

# Just Space 2024 Manifesto

A different kind of London—  
for people and communities



# Launch

# 13th April

# 2024

# Purpose of the Just Space Manifesto

## **A tool for 2024 year of elections:**

Mayor + London Assembly elections 2nd May

=> London Plan partial review (ordered by Gove), significant alterations, or a new London Plan

National government elections 2024?

=> Parties creating their manifestos for power

**A potential shift in thinking** about economy, taxation, local government and finance, housing, climate change, development, planning, communities

**This Just Space Manifesto 2024 promotes new ideas with prescriptive notions for carrying out changes**

# Towards a Community- Led Plan for London



Ideas for discussion  
and debate



# 2016

# Towards a Community- Led Plan for London

Ideas for discussion  
and debate



# Just Space Community-Led Recovery Plan



# 2022

# Towards a Community- Led Plan for London



Ideas for design  
and development



## Just Space Community- Recovery Plan



# Just Space 2024 Manifesto



A different kind of London—  
for people and communities



# 2024

# How was the Manifesto created?



JS Community Led Plan 2016

JS Recovery Plan 2022

topic drafts, meetings/ discussion => JS **Gathering** Nov 23

topic drafts, meetings/ discussion => JS **Conference** March 24

topic drafts, meetings/ discussion => JS **Manifesto** April 24

+ Editing down!

# The Manifesto is not...

**Comprehensive** e.g. nothing about transport

**Detailed** - that detail is either in previous work **or needs to be done**

**Doesn't include evidence** but does include some Endnotes and links

**Holistic** - it breaks down into topics, but these are all interconnected and experienced as a whole, and the deprivations created by planning are often inter-sectional

# The Manifesto is...

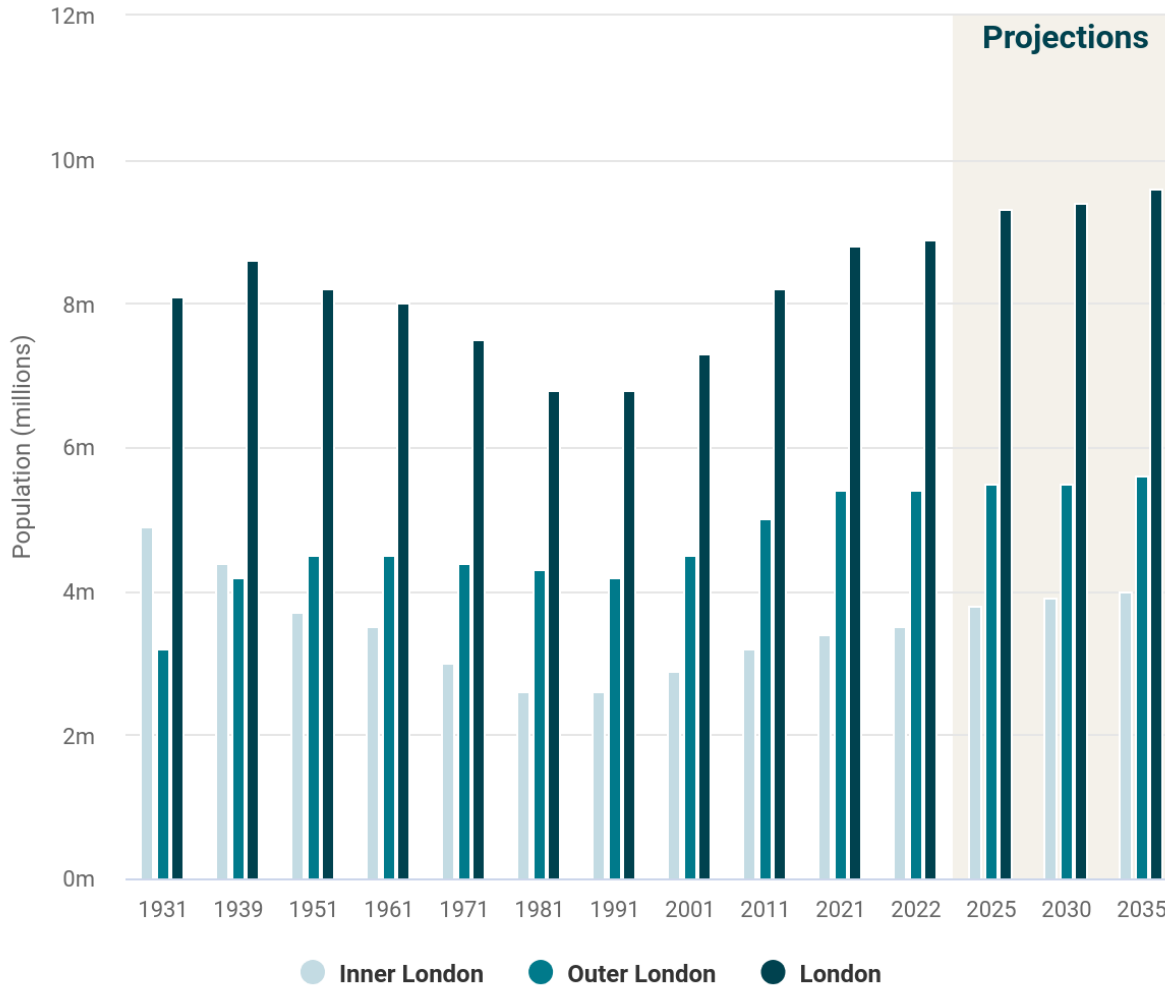
**coherent and radical**

**driven by JS members' experiences** on the front line

**an attempt to shift the dial** on the strategic things which create the conditions for our experiences: poor planning, opaque decision-making, deliberate manipulation, performative engagement, and community-destroying development

## London's population over time (1931-2035)

Data source: Population data for 1931-1971, ONS, Historical Census Population (via London Datastore); Population data for 1981-2022, ONS, Population estimates (via Nomis); Population projection data, ONS, Population projections (via Nomis)



## London's Population

6.8m in 1991

8.9m in 2022 (**31% increase**)

9.6m in 2035 (**41% increase**)

[UK pop. grown by 17%]

*How much more could London grow? For whose benefit?*



# The radical contents...

Build, build, build will not solve the housing crisis

- law of supply and demand doesn't work with land
- planning restrictions aren't the problem
- 300,000 homes permitted but unbuilt - 5 years supply
- safe haven for stolen money => empty homes

*An affordability* of housing crisis

## The radical strategic contents...

- Stabilise growth
- replace council tax
- introduce land value tax
- public land for non-profit housing
- moratorium on opportunity areas pending investigation of benefits

# The radical housing contents...

- major programme of public housebuilding
- abolition of Right to Buy
- govt give powers to Mayor for Tenancy Reform
- presumption against Estate redevelopment
- abolish viability tests
- transparent register of land ownership
- Community participation in SHLAA and SHMA



# The radical local economy contents...

- reintroduce economic and spatial planning!
- town centres/high streets for production, identity and care...
- ... with a market on every high street
- low-cost workspace (e.g. grade C office) protected
- no net loss of industrial land



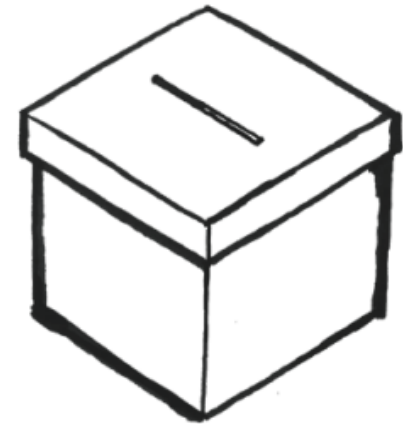
# The radical biodiversity, parks, carbon contents...

- Biodiversity Net Gain - problem: self-certification, voluntary regulation, relying on honesty of developer...
- ...Biodiversity Review Panels to hold measuring and monitoring to account
- Major planning applications must improve access to open space (i.e. more open space for increased population)
- Environmental Impact Assessments co-produced
- Retrofit first - outlaw demolition without approval
- low carbon alternatives - wood!



# The radical equity, fairness, justice contents...

- Co-production as a core value
- Community-led audits, starting with public land (for non-profit housing)
- free wifi on all public transport and public buildings
- provide support and resources for organisations supporting historically disadvantaged communities
- remove revolving doors



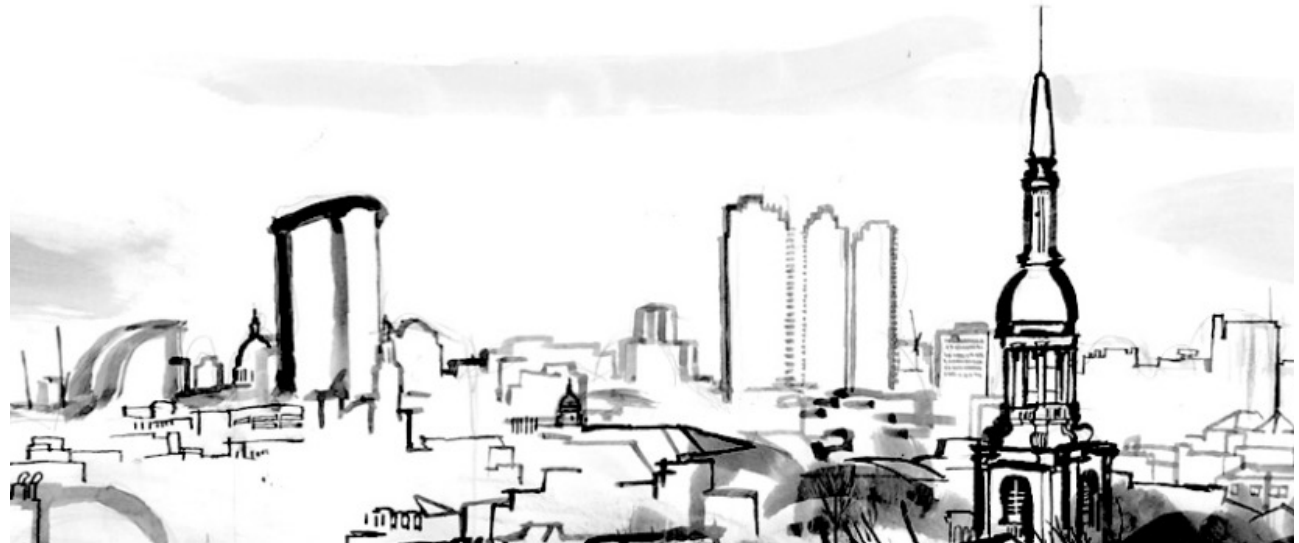
# The radical Caring Local City contents...

- Community Wealth building principles
- National care service
- Care and food hubs on every high street
- Community re-use of vacant property
- Lifetime Neighbourhoods



# The radical tall buildings contents...

- Moratorium on tall buildings
- Full GLA investigation of impact of tall buildings on carbon emissions, land values, amenity and efficiency
- Reintroduce the density matrix





# Where are we going next?

**Outwards**, to generate more debate:

- make common cause with other pressure groups: Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, Action on Empty Homes, London Housing Panel, Shelter etc
- Politicians and planners: send to all GLA members, candidates, local councillors, London Plan team
- Members and communities...

**Inwards**: focus on next London Plan: need to expand and deepen analysis in preparation of evidence base

## Who are we?

*'Our Human cells make up only  
43% of the body's  
total cell count.*

SO

*When you really come to think  
about it, we are mostly*

*Not Human*

*We are mostly Earth:*

*The rest are microscopic colonists'*

*We are mostly each other!*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-43674270>

*How much does our shared governance of our planet*

*- at each and every scale and form of living -*

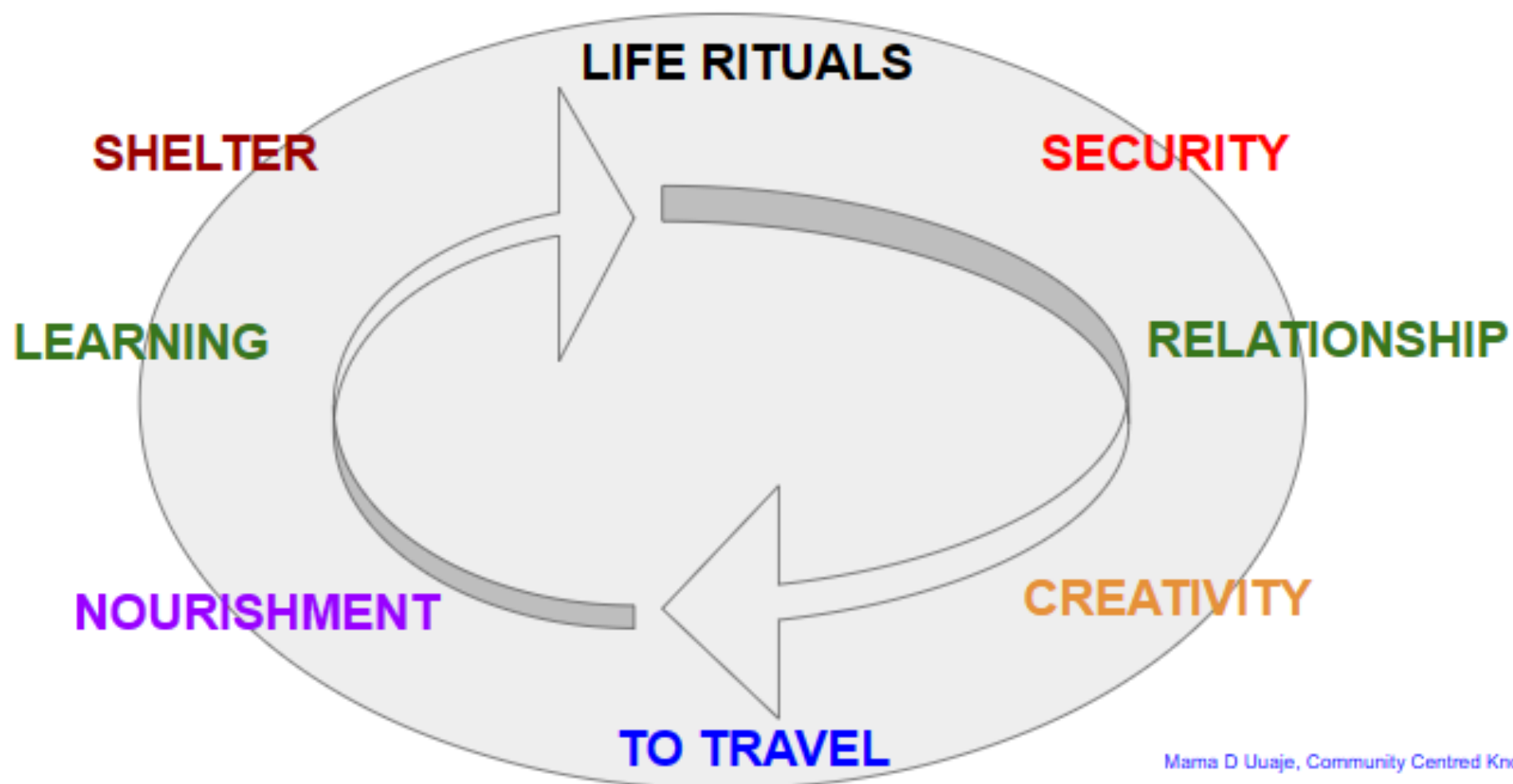
*respect our **co-being?***

*How much of how we care and plan for each other give credence to  
these wisdoms?*

***How much does our governance of our City  
- at each and every scale of living -  
respect our co-being?***

***How much of how we plan to care for each  
other exemplify these wisdoms?***

*We now understand that **we need** to embrace complexity/chaos to **really respond** to ever present change. To do this **Diversity is key***



***What opportunity does this Community Manifesto represent for the shared recovery and repair that WE ALL need: as individuals, and collectively.***

***How can it ultimately support affirmative and life affirming changes in our work and living environment(s), within the communities in which we work, live and play?***

# **SPREADING THE WORD**

# How do we get people interested and involved in planning?

- People get concerned when big change threatens their area...
- How to make common cause? A community finds its voice
- Go into existing community events and spaces – where are people organising locally
- But problem of wasting people's time once they get involved with *performative democracy*

# What is performative democracy?

Going through the motions of democratic control, accountability and decision-making, including

- ☒ encouraging people to participate in developer's pre-app consultations (CONsultation)
- ☒ Understanding hundreds of turgid inaccessible documents
- ☒ Registering objections to the planning application
- ☒ Presenting petitions
- ☒ Making representations to the planning committee
- ☒ Making representations to the Mayor



# Existing 'democratic process'

- We elect governments who make planning law and delegate planmaking and decision-making to local authorities, who we also elect
- In London we have third tier - a strategic authority responsible for the London Plan, a 'strategic' plan - could be very powerful!
- This manifesto is a strategic response to 24 years of unhelpful, insufficiently radical London Plans

# Picking apart performative democracy

Who makes planning decisions?

Local authorities:

- policies, guidance and plans ( and govt Inspectors)
- encouraging developers at early stage;
- determining planning applications
- But local authorities are captured by developers

Courts can untangle this...

But how do we actually affect decision-making?

# We get caught up in non-consultation

**Policies not followed** -> result of 'flexibility'? The plan is deliberately 'flexible'; decisions on a case-by-case basis

- Developers moan about the lack of certainty in the planning system - yet demand watering down/ removing planning controls!
- We need less flexibility - a plan with clearer priorities
- A community (third party) right of Appeal on proposals clearly depart from the development plan?

**Legal decisions and processes** are not followed

- Lack of continuity in local authorities: loss of institutional memory
- enforcement is costly for the community, even with a third party right of Appeal

# Transparency of decision-making

- Redactions due to 'commercial confidentiality' - take viability out of planning - if a scheme cannot meet the planning requirements without being unviable, it isn't a scheme, it's a fantasy
- Local democratic process: political parties secretive processes and behaviour
- Poorly educated politicians find planning equally baffling
- Lack of meaningful engagement - ultimately decisions are taken by electing people who take those decisions

# Planning as 'development control' rather than positive planning

- Planning officers or lead members don't have a vision, an alternative
- Planning as minimizing harm, mitigating the impacts of development, rather than requiring development to be driven by positive, community centred ideas
- Partly caused by withdrawing of state and public funding

# Developers/ landowners

- Knowing what you're up against: not on our side!
- Whose interests do they serve and who do the developments benefit compared to how they present schemes with slick PR  
(decoding/translating language used ,which has often been co-opted eg. affordability, social value etc)
- Developers present a fait accompli: “we will do this, we will build it like this”
  - the result of land ownership/ property rights, and a faux lack of understanding that development rights were nationalised in 1947

# Making our own plans

- Community vision - Neighbourhood Plans
- getting the community together
- setting priorities
- Alternative plan for a site
- getting neighbours, other groups and people involved together
- engaging and educating local councillors
- getting the planners on side?
- getting political parties on side?

# Activate the Just Space network

- Community organising and building power
- Inclusion as strength bringing people together – race, class, generations
- Share stories, strategies and skills – learning from each other and the past
- Create tools for how the planning process works – power mapping, who make decisions and how can we pressure them
- Collate information on developers, their companies and investors
- Connect demands from across our campaigns, so we can present a collective voice and vision to GLA/Mayor



# SOUTHWARK LAW CENTRE – PLANNING VOICE

LEGAL GUIDE TO RESPONDING TO PLANNING  
APPLICATIONS, COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND  
EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

# SYSTEMIC JUSTICE,

THE MOVEMENTS' LAW FIRM

WHAT WE DO ▾

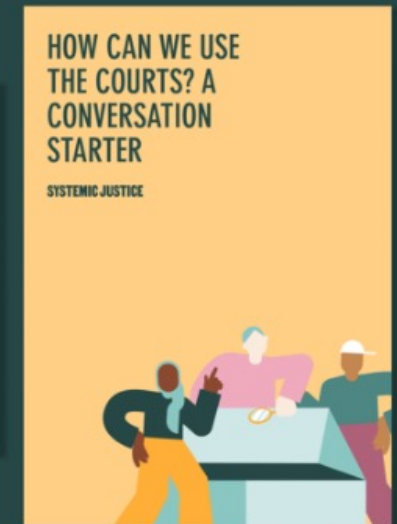
ABOUT US ▾

BLOG

DONATE

INTRODUCING:

# COMMUNITY TOOLKIT FOR CHANGE

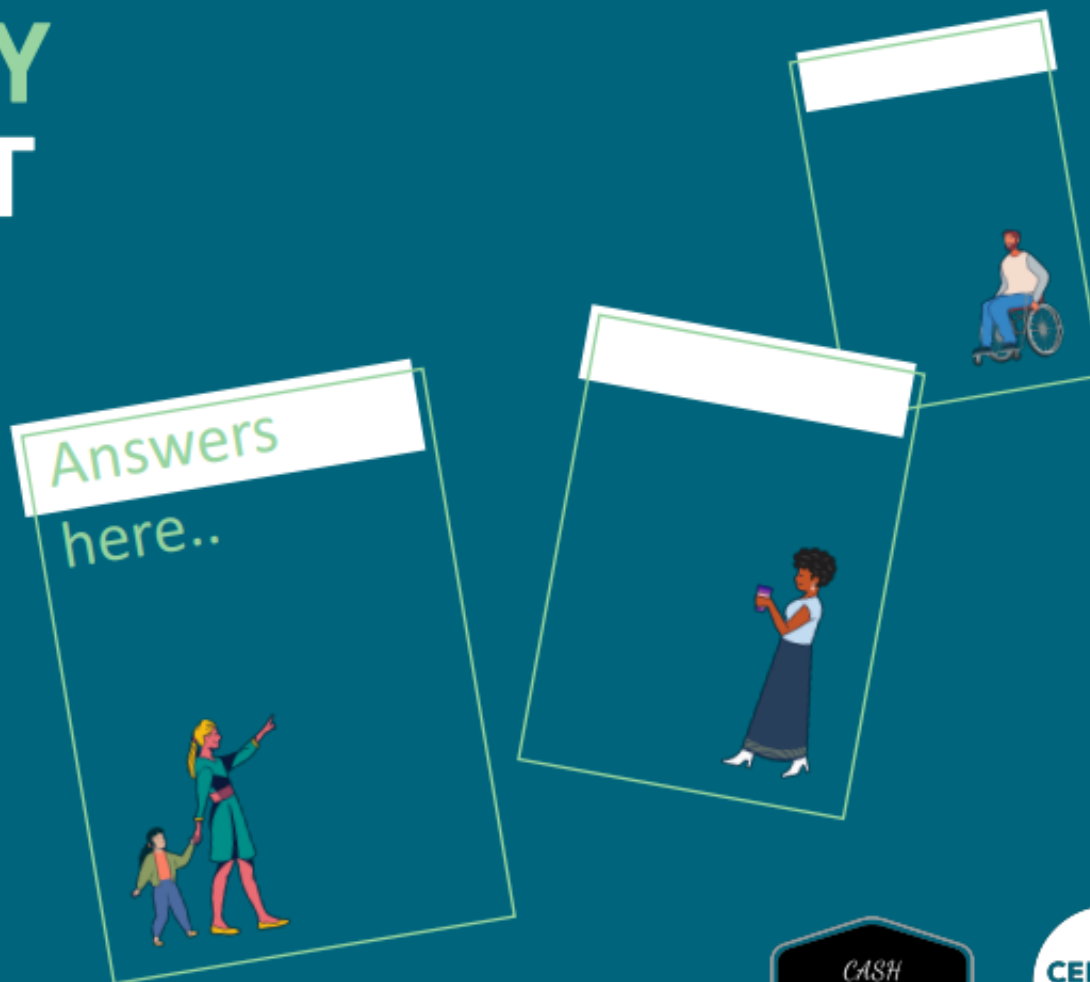


Community-driven litigation for racial, social, and economic justice



# THE **COMMUNITY** HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT

2023



# Conclusions?

- sign up to a topic group OR create a new topic group
- work towards evidence for the London Plan
- take the Manifesto to your community
- make common cause with other communities
- demand a presentation of the Manifesto to your elected representatives

**... Lunch!**