

# Community-led Planning Update

## August 2024



It's hard to believe we are already in the last month of the community-led planning pilot project in Berwickshire and Cheviot. It has been incredibly inspiring and a real privilege to support members of the community who are giving their time, energy and experience so generously to listen to their local communities and be part of creating community-led plan for the places they live.

This month's update covers:

- an overview of what has been achieved through the pilot project,
- our recommendations for support beyond the pilot,
- a review of Burntisland Local Place Plan which is registered with Fife Council to give you some inspiration and tips for yours,
- tools, resources and funding information,
- news about our peer support network.

We'd also love to hear from you if you have any feedback on our pilot. Please just send an email to [Beth](mailto:Beth)

### **Our pilot project**

Over the last ten months we have been able to offer support and resources to communities developing Local Place Plans, through our pilot project in Berwickshire and Cheviot. The pilot has been all about building local capacity for the task, with a focus on supporting community engagement. It has been funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which is locally administered by Scottish Borders Council.

During the pilot we have supported six communities in the Eastern Borders to get to a stage where they are on track to be able to register a Local Place Plan. We have also supported many other communities who are considering whether to embark on the process. We have done this through helping core teams to form, provision of training, fund distribution, on-hand support for core teams, our peer support network, support to access resources and by sharing of relevant information and tools. We have also developed our own guidance and other resources.

Our support has reached beyond the pilot area through our dedicated webpage and peer support network sessions. We have also developed strong links with relevant local, regional and national organisations and networks.

A draft report of the project, which includes some common themes which are emerging across the pilot area, can be downloaded [here](#).

### **Recommendations beyond the pilot**

We have put forward a set of recommendations for our support beyond the project, based on engagement with those we have been supporting through the pilot. We have presented our recommendations to Scottish Borders Council and expect to be able to give an update on this in our next newsletter. For now, we recommend:

1. Continuation of the Peer Support Network, hosted by BCA with support from SBC.
2. Representation of the Peer Support Network on the Community Planning Partnership under theme 4 (Place, Community and Connectivity) which BCA is leading on.
3. Internal training of Community Development Team by the project's Capacity Building Lead to equip them to be better able to offer guidance and information on community-led planning to community groups Borders-wide.
4. That we seek to secure further revenue funding for distribution to community-led planning teams to support the planning process. This funding could be applied for by CLP teams to cover local staff, compartmentalised consultancy support and community engagement expenses.
5. That we continue to offer relevant training such as community engagement, data analysis and use of mapping tools.
6. That we keep the community-led planning area of the website up to date and build on the resources it contains.
7. For ongoing in-person support at local CLP team meetings to be provided by SBC, with BCA Community Development Leads being brought in for occasional support (e.g. to assist with initial team formation).
8. For BCA to continue to be a voice for communities on all aspects of the community-led planning process.

### **Local Place Plan of the month**

[Burntisland Local Place Plan](#) (LPP) is one of nine LPPs registered with Fife Council, the Council with the most registered LPPs in Scotland, followed closely behind by Midlothian, with both Councils having far more than any others in Scotland (as an aside, there are 34 Planning Authorities in Scotland: 32 Councils and two National Parks).



[Attribution: Thomas Nugent](#)

It was produced by the Royal Burgh of Burntisland Community Council with the support of Burntisland Community Development Trust. It doesn't state on their website whether they had any consultancy or specialist support, so I assume they did the presentation work themselves.

It is singularly focussed on the use of land and buildings and maps only the spatial elements of their existing Community Action Plan (CAP). There is a useful summary table on P.4 which links the priorities included in the LPP to the CAP themes. The document is intended to influence planning and development decisions and does not contain a delivery plan.

They present proposals for designation of land in the Local Development Plan e.g. site location for a car park (P.14 and 15) and where housing development should happen and what type it should be.

There is a strong element of valuing natural greenspace, biodiversity, outdoor access etc, and the area of the plan covers the surrounding countryside.

They have used Parish Online for producing their maps with the proposal sites indicated. Annotation of maps and layering of other data sets are features available through Community Map Scotland, free to all Community Councils in Scotland for the first year, and specially designed for use in with LPPs, [check it out here](#).

It is worth designating a piece of land or a building which is of community value, even if there is no plan for how this might be implemented yet, as in the example of their parish church which is under threat of closure, but the community wish to retain as a "publicly accessible heritage asset" (P.11). Such a designation can be used to build a case for community ownership or protection of an asset at a later date and will form a material consideration in any planning application relating to the building.

They make good use of photos to illustrate issues e.g. derelict sites. I am also struck by their engagement with relevant landowners, it is a very sensible approach to include them in the conversation from the planning stages (P.23)!

I particularly like their tables in appendixes which show how their LPP policies link to NPF4 and LDP policies and aspects of other plans. Such an alignment will strengthen the case for influencing planning decisions, attracting funding for community-led projects and involving relevant partners in delivery.

### **Tools, resources and funding!**

Our [community-led planning webpage](#) is regularly updated with relevant information, resources and tools to support you with your Local Place Plan.

We have recently added the Placecheck Tool (main webpage, under the list of useful tools) and an article called "[Local Place Plans – why bother?](#)" from Nick Wright Planning.

We have also added a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document, in which we asked SBC the questions we hear from communities on how to access funding held by SBC for projects which feature in Local Place Plans and they have supplied responses.

Our guide to the process of producing a Local Place Plan has also been updated, view this and other [guidance](#) on our webpage too.

### **Peer support network**

Although Borders Community Action's [pilot](#) comes to an end on 31 August, we have included the continuation of the peer network in our set of recommendations for BCA's support going forward. We hope to have more news for you in September.

All the presentations for the sessions in April, June and August were recorded and these are [available on our website](#).

### **[Beth Landon](#)**

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