



Place Plans
by Planning Aid Wales



PLANNING AHEAD: Planning with your community

Place Plan Kickstarter
Community Guides **1/6**



PLANNING AHEAD: Planning with your community

Place Plan Kickstarter Community Guides 1/6

What is this document?



This guide explores community-led plan making.

It looks at the different types of plans communities can produce and what needs to be done to make a good plan that delivers results.

This guide has been prepared by Planning Aid Wales for Conwy County Borough Council as part of the 'Place Plan Kickstarter' project with funding from the UK Government Wales Community Renewal Fund.

Who is it for?



This guide has been designed for Community and Town Councils and / or community groups in Conwy that have either:

- Completed a Kickstarter Place Plan and are considering next steps, or:
- Considering producing some form of community plan and are wondering where to start.

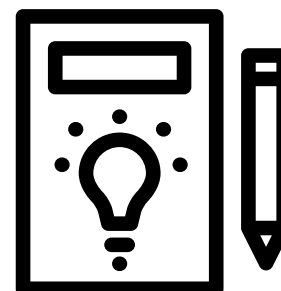
The guide is part of a series that explore community-led planning; these guides can be downloaded from www.placeplans.org.uk/conwyguides

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What is a Plan?

For purpose of this guidance, a plan is a document that is prepared by the community to identify what they want to improve or achieve in their area.



There are several names for plans that communities can produce in Wales:

- Community Plans – there is no fixed definition of a community plan; they can cover any topic, any project and any geographic area.
- Placemaking Plans – should consider and cover all issues in a unified way and tend to focus on regeneration projects in specific places.
- Place Plans – documents that focus on land-use planning issues in community ward areas and present community planning policies and priorities. These plans must be prepared by Community and Town Councils and can be adopted by Local Planning Authorities (planning departments in Local Authorities). [See Guide 2 for more information on Place Plans.](#)

It can sometimes be difficult to decide what type of plan to produce until you have a good understanding of **community priorities**.

The 'Place Plan Kickstarter' project was designed to help four Town Councils in Conwy (Llanfairfechan, Penmaenmawr, Llanrwst and Conwy) to explore the wants and needs of their communities and help determine what type of plan might be suitable for these communities in future.

The [Kickstarter Plans](#) produced for this project were intended to act as a starter plan that identifies community priorities, explores which type of plan might be suitable and presents a route map and action plan for producing a full plan in future.

This might be a good option for communities considering preparing any form of plan – explore the issues first before committing to a type of plan!

Planning for whom?

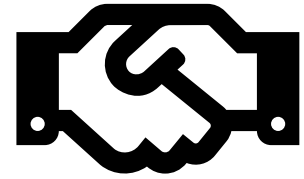
Very often, plans are made **for** communities. This guide and the Kickstarter project had a guiding principle that plans should be made **with** and **by** communities.



Setting up a community 'working party' of community representatives to oversee the preparation (and delivery) of the plan and engaging as broadly with the community as possible is essential to delivering a true community plan ([see guide 3](#)).

Why Plan at all?

Regardless of what type of plan you choose, there are a wide range of benefits to producing a plan with your community.



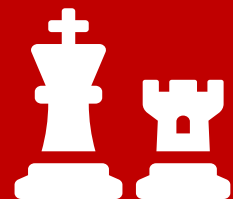
Community planning allows you to:

- ✓ **Work together** as a community to identify how you can improve your area;
- ✓ **Think broadly** about a range of community issues and how they could be addressed – this can help you think in the longer term;
- ✓ Develop community **'buy-in'** and grow community spirit;
- ✓ Understand and build working relationships with **stakeholders** including the local authority and wide range of local organisations, businesses and groups;
- ✓ Prepare **evidence** on local needs that can be used to apply for funding for projects and activities;
- ✓ Focus on **taking action** as a community ([see Guide 5](#))

A good plan should be 'strategic' – it should take into account community priorities, evidence local needs, identify opportunities for working in partnership with local groups and businesses and present a vision to deliver positive change over a range of time periods.

Crucially, some funders are now requiring communities to have **some form of plan** in place before applying to their funds.

Thinking 'Strategically'?



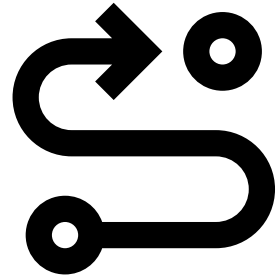
Communities are often told they need to 'think more strategically' when making plans or applying for funding. This can be frustrating if 'thinking strategically' is not defined.

Strategic thinking is a process where you consider what is happening and what might happen around you, then set goals accordingly. Strategic thinking encourages you to think in the longer term and to think about how you might respond to risks associated with a planned project or activity.

Getting from here to there!

Key things to consider for plan-making

The remainder of this guide breaks down how to produce a plan into some key **stages**.



Where to start

- If you are coming completely fresh to a possible community plan, it is definitely best to start with the **Kickstarter** stage.
- If you have already been through a **Kickstarter** process and decided that a Place Plan or Community Plan is right for you, jump straight to the section on **Plan-making**.
- If you have already been through a **Kickstarter** process and decided that your best approach is a practical Action Plan, jump straight to **Action Planning**.
- If you have already decided that a Community Plan, Place Plan or Action Plan is best for you, **please stop a moment!** Even if you do not go through all the questions and actions in a Kickstarter stage, it is really important to **at least think about all of those before setting off**. Being really sure you have the right approach for you can save enormous amounts of time and energy.

Kickstarter Stage

Before you start, it is important to be think about:

- Do we need a Plan?
- What sort of Plan?
- For all of our area or just the town centre?
- What people resources do we have to do a Plan?
- What other resources might be available to help us?
- What exactly can a Plan do for you and your community?
- What could a Plan do for CCBC and others?

You can set up a **Working Party** to manage the process and prepare initial answers to the above questions. This include elected councillors and people you know to be 'movers and shakers', good at making things happen within your community – these are **community representatives**.

The next point is often overlooked but it is very important. You are surely not doing your Plan just for it to sit on a shelf!?

Any plan should be a springboard to make a real difference to your place and community, maybe not immediately, but over time. So, you need to think about that right from the start and end with a practical **Action Plan**.

The Kickstarter steps (opposite) were followed in each of the 4 towns in Conwy. The stages a are all fairly informal and needn't be delivered in the order provided.

Most engagement activities focused on brainstorming and then prioritising answers to the following questions:

1. If we had £1million to spend on community projects, what would they be?
2. What do we love about our town?
3. What are the challenges facing our town?
4. What are the opportunities we should make the most of?
5. What should our town look like in 15 years' time?
6. How can we reach people in the community? (This informs later engagement work).

Kickstarter Steps



Form a 'Working Party'



Initial 'Brainstorming' to generate ideas



Gather existing information around those ideas



Liaise with key stakeholders to understand the setting

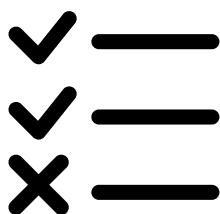


Community engagement – test the ideas via events, online engagement & surveys to identify community priorities.



Produce a draft Vision & Initial Action Plan

Even the results of a 2-hour brainstorming session with a group of community representatives can generate more than enough ideas that can be tested and refined in later engagement activities.



In the Kickstarter Project, the survey and subsequent engagement events asked people to 'vote' on the brainstorming answers; the summaries of these votes and any subsequent comments were captured in community priority lists.

It was clear that within these lists a set of **themes** emerged (e.g. Town & Buildings, People & Community, Health, Housing etc.).

Some **early evidence collection** is valuable just to check, for example, that an idea is not just from one person or that a suggested problem still exists – this should be developed even further in later plan-making stages. Welsh Government, the Office for National Statistics and Local Authorities hold a wide range of information on towns / community areas in Wales.

Identifying local government departments, businesses and other organisations that have a 'stake' in your town is important; these **stakeholders** can provide valuable information to make your plan better and may be able to help you deliver the plan.

The resultant Kickstarter Plan for each town summarises:

1. How other government plans and priorities will affect the town
2. The community and stakeholder engagement activities undertaken to prepare the plan
3. A profile of the town and what people love about it
4. Community priorities on what needs improving
5. A community-prepared Vision and Action Plan that seek to address those priorities and what type of plan should be prepared in future.

At the end of your Kickstarter work it should be clear whether the best approach for you is to now proceed with a Place Plan or a Community Plan and, sometimes for both of these plans, sometimes separately, some practical project Action Planning.

It is recommended that at the end of the Kickstarter stage, you should:

- ✓ Undertake a public consultation on the draft plan
- ✓ Consolidate the Working Party, resourcing etc.
- ✓ Consider submitting the plan to the TC for adoption
- ✓ Implement the short-term practical actions
- ✓ Work towards the preparation of a full Community Plan or Place Plan in y2.

You can view the Kickstarter plans at www.placeplans.org.uk/kickstarters

Plan Making Stage

You are now going to produce a Plan!

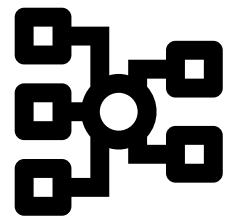
The broad series of steps below applies to both Place Plans and Community Plans. Be aware, however, that a Place Plan will become part of CCBC's series of statutory plans, so it requires more rigorous evidence and very clearly defined proposals ([see guide 2](#)).



The 6 main steps are normally done in order but you are likely to sometimes have to go back a bit as a new issue or new information emerges.

Step 1: Brainstorming your issues

This stage is about checking the list of issues or topics from your Kickstarter Plan* against what is possible and appropriate for a Place Plan or Community Plan.



This should be discussed and agreed with CCBC and once agreed, it then needs to be shared back with as many local people as possible – they need to know what type of Plan you are to develop and what it will, and won't, cover. (See *Guide 3 for advice on engagement during this and later stages.*)

* If you are confident about moving straight into a Place or Community Plan, it is essential to start with this broad-ranging, widely shared gathering of ideas, issues etc.

Step 2: Vision & Outcomes

Step 2A

Now that you have a fuller and clearer picture of your issues or topics, the Vision needs to be developed as a relatively short statement of what you want your place/area/town to be like in X years' time. Here is an example:



“In 20 years’ time, will continue to retain its position as the prime market town serving the south of District, capitalising on its rich landscape and its location. It will be a strong community and a place where people of all ages choose to live and work in a safe and accessible environment. It will be a place where wildlife thrives and the natural environment and green spaces can be enjoyed by residents and visitors.”

For communities that have done a Kickstarter Plan, you will already have an initial vision from which to build.

The Outcomes (or ‘Objectives’ – awful word!) needs to be a relatively short statement of what exactly you want your Plan to achieve, i.e. what needs to be done to reach your Vision. There must then be proposals, policies or projects in your plan to show how you will achieve each of those outcomes. (And, in reverse, no policy, project etc. can be in the Plan without its related Outcome!) Here are some of the Outcomes/Objectives from the same place as in the Vision above so you should see the connection:

Environment and Sustainability	Housing	Economy
Protect and enhance wildlife. Protect and create multi-functional green infrastructure corridors that can support the movement of wildlife across	Identify suitable opportunities which would support a range of housing (including self-build, affordable housing and housing for older people).	Retain town centre retail. Encourage new start-up Businesses. Support local tourism and a new Tourist Information Centre.

Step 2B

It is important to share the Vision and Outcomes as widely as possible and, ideally, get them agreed. And amend if the response suggests significant changes or additions (without ending up with long essays!).

Step 3: Evidence

Once you know the type of Plan you will develop and the issues and topics it will cover, it is important to get started on collecting the evidence on each issue/topic. (See Guide 4).

A lot of evidence is needed if (as above) a little more thorough and detailed for a Place Plan than for a Community Plan. Be sure to keep a full record of all the evidence that is produced.

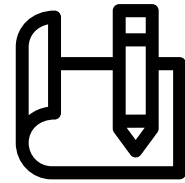


Evidence collection won't stop at this point; it may need to go on for some time but it is important to have a good base of initial material before moving on to Step 3.

Step 4: 'First Stab' Plan

Step 4A

A 'first stab' Plan does not have to be complete and final to be useful and necessary – the last thing to do is to present your community with what looks like, and they think is, a final version! Some parts of this first plan can be close to final, others just first drafts and probably some aspects just left open at this point as further work continues.



Producing a first draft need be no more than a rough and ready pulling together of parts done by different people on the Working Party, but it is probably useful to get some drafting help from others outside the group who have particular interest or expertise in particular topics. And chat to people in CCBC if you can.

Step 4B

It is important to get 'something' out to people at this middle stage so that they can get a sense of what everything is working towards, to keep them on board during what might otherwise be a long gap and give them a genuine opportunity to comment. This is therefore a first, almost formal 'consultation' (as with the Local Development Plan) so needs to be very carefully managed in terms of what goes out, who it goes to, how comments back are recorded and what changes are then made to your Plan. (See *the Engagement Toolkit*.)

Step 5: Amending the first stab plan

With luck, there will be a lot of useful feedback from people on the first stab Plan, probably on different aspects but beware, they don't always suggest the same changes! Each part of the Plan can then be amended in terms of its basic content, and again a chat to CCBC can help when you get conflicting responses.



Step 6: (Almost) Final Plan

Step 6A

Producing the (almost) Final Plan is something best left to just 1 or 2 people from the Working Party (though drawing in someone fresh to the process can be really useful). That is because everything now needs bringing together to be thorough, consistent, addressed in the same way, written in the same style and checked and checked again to be sure that everything is there.



It probably also needs to be well produced graphically – layout, style, photographs, maps, diagrams etc. - and that probably needs one person to do it. (Most communities will have someone with good graphic skills; just hunt them out and ‘persuade’ them to help you.)

Step 6B

This can be called the ‘last chance saloon’ stage because it should not be an opportunity to go back, add issues, query outcomes etc. but to do little more than very final sharpening, polishing and changes. The final Plan needs to be made available to ‘all’ (as with the first stab plan) but very much on a ‘what is really important that we may have missed or got wrong?’ basis. And, rather obviously, then make the final detailed changes.

Ongoing Activity

As well as the sequential stages above, there are four things that need to be done throughout the whole process:



1. Meet regularly. Your Working Party should meet at least quarterly to oversee, review and drive progress.
2. Engaging the community. This is highlighted above and is covered in more detail in the Engagement Toolkit.
3. Keep in regular touch with the three other areas/towns in the initiative to share what has (and hasn’t) worked, learn from how they have done their first stab or final Plan etc.
4. Liaising with CCBC. Also as highlighted above, it is important to check with CCBC at all stages, ideally before starting and certainly between stages to be sure they are in support of the direction your Plan is taking. And they will no doubt have some good practical advice to offer.

With the final Plan ready, this is when it gets submitted to Conwy County Borough Council along with a full set of the background evidence and a full report on the engagement work undertaken. Ideally, they will ‘adopt’ it in some way or at least provide guidance and support to help deliver actions in the plan

WELL DONE!

Action Planning Stage

Plans can take a long time to get completed and then for their proposals to be implemented.

Your early brainstorming work will almost certainly produce a list of practical things that could be started ‘now’, before a Plan is completed or as soon as the Plan is in place. Some may not need to be linked to an overall Plan but some might better be taken forward as part of making your Plan happen.



As stated at the very start, this stage often gets forgotten. What really matters is not having a Plan but the effects your Plan will have ‘on the ground’. The way to make sure that changes will actually happen is to produce an Action Plan to deliver your proposals and projects.

What approach to take?

- If you have jumped straight to this stage and all you wish to do is some practical projects, an ‘action planning grid’ follows shortly.
- If you are producing a Plan, you may still wish to crack ahead with some practical projects while working on your Plan, so again the grid is useful.
- If you are producing a Community Plan, that should include an action plan using the grid.
- An Action Plan would not normally be part of a Place Plan because only the land use proposals get formally ‘adopted’. But it can be really useful to include an Action Plan in your Place Plan to show how your land use planning proposals would be supported by local practical projects.

Here is the basic Action Planning grid that Planning Aid Wales suggest you use:

Topic: _____				
No.	Issue/Action	Specific actions	Timescale*	Who with**

* Short – Year 1, Medium – Years 2-3, Long – within 5 years.

** For example, CCBC, other communities, voluntary agency etc.

Key Questions

When looking in detail at any specific action, it is good to think about, discuss and make notes on some or all of the following, but only as appropriate - no project ever needs all the points to be addressed and some will already have been addressed in your Plan:

Targets / Goals



- What is the main goal?
- What will it deliver – what outcomes?
- Should the project be broken into stages? How long will stage each take?
- What are the risks?
- Do you have appropriate insurance?

Resources



- Does the project need funding?
- Who is going to apply for it?
- Who is going to oversee the project?
- Who is going to work on the project?
- How are you going to recruit volunteers?
- Can the TC lend staff support?

Engagement



- Who are the stakeholders you should work with on the project?
- How can you raise awareness of the project?
- How will the project be shaped by the community?

Data / Evidence



- What information already exists?
- What information do you need to gather? Photos? Surveys?
- Who will gather it?

Procurement



- Do you need to seek quotes / bids for contractors – Who? When? How?
- Do you need contract documents?

Delivery



- Who will oversee the work of the contractors?
- Who will monitor progress of the project?
- Should you develop a project timetable?

Completion



- How will you know when the project is completed?
- How will you launch the plan?
- How will you promote its use?
- How will you ensure it is used?

Evaluation



- How will you measure success?
- How will you feed back to the community?
- How will you use lessons learned?

Sample Action Plan

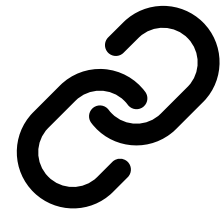
The following is an example action plan completed by a community.

Topic: Protect & Enhance the Environment						
Priority	Action	Partners	Lead Councillor	Timescale	Cost	Comments
Reduce the use of single-use plastic	Launch a Refill Scheme To review Town Council's use of single use plastic.	Refill Cymru Plastic Free Organisation Town Centre Business Schools	TBC	Ongoing	Minimal	Launched. Writing and Arts Festival to feature Refill project in their programmes.
To provide voluntary environmental groups with a more sustainable future.	To work with CBC to increase the number of volunteers active in 'Friends of' groups.	Voluntary Environmental Groups, CBC	TBC	Ongoing		
To encourage the use of pollinator planting in Council funded planting schemes	To direct council contractors to increase pollinator-friendly planting	Bee Friendly organisation	TBC	In time for spring planting.	No additional costs.	
To improve the maintenance and enhancement of Local park and Gardens	To investigate the feasibility of establishing a team to maintain these green spaces	CBC, voluntary organisations	TBC	Discussions with CBC early in year.		

Further Information

The Conwy Place Plan Kickstarter Community Guides are available from www.placeplans.org.uk/conwyguides – other topics include:

2. Place Plans: A Guide for Communities
3. Community Engagement: A Guide for Communities
4. Prove it! Community-led Evidence Gathering
5. Community Action: Implementation & Inspiration
6. From Plan to Projects: Developing & Funding Community-led Projects.



The Placemaking Charter provides a summary of key considerations around placemaking in Wales: <http://dcfw.org/placemaking/placemaking-charter/>

More information on Place Plans is available from: www.placeplans.org.uk

Planning Aid Wales provides community engagement and Place Plan support services: www.planningaidwales.org.uk

One Voice Wales provide a range of training courses and consultancy support services on community engagement and community planning. See: <http://www.onevoicewales.org.uk/OVWeb/consultancy-7450.aspx> for more information.