

Community Planning Resource Sheet



Writing Your Community-led Plan



Produced by CRCC in partnership with Cornwall Council

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This resource sheet is intended to help communities understand and work through the community-led planning (CLP) process, in conjunction with support and advice from CRCC and Cornwall Council officers.

This resource is part of a series on community planning which have been produced in partnership with Cornwall Council and others. The aim being to strengthen the process, and forge a mutually beneficial relationship that results in a more robust and effective Community Plan.

In order to help you write your plan this sheet has been devised to help you consider what might go into the document as well as other elements of the process. In addition, both Cornwall Council and CRCC can either signpost you to (or loan you) other completed plans to get ideas on the basic layout and concept.

Writing Your Plan - Overview

The Plan will include a range of information but some key points to remember are that the content should put across the views that have been gained (statistics, comments, etc) and set out clear actions in relation to the issues. It is also crucial to keep talking to key partners (Cornwall Council and others) to forge a 'working relationship' and to ensure they know what is happening, so it really is important to involve them at the draft plan stage. This enables you to gain useful feedback and information and also give them an idea of what things you might want them to be involved in - and help you put together a more robust document. This will help avoid a scenario whereby you present them with a final document that they have no knowledge of but which you want them to act upon!

Ideas on What to Include:

Introduction and Background - It is useful to give some information about the parish and population just to put things into context e.g if the parish is rural with limited facilities which has had its industry decline over the years then this might well lead to comments about transport, access to services and need for actions that kick-start employment and the economy. There may also be a desire to include some historical information and/or maps highlighting footpaths, historical buildings, landmarks, conservation areas etc. This does not have to be reams of information but can be an overview or key points - whatever is appropriate for you. It is useful to also set out why you decided to undertake a plan and how you went about it (including a rough timescale) and what number/percentage of the community took part in the consultation. The higher the percentage the more representative and valid the consultation.

Themes & Issues - Most plans are broken down into individual themes (e.g. health, housing etc) and may be linked to an overall vision which can act as a focus for resulting work and projects. It is usual for each themed section to include a summary of the community data which has been collated and analysed (stats, charts, examples, comments/statements, photographs) to illustrate the issues that have arisen. When using the data and depending on how you have undertaken your consultation you may identify some variance in results for

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different parts of the parish (e.g. residents in a main area of the parish may be satisfied with the children's play facilities, but residents in an outlying hamlet may indicate that they have none, but badly need a facility) and this can be useful information when you are writing the plan. Generally, the need to do this may only relate to one or two issues and not effect the overall parish views.

You may also want to highlight links to other parts of the plan as many of the themes will be inter-linked.

Additionally there needs to be a clear list or grid of actions that are related to the issues - How do you expect to tackle the issue (the steps to achieving this), who needs to be involved, is there a specific location related to the issue, what is the time-scale? Further, is it an action that can be done locally, does it need to be undertaken in partnership (local groups, Local Authority, Police, Health, other groups or organisations etc) or is the action to lobby for a change in a policy? The actions can either be within the themed section or grouped together in one section of the document. You may not include all the information above, but nevertheless you must include a clear framework for how things are going to be taken forward.

You may also decide to include policy information or strategic initiatives that the actions might contribute to e.g. the Local Development Framework, Local Transport Plan and so on.

Post Plan Implementation - Set out how the Plan is going to be monitored and refreshed, and who takes responsibility for overseeing this (Please note that there is a separate resource sheet available on this topic). It is also an opportunity to ask residents to get involved in the post plan project work.

Acknowledgements - This is an opportunity to acknowledge the Parish/Town Council, the steering group members, the community and local groups that have taken part in the consultation etc. You will also need to ensure that your funders are fully acknowledged and their details and logos are inserted as appropriate. It is always best to check with the funder at the draft plan stage to ensure that you get the details correct. It is also good practice to acknowledge any people/organisations that have given you additional support or guidance.

Glossary - Do include a glossary of terms e.g. 'affordable housing' or acronyms if it is appropriate and not explained within the text.

Achievements/Updates - Often there are issues identified within the consultation that are either already being worked upon or which are started during the course of the community planning process and it is therefore good to include an update on these, to show residents that things are happening!

Useful Local Information - Some plans include contact details for local groups etc., although as these might change during the lifetime of the Plan, you could consider a statement to indicate where the up-to-date contacts are available e.g. village noticeboard, parish website.

Finalising and Distributing the Plan:

It is important that the steering group (e.g. residents, community/business reps, and Parish/Town Council) work together to form their draft plan. Ultimately if the Parish/Town Council is to adopt the Plan and the residents, local businesses etc are to have an interest and role in taking it forward they must all have been involved and worked together. However, it is also important that external organisations and groups that could have an impact or role are also consulted and asked for feedback on the draft version. Please ensure that you allow them sufficient time to respond and that you make clear why you are sending the draft to them. Once the final version has been agreed, then it can be printed and circulated - again specifying why you are distributing it and making clear what your aims are. As printing the Plan can be expensive you may choose to do summary leaflets for residents (or make use of a local newsletter) as well as having full copies available in key locations. Some groups have chosen to transform the summary leaflet into a calendar or other useful item - a calendar is, of course, more likely to be dependent on the time year that you complete the process!

It is important that you keep the community informed and engage with partners as you work through the process - to strengthen relationships, maintain interest and move things on.