



Borders
Community Action

Local Place Plans:

**A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY
GROUPS**

What is Community-led Planning?

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 the lead on planning how services, amenities, opportunities for employment or education, public transport, health and wellbeing, social activities, the use of land and buildings and more can best work together to improve our places.

Is this a new thing?

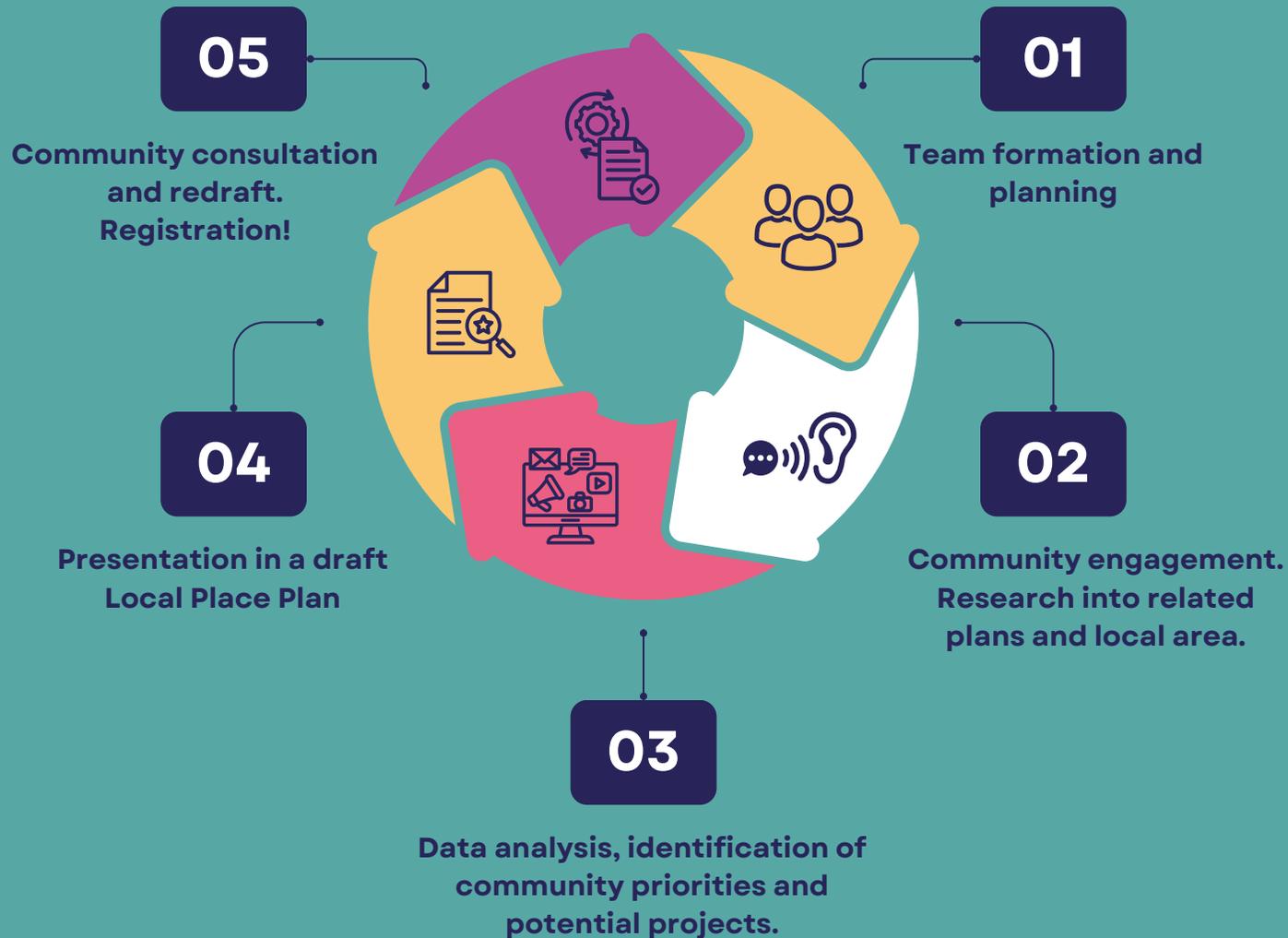
No! Communities have been developing community-led plans for their areas for a long time, often referred to as Community Action Plans. Essentially these set out a programme of community-delivered projects, often to inform the use of a funding stream such as renewable energy community-benefit payments.

What is new is that community-led plans are now written into planning legislation in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and communities are being invited to register Local Place Plans.

Community Action Plan or Local Place Plan?

To find out more about both types of plan and how they can ESSENTIALLY BE THE SAME THING, read this [article on our website](#). This guide can be used whether you plan to register your community-led plan as a Local Place Plan or not.

COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING PROCESS



We have support and resources available to help community groups in Berwickshire and Cheviot at all stages of the community-led planning process, with a focus on the community engagement stage. This is a pilot project until 31 August 2024 funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund.

As a result of the pilot some of the resources and opportunities we have developed (such as this guide, our dedicated webpage and the peer support network) are available across the Scottish Borders.

The following pages expand on each stage in the process and set out what support we can offer at each stage. Support which is only available in the pilot area is identified with a ticket.



01

Team formation and planning



- A Community Council or Development Trust may produce and register a Local Place Plan, but having a core team with representatives from other local groups too can help widen community buy-in.
- Group mapping: Which other key groups could join the core team? Community members, business owners and young people could also be represented. You could hold a public meeting to present what this is all about and invite participation.
- Once an initial core team is gathered it is a good idea to do a skills audit. Do you need to bring in anyone else to core team or access any specialist support?
- What supportive partners do you need alongside your team? Scottish Borders Council (officers and elected members), Borders Community Action and South of Scotland Enterprise are actively supporting Local Place Plans in the Borders.
- Consider agreeing a Terms of Reference (a simple agreement setting out how you agree to work together as a team e.g. Chair, how often to meet, roles).
- Timescale planning. This can be flexible, but it gives everyone an idea of the time commitment and helps to keep things on track. As a guide you can expect the process to take 12 to 18 months.

01

How we can help



- Publicity design and printing and other event costs for a public meeting. 
- Presentation at public meeting about what community-led planning and Local Place Plans are all about.
- Support to gather a core team and presence at meetings as required. 
- Support with a skills audit. 
- Provision of template Terms of Reference and timescale plan.
- Support to access funded specialist support available from the SBC Consultancy Framework – a list of pre-vetted consultants approved for the task of working with local communities to produce Local Place Plans.
- Support to access resources for local administration and communications if required. 
- You can join our peer support network to connect with other people across the Borders who are involved in community-led planning and learn from our guest presenters.
- Clear presentation of information and available support, resources and tools are available on our website [here](#).



- The foundation of any community-led plan is wide and inclusive community engagement, to draw out the community priorities for action and also the good things about our places which form an important part of our sense of belonging and community.
- Start with a group mapping exercise, building on the one you started for establishing a core team, to brainstorm all the elements which make up your local community and plan how you can reach as wide a cross-section as possible.
- There are multiple ways to do community engagement, from surveys (which are easier to do and to analyse, but may not have a great uptake) to in person focus groups where people already gather and tailored to the audience (the most effective, but most time-consuming method). A combination of approaches is a good idea.
- We recommend starting with the **Place Standard Tool**, which is a tool for structuring conversations about how people feel about living in their local place. It ensures alignment of themes with national goals and plans, making a stronger case for funding applications and to influence spatial planning.
- Check out the **National Standards for Community Engagement** to give you an idea about what good community engagement involves.

02

B) Research into related plans and local area



- Is there already a Community Action Plan for your local area? If so this could be refreshed and combined into a Local Place Plan, rather than having two separate community-led plans.
- Are there any major developments under consideration and is there time to ask the community about them as part of this process?
- A Local Place Plan must also have regard for wider plans which include the same area (e.g. the Local Development Plan, National Planning Framework (NPF4) and the relevant Locality Plan). It can set out a case for amendment of the Local Development Plan, but will need a strong evidence base of community engagement and alignment with the goals of the NPF4 to do so.
- As locals you will know your local area better than anyone, but you can add to this with relevant datasets such as demographics and deprivation statistics etc. Scottish Borders Council can put together area profiles for you to complement your local knowledge.
- Information about your local area will be needed when you put your Local Place Plan together and it can take time to gather, so its a good idea to start this alongside your community engagements.



Community engagement

- We can support you with engagement planning, design of publicity, surveys and engagement materials. 
- We hold funds for engagement event costs e.g. printing, venue hire, refreshments and other items. 
- We can arrange for Meaningful community engagement training for your team, provided by a local consultant. 

Research into related plans and local area

- Support to access area profiles.
- Support to access wider plans.

We can also offer support to access specialist consultancy support for community engagement, local research and understanding interrelations with wider plans.

03

Data analysis, identification of community priorities and potential projects.



- Scores (quantitative data) and comments (qualitative data) from surveys and group engagements need to be gathered and analysed to draw out common themes and key suggestions for action from the community.
- This can be done in stages, with initial findings being presented back to the community to check out findings and drill down further into detail to identify specific project ideas. Gaps can also be identified through data analysis, for example perhaps further tailored engagement is needed to reach children and young people or local businesses.
- Often there will be existing project plans which are being explored by members of the core team. You may need to adapt these plans or even change tack and channel energies into a new project idea in response to the emerging community priorities. Or your project could be ideally placed to address community priorities and the funding case for your project may be strengthened through the planning process.
- It is important that you consider how to analyse data when you are planning your community engagements, so you capture everything needed for analysis e.g. age range and genders and how to capture spoken input.

03

How we can help



- We can provide basic data analysis training. 
- We can support you to plan community engagement to reach groups which were identified as gaps in initial community engagements. 
- We can support you to access the SBC consultancy framework to undertake the work of data analysis, identification of community priorities and project planning under the leadership of your core team.
- We can work with your team to help navigate any challenges around identification of suitable projects. 
- We can support community organisations represented on your core team to take forward any “quick wins” which can improve community buy-in with the process.

04

Presentation in a draft Local Place Plan



- A Local Place Plan is primarily a spatial, map-based plan showing community aspirations for use of land and buildings.
- It can also encompass a community action plan for delivery of projects such as community activities or new clubs, improvements which are needed to public services and recommendations for local businesses.
- You will need to understand the requirements for a Local Place Plan to be registered, which can be found [here](#).
- It is a good idea to look at some examples Local Place Plans which have already been successfully registered for ideas of how to present the plan.
- If you have identified a list of projects, but want to find out what the priorities for action are ahead of your final draft you can present these for the community to vote on alongside the draft Local Place Plan.
- Bear in mind that if you are in a Borderlands Town (Eyemouth, Jedburgh, Galashiels and Hawick) there are specific requirements for your Place Plan which you will need to find out about from SBC.



- We can help you find good examples of registered Local Place Plans. Our monthly newsletter updates feature a Local Place Plan of the month, highlighting key points of good practice. Previous updates can be found [here](#).
- We can support you to access local graphic designers to help present your draft Local Place Plan. 
- We can support you to access the SBC consultancy framework for specialist work to pull your draft plan together.
- We can help you to understand the requirements for a Local Place Plan.
- We can link you in with the [latest guidance](#) and relevant people in SBC to assist you.
- We can help you link with neighbouring plans so you can check they complement one another and consider whether you could join forces on any delivery. 

05

Community consultation and redraft then registration!



- You will need to take your draft plan back to the community to check you have captured what you have been hearing well and whether the community are on board with your recommendations and proposals.
- You can hold a vote on the proposed projects at this stage to inform a timeline for action.
- Once you have done this you can update your Local Place Plan and include evidence of the final consultation work.
- If you wish you can present your delivery plan separately to your Local Place Plan or as an appendix.
- Your Community Council, all neighbouring Community Councils and your SCB elected members need to have a chance to review your Local Place Plan ahead of submission to Scottish Borders Council Planning Department and it must be submitted either by a Community Council, Development Trust or similar Community Body whose remit covers the same area of the plan.

05

How we can help



In addition to the support listed under stage 4 we can:

- Check through your final draft plan and make recommendations for changes.
- Assist you to understand the requirements for submission to SBC Planning Department

Pilot area



For support contact:

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Capacity Building Officer
Community-Led Planning

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Congratulations on the successful registration of your Local Place Plan! But what happens now?

Your **delivery plan** will identify partner organisations to take action on different elements of the plan. For example a Development Trust may seek community ownership of a key piece of land or a building to deliver community project(s). Scottish Borders Council may reconsider the allocations of land or other assets of local interest in the Local Development Plan. Your local Housing Association may take action on community needs for specific types of housing.

Your core team may wish to disband and let the partners get on with this work OR they may chose to reform as a steering group to oversee and coordinate the delivery of the Local Place Plan.

Your Local Place Plan will only continue to be meaningful as a **live plan**, which adapts as projects are delivered and is refreshed periodically to reflect changing community priorities. The same team may take this forward or a refreshed team could start the cycle again.

If you are in a **Borderlands** Town your Local Place Plan will also need to be endorsed by the Borderlands Programme Board and your next stage will be a Town Investment Plan.

Promoting and developing a vibrant third sector



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