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**Local Advocacy Toolkit**

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Your CLT is much more likely to succeed if you have the support of your council and local community. This guide is to help you push your community land trust forward.

It provides some of the tools you can use to build power in order to establish legitimacy and credibility, engage your council in a way that is productive and intentional and finally to leverage political moments to meet your CLT's goals.



### **TOOL BOX:**

#### **HERO, VILLAIN, VICTIM**

This is a tool you can use to make your story more compelling. Your CLT is the hero because local people are pulling together to remedy the housing problems in the area. The villain is the rampant affordability issues nationally and locally. The victim is the local economy, social cohesion and the community's wellbeing.

#### **STORY, STRATEGY AND STRUCTURE WORK TOGETHER**

The story you're telling has to make sense with what you plan to do and the way you plan to do it; our local community has for example a housing affordability crisis, but it's not just about building more houses, rather the right kind of homes (story). As a CLT we aim to build genuinely affordable housing that meets the needs of the local community. We are made up of local people and have an open membership and democratic governance structure (structure). We will work with the local council to acquire land, fundraise and build relationships with architects and developers and use our large membership to ensure we build the right kind of homes (strategy).

#### **MAPPING YOUR CAPACITY AND RESOURCE**

When putting together your strategy it's good to know where your organisation is strong and where needs improvement. A good tool for this is a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threats) analysis. This will inform your strategy. For example it might be that you have great expertise in the group but are lacking membership numbers. This might determine what you do next.



## **GETTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER**

Before you approach a councillor or housing officer you want to make sure you're able to communicate who you are, what you do and how you do it with ease.

## **STORY, STRATEGY, STRUCTURE**

You want to be able to explain why it's necessary for your CLT to exist, what it is you're going to do about particular issues in your local community and how you intend to address these problems all in 3 minutes.

It's important you take the complexity of these three areas and make it simple enough for someone to understand and repeat. This isn't about not having comprehensive governance structures, it's about being able to communicate this to your local housing officer or councillor.

## **CONTENTS:**

### **HOW TO BUILD POWER**

When building a relationship with your local council it is essential that you have and are building collective power.

### **ENGAGING YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL**

The first step to engaging your council is getting prepared. To build a productive relationship you have to understand them.

### **LEVERAGING POLITICAL MOMENTS**

CLTs are impacted by national and local political moments. How can you make the most of them?

### **GETTING YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER**

You want to be able to show your CLT off and to do that you must have a clear story, strategy and structure.





## **HOW TO BUILD POWER**

Every CLT needs to build its power to win over their council. To do this you need to have legitimacy. Your council will respond well if you are clearly representing the range of voices in your local community and aim to meet their needs. The best way to do this is to build a large, diverse and engaged membership. A good target is to recruit 20% of people in your community, or at least 500 members in large urban areas, and pay attention to the diversity in terms of age, gender and ethnicity.

## **COMMUNITY ORGANISING**

This is about building collective power and there are two main approaches. One is to bring together existing community groups, leaders and businesses in your area to support your work and even to join your CLT. Every community has churches or mosques, youth clubs and WI groups. The other approach is going out to recruit more members directly.

## **TOOL BOX:**

### **MINI MANIFESTO**

At least four months before a local election, start asking local parties and candidates to sign up to a few pledges. We have put together a mini manifesto with ideas you can copy which you can find on our website in the members area.

### **PRESS**

Press coverage gives you a louder voice and done well can make councils pay more attention. Local media will love covering anything visual, whether plans for a scheme or a group of local people gathering for some purpose. Stay positive and the more unusual and visual the better. Get to know local journalists and editors and find out what they're interest in.

### **NATIONAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

When central Government make an announcement there is sometimes opportunity to get local press. You may find your CLT speaks to some of the housing issues central Government is talking about in the media or a new big policy announcement. This is also an opportunity to meet with your councillors to talk about your projects.

### **OPEN MEETINGS**

These meetings are for new members or anyone who wants to come along. It's an opportunity for you to tell new members about the CLT and ways they can get involved. These are usually good to hold just after a big event such as getting in local press or an announcement by central Government.





## **LEVERAGE POLITICAL MOMENTS**

Political moments can be great opportunities to move your CLT project forward a few steps with great ease. You might lobby councillors and local parties ahead of a local election or meet with officials after central government announce a big fund. To see political moments as opportunities and know how to get the most out of them takes practice, but it has the potential to move your project along a lot quicker than originally expected.

## **YOU ARE THE EXPERT**

In many cases, housing officers and councillors won't know exactly how a CLT works and they may not have access to the community expertise you've organised through your membership. This is important to remember when meeting about a new government announcement or news story.

## **TOOL BOX: ONE TO ONE**

One to ones are used to build relationships and trust with local community and business leaders such as youth workers, Imams and Vicars. Suggest a casual 30 minute chat where you build trust and get them on board with your CLT's aims and take it from there. Ask to meet with their congregation or group, and discuss how they can help you recruit members.

## **MEETING AND EVENTS**

You want to ensure that you're providing a space for the community to come together and get to know each other. Make it fun! Get everyone to bring food and have some music. Be efficient with the formal meeting to get to the socialising. You want people to come back.

## **DOOR KNOCKING**

A brilliant way of raising the profile of your campaign, recruiting members and hearing the concerns of neighbours and community. An easy way to do this is to create a short survey asking their views and with a sign-up section. Drop this off and say you'll be back in a hour to collect it if they leave it somewhere accessible.

## **STALLS**

Similar to door knocking this is a brilliant way of raising the profile of your campaign and recruiting. This is something you can do consistently i.e. every few weeks or months. Try moving it around, from a high street to a school to a place of worship.





## **ENGAGING YOUR COUNCIL**

This is something you don't want to fall into, but something to walk into with all the questions answered. The relationship with the council can be a delicate one and you want them to be on side.

Councils are currently under a lot of pressure. They have too little funding and too many needs to fulfil. You will get more support if you show that you understand the challenges they face and how you will help them to address them.

## **HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR COUNCIL**

You are much more likely to succeed if you get on well with your council and have the support of the councillors and officers. You want to be friendly and pleasant to work with. You want officials to look forward to meetings with you, not dread them!



## **TOOL BOX:**

### **PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES**

Take some time to research your council's view of the world. What are the challenges they are struggling with? What are their current plans to address the housing crisis? You can find this out from their 'Local Plan' and press releases, local media and talking to councillors and officers.

### **BOLSTER YOUR CREDIBILITY**

You don't want to over egg your CLT, but you do want to show you mean business and can deliver. You can do this by mentioning your skilled board members, strong governance processes, funding awarded to your CLT and the involvement of professional advisers, large membership, prominent local supporters and realistic development plans.

### **HAVE THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS**

What's the problem you're addressing? Who is affected? What change do you want to see? What will the benefit of this change be for your council? What will happen if you don't take action?

### **KNOW WHO YOU SHOULD TALK TO**

You need to build a map of who has power in your local council and get them to help you out. This could be friendly senior officers and councillors. Or it might be people who have a lot of power who seem neutral and who you need to get on board.