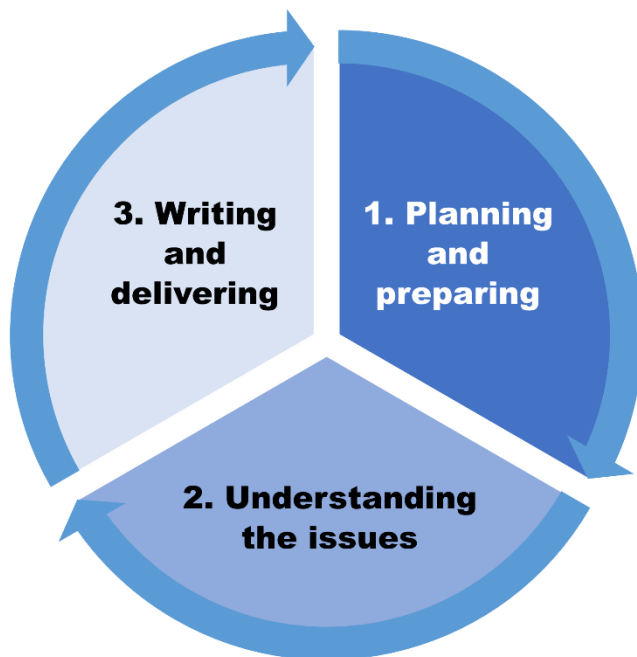


# PAS Guide for Community Delivery of Local Place Plans

## Part 1: Planning and preparing

This Guide is designed to support your community through the process of developing a Local Place Plan. It is based on a simple framework:



This document focuses on **1. Planning and preparing**. Visit the [PAS website](#) for the other sections of the Guide, including an Overview to Local Place Plans and their role in the Scottish planning system.



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### **Version 1.2 February 2023**

This guidance note is given to the best of our knowledge based on the information we currently have to hand. It will be regularly updated as our understanding of the Local Place Plan process develops.

## 1. Introduction

Developing a Local Place Plan takes time and effort, potentially over several months. It will likely require a core of committed volunteers to fulfil different central roles, as well as the energy of other citizens to attend your sessions and share their input. It's not a task to take on lightly but it can be incredibly rewarding and help form a firm foundation for the future wellbeing of your community.

A Local Place Plan can be a short, clear and visual document which sets out the Community Body's proposals and priorities.

[Planning Circular on Local Place Plans](#) (para 36)

The goal is to produce a simple, clear document, but you should be aware of the potential complexity of the process to get there. This is because in building trust, developing a mandate and maximising community buy-in, the *how* of the engagement process is as important as *what* is produced. Community moves at the speed of trust: taking time to deliver the process enables better communication and quality of thinking, but this must be balanced against the time and effort a longer process requires.

The key objective of the planning and preparing stage is to determine why you are developing a Local Place Plan in your area, developing an understanding what will need to happen, and figuring out who needs to get involved.

The general way of preparing a Local Place Plan will not be fundamentally different from how communities have been preparing community-led plans.

[Planning Circular on Local Place Plans](#) (para 10)

## 2. Eight criteria to inspire your work

PAS has developed a framework called SP=EED® to promote effective practice in community engagement – see Appendix 2 for more information about our SP=EED Practical Guide and accompanying learning programme. We offer the eight SP=EED criteria here to help inspire you as you begin to think about your engagement strategy.

Criteria	Explanation
<b>1. Transparency &amp; Integrity</b>	Trust is at the heart of all effective community engagement. Earn trust with communities and stakeholders by communicating clearly and openly about the purpose of the engagement and explaining the limits of what can be achieved.

<b>2. Co-ordination</b>	Process isn't the opposite of people, it offers the necessary support for relationships to thrive. Committing ourselves to a well-coordinated process challenges us to plan the detail thoughtfully, deliver in a timely way and consistently do the little things well.
<b>3. Information</b>	There is an art to sharing complex ideas in simple ways. Language and media give us the power to share, listen, and understand, rather than impose our message, or uncaringly frustrate others.
<b>4. Creativity</b>	Connection, understanding and insight are all deepened when our imaginations and emotions are stirred. Fun and celebration help us see the potential beyond the everyday. Engagement should be engaging.
<b>5. Responsiveness</b>	Being flexible and kind as engagement processes emerge allows us to adapt to meet the needs of ever-changing places and people. Responsiveness is a responsibility.
<b>6. Inclusiveness</b>	Making sure people can be involved ... and feel involved ... in a way that works for them is not primarily a problem to be solved or a technique to be employed, but a relationship to be bridged. This requires humility, time and effort.
<b>7. Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	Growing in skill and confidence and working to make a difference means having processes in place to track the effects of our work. Then making the time to sit down with others and allow them to show us what has been valuable and what has not.
<b>8. Learning &amp; Sharing</b>	A commitment to personal and organisational reflection means we can continually improve our processes and share our learning with others.

### 3. What roles will be required to deliver your plan?

There are several different roles involved in managing a process to develop an LPP. Normally a plan will take a few months to get ready for and then prepare, with delivery taking place over 1-10 years and longer. Some key roles will be:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Tasks and Activities</b>
Steering group members	Group of local citizens (potentially also office bearers in local community councils and charities) to lead and oversee the LPP.
Administration/general co-ordination	General organisation, correspondence, record keeping, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).
Fundraising	Liaison with grant making trusts and other funders, application writing, evaluation (if funding route taken).

Communications	Social media, letter/email/newsletter drafting, correspondence, media enquiries.
Volunteer co-ordination	Event management, task delegation.
Design/Graphics support	Visualisation, promotional graphics.
Event and discussion facilitation	Coordinating group discussions, event delivery, task delegation.
Analysis/plan writing	Summarising evidence/data, thematic analysis, writing.

Community-delivery of an LPP requires volunteers or other locally employed staff to fulfil these roles. Is there an existing paid local development worker who can offer some time to help? Otherwise, you might consider fundraising for a support organisation like PAS to help.

At the heart a community-led place plan process is a local steering group who take ownership of overall governance and key decisions along the way. While the outputs of the plan are in the hands of the wider community, the local steering group has a responsibility to manage the process well. Consider initially having a get together with a small group of interested local citizens to explore possibilities on an informal basis.

## 4. Clarifying why you are writing a Local Place Plan

There may be issues that your community feels are not being dealt with effectively through existing spatial plans, agencies and community groups in your area. These issues may be related to the development and use of land and buildings (physical issues), or may be social, economic or general community issues. With your initial core group, think about and discuss the following:

- What are the key social, economic or environmental issues in your area?
- How could the current development and use of land in your area be improved?
- Is there vacant and derelict land in your area which could be better used?
- Is there an opportunity to develop and manage assets/buildings/land in your area as a community?
- Who are the people with a stake in the future of a given place, and how can their needs be met through improvements?
- What specific targets and goals are you looking for and do you want to achieve?

It's helpful at an early stage to begin "roughing out" these ideas so that your initial group begin to form an indicative picture of that they anticipate might later emerge from the wider community.

You may want to look at previous engagement and consultation activities undertaken in your area, and/or plans which indicate current issues. These may have been initiated by your local authority, a service provider such as the NHS, or a community group, and will indicate what some of the issues and aspirations are in your area.

The legislation states that communities must have regard to the following when drawing up their plans, and these should be explored as early as possible:

- the National Planning Framework,
- the Local Development Plan for the land, or any part of the land, to which the Local Place Plan relates,
- a Locality Plan published for the area to which a proposed Local Place Plan relates.

As referred to in the Overview to this Guide, exploring these issues should help you begin to clarify the type of plan it may be most suitable for your community to develop at this time: a Community Action Plan, a Local Place Plan, or some other form of specialist plan. Much depends on clarifying your goals and thinking through which outside bodies you most want to influence. A Local Place Plan is primarily designed to influence the spatial planning system around physical issues but could also gather data and information designed to influence other important social and wellbeing aspects of your place.

It's also at this stage that you will begin to sense whether there is enough energy within the community to embark on and complete an LPP.

#### Resources

- [PAS Advice Service](#)
- [Understanding Scottish Places](#)
- [Vacant and Derelict Land Register](#)
- Paras 24 to 31 of the Planning Circular on Local Place Plans

## 5. Drawing on the skills and strengths of your community

Good community development practice encourages us to prioritise the skills and strengths of our community. Instead of focussing on what's wrong and assuming that outsiders need to change things (deficit focus), we can choose to focus on the resources and relationships already present within our local place (asset focus). Start with what's strong, not what's wrong. And then go on to figure out how to change what's wrong.

Take some time at the beginning to consider what is bringing life to your community: spaces, buildings, people, projects, support and celebrate these. In thinking about your engagement process, how can these things be foregrounded and honoured? Think about all the gifts and skills that different people have in your community:

- Creative artists – musicians, film-makers
- Administrators
- Community Connectors who everyone knows and trusts

- Retirees with lots of skills and time available
- People with energy and vision
- People with gifts of hospitality and cooking
- Carers
- Leaders (and not just the obvious ones)
- Young people just looking for a chance to be trusted and get involved

These skills, gifts and talents are a rich resource, with potential to bring vitality and energy to the engagement process. One side-benefit of developing a Local Place Plan is the opportunity to draw people together and collaborate on a shared vision. You may not be as alone as you think!

### Resources

- Read more about [Asset Based Community Development](#) as an approach.:

## 6. Identifying or establishing a decision-making body for the lifetime of the plan

The Planning Act indicates that a 'Community Body' may prepare a Local Place Plan. A Community Body may be a Community Council or a Development Trust, or any other group which has a written constitution and meets the conditions set out in the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#). For more information, see Appendix 1 to the Overview of this Guide.

Along with nominating one group to act as a lead organisation, you may wish to consider formalising a decision-making body or steering group which could oversee the delivery of the plan making process. This will help with the coordination of activities and ensure that decision makers broadly represent the wider community. Ideally, this group will represent different perspectives and different community groups from across your area.

It is almost always easier to find a way to run the LPP process from under the umbrella of an existing willing local charity than create a new one from scratch.

### Resources

- SCVO [Setting up a charity](#)
- Paras 12 to 17 of the Planning Circular on Local Place Plans

## 7. Identifying your key stakeholders

To help you understand why you are conducting a Local Place Plan you may wish to reach out to some of the key people, organisations, businesses etc in your area to establish a network of interested groups that will help inform and deliver your LPP. You should contact your local authority planning department to identify a point of contact and let them know your intentions to prepare a Local Place Plan so that they can refer you to useful background information. If you are unsure who to contact you can drop a request for help to the [PAS Advice Service](#).

You will also want to contact key anchor organisations and bodies that may help inform and support your plan. These could include your local housing association, access panel, development trust(s), and public service providers etc. Contacting the co-ordinator of your local Community Planning Partnership could be particularly helpful because their role is to offer a strategic link between service providers and the community.

Carrying out a stakeholder mapping survey can be an effective way to identify who the key groups in your area are. It will be important to ensure that seldom heard groups are included in this e.g. young and old, special needs groups etc.

### Resources

- [Mind-mapping techniques](#) or whiteboard software like [Conceptboard](#) or [Miro](#) can help with stakeholder mapping

## 8. Defining your place

A defining feature of Local Place Plans is their focus on the use and development of land, along with any buildings that are of significance to the local area. The boundaries defining the area of the LPP should be outlined as early as possible as this will help define which communities will be represented and the stakeholders that need to be approached. Consideration should be given to:

- Does the area you are looking at align with a local authority settlement statement/strategy?
- What areas are covered by existing representative bodies such as the local or neighbouring Community Council, or a development trust?
- Where are the major developments in your area located?
- Are there locations where the community may wish to focus new development?
- Who owns the land?
- Are there any existing LPPs in your area? Or, have any other community groups registered an interest to develop one?



To help with these questions you may wish to contact your local authority. They must keep a register of LPPs which have already been registered in your area and will be able to tell you if other community groups in your area are interested in undertaking a Local Place Plan.

#### Resources

- [Scottish Community Councils Finder](#)
- [Boundaries of Scottish Local Authorities](#)
- Paras 41-45 of the [Planning Circular on Local Place Plans](#)

## 9. Elected Member briefing

You are required to inform your local and community council councillors through an information notice when your draft Local Place Plan has been prepared and before submission to the local authority. But speaking to them early on in the process will establish mutual trust and understanding of wider political issues. In addition, you may want to speak to your local Member of Parliament (MP), and your Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP), which can be helpful if your LPP is likely to contain issues of a national significance.

You could consider organising a simple online briefing using Zoom or Teams and invite local and national members. Explain your plans and aspirations and offer them time and space to ask any questions they have.

#### Resources

- COSLA [Councils in Scotland](#)
- Scottish Parliament [Members of the Scottish Parliament \(MSPs\)](#)
- UK Parliament [Members of Parliament \(MPs\)](#)
- Paras 49-58 of the [Planning Circular on Local Place Plans](#)

## 10. Developing a strategy

Once you have assigned different roles and begun early conversations with key stakeholders, it will be useful to establish agreement on what, who, where, and how activities will occur. This will tend to involve an iterative staged process, with tasks and events running in sequence so that issues are continually clarified throughout the process.

It will be useful to establish a project plan where your work stages are broken down into individual tasks, with roles assigned so that you can effectively coordinate activities. Establish a community engagement strategy early on so that when you engage with your community you can show them their input is meaningful and will be informing a process. To get an idea of what you need to plan for, go through the rest of this Guide to see what types of activities will occur throughout the process.

Make sure you construct and document a process that will fulfil all the legal requirements for a Local Place Plan to be validated by your Local Authority. There is a helpful checklist provided in Appendix 1 of this document to help you ensure this. You don't want to get to the end only to find you have missed out one of these elements!

### Resources

- [PAS SP=EED Practical Guide](#)
- [National Standard for Community Engagement](#)
- [Place Standard](#)
- PAS Engagement Strategy workbook (contact the [PAS Advice Service](#) for more info)

## 11. Communications planning

Early on in the process you will want to let your community know what you are doing, and how they can feed into and inform the LPP. This will ensure that the community themselves feel a sense of involvement with the plan. There are a number of ways in which you can do this:

**Letter:** An early letter sent through an area wide mail drop, or an email, can be a useful way to outline why you are developing a Local Place Plan, and where and when residents and stakeholders can get involved. In this letter you can also let your community know of other ways they can keep informed, i.e. Facebook or a newsletter (as below). Having these delivered by local volunteers or even dog-walkers on their usual stroll can create door-step conversations and chats.

**Establish a newsletter:** You could establish regular communication with the community through a newsletter (online and/or offline). You may wish to send these out after events to summarise what happened for those unable to attend. These can be useful for record keeping too.

**Social media:** You could setup a Twitter and/or Facebook account which will help get the message out about events you are running. Or get permission to use existing community social media pages that already have large numbers of followers.

**Website:** It's often useful to establish a project website or have a tab/page on an existing well-used community website, to establish a platform to post material of interest in one place.

**Posters/flyers/banners:** By publishing and placing posters in prominent places in your community, and delivering or handing out leaflets, you will be able to further promote the development of your LPP and the events supporting it. Local doctors surgeries, halls and shops are all good places for this.

**Radio/TV/newspaper:** Contact local media to help spread the word.

**Informal and formal networks:** Sending a message or flyer through networks, such as community interest groups, can be an effective way of notifying residents and keeping them informed.

## 12. Funding and resource implications

You will need to determine how the LPP process will be funded and delivered. This decision may best be made when you have worked out what skills you already have within your community, and what other skills you might therefore need help with. It may also be worthwhile considering whether the support of a third party, such as a neutral, independent, impartial facilitator or designer, will benefit the process.

### Resources

- [SCVO Funding Scotland](#)
- [Scotland's Towns Partnership Funding Information](#)

## 13. Some handy tips

To help you succeed with your LPP engagement, here are some key principles and tips to bear in mind.

### 13.1 Early on

**Simplicity** – Think of the LPP process as a conversation with your community. A Local Place Plan is a reflection of the physical and social issues a community has, and the proposals/aspirations for its future.

**Partnership** – The plan and engagement process should be developed in partnership with the whole community so that they have ownership and feel they are able to

influence the process and the outcome.

**Accountability** – It will be important that your community feels that the process of decision-making is clear, and that individuals making decisions have confidence and are representative and responsible for the decisions they make. Bringing together a representative decision-making body early on, such as a steering group, can help here.

**Transparency** – Clearly communicate the process you are undertaking with your wider community as early as possible, indicating where they can contribute and how decisions will be made.

**Inclusiveness** – Ensure your LPP process is as representative as possible. Identify all relevant groups and organisations in your area and engage seldom heard groups (e.g. young people etc) and those most likely to be affected by any change.

**Co-ordination** – When planning out your consultation process make allowances for the needs of different groups and give your community/stakeholders enough time to respond to requests.

**Record keeping and documenting** – As early as possible you will want to agree a way of documenting and storing all the evidence you are gathering. This is most important in the community and stakeholder engagement activities. Using a consistent approach will help when you move from stage to stage, making it easier to analyse the information you have gathered.

**Creativity** – Be creative throughout the process. Use this Guide, but keep in mind that you know your community better than anyone else.

## 13.2 Whilst you're engaging

**Information** – Present and describe issues clearly, and visually, where possible. Communicate and update your community/stakeholders regularly and check with your community that the information you are providing is understandable. Remain flexible to change your approach if needed.

**Appropriateness** – Ensure your activities or communications are clear, understandable and meet the needs of each of your different target audiences.

**Responsiveness** – Listen to your community. Ensure that relevant information is provided at every stage of the process. Provide opportunities for the community and stakeholders to discuss their ideas and make changes to the plan. Record and document any changes and your decision-making process.

**Monitoring & evaluation** – Look at ways to hear feedback from people you connect with *even as you are delivering different events*. This can help you be responsive to opportunities you are missing, improve your event attendance, track response rates and

improve the quality of your engagement. Ask your community and partners how the process could be improved and reflect on this.

**Open minded** – Your community may feel there are both spatial (physical/land based) issues and community (social) issues that need to be addressed in your LPP. Be open to addressing both and combining them where possible. The future of your community will need both physical and social changes.

**Flexibility** – Prepare and plan for your engagement activities whilst retaining a flexible approach. Things may not go to plan on the day and being adaptable will help you. Don't be disappointed if the turnout for an event is less than you expected; quality engagement is often more important than quantity. Remember that it is often easier for a community/individual to object to something than come up with positive solutions.

**Stay positive** – Issues and proposals are different. An issue often defines a problem, whilst a proposal defines a solution to that issue/problem. Ensure that your LPP has identified a clear set of solutions/actions, remembering that a plan is about what things will happen, and where, in the future.

**Impartiality and Independence** – Be realistic about the roles that members of your community may play in the LPP process. An element of impartiality is important to build trust, credibility, and ensure there are no conflicts of interest.

**Think Global, Act Local** – You will need to consider the broader issues outside of your community; the purpose of planning is to manage the development and use of land in the long-term public interest. It will be important to show how your plan fits into the wider context.

## Appendix 1 – Checklist for LPP validation

What must you have implemented and provided evidence for to ensure your LPP will be validated by your Local Authority planning department? This list has been developed from the details given in [Planning Circular 1, 2022 Local Place Plans](#). More information on each of these elements can also be found in Appendix 1 in the Overview to this Guide.

An LPP can contain more information than what follows, but not less:

No.	Submission requirement	Circular paragraphs	Done?
1	A copy of the finalised Local Place Plan		<input type="checkbox"/>
	The LPP should contain the following elements		
2	A statement identifying the Community Body that has prepared the plan and its written constitution?	<i>Paras 12-17; 37; 40</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Map of the Boundary of the Local Place Plan.	<i>Paras 37; 41; 43</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	A statement of the Community Body's proposals.	<i>Paras 18-21; 41-45</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	An additional Map identifying specific sites/locations detailed in the Community Bodies proposals.	<i>Paras 41-45</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	A statement explaining how the Local Place Plan has regard to the Local Development, National Planning Framework and any applicable Locality Plans.	<i>Paras 25-31; 68-69</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	A statement explaining how the proposals in the LPP align with, or differ from, the relevant policies and development proposals in the plans in 6 above, and why it considers that the Local Development Plan should be amended in light of this.	<i>Paras 32-35; 70</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Evidence of compliance with the requirements of regulation 4.		
8	A copy of the pre-submission Information Notice evidencing of compliance with the required contents.	<i>Paras 54-58</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Records of when and to whom the Information Notice was sent (required local councillors and community councils).	<i>Paras 49-53</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Additional information that needs to be submitted.		
10	Documents confirming the status of the Community Body, and a statement showing compliance with the definition of a Community Body (see Appendix 1 of Part 1 of this Guide).	<i>Paras 61-65</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	Evidence of level of community support for the Local Place Plan and how CB reached that view.	<i>Paras 71-73</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	Copies of additional relevant documents as appropriate.	<i>Paras 74-76</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix 2 - How can PAS help

PAS offers a range of services that can support your community with developing a Local Place Plan.

- **Advice Service**  
Our Advice Service offers free, impartial and confidential advice on planning issues. [Visit our website](#) for more information.
- **Talks for your community group**  
[Contact us](#) to enquire about a free talk for your community group. We can provide a lively and informative overview of the Scottish planning system including the role of Local Place Plans.
- **SP=EED Guide to Community Engagement**  
PAS has developed SP=EED® to promote effective community engagement in planning and placemaking. The SP=EED Practical Guide is free to download and use. We also run regular training to support you with applying the SP=EED principles to your own practice. [Visit our website](#) to access the SP=EED Guide and to find out about upcoming training opportunities.
- **Practical support with developing your plan**  
Through our social enterprise arm, PAS is available to provide support with all aspects of developing community-led plans, including:
  - Community engagement strategy
  - Survey design
  - Workshop design and facilitation
  - Coding and analysis of your data
  - Report writing and production

You can commission us to contribute to specific elements of your plan or to provide project management of the full process. We can also provide training on aspects that you would like to run yourselves. [Contact us](#) for a free consultation.