

Borders
Community Action

Local Place Plans:

**A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY
GROUPS**

What is Community-led Planning?

Local people know their places best. That 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 amenities, services, social activities, opportunities for employment or education, connectivity, projects to tackle climate change and improve biodiversity, health and wellbeing facilities, access to natural spaces, the use of land and buildings and more can best work together to improve our places.

Is this a new thing?

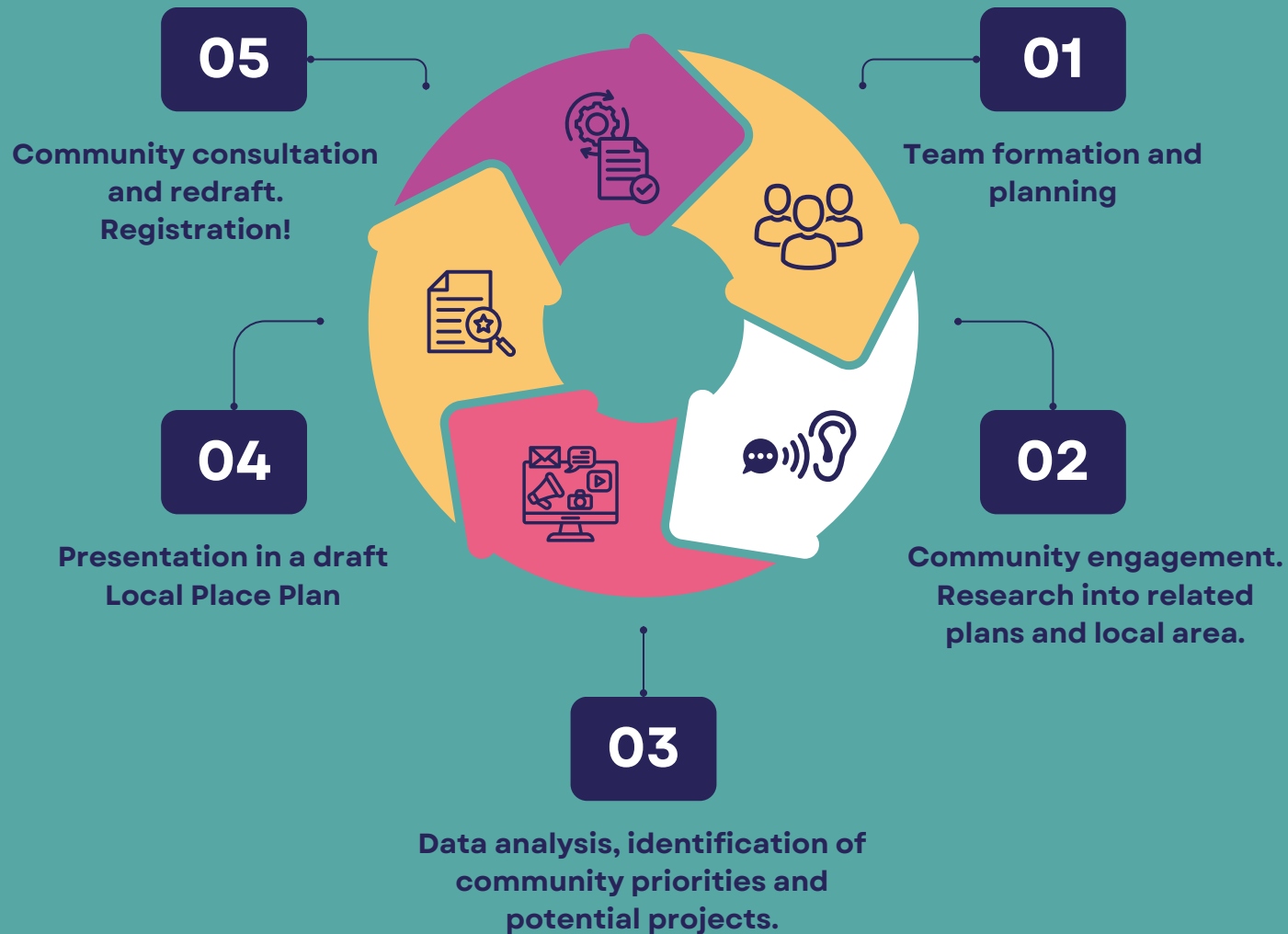
No! Communities have been developing community-led plans for their areas for a long time, often referred to as Community Action Plans. Essentially these set out a programme of community-delivered projects, often to inform the use of a funding stream such as renewable energy community-benefit payments. They are often undertaken by a Development Trust to determine their community mandate for action. They may also include community aspirations for public service provision, intended to influence Community Planning Partnership plans (Locality Plans and the Community Plan) under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

What is new is that community-led plans have now been given a mechanism for registration with the Local Authority (in our case, Scottish Borders Council) through the [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#) by communities being invited to register Local Place Plans.

Community Action Plan or Local Place Plan?

These can essentially be the same thing! A Community Action Plan can be presented in a way which is eligible for registration as Local Place Plan, by mapping projects spatially and showing regard for other relevant plans. A registered Local Place Plan can be used to indicate sites of community value, can influence the Local Development Plan and can form a material consideration in planning applications. It will take more time and effort to produce an eligible Local Place Plan, but it is worth considering for your community.

COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING PROCESS



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 support do you need? Scottish Borders Council (officers and elected members), Borders Community Action and South of Scotland Enterprise are all good contacts to be linked in with.
- 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.



- 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.

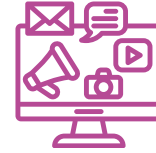
02

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?
- 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.
- 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.
- When you move onto the stage of data analysis and community priorities begin to emerge, you will need to combine insights from such plans with those community priorities as you plan your projects and proposals. For example meeting climate and biodiversity targets feature strongly throughout the NPF4, so if a local priority is for community food growing space, you could consider how this could be connected with other green spaces to provide biodiversity corridors.

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.

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, national guidance can be found [here](#) and Scottish Borders Council's Planning Department have issued guidance which can be downloaded [here](#).
- It is a good idea to look at some examples of Local Place Plans which have already been successfully registered for ideas of how to present the plan. We have reviewed several which are available to download [here](#).
- 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.

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 SBC elected members need to have a chance to review your Local Place Plan ahead of submission to SBC 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.



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 projects. 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.

Your Local Place Plan is your evidence base to back funding applications for community-led projects, make a case in a planning application, influence service delivery and to inform private investment and business development.

Promoting and developing a vibrant third sector



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