

Advice Sheet

7 Finalising your plan

STEP 7

FINALISING YOUR PLAN

Purpose

This step shows you how to finalise your plan document.

What's involved

Making sure that everyone is happy with your draft plan document and then launching it to gain maximum recognition and support.

Useful resources

Resource Sheet 1/1 – Who might be interested in a Community Led Plan

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

Introduction

By now you should have a draft document that details the purpose and intentions of your Community Led Plan. Before you put your plan into action it's important to check for one last time that everyone is aware of, and happy with its proposals. This shouldn't be a problem if you have made every effort to involve people and organisations before now!

This step provides some information that will help you to finalise your plan; checking this with everyone concerned and launching it in a way that will gain maximum recognition and support.

Agreeing the plan document

If you have consulted widely during the development of your plan, you should be confident that your draft document is an accurate and fair reflection of everyone's needs and expectations. However, it's advisable to provide members of your community with one last chance to comment on it. You might like to do this by making copies available for a limited time on your community's website, forum or newsletter. Where feedback is received, you will need to decide if it is appropriate to make revisions at this late stage, thinking about whether this would be beneficial to your community as a whole.

Depending on where you live, your local authority may also have procedures in place for receiving draft plans. Many will just want to see your plan before it is launched. Some may choose to provide you with feedback and suggest amendments to your proposals. And in a few cases, local authorities may require proof that you have met minimum quality criteria before they are willing to offer support for specific actions. Whatever procedures have been established in your area, they shouldn't come as a surprise if you have already involved your local authority in the development of your plan! Please refer to any guidance you have received from your local authority or if in doubt contact your nearest Rural Community Action Network (RCAN) member for more information.

Launching your plan

Once everyone is happy with your plan document, you should seek to launch it in a way that gains maximum recognition and support. You can do this by following the recommended actions below:

Finalise your plan document

To start with, make sure your plan is in a format that can be read, but not changed by readers. In the past, many communities have chosen to have copies of their plan printed for distribution.

In the age of the internet, however, it can be more cost effective to create electronic copies for download. If you do this, make sure the document has been put into a read only format such as PDF (Microsoft Word 2007 allows you to do this).

Set a launch date

Next, set a date for the launch of your plan. Think about when this is likely to grab people's attention – e.g. at weekends, during holidays or to coincide with other events in your community's calendar.

Decide what to do on the launch date

Many groups choose to hold some kind of public event to launch their plan. This is best arranged as a celebration of achievements to date and could include known public speakers that can champion your plan and help get your message across on the day. Ideally it should be as much fun as possible!

Interest people, groups and organisations in advance of the launch date

Try to interest as many people, groups and organisations as possible in advance of the launch, including local media. You can do this by contacting people direct or by publishing details on your community website and using social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Launch the plan!

On the day, make sure that you clearly explain what your community's plan is about, how it was developed, the actions proposed and how you will deliver on it. And don't forget to mention what a big achievement it's been to finally launch the plan for everyone involved!

Let people know how the launch went

It's always a good idea to follow up on your launch with some good news stories about how the day went and provide contact details of someone who can answer questions about the plan.



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

- **Checked to make sure everyone is happy with your plan document, including local groups and organisations expected to help with its delivery.**
- **Launched your plan to gain maximum recognition and support.**

