appreciation and thanks

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3. Long-term management of large housing developments in the UK

About this section

This section lays out the context in which large, housing-led communities in the UK have been planned and built in recent decades. To do this, we begin by defining the types of communities which are the focus of this study, and the standard development timeline they tend to adhere to.

Beginning with the history of place management in large-scale housing communities in the 18th century (where community-led stewardship has roots in this country), this section traces the shift toward today's status quo of privately managed estates. The state of the industry today points us toward a novel definition of place stewardship, which the remainder of this report goes on to explore.

What do we mean by large housing-led communities?

This research is focused on planned housing-led projects that are at least of a scale requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment (minimum 150 homes or 5 hectares). These will typically be brought forward under a single agreement such as a development agreement, planning application or ownership and therefore include a unitary management arrangement.

In reality these are likely to be communities that include many hundreds or even thousands of homes, with their own distinctive sense of place, social infrastructure (such as one or more community hubs, schools, shops, workspaces and health facilities) and physical infrastructure (such as roads, parks and flood defenses). They will be located in, or on the edge of, existing settlements, but may also form entirely new villages or towns.

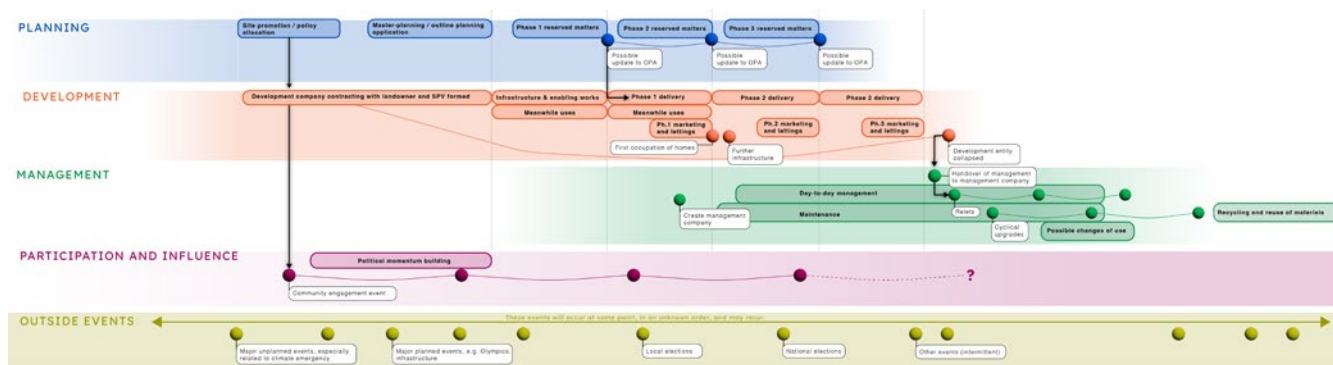
These types of sites will continue to play a key role in the significant need for more affordable and better homes and communities in the UK. In 2021 the [Letwin Review](#) found that there were nearly 400,000 unbuilt homes with full planning permission on sites of 1,500 homes or more in England, which is significantly more than the current annual housebuilding target.

Large housing-led sites are complex, require significant upfront infrastructure investment, and typically take a long time to plan and deliver. They are developed in stages, as set out in fig. 1 below. This typically involves:

- Promotion/allocation (a mix of land and planning processes that designate the use of a particular site),
- Land acquisition (financing and legal arrangements between land owner and developer);
- Planning permissions (outline and then detailed design of a particular site's layout, access and uses);
- Construction (building infrastructure then phased building of homes and other buildings);

- Sales (including to both private owners and institutional investors such as housing associations) and;
- Maintenance and adaptation (processes of changing, improving and maintaining the physical environment over time).

The development process can take more than 10 years and often over a decade. Specifically, [research](#) has found that sites of 1,000+ dwellings take on average five years to obtain detailed planning permission, then a further c.1½ years to deliver the first home. The subsequent build-out can take many years, even over a decade. During this period, hope for the future of the site is established even before the planning system is formally engaged.



[Figure 1. Standard development timeline: see [here](#) for full-scale version.]

Place management in larger housing-led communities

Planned large-scale housing communities have a long history in the UK, from the early philanthropic pioneers of the 18th Century, to Letchworth at the end of the 19th Century, to the Garden Communities Programme of the last few years (see a selection in Annex 1). Many of these initiatives emphasised the critical importance of long term stewardship and management and developed supporting financial and governance mechanisms as an integral part of the development model. Many are still operating successfully over a century since their establishment. There is much to be learned from these pioneers.

It has long been [recognised](#) that many recent large-scale housing developments are not well-designed, built or managed and the [links](#) with quality of life. There is a wealth of policy proposals, literature, checklists, guidance and case study work setting out how better new housing-led projects can be delivered. There has been much emphasis on seeking to raise design standards (e.g. from [Homes England](#), the [Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission](#), the [National Design Guide](#) and [Model Design Code](#), [Future Homes Standards](#) etc.) and policies are increasingly seeking to improve place management:

- England's National Planning Policy Framework ([NPPF](#)) (para 74c) and Homes England's [Garden Communities Toolkit](#) refer to the garden principles, one of which is community ownership of land. The NPPF also requires that planning should ensure that new developments function well 'not just in the short term but over the life of the development' (para 129) and includes several provisions securing long-term maintenance for trees (para 136) and water infrastructure (para 169(d)).
- In its 2023-2028 Strategic [Plan](#) England's national development agency - Homes England - is refocusing its effort on 'pride in place' and will include long-term stewardship plans as one of its requirements for partners
- The Stewardship Initiative has produced a draft [standard](#) setting out what landowners, developers and their agents should do to enhance quality and outcomes including '*long-term estate management through Community Management Trust (or equivalent) provided for from the outset with provision for funding to maintain quality*'.

However there is a long way to go. The Quality of Life Foundation found that 71% of local people say they have no or not much control over important decisions affecting their neighbourhood and local community and that 47% want local people to have more of a say over what happens in their local area. It has therefore placed 'control' and 'community' as two of the six key foundations of its housing quality framework based on a wide ranging evidence [review](#).

The privatisation of place management

Throughout the 20th century, much of the place management function for new large housing-led schemes was taken on by local authorities in 'adopting' the various physical assets. The maintenance was funded through local taxes (such as rates or council tax) and by developers providing an endowment (also known as a commuted sum) at final handover of a project.

Over the past four decades, there has been a major shift away from local government adoption, towards privately owned and run management arrangements. Across the 1980s the role of local authorities in England moved to regulatory functions with a reduction in the role of authorities in direct housing delivery and wider changes in the privatisation of public services. This included restrictions on authorities in building and borrowing for new homes in the 1980 Housing Act and deregulation of the financial service industry. It is clear that many local authorities are facing financial difficulties. Ageing populations and increasing social care bills – among other things – will challenge budgets further.

In 2024 the Competitions and Markets Authority (CMA) found that at least 87% of major estates assessed were using private estate management companies of various sorts to manage them. They found significant evidence of problematic and detrimental activities in the place management of new housing estates. This arose through high charges relative to the quality of amenities and management, disproportionate sanctions being applied and a lack of resident power in determining the management regime and making key decisions such as which managing agent to appoint, or the service levels.

In recognition of some of the most egregious practices, the Leasehold Reform Act was passed in 2024 which improved some leaseholder rights, giving greater transparency and opportunities to challenge charges, and making it easier for residents to take over building management.

Although not a core focus of this research, it should be noted that it is not just the private housing estate sector that has challenges. In May 2024, after much campaigning, a [letter](#) signed by 35 MPs implied significant problems in the way in which social housing tenants were (typically over) charged by their social landlords.

The state of the industry

There is a wide range of developers who will take different approaches to place management. From traditional house builders who focus on bringing forward land and then exiting the engagement as soon as possible (making up the majority of the industry), to master developers who bring forward serviced sites, selling or partnering on each phase, who take a longer-term perspective, to 'for purpose' developers who try to balance financial and social/environmental outcomes as well as some Housing Associations, some Build to Rent organisations and long-term landowner/developers.

Place management typically has far less financial importance to the developer than the sales values or construction and on-costs because a) These are a very small amount over the development cycle and b) Most developers do not retain a long-term stake in any place.

For mainstream industry players, the focus on place-management has tended to be during the development phase, where sales values can be positively affected by a high quality management regime. Once the last 'unit' has sold, then place management is simply viewed as a cost, and this is typically the trigger point for the transfer of place management to a private management company.

Until recently it was possible to charge significant, and often increasing ground rents to leaseholders on new housing estates. This practice has now been made illegal. CLTs are, uniquely, still able to charge residential ground rents in recognition of their statutory requirement to operate democratically, not-for-profit, and for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the community.

Place management is becoming more expensive, complex and regulated. Inflation has hit all sectors of construction including maintenance and repairs, with raw materials, products, labour and supply chain issues increasing with costs increasing particularly after COVID. New places have typically managed relatively simple physical assets such as parks and roads, but must now often include energy infrastructure (e.g. commonly-held PV arrays, batteries and EV charging stations) flood protection (e.g. Sustainable Urban Drainage) and biodiversity. A recent focus on building safety has created a huge and costly legacy of work for building owners and management companies. This all requires greater knowledge and skills for both the managers and those in the governance structures.

Interviewees described estate management as a 'low margins' business, with constant pressure from residents to keep management fees low. This has led to a sector that lacks innovation, and the sidelining of quality concerns and has minimal innovation.

From place management to place stewardship

There are several levels of place management ranging from unmanaged to stewarded.



Most large housing developments have private management regimes in place. Typically, private management regimes levy fees to residents to provide a basic level of maintenance for shared parts of the estate concerned, such as roads, verges, green spaces or community buildings. These can vary in quality from simply maintaining what is there, to including sinking funds that proactively collect money for future renewals. The table on the next page sets out the various common types of stewardship body.

Type of stewardship body	Summary
Management company	Probably the most commonly used form of stewardship body. They are companies set up to manage assets (land, property or facilities) as part of a development. Membership/ownership of the companies is very often extended to residents, who become members or shareholders, depending on the constitution of the company. They are sometimes called community trusts or development trusts (see below).
Community Land Trust (CLT)	Non-profit, community-based organisations run by volunteers that develop housing, workspaces, community facilities or other assets that meet the needs of the community. They are legally defined (in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008) but are not a legal entity in their own right and so can adopt one of several legal forms.
Development Trusts	Community organisations created to enable sustainable development in their area. They use self-help, trading for social purpose, and ownership of buildings and land to bring about long-term social, economic and environmental benefits in their community. Similar to community land trusts but have no legal definition and can adopt a range of constitutional forms and business models. They have traditionally been used in the regeneration of an existing area rather than in the development of a new community.
Other Types of Trust	A trust is a way of holding assets that separates legal ownership from economic interest. Assets are usually owned by trustees and managed in the interests of the beneficiaries according to the terms of the trust. Trusts can be unincorporated or incorporated and can take a number of legal forms.
Community Interest Companies	A special type of limited company which exist to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. CICs are set up to use their assets, income and profits for the benefit of the community they are formed to serve, and must embrace special features such as an 'asset lock', which ensures that assets are retained within the company to support its activities or otherwise used to benefit the community.
Industrial and Provident Societies	Organisations conducting an industry, business or trade, either as a co-operative or for the benefit of the community. Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation is an example of this model.
Co-operative societies	Run for the mutual benefit of their members, with any surplus income usually being reinvested in the organisation to provide better services and facilities. They often take the form of an industrial and provident society (see above), but can take a number of different legal forms.
Housing associations or registered social landlords	Some housing associations or registered social landlords provide services to communities beyond their role as social landlords. They might be contracted by a local authority to maintain the public realm or run community centres. They might, themselves, own these assets if there are facilities they have built as part of their own housing development.
Energy service company (ESCo)	A commercial structure created specifically to produce, supply and manage the local delivery of decentralised energy to larger, holistically planned developments.
Multi-utility services company (MUSCo)	Provides all the energy-related services of an ESCo, but also provides telecoms and/or water services for the site.

Source: Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (pre-submission draft), August 2020. [Link](#)

Place Stewardship is a type of place management that goes beyond management to sustain and enhance a place's ecological, social, and economic value over the long term. It includes the following key dimensions and associated benefits:

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

- Ongoing development of the local area, going beyond attention to maintaining existing assets.
- Better social, environment and economic values.

Place stewardship requires a holistic and interconnected view of people, place, community, bioregion, nation and planet. It recognises the interconnectedness of different forms of value and is based on an inclusive means of governance and decision making.

The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) has issued a range of reports and other forms of guidance around stewardship; these publications are important resources for those wishing to better understand, or create, long-term place stewardship arrangements. Key publications, including “[Built Today. Treasured Tomorrow: A Good Practice Guide to Long-Term Stewardship](#)” can be accessed from the TCPA website Stewardship section, [here](#).



We Can Make, Bristol. ©Ian Miles www.flashpointpictures.co.uk, commissioned by the Community Land Trust Network.

4. Five trailblazing English place stewardship case studies

About this section

In the context of the long-term management structures of large housing developments today, as outlined in section 3, the five case studies presented in this section offer models of alternative stewardship routes.

This section describes the core features of five housing settlements in England where forward-looking stewardship practices have been instrumental in the creation of large housing-led sites. The case study research was guided by interviews with key stakeholders from each site as well as industry experts, alongside desk research.

These case studies provide the basis for our sketch of a community-led place stewardship model which follows in section 7.

All details included in the case studies reflect the situation at the time of research in 2024 and may change as the development process progresses.

This research used five English case studies to explore new forms of stewardship as they exist in large, developer-led house building developments in the UK at present, along with their associated learnings. These existing examples, guided by interviews with core stakeholders and experts, point to contextual factors that are indicative of today's state of play. The real-world outcomes associated with these places, further support the scenarios and proposals for new stewardship arrangements detailed in later sections.

The cases were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- More than 150 dwellings being constructed on a site greater than 5ha in total
- Breadth in existing community-led stewardship structures, including CLTs and other arrangements
- A range of developer roles, as well as geographic and political contexts in order to maximise potential learning across the group and point to possible scenarios (see section 8)
- Identifiable success factors in each of the cases

This section outlines core characteristics of each of the five cases, pointing to the factors that drove aspects of success and possible learnings for interested parties. In addition, it is important to note that there is an abundance of existing research and other forms of knowledge that may provide additional nuance around each of these examples; as each of them is still in development, we expect further research to continue to evolve the picture. Further details of the cases can be found in the write-ups linked to each example.

Map and Summary table of characteristics



A 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, giving 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.



Climate Innovation District, Leeds. © Leeds Community Homes

B 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.

C 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
- £50 million project cost

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.

D 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.



St Clement's, London ©Architects and Masterplanners JTP. Photographer: Craig Auckland / Fotohaus.

E 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 become a CLT 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.

What we learned from the English case studies

Across our case studies it's clear that there was an early and ongoing commitment to new stewardship from at least two of the following actor categories: community organisations, local authorities, developers and landowners. Coalition-building of key actors is an important part of the process. This requires effective leadership, governance, participation and the effective deployment of resources. These are set out in more detail below.

In addition, cases benefitted where pre-existing stakeholder priorities were in line with new stewardship practices. Our case study research indicated that success factors in enabling new forms of stewardship included:

- Effective and evolving governance supporting stakeholder collaboration from the outset
- Willingness to use financial resources and/or planning policy levers by initiating stakeholder to support long-term stewardship
- A viable, diversified and independent business plan for the place stewardship entity
- A network of ongoing support for stakeholders and for residents in particular from national entities, experts and seeing what works elsewhere

We have used the richness of the case studies to inform both the Community-Led Stewardship Model (section 7) and the Scenarios (section 8) below.

5. Place stewardship in mainland Europe

About this section

As European cities continue to grow and evolve, the need for robust, flexible, and community-oriented governance models become increasingly important. Many European countries have a less privatised approach to stewardship than the UK and this section intends to build an understanding of the macro patterns across a select group of countries. This work serves as a starting point for the CLT sector to learn lessons between contexts.

A key element of this work intends to consider the range of stewardship models present across Europe, in the context of our learnings about the integration of CLTs in large housing-led sites in England.

The first part of this section highlights a selection of stewardship models and relevant structures across Europe, organised by jurisdiction. This is followed by an exploration of the connections between models in this study, considered in terms of governance, ownership and affordability, supported by our survey findings and three brief case studies, of the Danish non-profit housing system, of Switzerland's cooperatives, and of Organismes de Foncier Solidaire (OFS) in France, demonstrating governance, ownership and affordability at scale. The section concludes with a comparison of the European context with what's going on in the UK.

Note on the survey methodology, findings, limitations and possible future work

This research combined findings from a survey issued with desktop research. The survey was sent to ten countries, selected based on knowledge of active contacts in these places. The countries were:

- The Netherlands
- France
- Belgium
- Spain (Catalonia)
- Sweden
- Ireland
- Portugal
- Switzerland
- Germany (no response)
- Austria (no response)

The findings from this survey, as presented at the end of this section, are a starting point for future potential work. With additional engagement strategies, for example using an open-access wiki, this knowledge base could support further activity and learning across Europe. The survey data could be strengthened by further responses from the initial countries, a broader sample of countries included, and by initiating follow-up conversations with selected respondents to clarify and deepen elements of their answers, as well as further analysis of responses.

Examples of European stewardship models

This section highlights different stewardship and governance arrangements from entities across Europe. This list is not exhaustive and offers a starting point and indication of the structures that form a part of this landscape.

In a range of locations:

Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

- Countries: Found across Europe (notably in the UK, Belgium, and France).
- Role: CLTs are non-profit, democratic, community-led organisations. They develop and manage homes that are affordable to low and middle income households, as well as other assets that contribute to thriving local communities. They act as long-term stewards of these assets, ensuring they remain permanently affordable.
- Distinguishing features: Many CLTs in Europe make an important distinction between the homes and the land on which they are built. The home is owned or leased to a resident, but the land beneath - the main driver of market value - is owned collectively and held in trust with legal commitments never to resell it. This protects from increases to the land value. Legal safeguards are in place to ensure long-term affordability. CLTs have a democratic governance structure, which brings together residents, businesses and public institutions and balances collective and individual interest.

Homeowners' Associations (HOAs)

- Found in various countries, particularly in suburban developments across Europe.
- Role: HOAs are responsible for the governance of shared infrastructure, amenities, and enforcing rules in housing developments. They collect fees from homeowners for the upkeep of roads, parks, and communal facilities.
- Distinguishing features: HOAs in Europe tend to have less power over individual properties compared to their U.S. counterparts, where they may exert significant control over property use and aesthetics.
- More information [here](#)

Cooperative Housing Boards

- Found throughout Europe, especially in Scandinavia and Central Europe.
- Role: These entities govern cooperative housing developments, where residents own shares in the cooperative and jointly manage the building or housing complex. Shared spaces and infrastructure are maintained by the board, which is made up of residents.
- Distinguishing features: Cooperative boards tend to have more direct community involvement compared to external management entities like syndics.

- More information [here](#)

Public-private partnerships (PPPs)

- Various European countries, particularly in larger urban developments.
- Role: PPPs are often formed to manage large-scale infrastructure projects in housing developments, such as transit systems, public parks, and utility services. These partnerships allow for shared governance between local governments and private developers or operators.
- Distinguishing features: PPPs often focus on larger, urban infrastructure projects, rather than day-to-day management of residential amenities.

- More information [here](#)

Municipal government stewardship

- Common across Europe.
- Role: In some cases, local governments take responsibility for maintaining shared infrastructure and amenities in housing developments, particularly public parks, roads, and utilities.
- Distinguishing features: In many cases, municipal governance tends to focus on public infrastructure, rather than specific residential property management.
- For more information from Europe, search for country-specific resources. For more information from the UK, see [here](#).

Mutual Home Ownership Societies (MHOS)

- UK and expanding across Europe.
- Role: These societies allow residents to collectively own and manage homes through a mutual structure. MHOS helps make housing more affordable by separating land ownership from building ownership, where residents lease homes from the collective.
- Distinguishing features: The mutual structure emphasises collective ownership and long-term affordability, making it distinct from traditional co-ownership models.
- More information [here](#) (UK)

Local Development Trusts

- UK, expanding across Europe.
- Role: Local development trusts are community-led, non-profit organisations that manage shared infrastructure and services in specific areas. These trusts often focus on regeneration projects, ensuring that local communities retain control over the development and long-term management of their neighbourhoods.
- Distinguishing features: Focused on neighbourhood regeneration and development, as opposed to ongoing property management.
- More information [here](#) (Scotland)

France

Organismes de Foncier Solidaire (OFS) (France)

- Role: OFS are similar to CLTs in that they own land to ensure long-term affordability and community benefit, often in partnership with local municipalities. The buildings on the land are sold or leased to individuals or cooperatives at affordable rates.
- Distinguishing features: OFS tend to operate under formal, state-supported frameworks and the focus on collective governance and participation is less than might be expected in a CLT.
- More information [here](#) and [here](#)

Société Civile Immobilière (SCI) (France)

- Role: SCIs are a type of real estate holding company often used in France to manage shared property and real estate investments. While typically focused on family-owned properties, SCIs can also be used in multi-owner developments to manage shared infrastructure and distribute ownership among shareholders.
- Distinguishing features: SCIs operate like companies, with shareholders and a business structure, and may not always involve community participation.
- More information [here](#)

Les Offices Publics de l'Habitat (OPH) (France)

- Role: These public housing offices manage social housing developments and the infrastructure within them. They are responsible for maintaining common spaces, ensuring affordable housing, and improving the quality of life for tenants.
- Distinguishing features: OPHs are public bodies with a strong focus on affordable and social housing, rather than privately governed residential areas.
- More information [here](#)

Sweden

Bostadsrättsförening (Sweden)

- Role: This is a cooperative housing association in which residents own shares in the association, which owns the entire property. The cooperative is responsible for managing shared amenities such as gardens, parking, and communal areas.
- Distinguishing features: Bostadsrättsförening gives residents ownership of shares rather than direct ownership of their units, distinguishing it from private ownership models.
- More information [here](#)

Samfällighet (Sweden)

- Role: A samfällighet is a collective of property owners who manage shared infrastructure like roads, water systems, or recreational

areas within a housing development. It is a formal legal entity, with responsibilities to maintain shared property and ensure the smooth functioning of shared services.

- Distinguishing features: Focused more on infrastructure maintenance than direct property management.
- More information [here](#)

Belgium

Conseil de Copropriété and Syndic de Copropriété (Belgium)

- Role: The conseil de copropriété is the council of co-owners in an apartment building or housing development, responsible for governance and oversight of shared spaces. The syndic de copropriété is the property manager or management entity appointed by the council to handle day-to-day operations, such as maintenance, financial management, and enforcing community rules.
- Distinguishing features: The two-tier system (council and syndic) provides a more structured governance model than some less formal HOA setups.
- More information [here](#)

Netherlands

Vereniging van Eigenaars (Netherlands)

- Role: This is the association of owners in a residential building or development. Each apartment or property owner automatically becomes a member of the association, which is responsible for maintaining shared amenities and infrastructure. The Vereniging van Eigenaars has legal obligations, such as holding meetings and maintaining a reserve fund.
- Distinguishing features: More legal obligations than informal homeowner associations, ensuring compliance with national regulations.
- More information [here](#) and [here](#)

Ireland

Owners' Management Companies (OMCs) (Ireland)

- Role: OMCs are legal entities formed to manage shared infrastructure in apartment complexes or housing estates. They are responsible for maintaining common areas, collecting fees, and enforcing community rules.
- Distinguishing features: OMCs in Ireland operate under more formal legal frameworks, with extensive oversight responsibilities compared to more informal arrangements in some countries.
- More information [here](#)

Approved Housing Bodies (Ireland)

- Role: These are not-for-profit organisations that provide and manage

social housing. They are often involved in developments with shared infrastructure, ensuring proper maintenance and governance of common areas for residents.

- Distinguishing features: Focuses more on social and affordable housing than on private co-ownership governance.
- More information [here](#)

Germany, Austria, Switzerland

Bürgerstiftungen (Germany)

- Role: These are citizen foundations that manage local public spaces, green infrastructure, or community centres. They often focus on community participation in urban development and the preservation of public amenities. In some cases, they manage shared infrastructure or support local cooperative housing initiatives.
- Distinguishing features: They are usually more involved in the preservation and management of public spaces rather than strictly residential property.
- More information [here](#)

Wohnungseigentümergeinschaft (WEG) (Germany)

- Role: This is a formal homeowners' association for apartment owners, responsible for managing shared areas and infrastructure such as hallways, gardens, and parking spaces in residential buildings. The WEG is governed by a legal framework, which includes regular meetings, financial contributions, and decision-making processes.
- Distinguishing features: The WEG operates under strict legal guidelines in Germany, focusing specifically on apartment ownership.
- More information [here](#)

Baugemeinschaften (Germany, Austria)

- Role: These are collective building communities where groups of individuals come together to design, build, and manage their own housing developments. Baugemeinschaften often manage shared infrastructure, such as community gardens, parking, and energy systems, with an emphasis on sustainability and communal living.
- Distinguishing features: Baugemeinschaften are more focused on the planning and development phase of housing projects, where residents have significant input in the design and management process.
- More information [here](#) and [here](#)

Wohnungsbaugenossenschaften (Germany, Austria, Switzerland)

- Role: These housing cooperatives allow members to own shares in the cooperative, granting them the right to occupy a dwelling. The cooperative manages all shared spaces and infrastructure, often with a focus on affordability and community engagement.

- Distinguishing features: Wohnungsbaugenossenschaften tend to be larger in scale and more formalised, with a greater focus on long-term community housing development.

- More information [here](#)

Spain, Portugal

ESAL Agreement

- Role: The ESAL Agreement (Special Agreement for Land Assignment) in Spain is a legal framework that allows housing cooperatives to develop affordable housing on publicly owned land in exchange for managing and maintaining the property for long-term community benefit.
- Distinguishing features: Under this agreement, cooperatives like Abril and La Domèstika are granted long-term use rights, typically for 75 years, enabling them to construct and manage affordable housing without purchasing the land outright. This model ensures the land remains in public hands while providing housing at below-market rates
- More information [here \(Barcelona City Council\)](#)

Finland

Kaupunkilaisten Yhteistyöryhmät (Finland)

- Role: These community action groups are grassroots organisations involved in the management and stewardship of shared urban spaces, particularly in large housing developments or social housing. They focus on local governance, participation, and community development.
- Distinguishing features: These groups are often more informal and focused on civic participation rather than legal property management.

Community-led stewardship at scale across Europe – drawing connections between different practices

Each of the models above has their own approach adapted to the local context and needs.

In this section, we use Community Land Trusts as a control structure against which to begin to compare other models. Across Europe there are over 500 Community Land Trusts delivering and stewarding thousands of affordable homes and other assets. The European Community Land Trust Network is the voice for Community Land Trusts and aims to scale the approach across Europe. Community Land Trusts have a number of unique characteristics in relation to their governance, ownership and affordability. These are summarised below.

- Governance - CLTs are non-profit organisations that can be joined by anyone in the geographic area. They have a democratic governance structure that brings together residents, businesses and public institutions and balances collective and individual interest. Development and decisions are made by and for the community.
- Ownership - CLTs rethink traditional ownership structures. In most cities, house prices are increasing not because of changes to the building but because of increases in the land value. CLTs make an important distinction between the homes and the land on which they're built. The home belongs to a resident as we are used to (fostering low- income home ownership; social rent or utilising co-operative approaches), but the land beneath - the main driver of market value - is owned collectively by CLT with legal commitments never to resell it. This protects from increases to the land value and speculation.
- Affordability - CLTs have legal commitments to steward the land over the long-term. They own and manage the land in trust for the benefit of the local community, ensuring that homes stay affordable and are well managed in perpetuity. Different mechanisms are in place to ensure lasting affordability, including caps on resale in the case of home ownership.

Key survey findings: governance, ownership and affordability

The following section reflects overall findings from our survey of ten European countries.

- Across Europe, the governance of shared amenities and infrastructure predominantly involves a mix of private and public homeowner associations and condominium associations, which use locally-specific naming and legal structures.
- Municipalities also continue to play a key role, however this rests mostly in the ongoing governance of shared public spaces such as parks and roads.
- The use of private management companies is common across all contexts, with respondents noting challenges related to identifying a suitable manager or management company (based on availability or reliability), particularly in more diverse or socioeconomically challenged contexts where there might be less overall consensus.
- In regions such as the Netherlands, the Association of Owners (Vereniging van Eigenaars, VVE), and Belgium, with the syndic de copropriété (Co-owned Property Manager) there is a legally mandated structure or requirement for managing and maintaining buildings with multiple owners. For example, in Belgium, as soon as there is more than one owner in a building, the appointment of a syndic is legally required.
- As in the English context, professional management entities (such as a syndic de copropriété) are frequently contracted to handle the day-to-

day operations and maintenance of shared amenities. This is a common practice across various regions, ensuring that specialised expertise is applied to manage complex infrastructure effectively. However, the availability and reliability of these professional managers was found to vary, particularly in more diverse or socioeconomically challenged contexts.

- In the survey, it was found that there is insufficient pan-European evidence on the entities that are stewarding new neighbourhoods which indicated a need for further research. There are studies on the potential for co-operatives, or thematic issues such as affordable housing ([Housing Europe, 2024](#)).
- Public bodies and developers prefer models that are well-established, both private and public, emphasising the need for clear legal frameworks, as these are deemed to provide stability and predictability.
- Experimentation with new models, such as France's Organismes de Foncier Solidaire (OFS) reflect a willingness to explore innovative approaches to create non-speculative land stock for housing in line with CLT principles. However the stewardship element of OFS and similar emerging models is less strong, suggesting that there is a greater shift needed to draw out community stewardship as a key part of the potential of this offering, and to integrate this into future phases. At present, this structure has been used relatively widely, including plans for it to be deployed for approximately 20,000 homes in Paris, but the model has not yet been used on very large sites.
- Responses indicated a number of exemplary large sites across Europe such as Vollgut in Berlin (Germany) or IEWAN in Nijmegen (The Netherlands), which demonstrate effective community-based management. These cases are explored in more detail in the following sub-section.

This section uses the lens of governance, ownership and affordability to draw connections between Community Land Trusts and other community-led practices that exist across Europe. In each section, an example is shared of how this attribute is delivered at scale, drawing inspiration from other community-led practices.

Community governance practices across Europe

Community Land Trusts approach to community governance

CLTs are non-profit organisations that can be joined by anyone in the geographic area. They have a democratic governance structure that brings together residents, businesses and public institutions and balances collective and individual interest. Development and decisions are made by and for the community.

Other community-led governance practices

Cooperative housing boards, Bostadsrättsförening, emphasise active resident participation in decision-making, while PPPs and municipal governance models tend to involve less direct resident control. Entities like Vereniging van Eigenaars (Netherlands), conseil de copropriété (Belgium), and OMCs (Ireland) operate under strict legal obligations, ensuring compliance with national laws. In contrast, HOAs may have more flexible or informal governance structures, depending on the country.

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.

Denmark's non-profit housing: tenant democracy

Danish non-profit housing differs from a Community Land Trust (CLT) in that it is primarily managed by housing associations that provide affordable rental housing funded by tenant contributions and government support, while CLTs focus on long-term land stewardship and collective ownership of land to ensure permanent affordability and community control. Community Land Trusts can and do work in partnership with housing associations so there is scope for further learning between these approaches.

Background

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.

Danish housing snapshot:

- Population: approximately 5.8 million
- Dwellings: over 2.5 million
- Tenure: about 20% of Danes live in non-profit social housing.
- The non-profit housing sector is primarily managed by independent housing associations, collectively owned by tenants.
- Housing cooperatives and social housing associations provide rental housing at cost, and profits are reinvested into housing stock. Municipalities have the right to allocate 25% of available social housing to vulnerable groups.
- Rent levels are regulated, and housing is affordable compared to market rates.
- About 530 housing associations manage the non-profit housing estates in Denmark. Some large administrators, such as [KAB](#), manage up to 500 estates (holding 64,000 units).
- Denmark's largest social housing estate is Gellerup, in Aarhus, which houses approximately 10,000 people, in about 6,000 units, which is managed by the housing estate Brabrand Boligforening. It is currently undergoing an extensive regeneration push with a major architectural competition following a period of decline.

History and origins

The Danish non-profit housing system began in the mid-19th century, originating as a response to urban housing shortages caused by industrialization. Initially driven by labour unions and charities, the system was formalised in 1919 when laws were enacted to support housing associations, emphasising collective ownership and reinvestment of funds. After the Second World War, this system expanded, with the National Building Fund established in 1966 to finance refurbishments, during what was also a period of intense housing construction in Denmark. Tenant democracy was institutionalised in the 1970s.

Tenant democracy

Danish social housing emphasises internal tenant democracy at all levels. Non-profit housing associations are self-governing and self-organised entities, each governed by tenant-led democracy, which is arguably more advanced in Denmark than anywhere else in Europe. The local board for each individual estate is constituted by tenant representatives elected at an annual meeting. At these meetings, tenants exercise decision-making power over rents, estate budget, estate management rules and major maintenance and refurbishment projects (including whether refurbishment is carried out, what the nature of refurbishment will be and how much it will cost). A majority of tenants must approve any proposed sales of units in their estate.

There are around 7,000 of these local boards, representing approximately 530 non-profit social housing associations. This structure enables tenant oversight and control over their living conditions and the management of their housing estates.

Independent housing associations

While social housing associations are collectively owned and legally independent, they receive public subsidies. The associations manage the housing stock, including construction, renewal, and reinvestment. They operate under strict regulations, requiring any profits to be reinvested in new housing or refurbishments. This system ensures that social housing remains affordable and isolated from market price fluctuations.

Broad access

Social housing in Denmark serves a broad population. While it is available to vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled (to whom the government owes a particular obligation of provision, as below), it also provides housing for a wider range of household types. The target group for social housing is not limited by income testing, and universal access is maintained via waiting lists, ensuring that housing remains accessible to diverse social groups.

Municipal involvement

Municipalities are entitled to allocate 25% of vacancies in social housing to vulnerable families or individuals with unmet housing needs. This collaboration ensures that the housing sector remains an integral part of broader social policies, helping municipalities assist vulnerable groups such as the elderly, handicapped, and socially vulnerable.

National Building Foundation (NBF)

Older housing estates channel funds into the NBF once mortgages are paid off. This foundation supports renovations and social programs within the social housing sector. It helps maintain and improve the quality of social housing estates, ensuring that even older buildings meet modern standards and that residents benefit from ongoing social initiatives.

For more details about Danish non-profit housing, please see [here](#) (BL, the Danish Federation of Non-Profit Housing Providers), [here](#) (Housing 2030), [here](#) (European Commission Construction Sector Observatory policy factsheet) and academic publications [here](#) and [here](#).

Community ownership structures across Europe

Community Land Trusts approach to community ownership

CLTs own land, housing and other assets such as commercial units and amenities on behalf of their shareholding community, investing any surplus in the defined CLT area. They take a range of forms and operate at different scales; properties may be on a rental, shared-equity ownership, co-operative basis or even sold on the open market as cross-subsidy.

In most countries across Europe, CLTs make an important distinction between the homes and the land on which they're built. So the home belongs to a resident as we are used to, but the land beneath - the main driver of market value - is owned collectively by CLT with legal commitments never to resell it. This protects from increases to the land value and speculation.

Other community-led ownership practices

Cooperative models like Bostadsrättsförening (Sweden) and cooperative housing boards allow residents to own shares in the entity rather than individual properties, differing from private ownership structures found in HOAs or municipal governance models.

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. While these cooperatives have been supported by enabling factors from within Switzerland's housing tradition and legal and economic particularities, these conditions have supported the exploration of governance models, cooperative culture, and approaches to housing and design of public spaces that bear relevance for those working in other countries and contexts.

Switzerland's cooperatives

Co-operative structures can work in combination with Community Land Trusts - the land is owned collectively by the CLT. Residents can collectively own shares in the co-operative that manages the housing above.

Swiss housing snapshot:

- Dwellings: about 4.5 million, housing approximately 8.8 million people
- Tenure: social rent 6%, private rent 51.5%, owner occupied 42.5% (2020)
- This is the lowest rate of owner occupied dwellings in Europe.
- About 5% of housing in Switzerland is held by cooperatives, about half of which are in the city and canton of Zürich.

- Nearly 1 in 4 dwellings in Zürich are owned by a cooperative or public foundation.
- These rents are, on average, 20% below market rates.
- Since 2003, the Swiss Federal Housing Act has upheld housing as a basic right underpinned by the cooperative structure. The Swiss Federal Constitution requires the government to promote low-priced housing and ensure availability of affordable dwellings to all who need them.

Background

- Several central features of Swiss cooperative housing are as follows:
 - Deeply embedded democratic governance
 - Resident-led decision making
 - Working groups and committees
 - Holistic management of public and commercial spaces
 - Integration of public and commercial assets
 - Shared amenities with the public
 - Long-term affordability and sustainability focus
 - Affordability as a core value
 - Sustainability as a guiding principle
 - Ownership and shared responsibility
 - Collective ownership models
 - Cross-generational community building
 - Legal and Institutional Support
 - Institutionalised cooperative model
 - Public-private cooperation

Switzerland cooperative case: Mehr als Wohnen (More than Living), Zürich

- Location: Hunziker Areal, Zürich, Switzerland
- 400 apartments with over 1200 residents, 150 jobs and 30 retail units
- Area: 40,000 square metres

History and origins:

- In 2007, Zürich celebrated 100 years of government support for cooperative housing by launching an international competition to generate ideas for non-profit residential construction. The city released industrial land in the Hunziker Areal district for a low-cost housing development. The project was the result of a collaboration between over 50 cooperatives.
- Mehr als Wohnen, a district-sized development based on the '2000-watt society' principle, was built with 13 passive house-standard buildings comprising approximately 400 apartments.

Cooperative model and stewardship:

- Communal facilities include workspaces, green spaces, playgrounds, and social hubs like a daycare centre and urban gardens.
- Residents can form associations and apply for funding from the Solidarity Fund, which all contribute to based on income.
- A participation manager supports resident groups, while a staffed reception oversees services.
- The guesthouse generates income from weekday business rentals, while affordable short-term rentals are available to residents on weekends and holidays.

Governance:

Governance is resident-led with participatory decision-making. Key governance bodies:

- Commons Committee: Selected by the General Assembly, supports social life, resident initiatives, and manages the Solidarity Fund.
- General Assembly: Composed of all residents.
- Board of Directors: 15-20 people.
- Managing Board: 8 members from various professional backgrounds. This structure prevents bottlenecks seen in cooperatives managed by a single director. The board also attends resident meetings.
- Regular resident meetings and thematic working groups (e.g., energy use, green spaces) ensure democratic decision-making.

For more details of Mehr als Wohnen, see their 10 year reflections, 'A vision becomes reality – 10 years lessons learned' [here](#).

A full case study associated with this report is also presented [here](#).

Other important Swiss cooperative precedents

Two other trailblazing examples of Switzerland's advanced housing cooperatives and the range of forms these can take are Kraftwerk1 in Zürich and ABZ (Allgemeine Baugenossenschaft Zürich).

Focus on affordability

Community Land Trust approach to affordability

Affordability - CLTs have legal commitments to steward the land over the long-term. They own and manage the land in trust for the benefit of the local community, ensuring that homes stay affordable and are well managed in perpetuity. Different mechanisms are in place to ensure lasting affordability, including caps on resale in the case of home ownership.

Other approaches to affordability:

Wohnungsbaugenossenschaften (German housing cooperatives) prioritise affordability by offering residents collective ownership and control over their housing, maintaining below-market rents through non-profit, long-term housing management. Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) in Ireland promote affordability by providing social and affordable housing through non-profit organisations, often with government support to maintain low rents. Mutual Home Ownership Societies (MHOS) in the UK also emphasise affordability by enabling residents to collectively own and manage their homes through a mutual structure, where monthly payments are linked to income rather than market rates. Additionally, Baugemeinschaften (building collectives) in Germany often aim to reduce housing costs by allowing groups to self-develop their projects, bypassing traditional developers and creating affordable, sustainable living spaces.

Affordability: focus on scale

The first 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:

- **Government Involvement:** In France, OFS are primarily driven by local governments, public land organisations, and social housing cooperatives. In contrast, CLTs are more often community-led initiatives. The community governance element is less present in the OFS model.
- **Focus on affordability at scale:** The OFS have a relatively stronger focus on affordability and maintaining public investment in housing through a regulated model of ownership and resale.
- **Legal Structure:** OFS have a distinct legal structure, authorised by French national legislation.

Organismes de Foncier Solidaire (OFS), France

An Organisme de Foncier Solidaire (OFS) differs from a Community Land Trust (CLT) in that while both separate land ownership from housing to ensure affordability, an OFS is typically a state-recognized entity in France operating under specific legal frameworks to deliver affordable housing, whereas CLTs are often more community-driven and independent, with a broader emphasis on grassroots land stewardship and long-term community control.

Background

Organismes de Foncier Solidaire (OFS), also known as Solidarity Land Organisations, are non-profit entities in France designed to promote affordable homeownership by separating the ownership of land from the ownership of the building. This model aims to make housing more affordable and sustainable, particularly in areas with high property prices. The concept was introduced in 2014 through the ALUR Law (Accès au Logement et à un Urbanisme Rénové), which sought to address housing affordability issues by creating long-term, low-cost housing solutions. The OFS model is inspired by community land trusts (CLTs).

France housing snapshot:

- **Population:** approximately 67 million
 - **Tenure:** Around 57% homeowners, about 43% renters.
- OFS: Organismes de Foncier Solidaire currently account for a small, but growing part of the housing market, with many municipalities adopting them to address housing affordability challenges.
- OFS model separates the ownership of the land (held by the OFS) from the ownership of the building (owned by the buyer).
 - Housing units under OFS schemes are sold at below-market rates, and homeowners

lease the land from the OFS under a long-term ground lease (Bail Réel Solidaire, BRS).

- Lease periods typically extend for 99 years, with the lease transferable under strict resale conditions to maintain affordability.
- OFS units target low- and middle-income households, who pay a modest monthly ground lease fee in addition to their mortgage payments.
- As of 2024, there are 143 OFS officially approved, with around 8,500 housing units delivered or expected to be delivered, with further projects in development.

History and origins

The OFS model was established in 2014 through the ALUR Law, aimed at creating affordable housing in perpetuity by preventing land speculation. The law enables municipalities and public or private non-profit organisations to establish OFS entities. The aim is to decouple land from property to lower the purchase price of homes, thereby making homeownership accessible to a broader population. The model was inspired by successful community land trust models in other countries.

Tenant and homeowner democracy

OFS entities are typically governed by a board that includes representatives of local government, social housing organisations, and community stakeholders. While not as directly participatory as Denmark's tenant democracy model or CLTs, OFS homeowners can influence the management of their housing through their involvement in governance processes, ensuring that decisions reflect the interests of the local community and the long-term affordability of housing.

Independent, non-Profit structure

OFS are non-profit organisations, and their structure is legally designed to prevent land speculation. The land remains owned by the OFS, while the building is purchased by the homeowner, creating a clear division between land and property ownership. Any profits generated by the OFS, including rental income from the ground lease, are reinvested into maintaining or expanding affordable housing stock.

Broad access and affordability

OFS units are targeted at lower- and middle-income households who would otherwise be unable to afford homeownership in high-demand areas. Eligibility for OFS housing is determined by income thresholds, which vary according to household size and region. The OFS model ensures that housing remains affordable not just for the first purchaser, but for future buyers as well, as resale prices are capped to prevent market-driven inflation.

Municipal involvement

Municipalities may play a significant role in establishing and supporting OFS schemes. Many OFS are set up by local governments or in partnership with public land agencies, and municipalities may offer land or subsidies to help launch projects. This collaboration can ensure that OFS developments align with broader urban planning and social housing objectives held by the municipality. The model helps municipalities meet their housing needs without relying on market-driven solutions that tend to exclude low- and middle-income families.

Support for housing affordability

OFS initiatives have proven to be effective in maintaining long-term affordability. The separation of land and property ownership means that homeowners can purchase homes at prices well below market rates. The long-term ground lease ensures that the land remains out of the speculative market, protecting housing affordability for future generations. Additionally, the capped resale price ensures that homes under OFS schemes remain affordable to subsequent buyers, creating a cycle of affordability.

For more information, please see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#).

Comparing UK and wider European context

	UK Context	European Context
Governance Entities	Use of Homeowner Associations (HOAs), and Property Management Companies (PMCs)	Similar use of condominium associations (e.g., VVE in the Netherlands, syndic de copropriété in Belgium and France).
Municipal Involvement	Some local councils play a role in managing public spaces but very limited ongoing involvement in more recent private developments.	Strong involvement of municipalities in managing public spaces and sometimes in private developments. See: Zürich's support for cooperative housing as a way to deal with its housing crunch.
Financing stewardship	Use of reserve funds and service charges paid by homeowners	Use of reserve funds, more municipal budgets and public loans
Appetite for experimentation	Less common to experiment with models despite strong historical context (250 years since Owenites model villages etc)	Notable experimentation with models like OFS in France for non-speculative land stock and with building groups (baugruppen) in Germany

6. Place stewardship principles and the Community Land Trust model

There is no single perfect model of place stewardship, but rather a set of principles that are important in guiding decisions and collaborations. Based on the case study and comparative work above, we propose the following attributes for a successful long-term place stewardship entity:

- **Community:** Adaptable and effective governance approach that enables the entity to have sufficient influence over decisions that are important to the community, is inclusive, and uses appropriate democratic methods to bring diverse and skilled community members together.
- **Land:** Taking a key and ongoing role in the long term stewardship of a locality.
- **Trust:** To further the long-term wellbeing of the community, balancing the needs and interests of current and future stakeholders within planetary boundaries (an approach in line with the [Doughnut Economics](#) model).
- **Long-term:** Secure access to and sufficient control over an ongoing sustainable and sufficient revenue commensurate with the complexity, scale and diversity of assets it manages and/or roles it is responsible for.

These principles align very closely with the key elements of a Community Land Trust, which themselves have a statutory definition. As such, there are many forms of delivery and stewardship mechanisms which could be considered a CLT despite not actively identifying as a CLT, seeing as these organisations fit within the broader Community-led Housing (CLH) sector which was defined by Homes England in 2018 and within the CLT legal definition. Among our case studies, although only London CLT (St Clements) and Kennett CLT are CLTs, Chilmington will match the CLT definition when completed; and Oakfield and Leeds CID are CLT-adjacent in their place-stewardship arrangements; Leeds CID includes CLT-owned housing; and all five are notable for the decisions made to adopt a similar model on nuanced grounds.

Within a UK context, Community Land Trusts have significant benefits in that they provide flexible membership arrangements that can also include those from outside the community to participate (for example in managing a park that is used by a wider population). Further benefits and distinguishing features are laid out in the table below.

	CLT	RMC (typical)	ManCo
Governance	Democratic, open membership, in a network	Democratic, open membership	Privately controlled
Formation	(Ideally) at earliest stages to input into design & development	On completion of homes	On completion of homes
Boundary	Natural community incorporating, but going beyond, red line of site	Red line of site	Red line of site (may also cover other sites)
Assets	Public space, amenities, roads, homes, community centres, energy, etc.	Public space, amenities, roads	Public space, amenities, roads
Remit	Stewardship, ongoing asset and community development	Asset management	Asset management

Table: Comparison of CLTs, typical RMCs and ManCos.

Myths relating to Community Land Trusts and counter-evidence

Community Land Trusts have often struggled to gain traction with mainstream developers despite their notable benefits, often because of the current financing and policy regarding affordable housing as well as it being considered only for affordable housing and more risky. Across the range of stakeholders who will need to work collaboratively in new stewardship models, these misconceptions and limiting beliefs have hampered progress toward wide-spread adoption of new approaches to stewardship. In exploring aspects of new modes of stewardship, we have identified eight core myths about existing site management structures, Community Land Trusts and the role of citizens in place management:

Myth	Counter-Evidence
Myth 1: CLTs are only for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The legal definition of a Community Land Trust does not include housing, but rather a CLT <p><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></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to provide benefit to the local community ▪ to ensure that the assets are not sold or developed except in a manner which the trust's members think benefits the local community <p><i>2) is established under arrangements which are expressly designed to ensure that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ any profits from its activities will be used to benefit the local community (otherwise than by being paid directly to members) ▪ 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) ▪ the members of a trust control it. <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.
Myth 2: The CLT model is only appropriate on small sites	<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.

Using the alternative ways forward presented in the disassembly of these misconceptions, it's possible to consider what a wholesale new approach to stewardship might look like in the near future, as well as the transitions required to get us there.

7. Proposition: the community-led place stewardship model

About this section

Building on the case studies presented in section 4, this section begins by presenting a vision of an imagined community-stewarded place that could be initiated today, through the medium of a letter written in five years, framing the outcomes this approach could bring.

The section goes on to outline the primary features of a community-led place stewardship model through the transitions needed from characteristics of today's standard place-management practice, and concludes with a description of how a new stewardship model could work, basing this in links to other areas of our research.

A letter from Midfleet Community Land Trust, July 2029

Reflecting on the past five years in our new housing neighbourhood, the journey has been transformative. From our first conversations in 2024, community-led stewardship has been the cornerstone of the success of this place. Initially, there was scepticism from all of us, including the developer, about the viability of a model where residents had far more influence over long-term stewardship of local assets and decision-making processes. However, the results have surpassed all of our expectations.

We formed a CLT to structure our efforts toward shaping the masterplan and delivery approach. Our first priority was to make sure that there would be a physical hub for the community from the beginning. This included establishing and managing a community space where we could host the children's clubs and other activities. We also wanted the design and sustainability of homes to be enhanced. It was hard work, but it did mean that the project went through planning smoothly and early sales for our estate went really well as people could easily see and sense the kind of community that they were moving to.

The Midfleet Community Land Trust has taken on the ownership of a wide range of 'assets', including parks, solar arrays, and communal batteries. The shared solar arrays and communal batteries have drastically reduced our carbon footprint and energy costs and we can collectively choose to support residents who are having a tough time paying their bills. The park was going to be just grass, but from the outset we set out to have food growing, ponds and wildflower havens maintained by community volunteers and a dedicated team funded by diverse revenue streams. The development of these assets was not without its challenges. Ensuring that the initial investment was included at nil value as part of the land purchase and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits required real negotiation with the landowners, developer and the council. However, it's paid off in spades - and we feel lucky to have helped shape a place

that meets local people's needs and, more and more, feels like it's always been here.

One of the most profound aspects of our community-led stewardship is that unlike traditional management companies, the whole community, irrespective of their type of home, has a voice. This inclusivity was difficult to make happen, but used new methods such as putting together a series of community assemblies to ensure everyone was heard. Over time, this approach has built a culture of trust and collective responsibility among us. We are now planning to include a board member with specific responsibility for children and future generations. This is important as we gear up to work with the council on adapting to the increasingly extreme weather that we are experiencing.

We took time, from the beginning, to develop the design of our stewardship organisation, evolving it in tandem with the physical development of our neighbourhood. And we know that when the next phase is done, it will need to change and shift again.

Midfleet Community Land Trust joined a UK network sharing best practice and support. This has given us great support in navigating challenges and upskilling, from financial planning to community development. They provided templates and access to a solidarity fund and shared services like insurance to make things more resilient and get better deals.

While our journey has had its stresses—balancing diverse interests, managing resources, and fostering a culture of participation—the community-led stewardship model has proven its worth. It has not only created a sustainable and resilient new community but has also demonstrated that when residents are empowered to lead, they make solid choices, and beautiful things can happen.

As shown in section 3, it is clear that the current place management model causes significant detriment to residents. We need to develop new models that provide resilient, sustainable and effective stewardship of place. Our proposals do not require a wholesale redesign of the industry. Community-led stewardship models can build on aspects of the structures and professional capabilities of private management companies which enable changes to regulations to be effectively managed, while incorporating better governance, a greater role for citizens and more effective ways of maintaining financial sustainability. Community-led approaches depend on having solid foundations including a sustainable business plan and effective governance. Training, clear structuring of roles and responsibilities, and greater collaboration around compliance, can enable different actors to contribute more effectively to this crucial challenge facing developments.

Today, there isn't a system for roles to be played right, at the right time. Is there a way to do this better?

– A developer

Development corporations, with the right governance structure and documents, could act as hosts: coordinating roles at certain times. This would be possible if the development corporation had the appropriate planning powers.

– A consultant

The case study analysis (in section 4) and European analysis (in section 5) demonstrated that there are already aspects of a better approach already happening. Table 2 below describes the new model of stewardship that we need to move to, as well the longer term regenerative approach we should move towards over the coming years.

	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

Table: From typical current place management practices towards a regenerative future

How to develop a community-led stewardship model?

Learning from the five trailblazing case studies, European examples and interviews with sector experts we propose the following requirements to develop a Community-led Stewardship model:

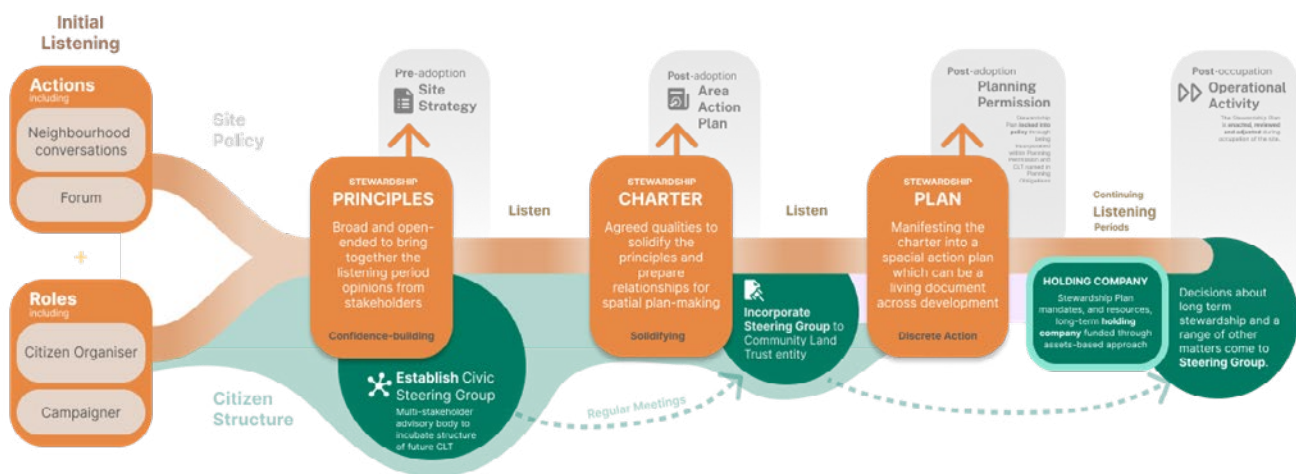
Stewardship organisational design from the outset

- In contrast to the physical design of new neighbourhoods which is governed by established design [stages](#), there is generally limited focus on the organisational and governance design of the place management arrangements. Most new housing estates are provided with a Residents Management Company or an Embedded Management Company with boilerplate articles of association and standardised management practices. These tend to be imposed by the developer towards the end of the construction process with little or no community participation. Typically resident directors are appointed at practical completion with minimal transition.
- Rather than leave it to the end of the process to establish the detail of the place's stewardship arrangements and entity, a community-led approach would put the organisational design of the stewardship entity at the centre of participation from the outset. This could start with an open 'initial listening' stage utilising citizen organising practices such as that undertaken by Igloo and Nationwide at Oakfield. This helped to understand the issues in the surrounding communities and integrated them into the place-stewardship approach. At Leeds Climate Innovation District, the concept of a Community Interest Company owned by the residents was a critical principle from the outset of that project.
- Early engagement builds trust and deep interpersonal relationships that are essential to the new stewardship practices putting down roots. This might take the form of well-run forums, training, and other structures to support residents. At Kennett, the local authority supported the establishment of a Community Land Trust from the outset, providing a focus and infrastructure for local people to get involved in the new housing development. At Oakfield two years of community organising laid the foundations for a project which was well-received by local people (including no objections at planning stage).
- The organisational and governance design would become more refined in parallel with the physical design of the new neighbourhoods, with key elements fixed at each stage contractually (land/options agreement, planning agreement, development agreement etc.). This would include the development of more refined business plans and the integration of diversified sustainable income streams into the management arrangements into the wider financial model ideally before planning approval is sought.
- Like physical design, several interviewees reflected that they have seen that authentic vision reflected in the place stewardship approach is often a key asset for marketing the proposals at each stage of the development.

- The design should also take into account the relationships with wider support networks (see below), as well as consider how the entity can positively relate to its surrounding communities. At St Clements, the CLT was established with support from a national network, and the ground rents from this project provide a wider community fund.
- Operational place-management evaluation should be included, perhaps through post-occupancy evaluation to include residents' perceptions of quality of place management and sense of control and safety: both at completion and on an ongoing basis.
- A design approach would support the building of trust and adjust to changes in the projects over the years of practice. An early indicative approach on how this design could work is set out below, showing how stewardship planning starts openly at the outset, and then is refined through the project.

The route to a stewardship plan

Reinforcing citizen engagement from an early stage



Maximising financial, planning, procurement and other support levers

- Stakeholders, particularly the public sector actors and private sector developers, can embed effective community-led place stewardship through the judicious use of financial investment, planning policies and procurement criteria particularly at the outset of a project.
- The Kennett and Chilmington cases demonstrated that proactive and creative planning policy frameworks provide fundamental support to the development of more effective and well-resourced place management approaches.
- Local authorities can and should seek (where necessary) to intervene early in the development process to capture greater amounts of land value and control the quality of developments coming forward in their areas. Not only will this reduce the future liabilities of poor quality projects, it can make a considerable positive financial return in its own right. At Kennett, the local authority used its financial power to control the land and submit outline planning, in this case also receiving a positive return on its investment. This also allowed it to agree to the terms of the land transfer and exert greater control over the developer throughout the remainder of the project.
- At St Clements, the public sector land owner made inclusion of community ownership and bespoke social value and long-term place management arrangements a key requirement of the terms of procurement.

Effective governance and stakeholder roles and collaboration

- During the development process, most of the engagement between stakeholders takes place through the planning process. However town planning is not, by itself, sufficient to effectively govern projects through their entire lifecycle which might last a decade or more. Rather we found that well-designed forums or structures that support interpersonal relationships and trust building with appropriate power relations are critical (for example at Kennett with the Design Group) and where this is absent issues have arisen (for example at St Clements).
- There is significant evidence that well-briefed local people working in partnership with property professionals can often make the better decisions on new developments, on where to make investments and savings to support effective use of public monies. Apart from potentially saving money, this can increase support for new developments (thereby speeding up planning processes) and create better partnership working.
- The ability for local people to have a significant amount of power itself incentivises greater participation and engagement with the trade offs required to deliver any scheme. At St Clements the distribution of ground rents for community benefit is controlled by an entity with local membership, and residents of all tenure have an equal vote in controlling the management company.

- After occupation, typically most individual residents do not have much influence over key decisions on how their places are managed because of the way in which management companies have been established or governed. Normally residents of different tenures are not granted equal rights and representation, with those in affordable tenures and private renters often losing out. Insufficient and inequitable power can result in conflict and lower levels of trust. Once directors are appointed, there is typically little engagement with the remaining residents.
- The community-led approach proposes that residents of all tenures and users (such as business owners, workers or operators) would have a fair voice and vote on key decisions. The approach proposes using a wider range of participatory methods (such as deliberative democracy, assemblies and sortition) where appropriate to build an empowered, inclusive and representative decision-making culture. Enabling leadership would encourage citizens to get together to discuss issues and decisions.
- Our interviewees were clear that effective designation of roles can build community capacity for long-term stewardship, while supporting a desired exit strategy for developers keen for considered handover to community. Greater understanding of collaborative ways of working, making decisions, and governing, is crucial for community stewardship success.
- They stated that a range of different skills sets is needed for a community-led stewardship organisation – there's a need for both in-depth technical knowledge and strong risk management approaches (e.g. public realm management or service charge allocations and fire safety) as well as entrepreneurial and trust-based skills (e.g. for making a community centre viable).
- Decision-making should also take into account a wider group of stakeholders such as those that live beyond the immediate community boundaries. Over time it should also develop mechanisms to consider the needs of future generations and non-human living things. These approaches will reduce the negative externalities of decisions made 'within the red line' of any particular housing estate, and reduce potential NIMBYism. A distinguishing feature of CLTs is their habitual role as a stewardship entity for the natural, commonly understood definition of the local community, which often encompasses but also goes beyond the red line of a development. There are also alternative forms of [ownership](#) which would support greater fairness for residents such as commonhold, fairhold. These are described in more detail in section 3.5.

Diversified activities, metrics and financing of place stewardship entities

- Our interviewees talked about the challenges associated with financing better stewardship arrangements. These require modest (relative to other development costs), yet ongoing investment to support the development of the organisational design, community participation, training in place management etc. Some discussed the need to factor in additional funding in the period between the early homes being completed, and the place stewardship entity having sufficient income from different sources to be viable and effective. This can be some time after practical completion. It is important that there is a sufficient allocation for place stewardship in early financial modelling.

- Most existing place management entities focus on the management of physical assets such as parks, squares and gardens, unadopted roads and perhaps a community centre or shared building. They tend to be funded through a fee levied on each household which is only available on occupation. This means that place management entities are often poorly capitalised and have a strong incentive to reduce annual costs, rather than focus on strategic investments. Too often there is limited provision for long-term liabilities, investments or inflationary pressures, especially when factoring in the additional costs associated with extreme weather and inflation.
- A community-led approach would include a holistic, longer-term view of social and environmental value alongside financial metrics. Integrating outcomes across project stages will enable these overlapping benefits to multiply and gain traction. This could be developed into a [cornerstone approach](#), whereby a few intuitive key metrics that correlate with a wide set of benchmark metrics are developed through community co-design.
- The community-led stewardship approach requires a viable and independent business plan with multiple sources of income. This could include ownership of a wider range of assets and commissioning of a range of activities including community development, developing a sharing economy, enabling more effective local services and long-term resilience planning. Relatively small shifts in the overall set up of the scheme (for example the book value of a commercial space on a larger project may be far less than the error margin in the pre-development cost plan and could be allocated to provide ongoing income for a place stewardship entity with minimal impact on overall viability) can have very significant long term impacts. This capacity should be embedded through training, articles of association, policy and other mechanisms, ensuring that it is factored into the appraisals and land valuation expectations from the outset.
- The scale of such assets, or potentially through combining with other local organisations or wider networks of place stewardship, a sufficient critical mass should seek to support paid staff and further compound benefits.
- Over time activities could create more local civic economies through sharing of energy, materials and items as well as proactive partnership working in creating long-term resilience. Place-based social, economic, and environmental wellbeing outcomes could start to have tradable value, and local entities can raise capital in innovative ways without creating rent seeking incentives. Furthermore, innovative pooling mechanisms for local social and economic capacity and liabilities could be developed, in order to designate and create collectively desirable outcomes.
- At the Climate Innovation District, the place management CIC receives an endowment from each home as it is sold and has a utilities subsidiary that can support it with income.

Support and knowledge infrastructure

- Interviewees were keen to create more community-centred approaches, but some expressed concern around the knowledge and experience to deal with an increasingly complex regulatory and compliance environment. This research recognises that these may best be handled by a professional with suitable experience. But there is a need for an empowered group of local stakeholders to manage any appointed professional: this is often lost in translation and under-accounted for in the establishment of place management arrangements.
- Currently there are industry bodies for managing agents, real estate entities and Community Land Trusts, but limited spaces for community-led place-stewardship specific entities to collaborate effectively.
- Knowledge sharing, precedents, research and study tours, are important mechanisms to both support new projects, but also build trust and mutual understanding between stakeholders in the process. Many of our interviewees referred to important trips that they had taken which showed the art of the possible and built ongoing and lasting relationships. At Chilmington, the council undertook a range of research to support the place-stewardship work.
- Early and ongoing support and training for residents is crucial: At St Clements, London CLT has built additional capacity within the local community and a shadow business plan to ensure that when the transfer of the residents management organisation took place, they would be ready and effective.
- Support from regional or national entities or networks was also an important factor in some of the case studies. The CLT at St Clements in London was established by Citizens UK and the Community Land Trust Network, providing it with much needed support and skills in its early years. At Oakfield, Nationwide Building Society took the initiative to build a housing project that could demonstrate that a better house-building approach could deliver more successful communities and higher quality homes. Several of our interviewees are expert intermediaries, supporting and developing trust between different stakeholders and got buy-in to alternative forms of place stewardship from the outset.
- There is a critical role for network or intermediary organisations (including the CLT Network and the European CLT Network and regional intermediaries) to support the development of a community-centred place stewardship sector. This might involve new or existing regional or national entities or networks related to emerging stewardship practices. Beyond local geographies, intermediaries operating at a regional scale can further enable these networks to scale successes and identify potential across context, building further momentum and capacity. A network would:
 - Provide accessible and high quality services to democratically managed housing developments, enabling economies of scale and providing professional support to community-led organisations.
 - Support skills development for residents, planners, councillors etc.
 - Provide de-facto schedules, guidance and contracts.

- Low cost advice and guidance support to community groups looking to explore community-centred place stewardship.
- Advocate on communities' behalf to wider stakeholders
- Work with others to develop a longitudinal study of the experience of residents of new housing areas as a way of informing further action and tracking and ranking individual developers.
- Support the retrofitting of community-led stewardship approaches into existing developments.

Effective data and digital design

- Currently there is limited smart use of data in residential place management, with proprietary systems being used.
- A community-led approach would include the development of open, shared data on costs and other key metrics. Standardised metrics would allow for effective comparison with industry wide data, enabling better decisions and efficiency. It would also see increased use of digital platforms to support effective governance, participation and accountability. Support the development of an evidence base for wider social, environmental and economic benefits of place stewardship interventions.
- New platforms would require robust set-up and orchestration to reach maximum effectiveness.



Walterton & Elgin Community Homes ©Ian Miles www.flashpointpictures.co.uk, commissioned by the CLT Network

8. Three scenarios for community-led stewardship

About this section

Using the model of community-led stewardship presented in section 7 as a north star, this section lays out three scenarios in which the establishment of such a stewardship entity can flourish within and enable a large-scale housing development. These scenarios start with a different initiating entity: developer/landowner, local authority or citizen group.

This section invites people considering a community-led approach to identify and consider key factors, roles, and events in pre-allocation through to occupation through these scenarios.

Each scenario is presented through a route map, which visualises the scenario across different phases and identifies the most important interactions between actors. The route maps can be used to further conversations, support the anticipation of possible challenges, and point to crucial collaborations, while giving a sense of three sets of conditions we have found to best support community-led stewardship initiatives.

The research has demonstrated that there are many possible development routes that projects can take in order to achieve success. However it is clear that the **starting conditions/early moves** at the outset of any project are critical in setting a future direction of travel. This will typically be from the time at which a site is being considered for housing. Once key aspects of place stewardship and delivery have been established and locked into place, it becomes progressively harder to change (and enhance) the approach over time.

From the early stages of consideration, larger housing projects typically take a long time to get built - often over a decade. Maintaining a 'golden thread' of agreed place stewardship approaches and a cohort of informed and motivated citizens is not straightforward. The longer a project lasts, the more chances for what we've called 'key events' to take place.

The key framing of the starting condition is based on the desires of the **initiating stakeholder** that either has, or is able to generate sufficient power and influence to champion community-led approaches.

We know from the case study research that even powerful stakeholders cannot work on their own: it typically requires two functions to champion community-led approaches in order to be successful (landowner, developer, local authority, community). The route for any one scheme will in reality be far messier and likely to include a combination of the approaches set out in the Scenarios.

Each scenario includes consideration of four elements in addition to stakeholders:

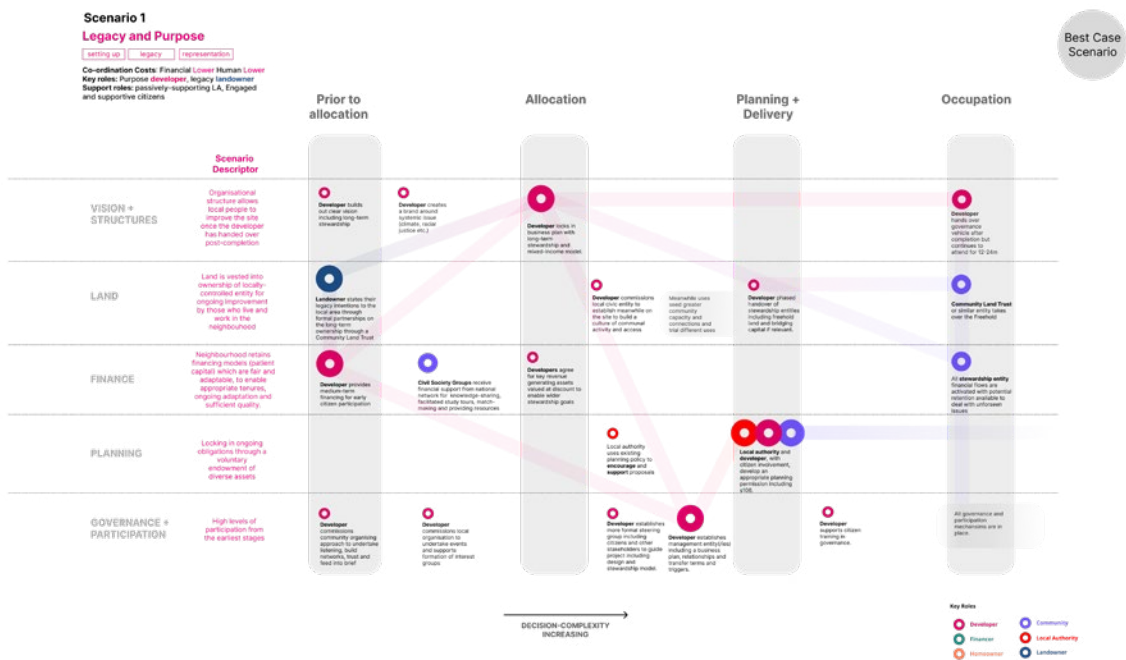
- **Land:** The way in which the land is developed, and the interests of the landowner often shape how places are managed in the long term.
- **Planning:** The planning system confers rights and responsibilities within the development and includes important levers in determining the value of the land as well as the place stewardship arrangements.

- **Finance:** The availability of financial resources allows different stakeholders to act and have power in the development process.
- **Governance and participation:** Who is included and how different stakeholders work together, resolve conflicts and create accountability. We have developed three scenarios based on the initiating stakeholder that is championing the community-led approach:

Scenario 1: Purpose-led developer or landowner

Primarily led by landowners or developers who are driven by a recognition that current industry practices aren't working well or by a desire to leave a positive legacy for future generations or local communities. Equally important is a recognition by profit for purpose developers that it often makes good business sense to build in citizen empowerment in place management from the outset. It is likely to reduce local resistance through planning (and therefore reduce uncertainty and costs) and can provide creative solutions to the 'problem' of place management. Furthermore it can be critical in providing evidence to successfully compete for future development opportunities.

In Scenario 1, the developer and legacy landowner collaborate in organisational and financial structuring in early stages to lay the groundwork for long-term stability of the development, allowing engaged community organisations to grow their stewardship capabilities in a lower-risk setting with a higher share of ongoing obligations having been locked in prior to allocation. The environment for this scenario requires a local authority to partake in organising the different stakeholders across stages and offering other kinds of support.



[Scenario 1: see [here](#) for full-scale version.]

Scenario 2: Local authority leadership

Typically motivated by senior politicians understanding that housing growth is likely to be more acceptable if it includes citizens at every stage – including long term place stewardship. Often supported by a belief in the need for an affordable, diversified and bespoke housing offer that community-led housing can provide. Although the people might change, this scenario depends on consistent political prioritisation of community empowerment in new neighbourhoods over a period of years.

In Scenario 2, an actively engaged Local Authority holds different parties, particularly the developer, to account in delivering key components of the stewardship arrangements and central development assets, while utilising an array of its levers including planning, taxation and levies to grow the scheme's steadiness. The local citizens are responsible for liaising with national network(s) and drawing other support for the scheme, with the success of this scenario enabled by trust and alignment between the Local Authority and the community.

Scenario 2

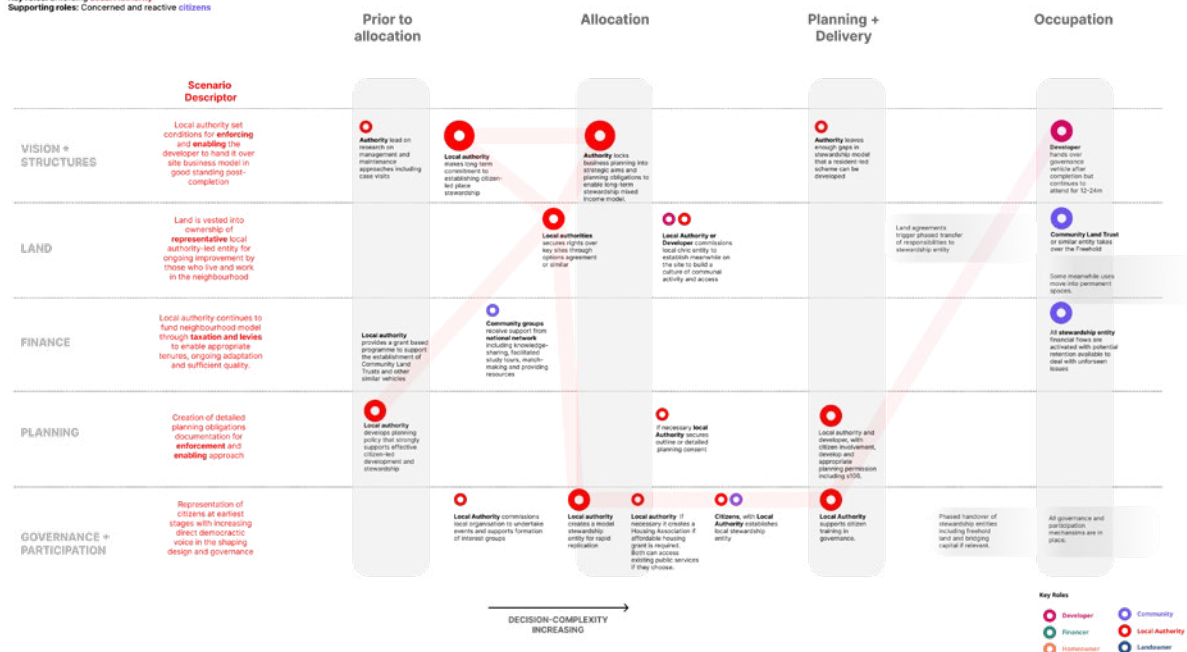
Local Authority Leadership

enablement | enforcement | representation

Co-ordination Costs: Financial Equivalent Human Standard

Key roles: Enforcing Local Authority

Supporting roles: Concerned and reactive citizens



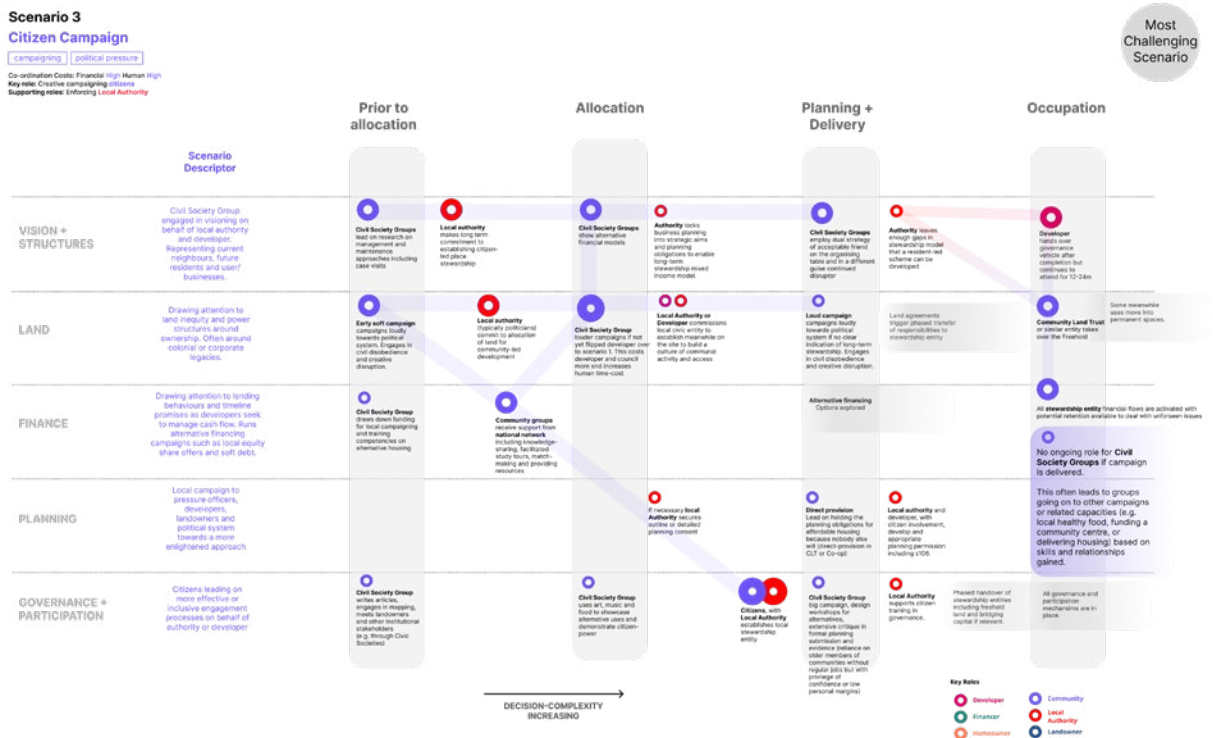
[Scenario 2: see [here](#) for full-scale version.]

Scenario 3: Citizen campaign

Typically inspired by deep problems in the types of homes and neighbourhoods being delivered through mainstream house building approaches and a concern for a lack of affordability, fair representation and unbalanced power dynamics. These practices of resistance and creative campaigning are necessary to develop leverage points that can be filled with creative alternatives.

Typically this is not a desirable scenario, but one that can be required if other stakeholders are not able or willing to collaborate effectively from the outset.

Scenario 3 sees a high degree of engagement by local citizens result in a resident-enabled scheme in the absence of enabling conditions beyond a broadly but passively supportive Local Authority. In this scenario, stewardship aims to be designed by the community outright, with a view to incorporating a greater share of local interests into a programme, possibly opening a door to more advanced or visionary views of the possibilities of new stewardship. A key challenge in this scenario is cynicism amongst the other stakeholders to move away from current models. However, if successful, the work to develop such a model of new stewardship can spark replicable schemes locally or through dispersal of lessons, as enabled by national network(s).



[Scenario 3: see [here](#) for full-scale version.]

In any project it's clear that Key Events can provide an important role in determining both the real scenario as well as locking in (or out) community-led place management. This can happen at different stages of the development process. In the St Clements project, the Olympic bidding process and desire for a 'legacy games' provided a unique opportunity for Citizens UK to organise and then gain commitment from all major stakeholders for a community-led approach even before a site had been identified. In other cases, existing projects can be enhanced by leveraging a Key Event. For example, the successful application by the existing project team at Chilmington to the Garden Communities Programme provided additional resources, but crucially required an enhanced role and power for citizens.

The above scenarios focus on the creation of the stewardship entities and role of stakeholders in the development phase. Place stewardship arrangements need to flex over the decades in order to meet the likely increasing challenges faced by local communities. This must be informed by effective and ongoing place occupancy evaluation.

Although our focus has been on new large-scale housing projects, it is clear that millions of households are in problematic legacy management arrangements. We believe that further work needs to be done to set out enhancements to the Right to Manage mechanisms to allow for the effective 'retrofitting' of new place stewardship arrangements for existing privately managed estates: from Right to Manage to Right to Steward. The TCPA's 2024 [report](#), "From patchwork to tapestry: Overcoming barriers to planning for long-term stewardship in existing communities", presents a valuable outline of the challenges to retrofitting quality stewardship arrangements on 'patchwork' sites where there are existing management arrangements in some areas, as well as several case studies which reflect common contexts in which stewardship arrangements might be revised.



9. Conclusions

Community involvement helps create harmonious living environments that are responsive to people's needs and aspirations as they evolve over time. This generates thriving communities where people choose to live, because they feel invested and a sense of belonging; local pride and care for the neighbourhood encourage residents to become enthusiastic stewards of place and design, which helps sustain and maintain it long-term.

– Future Places Studio, ADAM Architecture, and Farrer & Co: Place Making Two: "A stewardship approach to creating communities"

There is a need to provide more homes. But facing an increasing range of crises and with a place-management system that is detrimental to the residents it is supposed to be serving, a new approach is needed. This work has underscored the critical importance of transitioning from a traditional model of privately-managed housing estates to a more inclusive and resilient approach centred on community-led place stewardship.

It has also revealed, through an in-depth examination of various case studies and expert perspectives, and exploring the situation across Europe, that empowering and enabling residents to take an active role in the management and governance of their communities is not only beneficial but essential for fostering sustainable, well-governed neighbourhoods.

Developers are frequently asked to hold stewardship jobs which they don't want and aren't their responsibility. Ideally, the cost of developing civic infrastructure would be priced from the outset, on the basis of its value and additionality around social cohesion, good design, and capacity unlocking.

– a place management consultant

Community-led stewardship offers numerous advantages, including the cultivation of trust and a stronger sense of community ownership. By involving residents directly in decision-making processes, this model ensures that the unique needs and aspirations of the community are prioritised, leading to more effective and responsive management of local resources. Moreover, this approach, through the Community Land Trust model, contributes to greater social and environmental resilience, as engaged citizens are more likely to advocate for sustainable practices and long-term planning that benefit the entire community.

Contrary to the belief that communities lack the capacity to manage their own spaces effectively, the case studies and other evidence shows that with proper design, support and structures in place, community-led models can thrive and even outperform conventional management systems.

This research has focused on housing developments that are yet to be built. However it can, and should also apply to the millions of existing households subject to poor quality management systems. This requires more in-depth work, but further reform of the Right to Manage legislation and financial support to enable the creation of community-led place stewardship models should be developed further. This could also apply to other asset classes such as retrofitting community energy generation into existing places through a community land or energy trust.

Our recommendations include:

- The principles and practices that support community-led place stewardship set out in this work should be, wherever possible, 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.
- The development of a network to support emerging community-led practice should be established.
- A low-cost shared data-sharing or digital platform should be developed to support community interaction.
- Updates to standard viability models and assessments to incorporate effective place stewardship approaches.
- 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.
- 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.

As we refocus efforts on building more communities and homes, it is imperative that we embrace community-led stewardship models to ensure the creation of thriving, sustainable communities.

By placing the power of place management into the hands of those who are most invested in the outcome, we can build neighbourhoods that are not only resilient and adaptive but also deeply connected to the people who call them home. This approach represents an important step forward in the creation of vibrant, inclusive communities for future generations.

Annex 1: Overview of large, housing-led programmes in the UK

Large housing-led community programme	Overview	Design Principles	Place Stewardship entities and approach
Garden Cities Movement	Aimed to combine the benefits of the city and the countryside. Notable examples include Letchworth Garden City (1903) and Welwyn Garden City (1920).	Self-sufficiency, green spaces, mix of living and working and high-quality living environments.	Garden Cities were established by Companies or Trusts, which were responsible for planning, development, and management of the community. The financial model included capturing land value increases to fund community facilities and maintenance. Long-term stewardship was ensured through governance structures that involved residents in decision-making, such as local management boards or community trusts.
New Towns Programme	Established by the New Towns Act 1946, this led to the creation of over 20 new towns across the UK, such as Milton Keynes, Stevenage, and Harlow.	Emphasis on modernist planning such as segregated land uses, road networks designed for car use, and ample green spaces.	New Towns were managed by Development Corporations, which were responsible for planning, infrastructure, housing, and amenities. These corporations had significant autonomy and funding to ensure comprehensive development. On completion, management and maintenance responsibilities were typically transferred to local authorities. Some New Towns also established resident associations and trusts to manage communal areas and facilities (e.g. Milton Keynes Parks Trust).
Urban Development Corporations (UDCs)	Established to regenerate large urban areas. Examples include the London Docklands Development Corporation and the Merseyside Development Corporation.	Focused on economic regeneration, infrastructure improvement, and creating privately led new housing and commercial spaces.	UDCs were responsible for the regeneration of specific urban areas, with powers to acquire land, grant planning permissions, and develop infrastructure. After initial development phases, stewardship often involved transferring management responsibilities to local councils or specially created bodies to ensure ongoing maintenance and community development.
Millennium Communities Programme (late 1990s-2000s)	Aimed to create a series of sustainable communities showcasing innovative design and environmental performance. Examples include the Greenwich Millennium Village in London and New Islington in Manchester.	Focused on high-density, mixed-use developments with a strong emphasis on sustainability and community.	Managed by partnerships between local authorities, private developers, and the government, with a focus on innovative and sustainable development. Included planning for long-term management of community assets and sustainability features. In some cases, Community Development Trusts or similar bodies were established to manage community facilities and ensure that development benefits were sustained.
Eco-Towns Programme (2007-2010)	Aimed to create new towns with a strong focus on sustainability and environmental performance. The aim was to build up to ten eco-towns, although only a few, such as North West Bicester, progressed significantly.	Emphasised carbon-neutral development, sustainable transport, and high environmental standards.	Emphasis was placed on long-term sustainability, with plans for ongoing community management of green spaces, renewable energy infrastructure, and local amenities. Mechanisms like Community Interest Companies (CICs) were sometimes proposed to manage assets and reinvest profits locally.