

**Community Led Plans are local, action-based plans which address a wide range of problems and opportunities facing communities. They can include social, economic and environmental issues and give everyone in the community the chance to be involved.**

## Where to start

Community Led Planning is a process that enables local people to work together to consider their needs for the future, and to develop an action plan to help achieve their shared ambitions.

This process has its own value quite apart from the plan it produces. Many communities enjoy the time they spend producing a plan. They make new friends, establish new links between groups and individuals, and form better relationships with Local Authorities and other organisations which can support them.

The process leads to the production of a Community Led Plan, a document setting out what local people value, and what they would like to change. This should include a description of the community, an explanation of the process, results from the consultation, and a clear action plan.

The most important part of this document is the action plan for projects to achieve the aspirations of local people. The action plan sets out what needs doing, how it will be achieved, by whom, the timescale, and how it will be resourced.

## What are the benefits?

Community Led Planning can create cohesive, empowered and active communities in which people can influence decisions that affect their area. It can:

- Foster **Community Activity**. Getting together to talk about your community and take part in consultation events often builds community spirit and people find things start to get done.
- Leverage in **Funding**. Most grant applications require 'evidence of need' and a Community Led Plan can help to do this. It can also help you persuade local authorities to prioritise the actions coming out of the plan, and make resources available this way, too.
- Influence **Policy**. Often local authorities and agencies need good quality information about what issues matter most to communities. A coherent, well put-together plan can help influence policy.
- Provide a foundation for **Further Planning** such as Neighbourhood Planning or a Community Emergency Plan.

### What is a Community Led Plan?

- A process which encourages action, by the community, for the community.
- A document setting out a vision for the future and an action plan for how to achieve it

### What can a Community Led Plan do?

- Encourage community activity, building community spirit
- Provide evidence of need to attract funding and affect policy

### Give everyone the opportunity to be involved

- Ensure your steering group has wide representation from the community
- Consult as many people as possible - try to make it fun, interesting, and accessible

The timescales for community led plans vary according to the various circumstances of communities. Evidence suggests that the timescales below are a good working guide

Milestones	Time	Resources
<p><b>Getting Started</b> Involve the wider community and find out if there is general support for the project. Contact your local authorities.</p> <p><b>Establish a Steering Group</b> Ensure this group has wide representation from the community. Nominate a steering group member to liaise with local authorities.</p> <p><b>Develop a Project Plan</b> Put together a programme of activity and a budget. Be aware of the points in the process when you should liaise with local authorities.</p>	4 months	Volunteer time, administration and room hire are essential for all these activities
<p><b>Community Consultation</b> Involve as many people as you can in interesting and fun ways. Check how your plan could fit in with current local and regional strategies.</p>	6 months	As above, plus consultation events, promotion etc
<p><b>Prioritising and Planning Action</b> Sort and prioritise issues from the consultation and decide how to take action on them. Consult local authorities and relevant agencies on your proposed activities. You may need their help to deliver them.</p> <p><b>Drafting the Plan</b> Share a draft of your plan with the community, local authorities and other agencies.</p> <p><b>Finalise the Plan</b> Produce the final document, launch it with the wider community and celebrate!</p>	6 months	Volunteer time, administration and room hire are essential for all these activities
<p><b>Implement the Plan</b> Start to deliver your action plan. Try a mixture of delivering quick, easy to achieve projects to maintain momentum, and set in motion more strategic actions which will take longer.</p> <p><b>Monitor and review the Plan</b> Plan regular reviews and updates. Keep all partners and the wider community informed of progress.</p>	Ongoing	As above, plus project costs - you may want to budget in advance for some 'quick win' projects to get things started.

For more information please contact ACTion with Communities in Cumbria on Tel: 01228 817224 or visit our website: [www.cumbriaaction.org.uk](http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk)

**ACT champions community and rural issues**

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