



Place Plans
by Planning Aid Wales

PLACE PLANS: A Guide for Communities

Place Plan Kickstarter
Community Guides **2/6**



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A Guide for Communities

Place Plan Kickstarter Community Guides 2/6

What is this document?



This guide explores Place Plans.

It looks at what Place Plans are, how they can be produced and how they can be adopted as planning documents by Local Planning Authorities.

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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Why is land-use planning important?

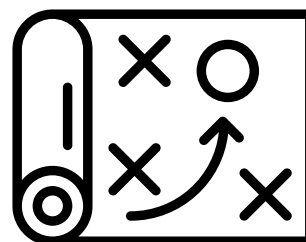
The planning system manages the development and use of land in the public interest.

It prioritises long term collective benefit contributing to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

Planning seeks to balance the needs of development and conservation, ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources whilst protecting and enhancing the built and historic environment. Planning covers all issues that relate to land use and development.

Welsh Government produces planning law, national plans and planning policy guidance and Local Planning Authorities produce Local Development Plans that inform how development should take place in an area over a 15-year period.

Local Development Plans set a framework for how and where development should take place and are the most important consideration in planning applications.



More About Planning

Planning Aid Wales has written comprehensive easy to read guidance on all parts of the planning system.

Visit www.planningaidwales.org.uk/about-planning/ for more information.



What is a Place Plan?

Communities in Wales now have more of an opportunity than ever before to shape the future of the places where they live and work.

A Place Plan:

- Focuses on land-use planning issues and can influence planning decisions and Section 106 negotiations.
- Can present community planning policies, priorities and projects.
- Can be prepared by Community and Town Councils (or community groups in areas where there are local councils) and can be adopted by the Local Planning Authority (the planning department at the County Borough Council).
- Links to the Local Development Plan set out by the Local Planning Authority and other local / Community Plans on a wide range of issues.



Through creative collaboration with the Local Planning Authority (LPA), local communities can develop community-led guidance to help achieve local aspirations and improve community well-being.

Place Plans must be prepared by Community or Town Councils (CTCs) or by community groups where there are no community councils.

A Place Plan can be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance as an extension to the Local Development Plan and as such can become relevant to planning application decisions.

More About Place Plans

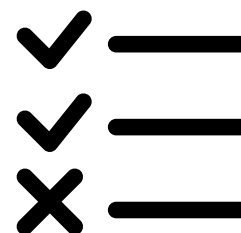
Planning Aid Wales has written comprehensive easy to read guidance on Place Plans.

Visit www.placeplans.org.uk for more information.



What can a Place Plan cover?

Place Plans can cover any issues that relates to the land use planning system. It can either be topic-based (e.g. affordable housing) or location- based (e.g. focused on how a specific site can be developed).



The following table illustrates typical community issues and highlights whether they are land use related or non-land use; this helps decide whether a Place Plan or Community Plan might be more relevant for your community:

Land Use Issues (Place Plan)	Non-Land Use Issues (Community Plan)
Sites for new housing development	Traffic management (speed control etc.)
Affordable housing for local people	Improving public transport
Locally sensitive design of new buildings	More activities / events for children / young people
Keeping and improving open spaces	More activities / events for older people
Energy conservation in new buildings	Initiatives to improve safety and reduce crime
Retaining existing community facilities	More / better footpaths, cycleways, bridleways
Sustainable construction of new buildings	Planting more trees etc.
Conserving existing quality of spaces and buildings	Litter management
New facilities for visitors	Encouraging healthy lifestyles
Premises for local employers	
Improving the town/village centre	
Renewable energy projects	
Flood mitigation scheme	

This list is not exhaustive and some Non-land use issues can overlap subject to what is involved – for example, Encouraging healthy lifestyles might require the construction of an outdoor gym, which would likely need planning permission.

What does a Place Plan look like?

An example of a recent Place Plan prepared by Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Town Council can be viewed here: <https://newtown.org.uk/consultations/placeplan.html>

Some of the key parts of a Place Plan include:

- Descriptions of the place and the challenges and opportunities it faces.
- Descriptions of how the community was involved in the preparation of the plan.
- A summary of desktop research and primary **evidence** gathered to inform the selection of policies / objectives / actions.
- A **vision** for what the community want the place to be like when the plan is delivered.
- Descriptions of **themes** that are relevant to the place and **objectives** for what the community want to see happen to make the place better.
- A set of **planning policy statements** that help deliver those objectives. These policies can then inform future town and community council decisions on planning issues.
- A set of **projects and/or actions** that the community would like to deliver over the lifetime of the plan.

Place Plan Themes & Objectives

A great place to live, learn & work    

- 1.1 **Character & Heritage**
- 1.2 **Housing and Future Development**
- 1.3 **Community Facilities**
(community centres, youth centres, libraries, leisure centres, public swimming pools, indoor recreational facilities, museums, art galleries, theatres, places of worship, colleges, schools, hospitals, surgeries, emergency service stations, courts & neighbourhood shops)
- 1.4 **Business, Learning & Employment**
- 1.5 **Health and Well-being**
- 1.6 **A Safe & Tidy Town**

Green Newtown   

- 2.1 **Open spaces** (includes play areas, outdoor sports facilities & allotments)
- 2.2 **Active Travel** (walking and cycling) & **Transport**
- 2.3 **Climate Change and Biodiversity**

Destination Newtown    

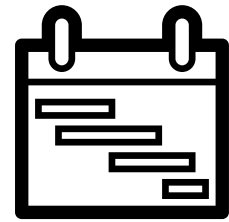
- 3.1 **Town Centre Experience** (Shops, services, accessibility, pedestrian signage)
- 3.2 **Tourism, Culture & Attractions**

Source: Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Place Plan

How are Place Plans prepared?

A Place Plan must:

- Link with existing planning policies and community plans. Place Plans cannot contradict the Local Development Plan or allocate new sites
- Be prepared collaboratively with the Local Planning Authority and other stakeholders
- Be evidence-based; and,
- Involve good community engagement.



There are no hard and fast rules about how a Place Plan should be prepared, providing they meet the above principles. In order to deliver all of the above, it is likely that it will take a year or more to prepare a Place Plan.

Preparing a Place Plan is not a small task, so it is best to consider whether there are committed members of the town or community council able to lead on a project. The plan will likely need some funding (e.g. to deliver community engagement) and further advice on this can be obtained from Planning Aid Wales.

Successful Place Plans have harnessed community enthusiasm and used volunteers to gather the evidence needed to prepare a plan. This evidence can include community surveys, fact-finding / research and walking tours to better understand the character of the place you live ([See Guide 4 for more information about evidence-gathering](#)).



Photos: Community & Youth Engagement on Newtown & Llanllwchaiarn Place Plan

What are the benefits of preparing a Place Plan?

A Place Plan is a real opportunity for communities to work together to research and express the needs of their community in land use planning terms.



If prepared correctly, Place Plans can help shape future planning application decisions and future Local Development Plans.

The process of preparing a Place Plan will help bring all sectors of the community together and build lasting relationships between communities, the planning authority and other stakeholders.

Preparing a Place Plan will also allow communities to identify and plan to deliver local projects. The evidence gathered to prepare the Place Plan can be used to secure grant funding for such projects.

Communities that have already prepared Place Plans in Wales have found that their communities have been empowered, knowledge of planning issues have increased and their profile and connectivity as a place have been increased.

[See Guide 1 for more general benefits for producing plans with communities](#)

What are the challenges with preparing a Place Plan?

Production of a robust Place Plan that is capable of being adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance can be time consuming and, in some cases, challenging. Planning Aid Wales recommends the following as key factors for success:



- Managing expectations – a Place Plan cannot contradict an LDP and may be subject to challenge by developers. Being clear about what you want to achieve with a Place Plan is essential.
- A committed & driven Community / Town Council. The support of elected members is essential to drive engagement and to ensure the Place Plan is treated as a 'living document' rather than a shelf decoration.

- Adequate time and right skills – Whilst planning & community engagement skills would be beneficial, dedicating adequate time to the process is essential.
- Local Planning Authority (members & officers) support & collaboration. Meet early and often with the planning policy team; they will be able to help guide the scope of the project and give you guidance on making the plan capable of being adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Is a Place Plan right for our community?

A Place Plan is one way of expressing the needs and wants of your community relevant to land use planning (e.g. delivering affordable housing, employment opportunities or protecting existing spaces), but there are other options.



A Community Plan might be a better approach if you have issues that on non-planning matters (e.g. public transport, tree planning or litter management) – see page 6 and Guide 1 for more information.

In order to decide whether a Place Plan is right for your community, Planning Aid Wales have prepared a step-by-step guide which is available from: http://www.placeplans.org.uk/en/?page_id=274. The planning team at Conwy County Borough Council can also provide advice on this, contact us using the details below.

Where can we find more information?

Planning Aid Wales have produced more detailed guidance on Place Plans that you can view at www.placeplans.org.uk

Contact the Strategic Planning Policy Team at the Conwy County Borough Council:

Strategic Engagement and Place Plan Officer
Strategic Planning Policy
Regulatory and Housing Services
CONWY County Borough Council

Email: cdll-ldp@conwy.gov.uk