



UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE VALUE

*A guide to recording the social and
economic fabric of our neighbourhood*



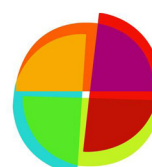
Partners

Peckham
Vision

*For an integrated
town centre*



Southwark
Law Centre



dpu
Development
Planning Unit

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THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

The following handbook has come together as a joint publication of the Development Planning Unit (DPU) of The Bartlett (global faculty of the built environment) at UCL, and JustSpace. Specifically, the student researchers involved in preparing this handbook are studying on the MSc Urban Development Planning course at the DPU and examining inequality in global urban development. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the significant support of our tutors, partners, and the community members who engaged with us. Thank you to Dr. Barbara Lipietz and Tim Wickson (UCL), and to JustSpace, Peckham Vision, Canal Grove Residents Association, Southwark Law Centre, and Southwark Group of Tenants' Organisation for their important inputs to shape and improve our process and for connecting us with existing efforts on the ground in our study area. We have a deepened respect for the determination and resolve our partners maintain in the face of salient challenges, and we are grateful to have benefited from their experience and wisdom.



LONDON'S RAPID DEVELOPMENT: WHY SHOULD WE CARE ?

Development is occurring across Greater London, and it is important to understand the future which has been laid out by local Councils and developers. The Old Kent Road area of Southwark, for example, was designated as an Opportunity Area by the Mayor of London in 2015. On the surface, the plans have promised 10,000 new jobs, 20,000 new homes and a £3.1 billion extension of the Bakerloo line.

However, key questions we must ask are:

- Who will benefit from promises for new jobs?
- Who will be able to afford the new homes?
- What consequences does a new transit line present?

To face these powerful interests, we must come together to secure the future of our neighbourhoods. This book will introduce a tool called a local audit to guide the process of capturing valuable information for decision-makers and community mobilising.

WHAT IS A LOCAL AUDIT ?

A local audit, also called a “social audit,” “fact-based audit,” and “community audit,” is a process of surveying a defined area for information which is not currently available. This often involves gathering factual data as well as perceptions of neighbours and community members through interviews. The local audit seeks to answer the question: “What do we value?”

This tool is useful in many ways, for example:

01. It can be used when an area undergoes development. If it is applied early enough in the development process, it can influence neighbourhood change.

02. It can demonstrate to the Council what your neighbourhood actually needs. After a social audit your community might decide there are not enough trees and can then advocate for new green spaces, or you might realise that all the local nurseries are overcrowded and ask for the Council to make space for new nurseries.

03. It can be used to display the richness and diversity of your neighbourhood. As you document your area, you may notice trends like, “We have a lot of...”, or, “We’re really unique in London for our...”. Gathering opinions across your area is a good way to increase its recognition.

This handbook has been built with inputs from the Old Kent Road development projects. However, it can be used in any neighbourhood seeking to bring community voice into guiding its future.

Tips:

Local auditing helps to feed real perspective of the needs and priorities of communities to decision-makers. Highlighted by a resident of Peckham East, “buildings and development will always be better than it would have been without the input of activists and campaigns.”



Figure 2: Field trip with Just Space (Source: Author)

HOW TO CONDUCT A LOCAL AUDIT ?

01



PHASE 1

Set goals/find the information that exists

02



PHASE 2

Reflect on neighbourhood ‘assets’/Plan the research

03



PHASE 3

Organise findings/ Next steps

PHASE 1

WHAT WILL YOU NEED TO KNOW?

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL ?

01

Thinking about the ways that community groups can shape development, you might want to:

- **Protect a specific site or complex.**
- **Intervene in a current planning process.** (pg.8, Chapter 4)
- **Create an entirely neighborhood-led plan.**

*Resources for each of the three will be provided throughout this guidebook.

Creating an action-group:

As a general rule, this is not a one-person job. Having a team within your organization or comprised of multiple organizations (recommended) will help you to cover more ground and gather more meaningful information.



WHAT WILL BE IMPACTED ?

02

Determine the target participants in your research based on who will be directly impacted by this development, planning process, or plan.

Based on your goal, the size of your team, and how much time you have to dedicate, what area can reasonably make up your audit?

First, ask yourself questions such as:

- How many people will conduct the assessment?
- How much time do you have to dedicate per week?
- What groups should be represented?

Including 'invisible' voices in your scope:

Social audit can and should be used as a tool for inclusion. Which voices have traditionally been left out of the conversation? How can you ensure that the scope of your project includes the excluded?



WHAT INFORMATION ALREADY EXISTS ?

03

To maximize your resources and support a contextualised understanding of the area, look for information which already exists.

This could be:

1. Existing data: demographics, studies, etc.

Look: Council website, local universities (more in appendix)

2. Local knowledge: history, heritage, experience, and change

Look: Museums, libraries, historical societies, cultural groups (appendix)

PHASE 2

GETTING STARTED

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY ASSET ?

Definition

According to the Community Right to Bid in the Localism Act, an Asset of Community Value is "a building or other land that is believed to further the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community."

Room for expansion

Within this guide, we want to expand this definition to include other types of community value which can be intangible; they can include connections to your neighbor, a sense of belonging to the community, and housing (which the Localism Act currently excludes from being a community asset).



WHAT DO WE HAVE ?

TYPES OF COMMUNITY ASSETS (More on page 07-10)

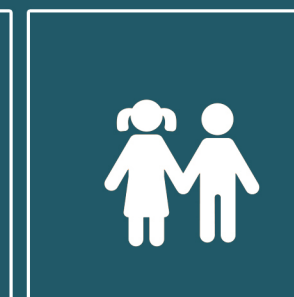
JustSpace has identified four broad categories of assets which contribute to the image of a community. The following pages break down these categories and present selected examples. They are not comprehensive nor rigid, but help to focus local auditing research on a set of features you wish to highlight/preserve in the neighbourhood.



GREEN
INFRASTRUCTURE



HOUSING

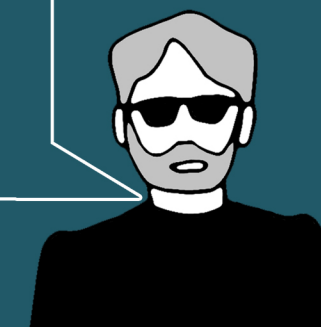


SOCIAL/
COMMUNITY SPACE



ECONOMIC
INFRASTRUCTURE

This process should be adapted based on your organisation's capacity; you can choose which assets you research, and how much detail you research in.





PHASE 2

ASSET COLLECTION



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Definition:

Green infrastructure is the network of green spaces (including water-spaces) in urban areas. These spaces can: provide a place for recreation activities, restore mental and physical health, filter urban air pollution, and manage flooding (GLA, 2016) These features are under-protected, and despite initiatives to provide new green spaces, preservation of current infrastructure presents a challenge.

List of assets:

Green assets:

- Parks
- Street trees & shrubs
- Green roofs
- Green lawns
- Pavement
- Cycling routes

Blue assets:

- River
- Canals
- Waterbodies

Example: Street Trees in London

London has an estimated 8 million street trees. They are an important green asset because they circulate fresh air, absorb air pollution, provide shade, and become homes for urban animal species. Street trees also, importantly, provide the backdrop of the neighbourhood's aesthetic. The plan usually overlooks these environment assets within the area and cut down the trees during the construction process.

[To see Street Trees Map in London, you can check <https://maps.london.gov.uk/trees/>]





HOUSING

Definition:

Regarded by some as space that provides private or shared physical amenities that should be affordable and accessible, and provides an environment that can satisfy emotional and psychological well-being. Auditing housing features can help to establish community-informed minimum standards for a neighbourhood, by uncovering the lifestyles and preferences of the local population. This type of information could inform policies for future housing development in an area.

Here is a list of common elements you may wish to include in your research:

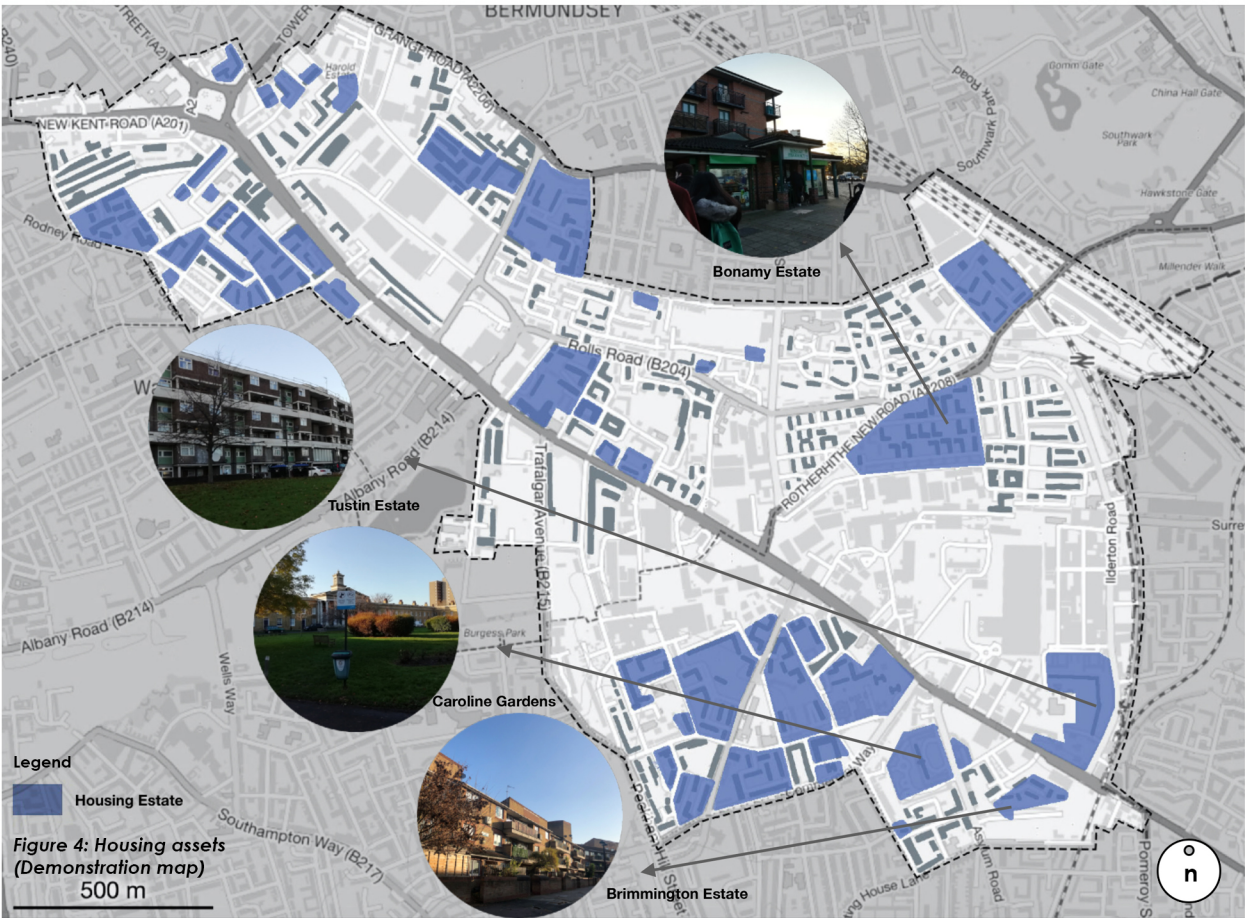
- Number of bedrooms
- Number of bathrooms
- Number of private parking spaces
- Number of covered parking spaces
- Number of storeys
- Housing Types (terraced houses, tower blocks, etc.)
- Housing Styles (Georgian, Victorian, modern, etc.)
- Tenure (freehold, leasehold, rental, etc.)
- Tree cover
- Green amenities (private/shared garden, flower patch, grass patch, etc.)
- Outdoor space (patio, balcony, terrace, courtyard, etc.)
- Play space
- Tenants Halls
- Community Centres

**Note: it is recommended to enlist specialist help for review of very detailed condition elements like roofing, ventilation, and heating, and as well for tenure types such as travellers' sites, rough sleeping locations, and care homes.

Example: Tustin Estate Residents Manifesto

Tustin Estate on Old Kent Road at Ilderton Road is currently planning for resident votes about its future. Options up for voting include refurbishment, infill development, and demolition with replacement. As part of the process of building a collective vision and determining what matters to them, the residents created the Tustin Estate Residents Manifesto, May 2019, which articulates specific measures and qualities that the residents wish to have maintained in their housing regardless of the outcome of voting on upgrading/replacement, such as Council rent rates and good ventilation for all bathrooms.

[Read the full text at: <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/asset/s/attach/9975/Tustin-Estate-Residents-Manifesto-18.06.19.pdf>]



SOCIAL/ COMMUNITY SPACES

Definition:

Social infrastructure is a broad category which includes both spaces which accommodate for social services and spaces for community gathering. These foster a sense of community, leave room for necessary services for a well-functioning city, and are the places outside of the home which can function as the spaces for education, exchange, growth, development, and expression of people operating within it.

List of assets:

- Health facilities
- Nurseries, primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, libraries
- Cultural, arts, sports & leisure facilities
- Places of worship
- Fire stations
- Policing or community safety facilities

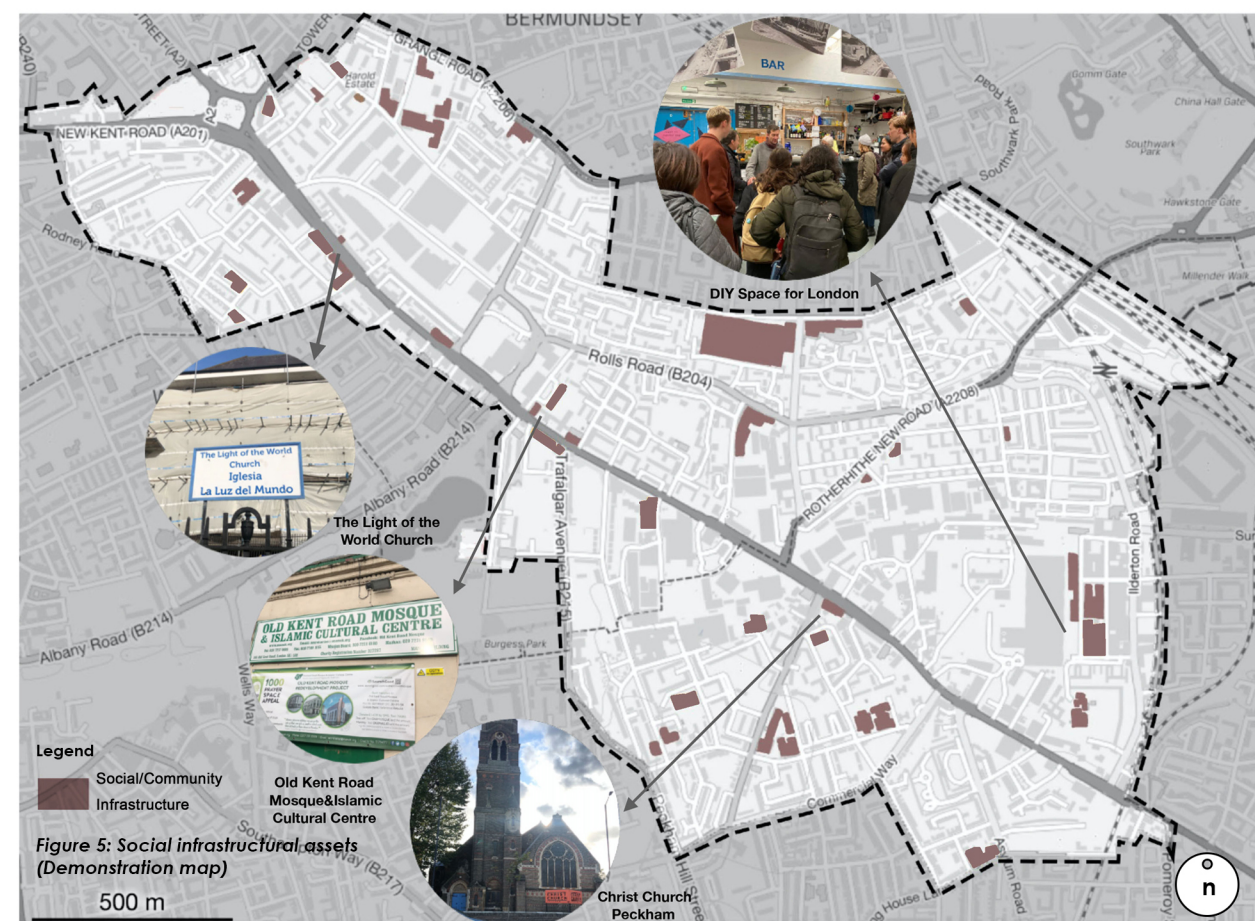
At a more local level, social infrastructure includes;

- Play and informal recreation facilities
- Public toilets
- Drinking water fountains and seating
- Community centres
- Community halls and meeting space
- Music venues
- Pubs
- Open spaces and public spaces
- Youth centres and playground
- Centres for older people
- Listed buildings and heritage

Example: Bells Gardens Community Centre

Bells Gardens Community Centre is operated by Southwark Group of Tenants Organisations (SGTO). The community centre is accessible to the tenants and residents within the community. It is used as a venue for community-based projects and is a space many local groups hold meetings. Other services include computer skills training, online food hygiene courses, and access to a housing reference library. For more information,

[For more information, visit:
https://www.sgto.org.uk/wp_sgto/]



ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

Definition:

Economic infrastructure promotes business activity through the support of other sectors of the economy.

This infrastructure can include physical structures, systems, institutions, services and facilities; the economic system it forms is crucial to its surrounding neighbourhood. Understanding the economic background of an area can increase a community's bargaining power with local authorities and developers, and can help to protect businesses which are valuable to the community.

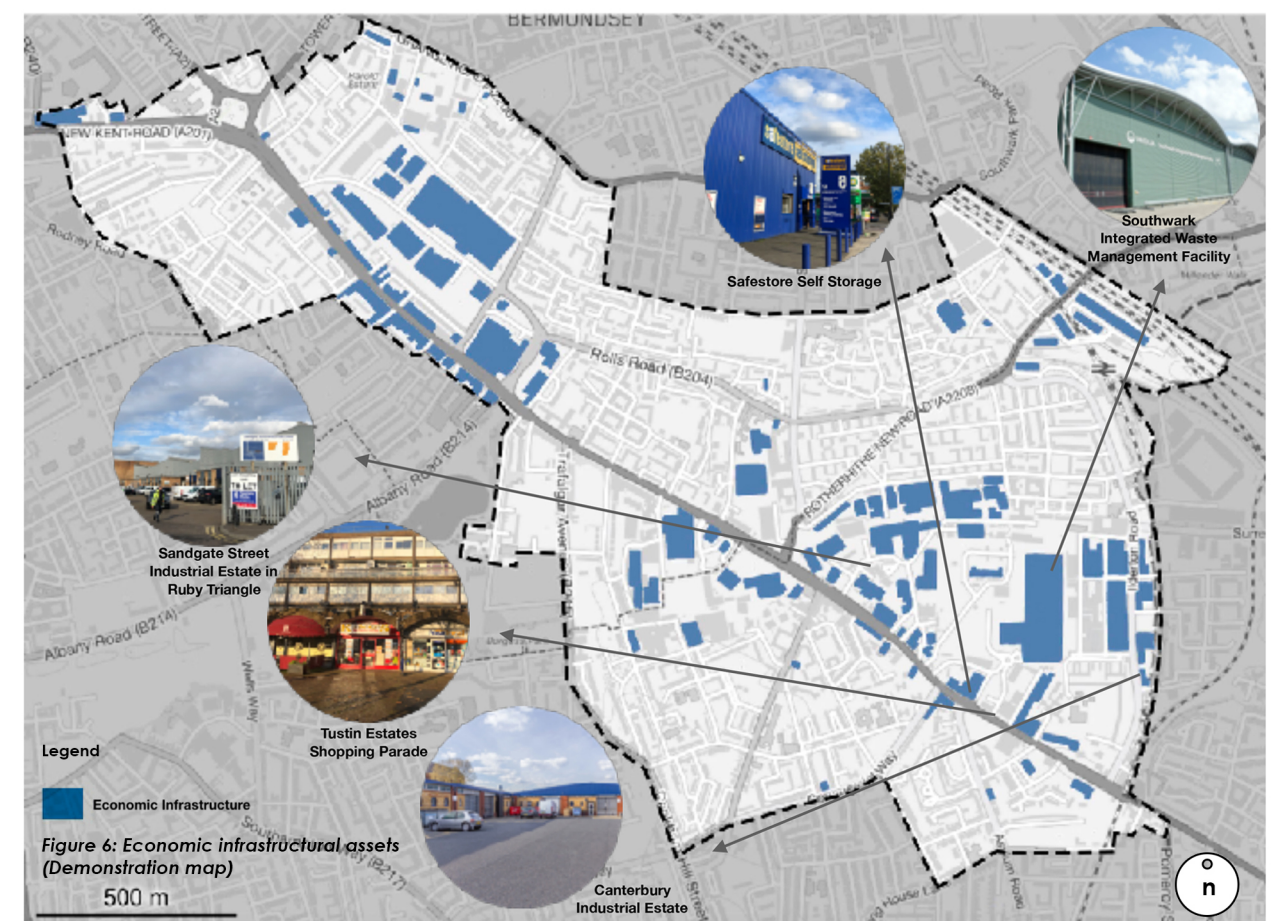
List of assets:

- Local shops and businesses
- High streets
- Street markets
- Work spaces
- Art studios
- Industrial units/estates
- Yards
- Warehouses
- Parking facilities
- Gyms

Example: Canterbury Industrial Park

Located between Tustin and Bramcote Estates, the Canterbury Industrial Park presents 14 units including parking facilities. It is managed by Capital Industrial, a Real Estate company. The purpose of the Industrial Park is to provide local companies with studios, offices or warehousing facilities thus generating employment in the area. Among other firms, it currently houses an electric services company and an industrial plastics provider.

[For more information, visit:
<http://www.capitalindustrial.co.uk/properties/canterbury-industrial-park/>]



PHASE 2 DATA COLLECTION

- ✓ Determine the scope/ objectives
- ✓ Identify which assets you are researching
- ? Data collection

Inclusivity in Data Collection

The means you use to gather information can incidentally exclude people from the conversation. Be aware of the time, place, and means you hold interviews, focus group meetings, and other surveying: Is there a time of day which many people are at work? Instead of holding a meeting, could you go to where people are in their daily lives? Do you notice that any identity group for the area is consistently not present?

Note: This process can change when new information is brought forward. For instance, through interviewing you may discover that a particular asset is of value which you hadn't considered. It's expected to return to earlier steps in the process.



GUIDANCE - TIPS

FACTUAL INFORMATION

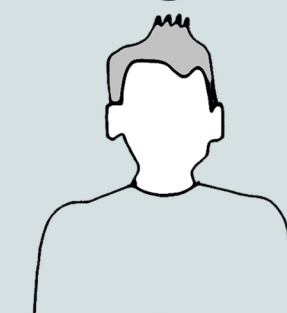
Practice ground-truthing. Verify data found online from secondary sources such as visual walks and interviewing.
Pay attention for data biases. Existing studies and data can intentionally or unintentionally exclude marginalized groups. Who might be excluded from the data you are looking at?



01 TIPS

STATUS/ CONDITION

Get creative with interviewing techniques. Some traditional examples include asking sliding scale questions (On a scale of 1 to 10...), but more creative methods exist.



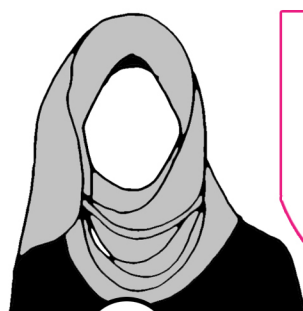
02 TIPS

EXPERIENTIAL

Tap into emotional data. Experience matters, and is not often captured in quantitative studies. Asking open ended questions which allow focus groups and interviewees to express feelings can reveal a greater picture about community assets.



03 TIPS



TIER 01

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Information based in facts and statistics

- Does it exist? How many are there?
- Who owns it?
- Where is it located?



TIER 02

STATUS/ CONDITION

Information which is based on fact, with subjective aspects.

- How much is it used?
- Who generally uses it?
- What is the condition?

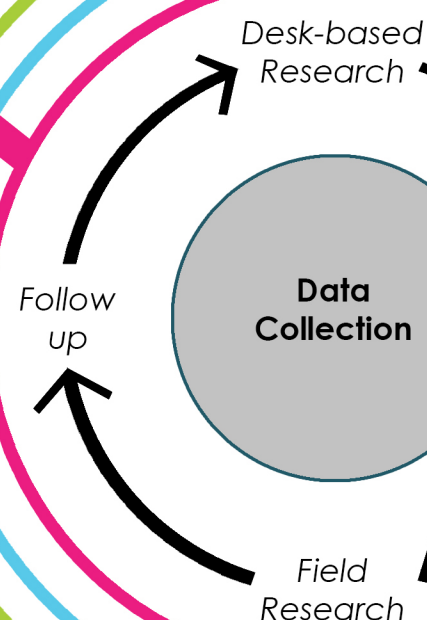


TIER 03

EXPERIENTIAL INFORMATION

Information which is personal, based on the experience and perspective of the audience.

- What value does it have for you?
- How safe does it feel?
- What role does it play in the community?



Note: This process can change when new information is brought forward. For instance, through interviewing you may discover that a particular asset is of value which you hadn't considered. It's expected to return to earlier steps in the process.

PHASE 3 NEXT STEPS

After gathering all of this knowledge from the neighborhood, what happens next? Revisiting your objectives

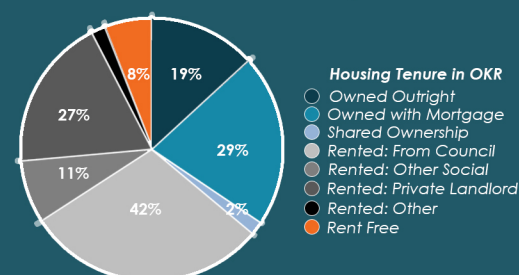


STEP 1: Organising findings visually (e.g. graphs, charts, maps) and highlight needs and aspirations

- Ensure you record addresses, owner (if known), why you feel it's an asset of community value, how the need was demonstrated, etc.

[Source of OKR Housing Tenure chart:
<https://www.streetcheck.co.uk/postcode/se151j>]

- Quantifying: Utilise various assessment indices [e.g. Neighborhood Assessment Index, refer to Appendix]



STEP 2: Consider options within Legal Framework (this may be the same as your goal from Phase 1, or you may revise your goal based on your findings) based on timing

(a) Community Right to Bid (Localism Act 2011)

Community groups can nominate property that is believed to further the social interests or social wellbeing of the local community, and can bid to buy the property on the open market if the property owner decides to sell. Community groups, local parish councils or local neighbourhood planning forums and charities can nominate properties.

(b) Community Asset Transfer

Asset transfer is passing ownership or management of a building or piece of land from a public sector body to a third sector organisation (e.g. Community group/enterprises/social enterprises).

(c) Neighbourhood planning (Localism Act 2011)

It gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area.



STEP 3: Seeking Additional Support

Let's discuss how the community can preserve the assets.

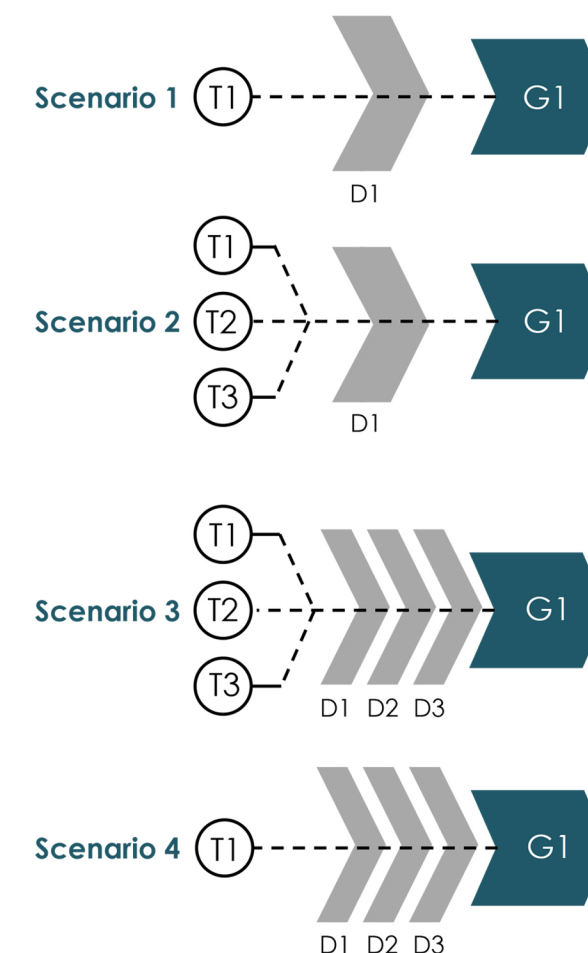
- To comment on current planning applications, visit <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications/comment-on-planning-applications>
- To consider further options for funding, please check <https://mycommunity.org.uk/funding-options/>
- For a detailed example of community mobilisation in the area, see <http://ewnforum.org/Activities>
- For legal advice regarding rights to engage in planning, visit http://www.southwarklawcentre.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=71&Itemid=78

APPENDIX

What is a NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSESSMENT INDEX ?



NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSESSMENT INDEX



[Note: T = Themes, D = Dimensions, G = Goals]

A Neighbourhood Assessment Index has been developed as an example to help communities develop their own "asset performance" scorecards. These scorecards help to identify key areas for improvement, which could eventually help to decide appropriate area development strategies. Here are the key steps:

1/ Choose your Themes (e.g. housing, environment, etc.).

2/ Select your vision Goals (e.g. Themes Underpinning a Community-Led Plan for London developed by Just Space).

3/ Identify suitable Dimensions (related to your Themes) which would help the communities to achieve their vision Goals.

4/ Develop the scorecard & start gathering relevant data for each Dimension of each Theme.

5/ Once the data is collected, start assigning scores (out of 10) for each category. Based on the grading system established (what scores do we consider Excellent, Satisfactory, or Need for Improvement), communities would be able to identify needs which they may wish to discuss with their local Council and developers of active projects in the area.

01		02					
Support for well-functioning suburbs, providing many key amenities and job opportunities locally, thus reducing the need for costly and polluting travel.		Delivery models for regeneration that prioritise social sustainability and social infrastructure, respecting and supporting Londoners' attachment to place and sense of belonging.					
Dimensions Themes	Dimension 1 (e.g. Condition of the Assets)	Dimension 2 (e.g. Access to the Assets)		Dimension 3 (e.g. Communities & their Needs)		Dimension 4 (e.g. Planning & Participation)	
		Proximity	Inclusivity	Gender based	Ethnicity based	Consultation	Representation
		Perform.	Maintain.	H.Impact			
Theme 1 (e.g. Environment)	Theme 1 (e.g. Environment)						
Theme 2 (e.g. Housing)	Theme 2 (e.g. Housing)						
Theme 3 (e.g. Amenities)	Theme 3 (e.g. Amenities)						
Theme 4 (e.g. Economy)	Theme 4 (e.g. Economy)						
Theme 5 (e.g. Culture)	Theme 5 (e.g. Culture)						
Theme 6 (e.g. Safety)	Theme 6 (e.g. Safety)						
Theme 7 (e.g. Health)	Theme 7 (e.g. Health)						
Theme 8 (e.g. Education)	Theme 8 (e.g. Education)						
Theme 9 (e.g. Transport)	Theme 9 (e.g. Transport)						
Theme 10 (e.g. Environment)	Theme 10 (e.g. Environment)						
Theme 11 (e.g. Governance)	Theme 11 (e.g. Governance)						
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Theme 15 (e.g. Cultural)	Theme 15 (e.g. Cultural)						
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**Who benefits from
neighbourhood housing and
development projects?
How can community groups
shape the future of our
neighbourhoods?
How can our voices be heard?**

This guidebook offers a tool for community information-gathering, and was designed for community groups to document and understand what people in a neighbourhood value. Furthermore, how this value can impact discussions for future development.



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