



**Place Plans**  
by Planning Aid Wales

# PROVE IT!

## Community-led Evidence Gathering

Place Plan Kickstarter  
Community Guides

4/6



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Place Plan Kickstarter Community Guides 4/6

### What is this document?



This guide explores community-led evidence gathering.

It explains why evidence is important to make robust plans and provides a series of practical toolkits you can use to gather different types of evidence for your plan.

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](http://www.placeplans.org.uk/conwyguides)

# Contents

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- Why Is ‘Evidence’ Needed? ..... 4**
- Finding Your Evidence..... 6**
  - Setting up an ‘Evidence Team’ ..... 6
  - What’s There Already? ..... 7
  - Filling The Gaps Locally ..... 8
  
- Practical Example 1: Local Facilities ..... 9**
- Practical Example 2: Empty Space in The Town Centre ..... 10**
- Practical Example 3: Tourism ..... 12**
- Practical Example 4: Public Open Spaces ..... 14**
- Practical Example 5: Local Heritage ..... 16**
- Practical Example 6: Development Site Assessment and Guidance ..... 18**
- Practical Example 7: Character & Design ..... 20**

# Why Is 'Evidence' Needed?

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Evidence is very important in plan-making.

Communities will often have strong opinions about what they want or need, but a strong plan will explore these wants and needs to help establish the **facts** around an issue.



## Example 1:

*As part of an area-wide project, the Traffic Group of local people complained bitterly about 'outsiders' driving too fast through their villages. However, after further thought, one member of the group finally said "We must be honest; it's not outsiders who are the worst culprits, it's us who live here".*

*Eventually, all the other group members agreed. The Highways team then did some formal checking and the evidence was clear – those doing most of the speeding were the locals. If the Highways team had just accepted the first explanation, public time and money would have been spent on the wrong solution.*



## Example 2:

*A campaign was started to keep open the one remaining local shop in a village, which was threatened with closure. Almost 90% of residents signed the petition to keep the shop.*

*It then emerged that one result from a village survey, done just two years previously, showed that less than 10% of local people actually used the shop, preferring to go to a nearby supermarket! Why struggle to keep a shop open if local people barely use it?*



Evidence can come in various forms: facts and figures, photographs, maps, historical records and so forth. Community opinions and ideas are an essential part of that, coming from 'surveys' of various sorts (also see the Community Engagement

Toolkit). But, as above, it is always important to check what are usually personal ideas or opinions against some form of actual evidence.

That does not mean that community opinions and ideas are always wrong; they are more often right than wrong but still need checking. Just as in a court of law, when a witness states *“I saw him grab the bag”* and that is corroborated by someone saying *“I saw him too”*, that still has to be checked when an expert says that *“It was too dark for anyone that far away to be able to see properly”*.

In relation to any Place Plan or Community Plan, your proposals and projects need to be backed up with some form of evidence. That will give real weight to your proposals, avoid later questioning or even challenges to your Plan. Most importantly, it will also ensure that precious resources – yours, the local authority’s and others - are used to best effect on genuine issues and problems.



While getting as many people as possible actively involved with your evidence collection is a really good idea - back to community engagement again – that also helps to maximise the chances of good results and helps people to appreciate why what may seem like self-evident ideas (outsiders speeding for example) may not be entirely correct.

It is also important to be aware that evidence collection is not a scientific process, not least because some typical Plan issues cannot be resolved fully; there is always a matter of judgement.

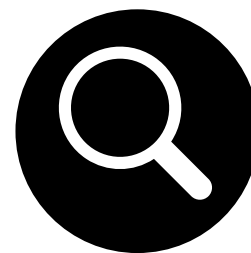
And finally, when you look back, you will probably end up with more evidence than you needed. But that’s a good thing so ignore it.

# Finding Your Evidence

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Don't just launch into this randomly.

1. Start by thinking carefully about and agreeing (including with Conwy County Borough Council) your objectives – i.e. what issues or topics you want your Plan to cover. And be aware that some new issues can emerge halfway through.
2. Establish what evidence is needed for each topic – look at other Plans, talk to Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) or other and check any guidance (see later).
3. Work out who can best do the evidence collection work.
4. Check what evidence already exists and then, and only then, work out what's needed to top that up.
5. Top up what exists already, fill the gaps, localise material to your specific place and make sure all your evidence is as up to date as possible.



More now follows on stages 3, 4 and 5.

## Setting up an 'Evidence Team'

There will almost certainly be a lot to do, so the more people you can get involved beyond your Working Party the better. As well as sharing the load, this gives those other people a real stake in the evolving plan; more than they will get from the wider community engagement. It really helps people to feel the Plan is 'theirs' .... because that way it will be!



The other benefit of this is that it can reduce each part of the work to something that won't draw heavily on any one person's time. People are often reluctant to get involved because they think they will be signing their lives away. Ask them about just one 45 minute or one hour task and a surprising number of people will be happy to do it.

One good way to spread but also keep good control of the work is for each member of your Steering Group to take the load on a single topic (or maybe two) and invite a few of their friends or neighbours to join in. The topic lead person may even know, or can find, someone with relevant interests, maybe even some starting information or contacts. If the evidence needed is about different areas of your Community Council area, suggesting probably quite a lot to do, try to use your local networks to find small groups of 3/4/5 people for each smaller area.

The other key way to widen your team is to engage local groups and organisations to take the lead on specific tasks. In fact, some of those groups are likely to have useful evidence already. There is more help on this, and some examples, in the sections that follow.

There is also another level to making this work effectively. As there are four towns/areas involved with this CCBC initiative, it would be really good to share experience as you go along – letting others know how well (or not) you managed, what lessons you learned and what your results were from getting the evidence on topic X and hearing back from others how they got on with topic Y or Z. That will save you all from having to learn the hard way!

## What's There Already?

A lot of the evidence you are likely to need already exists and just needs to be found (though that is not always as easy as it sounds), so don't go starting afresh if what you need is already available.



Some key sources of evidence beyond your community include:

- The census (really useful to argue for locally appropriate types of housing for example).
- Basic town by town data from Understanding Welsh Places (<http://www.understandingwelshplaces.wales/en/home/>)
- CCBC (covering many relevant topics but often very general\*).
- Health service and Police (often very useful but be aware of confidentiality issues).
- Voluntary Agencies (often very detailed on their specific topic, e.g. mental health).
- Private Companies (some, if not many, can be very useful but watch for anything they might seek in return).

*\* There are many relevant issues covered by CCBC, and they will almost certainly have really useful information on all of these, so we can't list them all here. It is best to use a key contact who will help you with much of this.*

Evidence available from CCBC (or others) can be especially useful because it is to 'official' standards so is always a good guide to what you could produce at your local level. However, it can be very general and not specific enough to your particular place. Very local data on housing needs, traffic movements and so forth is very much what will be needed for your Plan.

It can also be surprising what evidence is available within your community, possibly even to a 'professional' standard.

Here are just a few examples, and you know your community best and can no doubt find more:

- ✓ A civic or history society may have details of buildings and structures, events or previous area/town plans.
- ✓ A walking group may know not just where the statutory footpaths are but where others are, their condition and how they all link together.
- ✓ A local wildlife group may have thorough records, perhaps over many years, of things such as bird and animal sightings and key trees.
- ✓ Whoever runs your community hall is likely to have records of who used to use it, who uses it now, how well it is used and so forth.

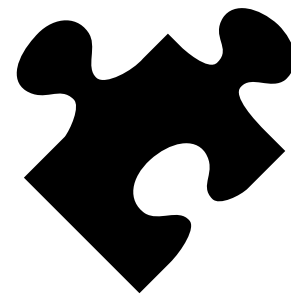
This all sounds good but two small cautions. Local groups who already have information did not produce that for the benefit of your Plan, so some information may not be relevant and there will almost always be some gaps to fill and some necessary updating. In addition, such groups are often made up of ‘enthusiasts’; that’s great but they can go overboard with what and how much they produce - a ‘book’ rather than a page or two! Everything they may offer therefore needs checking generally, probably pruning and certainly checked for relevance to your specific Plan.

## Filling The Gaps Locally

Now you are on your own. Well .... yes and no!

How exactly do you assess character or check parking or hunt for empty premises in the town centre? Professionals will have their own assessment forms and survey sheets for some things – see the Local Development Plans Manual as an example:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-03/development-plans-manual-edition-3-march-2020.pdf>



These assessments can be over-complicated for your purposes and, even if adapted for local use, they can still fail to be genuinely ‘community-friendly’.

There are so many different topics that a Plan might wish to consider, and local variations inevitably needed, that this note could never cover them all. What follows are some examples of methods that we know have worked for local people. This includes a variety of topics and techniques; some quick and easy, some more demanding but still (as others have proved) achievable. It may well be that, if you have a different topic to work on, you may be able to tweak a technique a little and make it work for that other topic.

# Practical Example 1: Local Facilities

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**THE ISSUE: Do we have enough facilities and in the right places, are they well used, are they in good condition, is there enough parking etc.?**

Here is an extract from what a group noted in a large village, with examples of useful comments.

## Schools and other places of learning

- Primary school 1
- Primary School 2
- Secondary School
- Adult learning centre

## Medical facilities

- Hospital
- Doctor's Surgery 1
- Doctor's Surgery 2
- Dentist 1
- Clinic 1

## Leisure and sports

- Rugby Club – have their own pitch and changing rooms plus club house (available to hire)
- Football Club – Recreation Ground; pitch & changing rooms
- Golf Club – have occasional meetings in Six Bells pub
- Walking Club – weekly walks start/finish at Fox & Hounds pub
- Royal British Legion - meets in Pub

## Recreation grounds, accessible woodlands, allotments

- Recreation Ground – available to hire
- Franks Wood - owned by our Council, full public access
- Council allotments – currently full with waiting list

## Play Facilities

- Recreation Ground - managed by Council, varied equipment, good condition
- Primary School play area - managed by school, always open, varied equipment, good condition
- Martins Croft Play Area - managed by local authority, limited equipment, poor condition
- Pinewood Play Area - managed by local authority, currently closed off

## Youth centres

- Kidspace – open 3 nights a week and on Saturdays, rooms in old house, not great condition
- Methodist church – runs Tuesdays and Thursdays for children <11

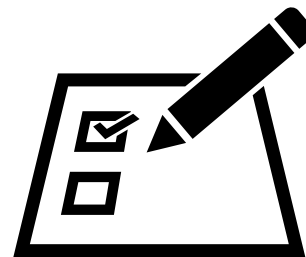
## Village Hall

- Hired out for all. 80-85% used
- *Weekly User Groups:* Lunch Club; Whist Drive; Martial Arts; Art Group; Parent & Toddler; Musical Theatre
- *Monthly User Groups:* Cinema; Gardening Club; History Group; Women's Institute; Village Hall Committee Meetings
- *Yearly Groups:* Musical Theatre two annual shows.
- *Occasional Users:* Theatre Set Building Sessions; Birthday Parties; Wedding Receptions & Evening Parties; Fund Raising Events

## How to do it

A group of 3/4 people is perfect for this.

- It can start as desk work just with what the group already know and can then be added to by asking around and walking around.
- This involves listing all local facilities, with some brief commentary as appropriate (don't get stuck with the content above if it does not apply to your place).
- Facilities should be mapped as well as listed - this can show parts of your area that lack facilities.
- Photos can also be useful.



## Practical Example 2: Empty Space in The Town Centre

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**THE ISSUE:** There seem to be lots of empty rooms above shops in our town centre. It would be great if we could get them back into use as offices or flats. That way we could provide more varied housing accommodation and increase the vitality and footfall in our centre. So how do we check what's there?



The example below shows a completed form for one street and obviously relies on visual evidence - no need to go into places! (Entrance location is important if upper spaces are to be used without going through whatever is on the ground floor.)

## How to do it

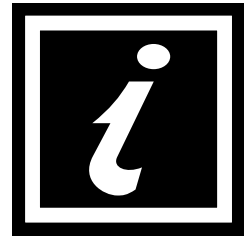
- Each street can be surveyed by one person so sharing round the task keeps down the load.
- The form above took less than 1 hour to complete.
- Each 'surveyor' needs blank forms, clipboard and pen.
- Good to type up the results later.
- Adapt as necessary for your town centre.

Address	Floor Usage					Notes	Residential Entrance Location	No. of Properties with Flats	Total No. of Flats
	Ground Floor	1 <sup>st</sup> Floor	2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor	Basement				
	439	369	277	225	50			145	326
Swan House	Residential	Residential	Residential	Residential				1	15
2	Vacant	Residential	Residential	N/A		Formerly Army Surplus	Street door	1	1
3	Peter Charles Hair Salon	Photography	Residential	Residential				1	1
	Philip Price Photography			N/A					
The Falcon	Access to mews & flats	Photography	Residential	N/A		3 mews property at back		1	1
4	Vacant	Photography	Residential	Residential			Via Falcon		
5	Shuko	Offices	Offices	N/A			Street door	1	3
	Side door to no.6								
6	Harrison Clark Shawcross	Offices	Offices	N/A		Application made for office conversion		0	
	Entrance to Yard & Mews					Mews properties at rear			
7	Rossiter Books	Offices	N/A	N/A		Corn Exchange, TC Offices		0	
	Gate to 1 <sup>st</sup> Floor offices								
8	The King's Head Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	N/A		6 Mews houses at rear		1	6
9	Indian Summer	Residential	Residential	Residential			Street door	1	5
10	Avellino	Residential	Residential	Residential	Kitchen			1	1
11	Vacant	Residential	Residential	Residential				1	1
	Pigs Alley Access to Tudor flats and flat above Chinese Medicine shop							Access for 7 properties	
12	Chinese Medicine	Residential	Residential	?				1	1
13	Tudor Sweets	Residential	Residential	?				1	1
17	Roswyn Hotel Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	N/A		Under conversion to flats		1	
18	Vacant	Residential	Residential	N/A				1	
19	Vacant	Residential	Residential	N/A				1	
20	Enhanced Homes	Residential	Residential	N/A				1	3

# Practical Example 3: Tourism

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**THE ISSUE:** Tourism is really important to our town. We know what is provided for visitors but we don't really know why they come, how long for, what they do when they are here, what they think of our place and so forth. How can we find that out?



Well ---- ask them! One example set of questions posed to visitors, and the form used, follows below.

<b>Tourist Street Survey</b>
Date, time, location:
Could we ask your home postcode please?
<b>Where have you come from today?</b> (Not always the same as postcode – they may be staying nearby.)
How long have you stayed here, or think you will stay, today?
If they are staying in the town where and for how long?
What made you visit our town – just general interest or anything specific?
<b>What have you done or aim to do while you are here?</b> (Just wander round, get some refreshments, visit anything particular?)
What have you enjoyed or are enjoying about our town?
Is there anything that you're not so happy with that we could improve for visitors like you?
Any other comments?

## How to do it

- This ideally needs 4 or 5 people, happy to stop people in the street and check if they are visitors.
- Interviewing (which only takes a couple of minutes) is best done over a few different days and times (weekday, weekend, morning, afternoon) and also not just in the main tourist season.
- The best place to do this is in your town centre and there are two proven ways of doing it:
  - The first way is to stop them, explain why you are stopping them and ask if they are happy to answer a few questions, noting any results on a simple form as above.
  - The second way (you could do a bit of both) is to ask a few shopkeepers\* to do the same when people come in their shop. (\* Those shops more likely to be used by visitors.)

### Tip:

*Be aware of GDPR rules!*

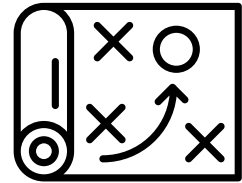
*Keep questionnaires and feedback forms anonymous so you only have the data you need. Only ask questions about age, religion or other*



# Practical Example 4: Public Open Spaces

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**THE ISSUE:** We are keen to keep and improve, maybe add to, our public open spaces, but are they all well used, well maintained, safe and accessible to all? How can we find that out?



Here is an example form used by a community in Wales.

Public Open Spaces Survey	
<b>Name of open space:</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Basic description</b> (What specific features or elements are there: grassed areas, wooded areas, walkways, seating, lighting, art works, play areas, buildings etc.)	
<b>Accessibility?</b> (Within easy local walking distance, car parking on site or adjacent, public transport link etc.)	
<b>How well used?</b> (E.g. heavy use, light, rare, never, all the time, weekends, summer only etc., by adults, older people, families, children etc.)	
<b>Safety?</b> (Does it feel safe and secure, signs of anti-social behaviour, safe at nights etc.)	
<b>General condition?</b> (Very good, good, OK, poor, very poor, good in parts)	
<b>Scope for improvement?</b> (It really needs .....)	
<b>Other Comments</b>	

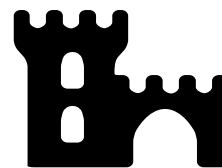
## How to do it

- The task is best started with 2/3 people doing the listing and mapping.
- Because the only people who are likely to be able to give useful answers to some questions are those who live near those spaces, you need to do a bit of detective work and find them.
- The starting point for this is a map locating all public open spaces in your area.
- You will need a map, pad, pen and form, one of your original 2/3 people and ideally one local person per open space.
- It is then a matter of a walkabout and note-taking on each open space.
- Some photos can be useful.

# Practical Example 5: Local Heritage

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**THE ISSUE:** We know or can find out quite a lot about our local Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings but there are lots more buildings, features, signs, seats, memorials etc. that are really important for us (and probably of interest to visitors) that we would like to protect and celebrate.



## Can we do this?

The answer is 'yes'! Cadw provide guidance to enable you to also 'list' all sorts of buildings, parks, gardens and archaeological sites as well as small (even very small) and historically significant features (see examples later). Listing such things that are important to you gives them some protection in the planning system.

CCBC will be very reliant on local communities submitting suggestions for what is called 'Local Listing' because they probably do not have the time, or the detailed local knowledge, to do that themselves. Here is the link to the Cadw guidance:

<https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/historic-assets/other-historic-assets/historic-assets-special-local-interest>

Items put forward must meet some key criteria. For Cadw these are (with some explanations added):

- ✓ Aesthetic interest: architecture and designed landscapes
- ✓ Archaeological interest
- ✓ Historic interest
- ✓ Historical association (e.g. with an important local person or event)
- ✓ Group value (making a positive contribution to their setting)
- ✓ Social and communal value (contributing to local distinctiveness or having spiritual value)
- ✓ Age (this can include very recent things - see later)
- ✓ Rarity (it may be the only one left in your area)

Below is an example of a description and a form produced for a Plan in England (with slightly different criteria). The photo not included here.

Community Heritage Asset Survey	
Asset type	Public House
Short description	Public House in the centre of town – but at end of the Village Mid 19 <sup>th</sup> C. Stone and unusual frontage with gallery to rear facing side road. features of interest An active public house.

Criterion	Brief Explanation
Age	First mentioned on the 1840s Tithe map and appears in the 1861 census.
Rarity	-
Visual / aesthetic interest	An attractive example of an early Victorian Public house
Group value	Like the Poacher opposite, it marks the end of the Victorian style of buildings on the High Street.
Archaeological interest	-
Historic association	Has always been a public house and always known as The Plough. No doubt attributed to the farms on the southern side of the town and adjacent in those days.
Designed landscape interest	-
Other? Extra?	A pub that is well supported by people of ..... through the day. An attractive building that sits on the High Street almost opposite The Poacher.

And here are some examples from a Community Plan of items then supported by the local authority and added to their Local List:

- Horse and carriage mounting block
- Sun Fire Insurance plaque
- Rover the Dog memorial sign
- Memorial seat
- Thatched Bus Shelter
- The Pump, West St,
- Red Post box on pole
- Old Fire Station (engine house)
- The Old School
- Dalek litter bin (Dr. Who linked because the village green was used for filming!)

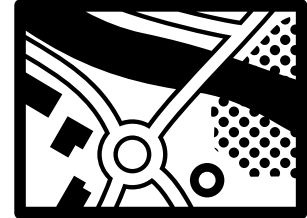
## How to do it

- Developing an initial list is a task for a group of 3 or 4 people.
- If you have a local history society, it can be good to engage them to do the work.
- If not, but you know of keen and knowledgeable people on local history, encourage them to join the group.
- It involves a lot of walking around, taking photos of possible features etc., mapping their locations and then – as in the guidance – checking with a completed form per item) -whether or not they meet the Cadw criteria.
- Much of exactly how to do this is covered in the Cadw guidance.

# Practical Example 6: Development Site Assessment and Guidance

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**THE ISSUE:** We know some sites in our area are going to be developed, and some new ones might come forward, so how can we ensure that all the key local factors are considered and the eventual developments are right for us in all ways?



Your Plan will not be able to formally allocate development sites; that is for CCBC. They do this on the basis of their own site assessments. These cover:

- Size – is the site large enough for allocation?
- Location – is the site well related to existing settlements?
- Constraints such as: Flood risk, Environmental designations such as SSSI, SAC etc., Open space, Listed buildings/Conservation area, Agricultural Land classification.

It is, however, possible that land owners and agents will have put forward more sites than are needed at the time and it is also a common experience that starting off to develop your own Plan can lead to other potential sites being identified. You can therefore help CCBC with ensuring the best possible choice of sites and how they might best be developed by:

1. Producing thorough assessments of additional or newly emerging sites.
2. Taking CCBC's assessment of already known sites into more, and more local, detail.

## 1. Assessments of Additional or New Sites

The Planning Aid Wales (PAW) Place Plans website includes notes and very practical guidance on how to do assessments (go to: [https://www.placeplans.org.uk/en/?page\\_id=50](https://www.placeplans.org.uk/en/?page_id=50)). Choose the Site Assessment box on this page.

The PAW forms include the three CCBC criteria noted above but then go into more detail. If a site emerges from this assessment as suitable or potentially suitable, CCBC (if they agree!) can then use your information to set out some key guidance for development of the site – heights, access points, materials, open spaces, parking etc. They would then agree this guidance with you.

## 2. Adding Detail to CCBC Assessments

For already known or allocated sites, you can access the CCBC assessment then add just what is in Form B and on in the PAW guidance. Once again, they would then agree any guidance with you.

### How to do it

- It is best for any site to be assessed initially by 3 people, one of whom should be someone who lives near to the site.
- Assessment involves walking around the site and its surroundings, taking photos and completing an assessment form (so need forms, clipboards, pens, camera).
- This might take 1 hour or so.
- (Be careful about getting actually onto a site; it is most probably private).
- Forms should then be checked and agreed by the whole Plan Steering Group.

# Practical Example 7: Character & Design

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**THE ISSUE:** Too many recent developments in our area look as though they could have been designed for ‘anywhere’. They do not fit into, respect or add to the distinctive character of our place. How can we ensure that new designs are appropriate to our specific place, area and buildings?



This is likely to be the most time-consuming of the basic tasks but:

- It is one of the most important to ensure that any future developments respect and even enhance the distinctive character of your place.
- Each of the different aspects is easy to do.
- Experience shows that it is something that people really enjoy.
- Only **you** can do it; only **you** know **your own place** well enough!

Here’s a typical comment from a community group after doing Character and Design assessment:

*‘It’s astonishing; we’ve never really looked at our place like that before. We all learned so much from doing it and it was so enjoyable!’*

The Planning Aid Wales (PAW) website includes notes and very practical guidance on how to do assessments (go to: [https://www.placeplans.org.uk/en/?page\\_id=50](https://www.placeplans.org.uk/en/?page_id=50)). Choose the ‘Character Assessment’ box on this page.

The PAW guidance suggests assessment of your whole Community Council area’s landscape and of your settlement (or settlements plural if you have more than the one main town/village). For your particular Plan we suggest focusing on settlement(s) because that is where, in the settlement or on its edge, developments are most likely to take place.

As the guidance says, there are two main stages to assessment for each settlement:

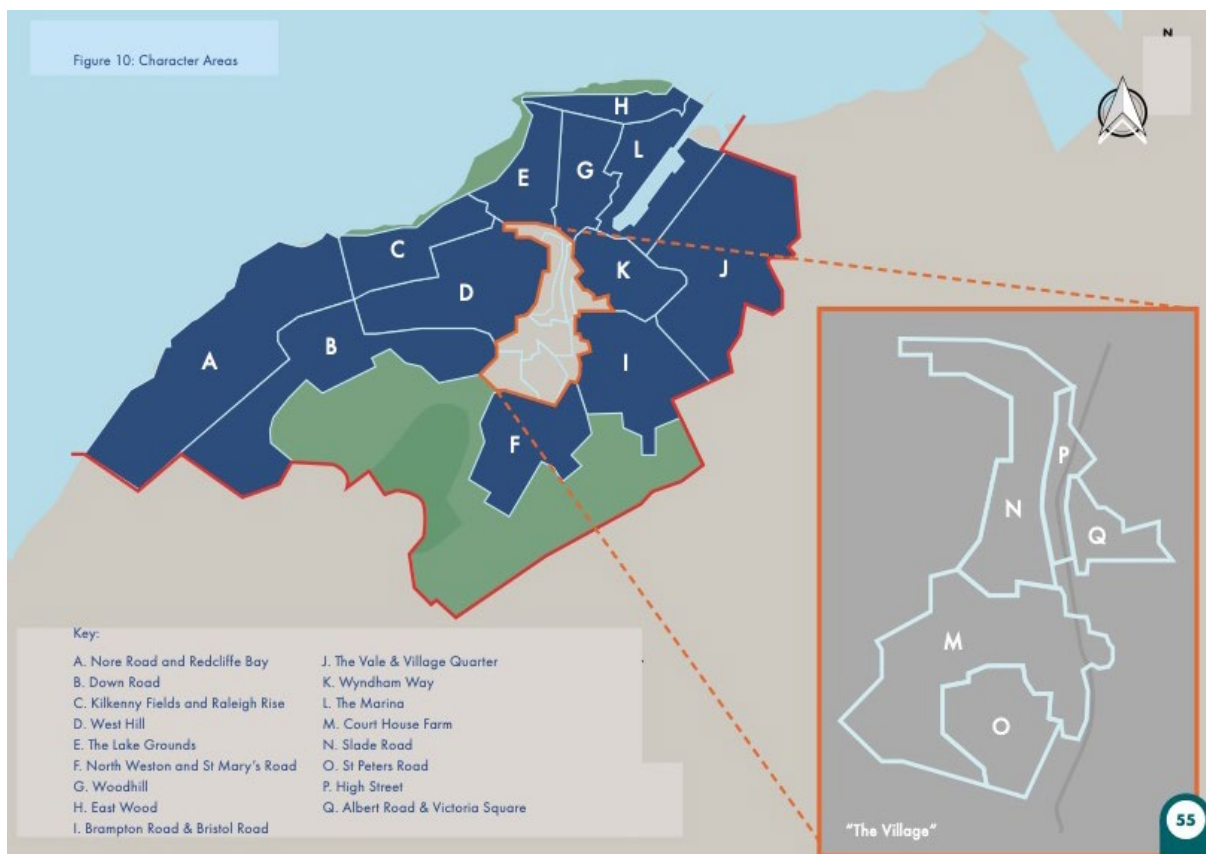
- **Defining Character Areas.** Almost every place has areas that look and feel different, often a result of when they were built (19<sup>th</sup> century, interwar - 1918-1939, post war, very recent etc.) but also where they were built (in the flat, on a slope, along a road, near the river or sea etc.).
- **Assessing Character Areas:** A detailed look that shows clearly how and why each area is different and offers hints about the appropriate character of any new development.

**Now a key point:** What follows later takes things on a step on from the PAW guidance by suggesting how you can use your assessment to draw out some broad ‘**Guidelines**’ for future development.

The section on **Character Areas** in the PAW guidance covers most of what you need but, building on the core principle of maximising the number and range of people from the community involved in your Plan, think about:

- Finding a way to ask lots of people to draw their own character areas on a map – once people start they find it fascinating.
- Maybe asking another group who know your area well – e.g. a local history or walking group – to get all their members to draw maps.
- Asking older students in the local high school (all or just those doing Geography) to draw maps.

Once you have some broadly agreed Character Areas and to help you get a ‘feel’ for what results might look like, here is an example of an overall summary map:



The **Settlement Survey** form in the PAW guidance is what you might use for each Character Area. For the main towns, there might be 8 or 10 Character Areas so the ideal, if you can manage it, is to find 2 or 3 people to do each area. Surveying a single area might take around an hour so this is not that demanding on any individual. The format and questions are similar to those in the Site Assessment

section (Practical Example 6 above). Taking some photos is extremely important, as you can see from the example produced by another community in England:

Once again, here is an example of a summary description of a Character Area though it is essential to support this with a set of photos.

#### Zone 1: Historic core

#### Description

This is the medieval core of Frome, incorporating the main shopping area, including Catherine Street, together with an adjacent residential area to the north-west, West End, a tiny, self-contained enclave of mid-nineteenth century houses.

This zone generally relates to Character area 1 of the *Frome Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals* document.

#### Distinctive features

- **Layout:** The zone, which covers the historic core of Frome with its medieval street pattern, lies around Market Place. Market Place occupies a relatively flat site beside the river, from which Stony Street and Bath Street rise up the hillside. West End is a tiny, self-contained enclave of mid-nineteenth century houses linked to the town centre by Cork Street, north of the town centre. Although outside the conservation area, the Westway Centre and Cork Street car park are included within this zone as they form part of the town centre retail core. Key features of the area are:
  - Market Place, the commercial core of the town, is the principal central space, being much wider than the other streets that radiate from it. It is almost entirely enclosed by listed buildings.
  - Cheap Street is particularly attractive with its central leat, a conduit of running water and remaining timber-framed sixteenth century buildings, recognisable from their jettied frontage.
  - Stony Street and Catherine Hill, a steep stone paved pedestrian area of specialist shopping lined with historic buildings.
  - With the exception of Market Place and Bath Street, the streets are narrow.
- The sweep of Bath Street, lined with smooth ashlar-faced stone three-storey buildings, embellished with classical motifs, contrasts markedly with the varied eaves line and narrow confinement, for example, Cheap Street or Stony Street.
- **Uses:** This is the retail core of the town, but includes commercial and residential uses.
- **Landscape and open space:** This is the most compact and dense part of the town, with Market Place and the churchyard of St John's Church providing the only significant open space. Trees and vegetation are very limited in the town centre, with St John's Church providing the principal green space, although there are views of the vegetation along the railway and Welshmill Road and along the River Frome, which runs along part of its northern boundary.
- **Townscape:** The architectural character is rich and varied, with a large number of listed buildings dating from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Building height is greatest around Market Place but generally does not exceed three storeys, although The Crown Public House is four storeys and the Stroud and Swindon Building Society building is four-and-a-half storeys. West End is a quiet residential collection of relatively unaltered mid-Victorian houses set back behind well-tended front gardens.
- **Materials:** Many of the grander properties in the town centre, particularly on Bath Street and Market Place, are of smooth ashlar-faced stone. Others are of partly dressed Forest Marble for the walls, with external corners, window and door openings dressed in Bath stone or Douling stone. Many of the stone work dressings have been inappropriately painted. Cheap Street contains some timber-framed sixteenth century buildings with jettied frontages. The roof materials are a mix of red/brown pantiles and slate. There are some exceptional examples of historic paving, old lighting columns and bollards in this area, particularly in Cheap Street. Other parts of the town centre have more modern materials, with macadam prevalent.

## Design Guidance

Once you have your results in terms of Character Areas and assessments of each area **as they are now**, it can be really good to move on to offer some basic guidance to future developers and their designers about what you believe to be key factors that would make for **future** buildings.

Good designers should not need this but should still be encouraged to look at and learn from all your assessment work. However, good designers are sadly rather rare so providing more hints to the less good designers can help a lot. Avoiding too much detail is to be avoided so here again is a useful example of the sort of level of detail that has proven useful:

# Design Guidance Prepared from a Character Assessment

## Building massing and layout

Buildings in Fulbourn have typically simple forms and features, and the character comes from the horizontal proportions and attractive diversity created by irregular building alignments and prominent roofs. Pale Cambridgeshire bricks or renders in white or natural colours are prevalent, with wood used for the doors and details. The integration of building and planting is critical.



Fig. 48 - Irregular building lines and pedestrian orientated streets



Fig. 49 - Car and cycle parking integrated in the site design



Fig. 50 - Lane and alleyways preferable than engineered streets



Fig. 51 - Pedestrian orientated street design with trees and low level lighting



Fig. 52 - Planted street achieved without deep front gardens



Fig. 53 - Planted frontage minimising visual impact of garage doors

## Details and materials that make Fulbourn special

In Fulbourn, the character and quality of the village is often in the details: traditional boundary walls, gates and posts, and in elegant simple arrangements for the doors and windows.



Fig. 54 - Traditional back and flit walls - a distinctive feature of the village - used to define the edge of private spaces



Fig. 56 - Attractive combination of simple details: traditional gate, wall and trees enriching local character and screening parking



Fig. 58 - Contemporary porch and store cupboard with traditional wall



Fig. 59 - Simple modern details concealing the utility boxes