

The Action Plan is the most important part of your Community Led Plan (CLP), converting the issues the community have raised into clear, achievable actions. It's important to involve the community in developing a shared vision and planning and prioritising what goes into your Action Plan.

Where to start

After the results of your consultation are gathered in, you should have, in its simplest form, a list of issues and problems that need solving.

Action planning is about identifying solutions to those problems, however large or small, and ways to find solutions, if they aren't clear.

Remember, a Community Led Plan is not all about problems. If things are working well in your community, make sure you include actions to continue to support them.

At this stage you may also want to feed back the results of the consultation to the community, to involve them in prioritising and action planning.

Some issues in your Plan will be able to be addressed through direct action by your community with little outside help. Other actions, especially those linked to local services, cannot be addressed by the community alone.

It's important to continue to work with local authorities and take advice whilst drawing up your action plan. Involving other organisations won't dilute your Plan; it will help to ensure it is up to date, accurate and feasible, whilst also providing extra support where community and strategic priorities match up.

When is an action not an action?

Beware of actions that are really just statements or issues, look at the example below:

Footpaths are over-grown and rarely used

This isn't an action, it's an issue.

Footpaths should be regularly cleared

This isn't an action, either. Yes they should, but what is going to be done about it?

The Heritage Group will work with [local conservation group] to clear the footpaths 4 times a year, in the summer.

This is an action. There may also be additional actions to address the issue fully e.g. create a local footpath map or set up a walking group, to promote footpath usage.

Be realistic but not cynical. Some actions are long term or aspirational so it is important to break these down into manageable chunks. It's important to be realistic about what you can achieve, but don't be afraid to think big.

Include some 'quick wins'. Are there any actions that you've completed while working on the Plan or which can be achieved easily? This helps to start things out on a positive note and show that progress can be made.

Actions in need of volunteers or a local lead can also be included with a clear 'call to action'.

Go back to the community

- Provide them with the results of the consultation.
- Invite them to help identify and prioritise the actions needed.

Issues, Actions, Statements

- Know the difference.
- Use them clearly in your action plan.

Share draft with partners

- Liaise with local authorities and other local partners identified in your Plan.
- Ensure you have contacted all those listed in your action plan to ensure your ideas are realistic.

What to include in your Action Plan

Issue: What is the issue/problem which is addressed by the following action(s)?

Action(s): What needs to happen to address this?

How to tackle it: How will the action(s) be carried out?

Lead Responsibility: Who will monitor progress to ensure the targets are met and reviewed?

Partners: Who will help the action to be achieved? Local Authorities and agencies can often be the key to CLP actions.

Priority: What priority has the community given the action? This can help guide activity when resources are limited.

Timescale: What is the expected completion date for this action?

Resources: How will this action be funded? What additional resources are needed or are available?

Progress Review & Feedback: When and how will the actions be reviewed and how will you feedback to your community?

Example Action Plan:

Issue	Action(s)	How to Tackle It	Lead Group & Partners	Priority	Timescale	Resources
Sustainability of Village Hall in doubt; increase in running costs & deterioration of the fabric of the building.	Carry out necessary surveys Improve Heating Create disabled access & toilets Upgrade fire protection General improvements and refurbishments	Village Hall Committee to seek building condition survey, energy audit and accessibility and fire safety advice Raise funds through social events & grant applications Co-ordinate local volunteers to do some refurbishment, as appropriate, to keep costs down.	Village Hall Committee External funders ACT Local people	High	3-5 yrs	Dependant on outcome of survey & funders Fundraising Local volunteers

Checklist:

It's a good idea to ask the following questions as you draft your actions:

- Is it an action?
- Does it clearly relate to the findings of the community consultation?
- Does it identify who's involved, who's in charge and when it's happening?
- Is it achievable?
- Is it clearly laid out and easily found in the document?

Sharing your Action Plan

There will be partner organisations listed in your action plan who's help you will need to deliver it. These may be local authorities and /or local community groups such as the village hall committee or youth club.

Its important that these organisations are all shown, and are invited to comment on your draft action plan. Its not only courteous to do this, but you're more likely to get an action plan which can be delivered at the end of it. If you're unsure who to contact at your local councils or National Park Authority, contact ACT who will be able to help.

For more information please contact ACTion with Communities in Cumbria on Tel: 01768 425 666 or visit our website: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk

ACT champions community and rural issues

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