

## Community-led planning newsletter update

November 2023



### **Making places work for people**

Local people know their places best. Sounds like an obvious statement, but planning has historically been “done to” communities, rather than been led by communities. Community-led planning is all about local people and community groups taking a lead on planning how services, amenities, opportunities for employment or education, public transport, healthcare, social activities, the use of land and buildings and more can best work together to improve our places. Of course this is also a big ask for community groups and volunteers, but support and resources are available for the process. Read on to find out more about what we’ve been doing at Borders Community Action to build capacity in communities to engage with community-led planning....

### **Capacity Building role update**

Since starting the role of Capacity Building Lead supporting community-led planning at the beginning of November, things have moved apace. This role underpins a pilot in Berwickshire and Cheviot until August 2024, the learning from which is intended to inform the roll out of support across the whole of the Scottish Borders.

### **Core teams, community councils or development trusts leading?**

So far support has mainly been given to communities which are gathering core teams to lead on the process of developing a Local Place Plan, but also to a couple of community councils which have approached us. Both approaches are equally valid, although some towns across the Borders are required to have a Town Team to access Borderlands funds; in the pilot area these are Jedburgh and Eyemouth.

The core team approach has the advantage of being collaborative right from the early stages, meaning that the resulting plan is more likely to be widely “owned” by the whole community. However, the challenge can be that this newly formed team can take time to work out how to operate together and there are also challenges balancing the need for a representative core group with one which is of manageable size to make progress.

## Meaningful community engagement

An understanding is growing that these core teams are not the place where community engagement happens, but rather are where the engagement planning occurs, then further down the line where the plan is prepared ready to be taken out for wider community consultation, based on emerging community priorities.

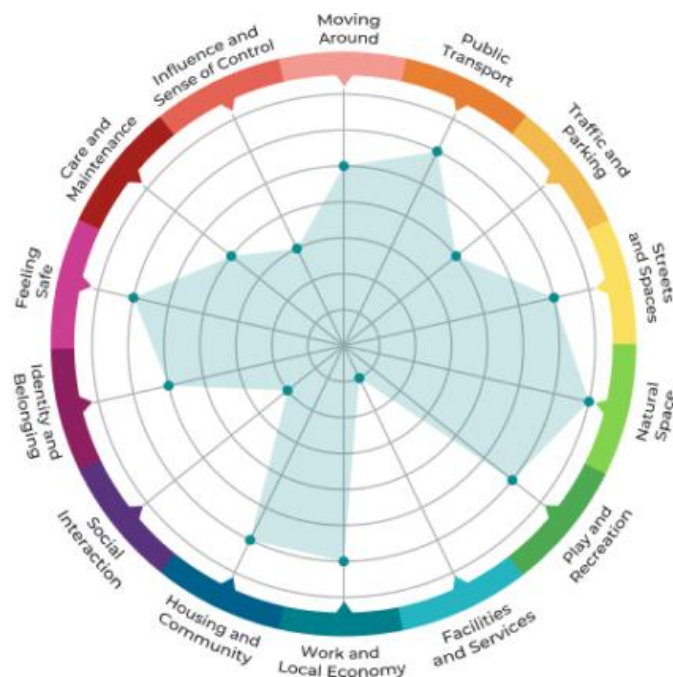
Wide and inclusive community engagement is the foundation for any community-led plan, and this happens in the community, where people gather, adapted to be accessible and appropriate to each audience. The process of planning such engagements can be challenging, especially if that requires collaboration between a range of community groups which have not worked together before.

Borders Community Action host training delivered by a local consultant, Anne McNeill, which gives an excellent overview of what meaningful community engagement looks like in practice, with the most recent session held in Eyemouth on 14 November receiving great feedback saying people felt better equipped and learned something new to take back to their communities.

## Clear communication with groups leading on Local Place Plans

What I have been hearing from community groups is that clear, straight forward communication about the process and support available is key. SBC have put together the Place Programme web pages to present this information in a clear and accessible format and can be accessed [here](#).

I have also presented on community-led planning, most recently to a community council meeting, to assist with awareness raising around the support and resources available. This presentation also covered the importance of the Place Standard Tool and where Local Place Plans sit within the new planning structure brought in under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019. A summary of this information can be found on our website [here](#).



## Peer support group

Another request from community groups is for a peer support group. This is a fantastic way to share learning between community groups leading on Local Place Plans and information on support and resources available. Work is underway to plan this group, if you are interested, please get in touch with [beth@borderscommunityaction.org.uk](mailto:beth@borderscommunityaction.org.uk)

### **How can I get involved?**

If you would like to find out more about what is happening in your area or would like to host an engagement session as a group or organisation just get in in touch with [beth@borderscommunityaction.org.uk](mailto:beth@borderscommunityaction.org.uk).