

Advice Sheet

9 Reviewing your plan

Purpose

This step shows you how to review your Community Led Plan every few years to make sure it is up to date and responsive to the current needs and aspirations of your community.

What's involved

Knowing when to review your plan, what you will stand to gain from this and revisiting the previous steps outlined in this toolkit.

Useful resources

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

Introduction

Ideally, you should seek to review your Community Led Plan every few years to make sure it is up to date and responsive to the current needs and aspirations of your community. The timing of the review and the amount of work you put in will need to be determined by your community and should be considered in light of how successful your original plan was.

This step provides some general guidance that will help you to review your Community Led Plan. It looks at the benefits of reviewing a plan, the triggers for doing this and the work involved.

Why review your plan?

A review of your Community Led Plan can have several benefits:

- It is an opportunity to reflect on your original plan to see what it managed to achieve and what it didn't
- It is an opportunity to see if your community's needs and aspirations have changed significantly since you last produced your plan
- It is an opportunity for you to revisit actions from your previous plan and decide whether to pursue new ones that address current needs and aspirations
- It is an opportunity to reinvigorate local action and community spirit.

When to review your plan

A Community Led Plan can be reviewed at any time. There are no hard and fast rules as to when this should happen, but most communities tend to embark on the process every 2 - 5 years. As a rule of thumb though, a review should be considered if any or a combination of the following circumstances prevail:

- When interest in your original Community Led Plan has waned or where your community is struggling to deliver outstanding actions
- When you feel there have been significant changes to your community that need to be reflected in your plan
- When there are new opportunities (such as the availability of new funding, support or policy initiatives) that you could take advantage of.

How to review your plan

If you choose to review your Community Led Plan, it is important to note that you will not be starting from scratch. Much of the work your community put into developing the original plan can be revisited, reused and revised to save time and effort and make the process more manageable.

Broadly speaking, the process for reviewing a Community Led Plan is the same as that followed the first time around. We recommend that you re-read and follow Steps 1-8 of this toolkit but take note of the following advice at each stage:



Launch the plan (Steps 1-3)

Check whether your community wants to review its plan

For a review of your Community Led Plan to work, you need to be confident that people want this to happen and remain supportive of the process. Whilst it might not be necessary to hold another launch event, it's important that you find ways to communicate your intention to review the plan and provide people with ample opportunity to express their views or support.

Recruit new volunteers

Hopefully many of the people, groups and organisations that got involved in your plan previously will be willing to lend a hand this time around. Although it's sensible to seek their involvement again, you should also try to recruit new volunteers. This will help to reduce any over reliance on the usual suspects and keep the dynamism of your plan alive.

Re-establish a leadership structure and plan ahead

Hopefully, the leadership structure that your community initially adopted is fit for purpose again. However, it's advisable that you provide new opportunities for new people to get involved with the planning and management of the review process.

Find out what resources, information and support are available to you

Given the time that's passed since you last produced your plan, it's worth doing a bit of research to see if the resources, information and support you relied on before can still be used. It might be the case that there are new opportunities you can take advantage of.

Evidence local needs and aspirations (Step 4)

Find out whether there are new facts and information about your community

It's likely that new facts and information have become available about your area. Search for this and see whether you can identify any changes that have taken place which should be discussed by your community. This should include new policies or strategies adopted by your local authority.

Revisit, re-use and re-design methods to consult your community

Again this is another area where you can save time and effort. Provided that you undertook a well structured consultation in the first place using a variety of methods to speak to different people, you should be able to repeat much of the exercise without having to re-invent the wheel. For instance, you may be able to update and re-use the questionnaire that you used before or recycle existing resources, documents, models and templates etc. One benefit of doing this is the opportunity to compare responses over time to see how your community has changed.

STEP 9

REVIEWING YOUR PLAN

Agree and prioritise actions (Steps 5-7)

Consider what your plan achieved before and what you want to do about any outstanding actions
Hopefully your community achieved many of the actions proposed in your original plan. However, it's not unusual for some actions to remain outstanding. Whilst remembering all those things your community previously achieved, you should also consider whether it's worthwhile continuing to pursue actions that are unlikely to be achieved or are no longer desirable.

Decide whether new actions need to be proposed

Based on an assessment of any new information that you have gathered about your community's needs and aspirations, you may decide that new actions need to be pursued. You should seek to prioritise and plan these as outlined in Step 5 of this toolkit.

Identify new opportunities to work with external organisations and influence broader policies

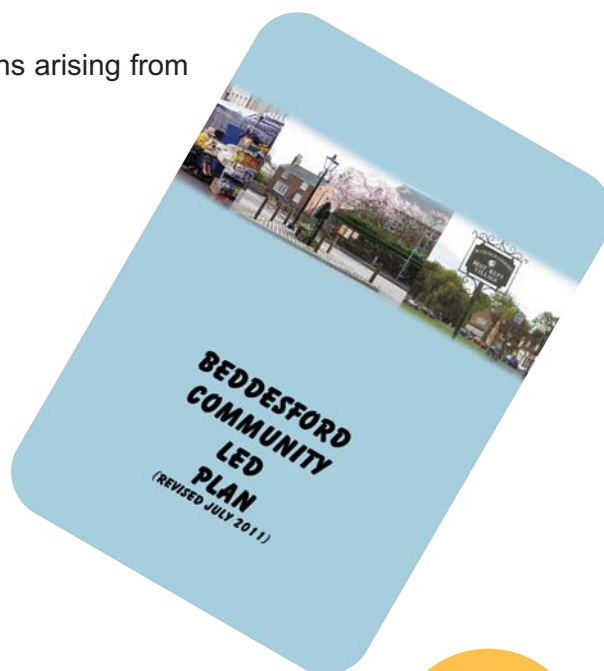
The Government is introducing new policies that communities can use to shape the future of their neighbourhood. The Localism Act introduced in 2011 provides a range of different rights that you can use to propose new development in your neighbourhood, take over the delivery of services and bid to take ownership of community buildings, assets and public land. When reviewing your plan, think about whether you wish to make use of these new policies to deliver any new or existing actions in your plan.

Consider new ways to publicise your plan

You may wish to consider different ways of publicising your plan this time around, based on your previous experiences and making use of new technologies, e.g. internet, social media etc.

Deliver and monitor actions (Steps 8-9)

Look to implementing and monitoring any new actions arising from your reviewed plan in the same way as before.



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

- Understood why and when to review your plan
- Re-visited Steps 1-8 of this toolkit and thought about how you can review your plan, building upon previous efforts and taking shortcuts where possible.

