

Advice Sheet

8

Implementing and monitoring your plan

Purpose

This step shows you how you can implement and monitor the actions in your Community Led Plan.

What's involved

Understanding what needs to be done, having a group of people that can regularly check progress and keeping the rest of your community in the loop to maintain momentum.

Useful resources

Resource Sheet 6/1 – Action plan template

Local resources – contact your Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) member for details

Introduction

Having finalised your Community Led Plan, you now need to put it into action. Be prepared for this to take time. Depending on the actions you have proposed, it could take several years to achieve everything your community wants to achieve.

This Advice Sheet shows you how you can implement and monitor your plan's actions. To do this, you will need to be clear about what needs to be done, continually check progress and keep your community in the loop to maintain momentum.

Revisiting your action plan

If you have followed the guidance for producing a Community Led Plan as set out in Steps 1-7 of this toolkit, you should have a document which sets out a number of actions that can be undertaken for the improvement of your local area. Each action should state:

- the desired outcome
- how it should be delivered
- who needs to be involved
- the resources required
- an expected completion date.

See also: **Resource Sheet 6/1 – Action plan template**

It's worth revisiting this action plan on a regular basis to make sure everyone is clear about what needs to be done, especially those people or organisations who will be delivering the actions!

Monitoring

Before you start the ball rolling, you'll also need to decide how your community will monitor progress made towards the implementation of individual actions. This is particularly important for longer term endeavours which have a habit of losing their way over time if not sufficiently monitored.

Monitoring progress will allow you to:

- make sure work is being undertaken as originally specified in your action plan
- spot potential delays or extra costs before they become a problem
- re-direct the efforts of volunteers or resources towards actions most in need of attention
- give confidence to people in your community, funders and other supporting organisations that your plan is being well managed and is on track to deliver the changes sought.

Whilst your action plan should specify who is responsible for the delivery of specific actions, it is recommended that either your steering group or parish/ town council takes responsibility for monitoring the overall plan.

Your steering group or parish/town council should ideally meet every few months to monitor your plan. Prior to each meeting, a conversation should take place with those people, groups or organisations charged with the responsibility of delivering individual actions. As a group, you will discuss progress or any issues arising and be prepared to take remedial action if necessary. This needn't require a detailed reporting process - you just need to be aware of what's going on!

Maintaining momentum

As your Community Led Plan could take time to implement, it's important that you maintain momentum by keeping your community interested and making sure that the volunteers, groups and organisations charged with the delivery of actions feel supported and appreciated for their efforts. There are a few things that you can do to make sure this happens:

- Stagger the completion of actions. If you can achieve some quick wins to begin with, your community is more likely to have confidence in the implementation of longer-term actions.
- Communicate and celebrate achievements and milestones as they happen. There's no need to wait until your whole plan is finished to throw a party!
- Try to feature your plan in the local media or get people with a public profile involved where significant achievements have been made.
- Recruit new volunteers and encourage people to take on new responsibilities (particularly if you think the usual suspects are feeling overburdened or taken for granted).

Remember, your community is ultimately responsible for the implementation and delivery of your plan. No one else is going to make sure it works and derives benefit for your community!

By the end of this stage, it is recommended that you have:

- **Revisited your action plan and made sure that everyone understands the work that needs to be done**
- **Agreed that either your steering group or parish/town council will monitor progress being made toward the implementation of actions in your plan**
- **Sought to maintain the momentum of your plan by staggering the delivery of actions, celebrating achievements as they happen, engaging with local media and supporting and recruiting new volunteers.**

