

Local Place Plans

**Challenges and opportunities:
A framework for draft guidance**

January 2020

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About this report

Section 1 provides an **executive summary** of the main points of the report.

Section 2 sets out the **background** to the report.

Section 3 describes the **research process**.

Section 4 presents the **key findings**.

Section 5 outlines **ten guiding principles** to effectively support a community-led Local Place Plan model.

Section 6 summarises a **process for producing a Local Place Plan**. It is based on experience already developed in the field of community action planning and community engagement in spatial planning in recent years. Existing good practice and advice which is already available is also signposted.

Section 7 outlines three **case studies** of recent community-led plans. This selection exemplifies many of the principles and techniques outlined in sections 5 and 6.

Section 8 highlights some sources of **further support and information** which are already available.

Section 9 contains **recommendations** on areas of further work required to support the successful implementation of community-led Local Place Plans.

A note on language and acronyms: For the purposes of this report we are using the language of Local Place Plans as used in the [Planning \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#), shortened to 'LPP'. The terms 'community led action planning' and 'Local Place Planning' are used interchangeably. The issue of language is discussed in sections 1.5, 2.5 and 4.2 of the report.

Section 1 Executive summary

1.1: In late 2018 the [Scottish Community Development Centre](#) (SCDC) and [Nick Wright Planning](#) were commissioned by the Scottish Government to facilitate discussions on the challenges and opportunities presented by Local Place Plans (LPPs) and on the implications for the planning system and for communities. An objective of the work was to contribute to early thinking for preparation of draft national guidance for LPPs. The work was carried out through a staged process of action research using interviews and focus groups, culminating in a national seminar. Participants were drawn from local communities, local authorities and national organisations.

1.2: Community-led Local Place Plans (LPPs) have been a key element of Scottish planning reform since the [Independent Review](#) in 2016 and are now enshrined in planning legislation. LPPs are one of the Scottish Government's key proposals aimed at improving public engagement and involvement in the planning system, providing a new opportunity for communities to proactively feed into the development planning system.

1.3: LPPs offer an opportunity to do more than simply add to the land-use planning system. Community-led LPPs are part of a broader suite of mechanisms designed to reform public services in Scotland and support greater community empowerment at the local level. They can help to align community and spatial planning, ensuring that decisions that are made on behalf of communities accurately reflect their issues, interests and aspirations, and that resources are targeted effectively. LPPs can also support implementation of the Scottish Government's [Place Principle](#).

1.4: The benefits of a Local Place Planning process can be summarised as follows:

- **Better planned services:** Clearly voicing local community aspirations helps local authorities, Community Planning partners (and funding organisations) to better understand local issues and what outcomes local people are looking to achieve, and to more effectively target investment and services as a result.
- **Community empowerment:** The process of preparing a LPP can support and stimulate community action. The LPP can provide a framework for community activities and help make a case for funding and endorsement.
- **Collaborative action:** Preparing a LPP can help to create positive, strong relationships within the local community and with partners such as the local authority and other Community Planning organisations, in turn stimulating and supporting the delivery of actions in the LPP.

1.5: The language of Local Place Planning was introduced in earlier iterations of the Planning (Scotland) Bill. In many communities, local community led action planning has been underway for some time and this led to some confusion over the terms and language used to describe LPPs in the research process.

1.6: In addition to the above, research participants had differing views about who initiates a LPP process and where ownership of the plan lies.

1.7: It was generally agreed by research participants that, if LPPs are to succeed in their aspiration to be a mechanism for community empowerment in the planning system, they should be **community initiated and community led**, and that the planning system, and other agency providers, should respond positively to support delivery of LPP visions and proposals.

1.8: Ten guiding principles for local place planning emerged through the research process:

1. LPPs should be community led
2. LPPs should be prepared through inclusive and robust community engagement
3. LPPs should express a clear vision with key actions
4. LPPs should be co-produced and co-delivered
5. LPPs should reflect community aspirations, and should not be limited to spatial planning
6. The spatial elements of LPPs should inform Local Development Plans
7. LPPs should be tools for community empowerment and addressing inequality
8. LPPs should be tools to help community planning and land-use planning achieve better outcomes
9. LPP boundaries should reflect local community boundaries
10. LPPs and [Community Action Plans](#) can essentially be the same thing

1.9: To ensure that LPPs deliver on their proposed benefits, several strategic initiatives need to operate coherently. These include:

Resources to plan, resources to deliver

- To equip local communities to prepare and deliver LPPs, they need access to information, expertise and funding. Some of this may be sourced through partners and there may also be a case for independent support.
- Equally, because so many aspects of local communities are affected by local government services, investment and decision-making, local authorities will have a key role in helping to prepare and deliver LPPs. They must therefore be able to commit resources, time and personnel to supporting the preparation and delivery of LPPs.
- For LPPs to contribute to the [Programme for Government's](#) objective of tackling inequality, criteria for decisions about the amount and allocation of resources for Local Place Planning needs to be developed at national and local levels. Otherwise, the risk is that inequality will be increased by the most capable and confident communities securing more resources.

Areas of further work

Areas of further work which need to be taken forward to support the preparation and delivery of LPPs include:

- The preparation of strategic/policy guidance for local communities, local authorities and Community Planning partnerships on the preparation and delivery of LPPs, taking the framework offered in this report as a starting point. Guidance should include clarity about the language, role and status of LPPs in local authority and Community Planning Partnership decision-making processes (including Locality Plans), place making and land-use planning decision-making. This guidance should be co-produced with the involvement of the community/third sector, local authorities and Community Planning partners.
- The development of an overarching guidance statement on the alignment of the relationship between LPPs and policies designed to reduce inequality and support community empowerment, including the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, community-led regeneration and the place principle, Public Health Reform, and the socio-economic duty.
- The development of a route map to resources and some alignment of funding streams across central and local government (and other funders) to support the preparation and delivery of community-led LPPs.

Section 2 Background to the report

2.1: In late 2018 the [Scottish Community Development Centre](#) (SCDC) and [Nick Wright Planning](#) were commissioned by the Scottish Government to facilitate discussions on the challenges and opportunities presented by Local Place Plans (LPPs), and on the implications for the planning system and for communities. An objective of the work was to inform the drafting of national guidance for LPPs.

2.2: This report outlines the opportunities for community-led Local Place Plans (LPPs), introduced by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, to support Scottish planning reform, community empowerment, alignment of community and spatial planning and local governance. The report aims to inform the drafting of national guidance.

2.3: The introduction of LPPs within the new planning legislation aligns with other policy and legislative measures on community empowerment and public services reform, including better connections between community planning and land-use planning. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act was implemented in 2015. It sets out statutory duties for public bodies to support community engagement and gives communities rights to request to participate in outcome improvement processes and to take control of public assets where they can provide wider community benefit. In July 2019 Audit Scotland published a set of co-produced [Principles for Community Empowerment](#) to ‘raise awareness of community empowerment and promote such a shared understanding across scrutiny bodies to support high-quality scrutiny of community empowerment’.

2.4: In December 2017, Scottish Government and CoSLA jointly launched the Local Governance Review to consider how powers, responsibilities and resources are shared across national and local spheres of government, and with communities. The two strands of the Review are community level decision-making and public service governance, each of which is relevant to the LPP concept. A key message from the Review’s wide-ranging consultation in 2018 was that “communities can really flourish if they have control and influence over decisions that affect them most”.¹ At the time of writing this report, the findings of the Review are yet to be completed and published. LPPs can also support implementation of the Scottish Government’s [Place Principle](#).

¹ Scottish Government / COSLA joint statement, 16 May 2019: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-governance-review-joint-statement/>

2.5: Across Scotland, communities are already producing plans as an expression of their vision for their place - the outcomes they want to see improved, the actions they might take independently, and recommendations on how vital services might be delivered. The names of those plans can vary (for example, community action plans, community-led action plans or local place plans) but many of them have spatial elements, around which engagement with the planning system will be necessary.

2.6: LPPs have been an important element of Scottish planning reform since the Independent Review of the Scottish Planning System reported in May 2016. The Independent Review's report ("[Empowering planning to deliver great places](#)") included as one of its recommendations (page 38):

“44. Communities should be empowered to bring forward their own local place plans, and these should form part of the development plan.

Communities are best placed to define the future of their place and this may emerge from community planning as locality plans, or could be driven by land reform or charrettes. These plans should be given statutory status by forming part of the local development plan where it can be demonstrated that they play a positive role in delivering development requirements. Communities should also go beyond plan preparation and be supported to actively enable their delivery. Community development trusts, community councils and other community groups will play an increasingly important role in this.” (page 38)

2.7: The Scottish Government consultation "[Places, people and planning: a consultation on the future of the Scottish planning system](#)" (January 2017) included Local Place Plans as one of its proposals, under the heading "*Giving people an opportunity to plan their own place*" (page 17). The White Paper contained a number of considerations for Local Place Plans which related largely to their relationship with the land-use planning system and local authorities.

2.8: The *Planning (Scotland) Bill* was introduced to Parliament on 4 December 2017 and received Royal Assent as the Planning (Scotland) Act on 25 July 2019. The Act is central to a package of measures intended to strengthen the planning system's contribution to inclusive

growth and empowering communities. The Scottish Government's [work programme](#) for implementing the Act was published in September 2019.

2.9: A key element of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 is the introduction of a new right for communities to produce LPPs. The provisions of the Planning Act relating to LPPs include:

- A community body may prepare a Local Place Plan.
- A Local Place Plan is a proposal as to the development or use of land.
- In preparing a Local Place Plan, a community body must (a) have regard to the Local Development Plan, the National Planning Framework, and such other matters as may be prescribed; and (b) comply with any prescribed requirements as to the form and content of the plan, and any steps that must be taken before preparing the plan.
- If a community body considers that the Local Development Plan should be amended, it may set out its reasons.
- Every planning authority must keep a register of Local Place Plans. If a planning authority decide not to register a local place plan on the basis that it is not valid, the authority must give their reasons.
- “Community body” means a community-controlled body within the definition given in section 19 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, or a Community Council.

Before preparing a Local Development Plan, a planning authority are to publish, in such manner as they consider appropriate -

- (a) an invitation to local communities in their district to prepare Local Place Plans in accordance with schedule 19
- (b) information on - (i) the manner in which and date by which such Local Place Plans are to be prepared in order to be taken into account in the preparation of the Local Development Plan, (ii) the assistance available for local communities to prepare Local Place Plans.”

Section 3 Research process

3.1: The objective of this commission was to inform the preparation of draft national guidance for Local Place Plans (LPPs). With this in mind, the work focused on three sets of research themes and related questions:

Connecting agendas: community empowerment, community planning and spatial planning

- How might LPPs, Local Outcome Improvement Plans, Locality Plans and Local Development Plans be aligned to ensure reciprocity?
- How can LPPs be maximised as a mechanism for community empowerment and regeneration?
- How should Local Place Planning processes be supported to consider and respond to equalities issues experienced by children and young people, disabled people, Gypsy-Travellers and other people with protected characteristics?

Skills and behaviours for Local Place Planning

- In what ways could LPPs integrate with, and build on, related experience and practice in community development, regeneration and planning.
- What is needed to help communities and professionals work collaboratively on engagement, plan-making and plan delivery?
- What skills, capacities and resources would be required amongst communities and professionals for effective local place planning? (including engagement, plan-making and plan delivery)

Resources for Local Place Planning

- How can access to limited resources for Local Place Planning be managed nationally and by individual community planning partnerships?

3.2: These research questions were used over three work stages:

| | Who | What | When |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|
| 1. Key stakeholder interview | Improvement Service Planning Democracy Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) Royal Town Planning Institute Scottish Communities Alliance (SCA) Scotland's Regeneration Forum (SURF) | One-to-one-semi- structured interviews with key stakeholder organisations to test the research questions and understand opportunities and challenges associated with the introduction of local place plans. | December 2018 – January 2019 |
| 2. Focus groups | Scottish Communities Alliance (host), Planning Democracy, Sustainable Dunbar, Voluntary Arts Scotland DTA Scotland members (DTAS) West Dunbartonshire Council (host), East Dunbartonshire Council, Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority, Renfrewshire Council (spatial/community planning/community learning and development (CLD officers, community representatives) Dundee City Council (host), Angus Council, Fife Council (spatial/community planning/CLD officers, community representatives) North Ayrshire (host), East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire (spatial/community planning/CLD officers, community representatives) Scottish Government officials (planning regeneration, local governance) | Facilitated discussions based on the research questions, to further test the research questions and gather qualitative data. | February-March 2019 |
| 3. National seminar | Approximately 60 representatives from an invitation list comprising community organisations, local planning authorities and community planning partnerships, relevant representative agencies and stakeholder organisations, and the Scottish Government. | Programme included an explanation of a community-led model for LPPs that had emerged from the initial stage of research; presentation of examples of what LPPs might look like from previous similar work; and | April 2019 |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| | | group/panel discussions to test the community-led model, focusing on opportunities, uncertainties and potential roles and support for different stakeholders. | |
|--|--|---|--|

3.4: We are grateful to all those involved for their time and contributions.

Section 4 Main research findings

4.1: It is worth noting that, throughout the course of the work, there was consistently strong interest in being involved from those who were approached.

4.2: It is also important to note that in many of the discussions there was some confusion over the terms and language used to describe Local Place Plans (LPPs), mainly due to the variance of roles and disciplines of the participants. Community practitioners and community representatives familiar with the process of community led action planning were sceptical about the benefits of introducing new language to an existing area of work, and resistant to the idea of potentially having to prepare a separate ‘place only’ plan to satisfy new planning legislation. It was argued that this could co-opt community effort and stretch capacity at community level where time, voluntary effort and resources are already under pressure.

4.3: In addition to the above, there were also differing views about who initiates and leads a LPP process and where ‘ownership’ of the plan lies. The legislation states that *‘Before preparing a Local Development Plan, a planning authority are to publish, in such manner as they consider appropriate, an invitation to local communities in their district to prepare Local Place Plans in accordance with schedule 19’*. Participants queried whether this could potentially discount proactive community led plans, if the spatial elements of existing community-initiated plans could be included, and what the timing implications would be in relation to the preparation of the Local Development Plan.

4.4: It was generally agreed that, if LPPs are to succeed in their aspiration to be a mechanism for community empowerment in the planning system, they should be community led; and that the planning system, and other agencies and service providers, should respond positively to support delivery of LPP visions and proposals.

4.5: The main responses from the interviews, focus groups, case studies and national seminar are outlined under the following headings:

- 1. LPPs and the empowerment agenda**
- 2. LPPs and equalities**
- 3. LPPs in relation to spatial planning and Community Planning**
- 4. Building the capacity of agencies and organisations**
- 5. Resourcing**

1. LPPs and the empowerment agenda

LPPs are a way to help build the capacity (information, knowledge and skills) of communities. In a genuine 'community-led' process, the community will lead on the research phase of the plan, the presentation of the results, and planning and delivery of some of the elements of the action plan itself. Communities should self-identify, should not need to seek permission to develop their plans, and should be able to access appropriate support when they need it.

- “What’s the value of a plan? It helps everyone to sing from the same song sheet. Setting out community priorities is important, especially if it links to delivering resources, for example, through Participatory Budgeting (PB). A community action plan can feed up to strategic level to inform resources and allocation across neighbourhoods.” **(Dundee/Fife/Angus focus group)**
- “LPPs could be a ‘way in’ to build community empowerment – if there is commitment to delivering on them in the long-term.” **(Dunbartonshire/Renfrewshire focus group)**
- “Cumnock Action Plan has been led by the steering group, bringing together representatives from ‘Create’, ‘Cumnock Area Musical Production Society’, ‘Cumnock Community Council’, ‘Cumnock History Group’, ‘Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise’, ‘Things Tae Dae Social Hub’, ‘yipworld’, local residents and local businesses. These representatives and other volunteers have been actively involved in gathering community views through the consultation process. The volunteers did all the research, the chapping on doors, going into schools, local businesses, setting up pop up stalls, profiling their areas and mapping community assets.” **(Cumnock case study)**

2. LPPs and equalities

It needs to be recognised that communities can be intersectional and will be made up of cross section of people with protected characteristics. All voices must be heard within Local Place Planning processes. There are communities within communities. Effective communication and support to involve all those who want to be involved is essential. There needs to be recognition that more disadvantaged communities will need more support and we should think creatively about where support resources are targeted.

- “We need to consider how to respond to and involve more people, diverse voices, not just those already ‘engaged” **(Ayrshire focus group)**

- “More disadvantaged communities will need more capacity building support. There’s a danger that only well-off communities will develop plans.” **(Dundee/Fife/Angus focus group)**
- “Equality issues need to be considered in any LPP – this may involve additional costs to include communication, collaboration and, for example, the use of the arts in the process.” **(SCA focus group)**

3. LPPs in relation to spatial planning and community planning systems

In the case studies and the focus groups participants told us that we need a new way of working to ‘flip the system’ so that all public sector policy making, and service delivery is led by the needs, aspirations and priorities identified by the communities they serve. This new approach will encourage local authorities and communities to work together including those in spatial planning. LPPs will have most chance of success if they are co-produced with agency partners, who can bring the technical expertise needed to inform well prepared plans for spatial development and service design. Participants agreed that in order to achieve a systematic community-led approach, LPPs need to have ‘teeth’.

Participants in the research told us:

- “There needs to be a mechanism to ensure that LPPs become part of the Local Development Plan; or are, at least, a material consideration.” **(national seminar)**
- “The starting point is the needs and aspirations of communities rather than the process of having to produce a plan. A LPP should be the spatial expression of the needs and aspirations of the community.” **(national seminar)**
- “We need to have planners out of their silo and talking to communities. Why are planners not required to be on a CPP board? Part of a planner’s role should be to advise on technical issues within LPPs.” **(SCA focus group)**

4. Building the capacity of agencies and organisations

Multiple skills sets are needed to support the development of robust community led LPPs. Community organisations and community representatives need to be able to understand what they need to have in their plans for them to be well-researched and influential documents, and they need to be able to evidence good quality community engagement processes. Public sector workers need to be able to understand what their support role is and how to use their expertise effectively in their interface with communities. At an agency level, systems require to be put in place to help foster a joined up collaborative approach, and to ensure an effective response to community priorities.

- “Is there a special role/skills-set to support joined-up thinking? How can we ensure we see communities as assets and help facilitate them to do what they can? We need to be open and honest and make sure communities have the right information, for example, local authorities don’t always own the land needed to deliver community aspirations.” **(Ayrshire focus group)**
- “Planners, Community Planning managers/officers and Community Learning and Development workers need to join up to take advantage of this set of multi-disciplinary skills. There is a need for shared skills sets – for example, between planners and community workers, health and planning, and between communities and agencies – communities have specialist skills in recruiting and working with volunteers, fund raising, and much more.” **(Dunbartonshire focus group)**
- “There are skills needed for public sector workers to engage with this process - they need to be out in communities and be proactive in consultation processes, not work only on paper – plans and outcomes need to be coproduced! They can feed in appropriate information - give expert information on land receipts, etc.” **(DTAS focus group)**
- “Invest in capacity of the staff to think differently.” **(national seminar)**

5. Resources

Budget processes are required which put more **delivery funding** on the ground for communities to implement actions in their LPPs. Previously there has been some money available through a competitive grants process to develop local action plans, e.g. Making Places Fund, now part of the new Investing in Communities Fund, but not to deliver the objectives of the plan. Communities also need access to relevant **information and data** for their area to develop their LPPs, for example, community demographics, transport patterns, data on social issues such as health and wellbeing, or housing information. Finally, as well as **support** to organise from community development staff, many communities will need technical support from planners and other service providers, support with communication materials and access to online resources.

- “There needs to be a central fund to support place plans – the funding needs to be devolved to each authority area to ensure that it’s not just those with sharpest elbows who benefit.” **(Dundee/Fife/Angus focus group)**
- “To ensure inclusive processes at community level, there needs to be best practice guidance. For example, in Govanhill there are 25 different languages. Local population data should be available and accessible. What and where are the areas of inequality in a local area? Benchmark statistics should be freely available. Local authorities and Community Planning partners already hold good data, how do they use this and help communities use it? It should be open source. Could government and other agencies create basic local data sets to publish on a regular basis?” **(DTAS focus group)**
- “Resources are not just money - advice, skills, expertise, and knowledge all count. We need to untap the resources already in local authorities and we need to create bespoke packages – communities are all at different stages. We need to use community development support in less organised communities, and a system behind that to help communities negotiate a package of support.” **(DTAS focus group)**
- “Anxiety about costs in the system... but recognise there will be long-term gain.” **(national seminar)**

Section 5: Guiding principles for local place planning

5.1: A common aspiration emerged from all sectors involved in the interviews and focus groups - community organisations, local authority officers and civil servants – that Local Place Plans (LPPs) should follow a “community-led” model with five broad purposes:

- LPPs as a statement of a local community’s vision for its future.
- LPPs as the spatial expression of community needs and aspirations, but with a scope extending beyond land use and spatial planning.
- LPPs as live documents with a focus on action and delivery.
- LPPs as collaborative, co-produced tools to support community empowerment.
- LPPs as tools for local authorities and Community Planning Partners to understand local aspirations and target their services and investments accordingly.

5.2: These purposes seek to combine LPPs as described in the 2019 Planning Act with other government agendas relating to community empowerment and improved alignment of spatial and community planning.

5.3: This model was discussed at the national seminar in April 2019, the final phase of the work programme, with a wider range of future stakeholders. As in the key stakeholder interviews and focus groups, participants expressed both uncertainties and opportunities around Local Place Planning.

5.4 In response to those discussions, ten guiding principles emerged to help inform a Local Place Planning process to meet its purpose as outlined above:

1. LPPs should be community led

Plans should contain the community’s vision for their area, prepared by or with direct involvement from the community themselves. The community should recognise the LPP’s vision and objectives as authentically “their” agenda for the future of their community. At the same time the local authority, Community Planning Partners and key stakeholders must also be actively engaged and support production and delivery of the LPP.

2. LPPs should be prepared through inclusive and robust community engagement

To ensure that an LPP reflects community aspirations, inclusive and robust community engagement is essential, ensuring that everyone who wants to be involved has that opportunity. As well as having support from community development staff and input from service providers and planners many communities will need access to support for communications and language resources. Communities should be supported to self-identify and should not need to seek permission to develop their plan.

3. LPPs should express a clear vision with key actions

Every LPP should have a clear community-led vision for the future, with physical outcomes usually expressed in the form of a spatial plan or diagram. But a vision alone is not enough. Every LPP must also contain specific, realistic actions and a consideration of the resources to deliver those actions. Some actions may be deliverable within months, others may take years. Local planning and community planning timescales should take account of this and shape their systems to respond.

4. LPPs should be co-produced and co-delivered

Communities are entitled to develop their own plans as and when they see fit. The actions required to deliver the community's vision will nearly always involve other stakeholders such as the local authority and other Community Planning Partners. These organisations will inevitably have to operate within resource constraints. For the best chance of success, the projects or initiatives contained in the LPP should be co-produced collaboratively by the local community, the local authority and other relevant stakeholders – responding to the community's vision but taking account of real-world opportunities and constraints. LPPs should be regarded as 'live' documents which may need to be flexible to changing circumstances, for example individual actions may adapt during the lifetime of the plan.

5. LPPs should reflect community aspirations, and should not be limited to spatial planning

Communities should use their LPP to set the agenda for future change, encompassing anything that they wish to consider. The vision and actions contained in a LPP should consider the community's future in the broadest possible terms – not just spatial planning's concern with the development and use of land. LPPs should, however, contain a spatial plan which shows where some or all of the actions contained in the LPP will be delivered, to show how the "place" will change in the future.

6. The spatial elements of LPPs should inform Local Development Plans

The physical elements of a LPP should have regard to the spatial strategy and policies within the Local Development Plan and, where relevant, the National Planning Framework. If the local community's vision for its future is at odds with the Local Development Plan, the local community and the planning authority should use the collaborative Local Place Planning process as an opportunity for dialogue and to work together as equals to resolve any such differences. Local authorities should regard LPPs as material considerations until the adoption of the Local Development Plan, and an opportunity to understand community aspirations and inform Local Development Plans.

7. LPPs should be tools for community empowerment and addressing inequality

LPPs should be considered as mechanisms for empowering communities at a local level and for improving local decision-making processes. LPPs should provide an opportunity to hear the less heard voices in the community and respond to their needs. They should encompass the interests and views of 'communities within communities' and seek to address issues of inequality through appropriate actions. LPPs should be developed with support from local authorities and Community Planning Partners to include people from disadvantaged and marginalised communities to have their say.

8. LPPs should be tools to help community planning and land-use planning achieve better outcomes

Local authorities and Community Planning Partners should regard LPPs as statements of community aspiration which they can use to target services, decision-making and investment to produce better outcomes for local communities. Whilst community-led, Local Place Planning community engagement processes provide opportunities for local authorities and Community Planning Partners to better understand local community aspirations.

9. LPP boundaries should reflect local community boundaries

Every LPP should relate to a local community which local residents identify as "their" local community, such as a village, small town or urban neighbourhood in a larger town or city.

10. LPPs and Community Action Plans can essentially be the same thing

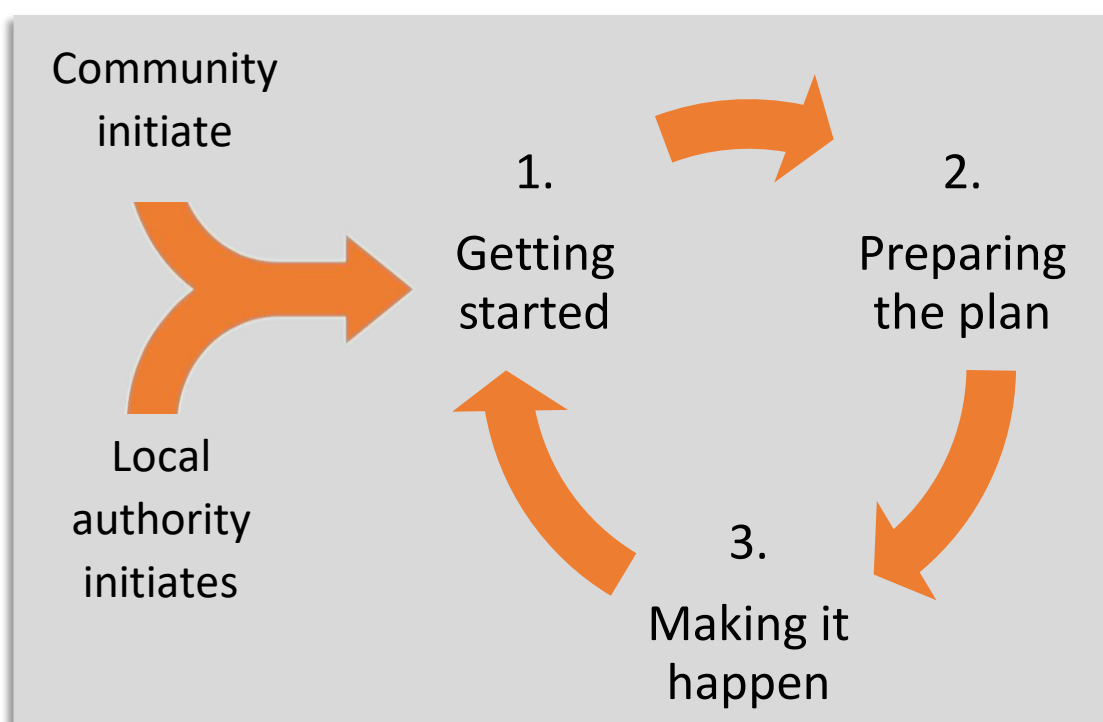
Many communities throughout Scotland have prepared [Community Action Plans](#) or their equivalent over the last decade and more, often with the support of local authorities and Community Planning Partnerships. Many of these plans have been prepared using the

processes described in this document, and many of the actual plans could be described as Local Place Plans. A Community Action Plan can in essence, rather than in name or in statutory terms, also be a Local Place Plan; and vice versa.

Section 6: Process for producing a local place plan

6.1: This section draws on existing knowledge and experience from in the field of community action planning and community engagement in spatial planning to offer a framework for how to prepare a Local Place Plan (LPP).

6.2: The accompanying diagram shows a framework for preparing a LPP.



6.3: Stage 1: Getting Started can take a number of months in order to:

- **Make the decision** to prepare a LPP: one community body may decide to initiate a LPP process or a number of local community organisations may decide to work together. Alternatively, in areas where community bodies need support and resources to prepare a community-led LPP, the local authority or Community Planning Partnership may wish to issue “an invitation to local communities in their district to prepare LPPs” (Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, section 14(2)). This would involve assessing local appetite for preparing a LPP, identifying community organisation(s) which might take a lead role, and assessing capacity and support needs. If capacity building is required, this may take months or years. It is important

to remember that the LPP must be community-led, even if the process is initiated by a local authority or Community Planning Partnership.

- Get **commitment from partners**, particularly the local authority and Community Planning Partnership, to collaborate in preparation and delivery of the LPP.
- Secure **resources** to prepare the LPP – which might include funding for community engagement events and materials, and for any external technical or facilitation support which might be required. If funding can be identified for delivering the LPP at such an early stage, all the better.

6.4: Stage 2: Preparing the Plan (typically takes a few months):

- **Agreeing how to collaborate:** the community organisations and other partners, such as the local authority and Community Planning Partnership, should decide what they will each contribute and how to manage the process. They may decide to employ external facilitation or technical support, which will need to be properly briefed and managed.
- **Robust community engagement** is vital at every stage of the Local Place Planning process, from agreeing vision/objectives to identifying actions and priorities. To be truly community-led, the local community must be given control at each of these stages. This requires an iterative community engagement process involving a variety of techniques.
- Community engagement should be an **inclusive and democratic** process. This means that it should be planned and carried out in line with the National Standards for Community Engagement and PAS SP=EED benchmarking for community engagement in planning. Local authority and Community Planning Partnership staff may be able to assist, for example with equality considerations or in reducing barriers to participation experienced by marginalised groups and people with ‘protected characteristics’ in terms of the Equality Act 2010. Local communities may also want to undertake some local research with residents and interest groups, and may benefit from local community development to support this.
- The content of the LPP should **reflect the aspirations and needs of the local community itself**. This means that it may relate to a wide range of topics – social, economic, cultural and environmental – not just spatial planning. Some of the actions may be solely for the local community to take forward, either independently or with support from others. Some actions may have implications for public sector

services or spending – which is why it is so important that LPPs are co-produced in discussion with the public sector, so that the LPP is realistic and informed.

- The **community's vision** in a LPP should be long term (5-10 years), with enough flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances over that time.
- To prepare the community vision that must be at the heart of every LPP, local communities need access to **information and support**. Free online information helps to build up an accurate picture of local communities to complement perceptions and provide evidence – for example Understanding Scottish Places, scotland.datashine.org.uk, census data, National Library of Scotland historical mapping, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, flood risk mapping and individual local authorities' data, mapping, plans and strategies. Local authorities and Community Planning Partners staff may be able to help signpost, access, interpret and respond to the mass of information that is available.
- The actions and projects to deliver the community's vision should be **co-produced** with relevant local authority and Community Planning Partnership staff, whose professional knowledge should help to produce workable actions and consider how their organisations can proactively help to deliver the community's vision and objectives.
- **Short term actions** will help to build momentum, particularly if resources can be identified to deliver them through the Local Place Planning process. More ambitious, **long term actions** can also be included even though resources might not yet be available. In considering longer term actions, it should be considered if a realistic delivery route is likely to exist in the future.
- The **final LPP document** should include the agreed community's vision/objectives (expressed spatially in a plan or diagram) and clear actions and priorities to deliver that vision, backed up with information on the community engagement process/outputs and other relevant information as evidence. There is no single approach to the look or presentation of a LPP, other than they should be accessible to the local community. Existing examples of good practice include LPPs that are short, clear and visual, using graphics, photographs, maps and text to communicate ideas and priorities.

- **Distribution:** the LPP should be published locally, in hard copy and online, and communicated to the local authority and other Community Planning partners. A short summary may be useful for widespread distribution.


6.5: Stage 3: Making It Happen may take sustained activity over years, but should start as soon as the plan is complete.

- **Successful delivery** is vital: any plan is only worthwhile if something happens. ‘**Quick wins**’ in the first few months after completion of the LPP will help to demonstrate success and build momentum – because delivering the bigger actions may take years of collaborative effort.
- LPPs should be seen as **living documents** with a **continuous review cycle**. Whilst the community’s vision may last for a number of years, the actions in an LPP may need to be reviewed after a couple of years as delivery progresses and circumstances change. For spatial planning actions, the relationship between LPPs as living documents and ten-yearly Local Development Plans will need careful consideration.
- **Collaboration** needs to continue from the plan preparation into delivery. It is likely that the majority of actions in a LPP will involve collaboration between the local community and other partners.
- LPPs should be taken into account in preparation of **Local Development Plans**, and should be used by local authorities and Community Planning partners to plan service delivery and local investment.
- If communities need **support**, it can be sought from a number of organisations, as indicated in section 9.
- **Keeping people informed** is vital to maintaining interest and support across the local community and other partners.

Section 7: Case studies

7.1: The previous sections of this report outlined principles and techniques for producing Local Place Plans. Using these, what might LPPs look like?

7.2: The Scottish Government makes clear in its consultation "[Places, people and planning: a consultation on the future of the Scottish planning system](#)" (January 2017) that:



"We recognise that communities vary and they may come up with a range of plans. Our proposals would not try to fully control the form that local place plans might take." (paragraph 2.13, page 19)

7.3: That suggests that the format of Local Place Plans might vary from community to community. So, to illustrate what LPPs might look like, three different examples of community-led plans are outlined in this chapter. One key element shared across all these examples is that they are simple, visual and easy to understand.

7.4: It is important to note that all of these examples were prepared **before** the Planning (Scotland) Act was passed, and that only one of the three (Foxbar, Paisley) purports to be a Local Place Plan; the other two (Buckhaven and Cumnock) are Community Action Plans which nonetheless share many principles and techniques with Local Place Plans.

Foxbar (Paisley), Renfrewshire

Foxbar is a neighbourhood in south-west Paisley with a population of around 8,000 inhabitants, with its own Community Council and identity. Preparation of the plan was initiated by the local authority, Community Planning Partnership, Community Council and Housing Association, who worked together for a number of months to agree to prepare a plan and secure the necessary resources. Only then did preparation of the plan itself begin.

The plan itself was co-produced with the local community over approximately 6 months during spring and summer 2018, involving a sequence of discussions with community organisations, schools, youth groups, public drop-in sessions and online/social media engagement (see diagram). A small team of external facilitators with planning, design and community engagement skills facilitated the co-production process, guided by the local partners in the form of a steering group.

With resources and capacity for delivery both scarce, one key aspect of the co-production process was supporting the local community to prioritise what was most important to them. This led to nine priority projects, which

represented a range of short and long term actions (see graphic). Interestingly, only one of the projects – new homes on derelict sites – had a direct link with land-use planning.

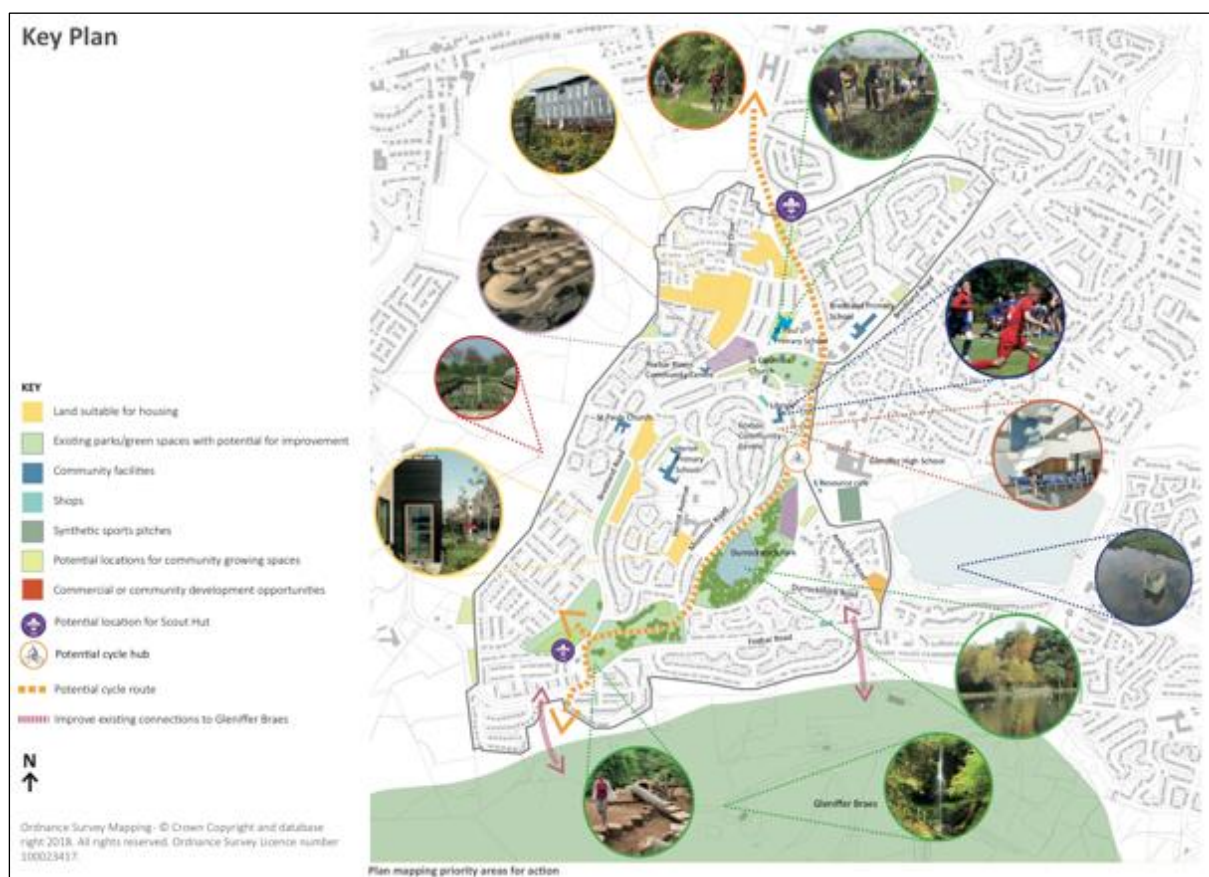
The Local Place Plan itself contained a graphic plan and visualisations showing the nine projects, plus information describing each of the projects and how delivery should start. The full LPP can be seen online [here](#).












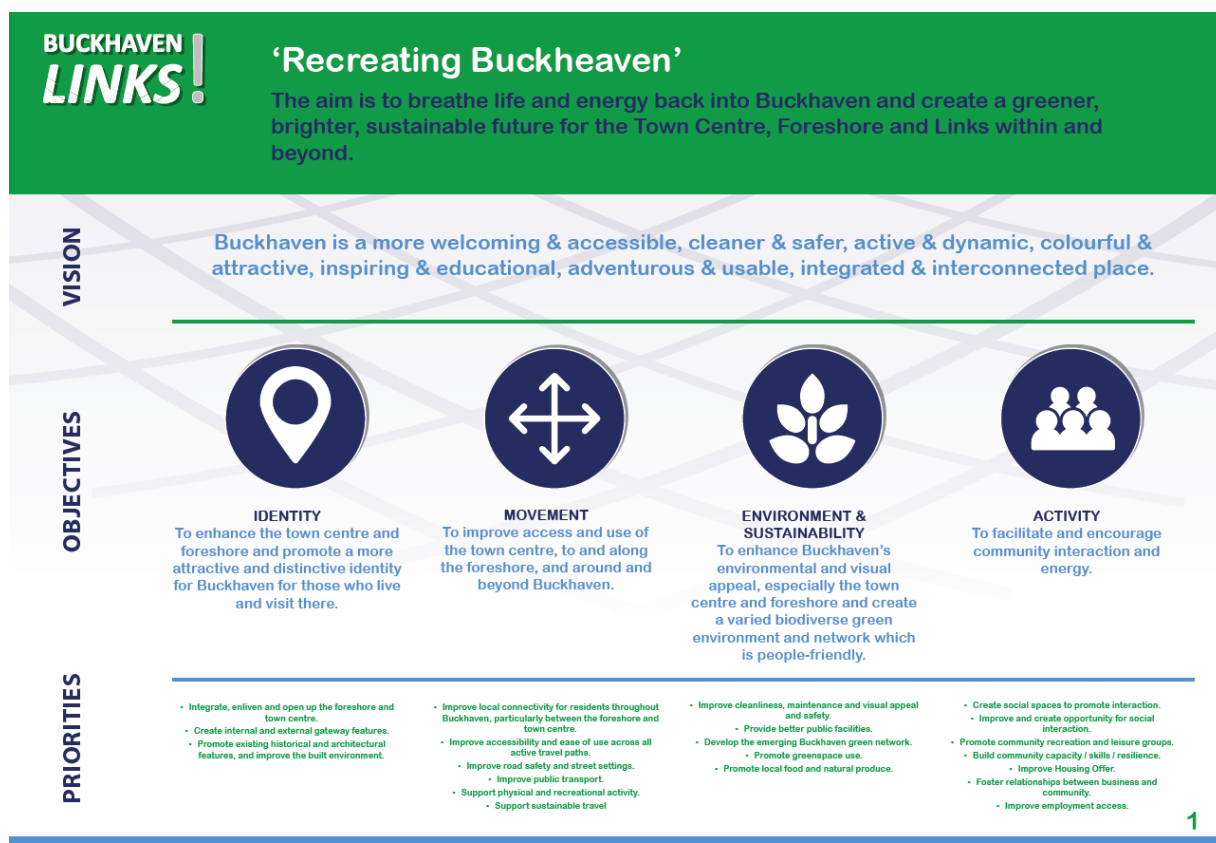
There is no guarantee that everything will be delivered: funds and commitment will need to be secured. But a year since the plan was prepared, three of the nine actions are being delivered: Community Asset Transfer of a derelict school site to enable a community growing initiative, funding applications for a cycle/walking route, and reinstatement of the community's annual Gala Day.

Learning points

- Successfully initiating the Local Place Plan relied on several months of close collaboration between willing partners – the local community (largely through the leadership of the Community Council) and the local authority (particularly spatial planning and community planning functions) - to agree that a community-led plan was the way forward and to secure the necessary resources.
- The community itself, with facilitation support, consciously decided to prioritise an achievable number of projects.
- Linked to this, everybody involved was conscious from the outset of the plan needing to be deliverable. This helped to inform the choice of priorities during the process.



| | | Civic Pride | Community Activity | Homes and Community Facilities | Parks and Green Spaces |
|--------------------------|--|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Community Events |  | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 2. "What's on" Directory |  | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 3. Community Growing |  | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 4. Youth Projects |  | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 5. Cycling |  | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 6. Durrockstock Park |  | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 7. Glennifer Braes |  | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 8. New Homes |  | | | ✓ | |
| 9. Community Facilities |  | | ✓ | ✓ | |



In 2018 Community-Led Environmental Action for Regeneration (CLEAR) commissioned a charrette programme to create a community-led plan for Buckhaven in Fife. Funded jointly by the Scottish Government and the local authority, CLEAR commissioned Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) to manage a charrette process which was eventually called ‘Buckhaven Links!’ The aim of the charrette and subsequent community-led plan was to ‘Breathe Life and Energy back into the town and create a ‘Greener, Brighter, Sustainable Future for the Town Centre, Foreshore and Links within and beyond’.

CLEAR were particularly concerned with the town’s neglected foreshore, run-down central street and lack of housing options. Residents reported that they wanted to link the town centre and the foreshore physically and to involve the wider community in the discussion about the future of the town. In the past, Buckhaven was a fishing village and small seaside resort; the community’s vision was to reinvigorate the area to attract visitors and new residents, and to instil pride in the local people.

CLEAR had previously held smaller community engagement exercises about the issue of physical regeneration and housing, but the charrette was a way of getting legitimacy for a bigger project and getting something done with the local community and partners on board.

Developing a shared community vision for the area

“Buckhaven Links!” involved school engagement activities, pre-engagement meetings, workshops, street conversations, drop-in surgeries, and a community survey, all conducted over the months of January to April 2017. A wide selection of community groups, representatives, local students, and residents were involved in the process.

The local authority was involved in the charrette process, with representatives from community planning and parks. It was a systematic process with a wide range of community involvement, including young people. As well as mapping and graphics the process involved the use of questionnaires and social media.

Learning points

- The Local Place Plan should have a formal role for the Community Council to anchor the Plan in the decision-making processes of the community.
- There needs to be more help for the local community to access funds and support and a commitment from statutory partners to help realise the plan.
- Communities need to be aware that a plan isn't always about something you can do but it is also useful to have an action written down so that maybe it can be taken up in the future.

For more information on the Buckhaven Links plan please go to: www.clearfife.org.uk

Cumnock, East Ayrshire

The Action Plan sets out the priorities for the development of Cumnock over 5 years as determined by the community through an extensive process of community engagement carried out between August 2015 and February 2016. The development of the Action Plan began with Cumnock Community Council recognising the potential of the community working together to benefit the area. Two information sessions were arranged to gauge the interest of the wider community and a separate voluntary steering group was formed in July 2015 to take this forward.



Cumnock Action Plan is currently led by the steering group, bringing together representatives from Create, Cumnock Area Musical Production Society, Cumnock Community Council, Cumnock History Group, Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise, Things Tae Dae Social Hub, yipworld, local residents and local businesses. These representatives and other volunteers have been actively involved in gathering the full community views through the consultation process. The volunteers did all the research, the chapping on doors, going into schools, local businesses, setting up pop up stalls, profiling their areas and mapping community assets.

Cumnock Action Plan Steering Group is working in partnership with EAC Vibrant Communities Team and Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland (CORRA) to implement the priorities identified within this plan. The process gathered responses from 60% of the households. There are 6 themes within the plan:

- Outdoor activities & open spaces
- Local economy
- Better town appearance
- Community facilities, activities and events
- Tourism, history and heritage
- Services

There is still a very active core of volunteers 2 years on, there is a lot of knowledge about the Cumnock Action Plan. The plan was branded by local people 'Cumnock is Ours'. A business association has been formed as a result of the plan and local businesses are becoming more involved with the community and communicating with each other. Volunteers took over the Christmas festival and organised litter picking.

The plan contained quick wins, as well as more ambitious projects like a new train station which may take 10 to 15 years. Big projects like these will require huge commitment and support from the local community, the public sector and other agencies.

Learning points

- There is a need for financial support immediately e.g. a 'community chest' to take forward the easy win projects or a Participatory Budgeting process to take forward some elements of the plan.
- The role of spatial planners in the process is important – but the slow speed of Local Development Plan review processes makes it difficult to react to community needs on the ground.
- There needs to be more support from the Third Sector Interface to support groups to constitute, set up governance structures, and build capacity with small community groups willing to take on aspects of the plan.
- Community development workers are a valuable resource for effective community-led planning, but increasingly stretched as they now work across multiple communities.
- Access to meeting spaces is really important for planning and delivering community activities – but the cost can be prohibitive, even for premises run by the local authority in its role as a collaborative partner.

For more information about the plan: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/C/Cumnock%20Community%20Led%20Action%20Plan.pdf>
<https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/PlanningAndTheEnvironment/Development-plans/Placemaking/Placemaking.aspx>

Section 8: Recommendations

8.1: This report has outlined an opportunity and approach for community-led Local Place Plans as part of a broader suite of mechanisms designed to reform public services in Scotland and support greater community empowerment at the local level. To ensure that LPPs fulfil this opportunity, several strategic initiatives need to operate coherently. These include:

Resources to plan, resources to deliver

- To equip local communities to prepare and deliver LPPs, they need access to information, expertise and funding. Some of this may be sourced through partners and there may also be a case for independent support.
- Equally, because so many aspects of local communities are affected by local government services, investment and decision-making, local authorities will have a key role in helping to prepare and deliver LPPs. They must therefore be able to commit resources, time and personnel to supporting the preparation and delivery of LPPs.
- For LPPs to contribute to the [Programme for Government's](#) objective of tackling inequality, criteria for decisions about the amount and allocation of resources for Local Place Planning needs to be developed at national and local levels. Otherwise, the risk is that inequality will be increased by the most capable and confident communities securing more resources.

Sharing skills and building capacity

- Preparing and delivering successful LPPs will rely on collaboration amongst community organisations, and between community organisations, local authorities and other Community Planning partners.
- Whilst some local authorities, community planning partnerships and community groups are already very skilled at collaborative working, to many it will involve a new way of working. A programme of sharing skills, training and capacity-building will be required to support new collaborative ways of working.

Areas of further work

Areas of further work which need to be taken forward to support the preparation and delivery of LPPs include:

- The preparation of strategic/policy guidance for local communities, local authorities and Community Planning partnerships on the preparation and delivery of LPPs, taking the framework offered in this report as a starting point. Guidance should include clarity about the language, role and status of Local Place Plans in local authority and Community Planning Partnership decision-making processes (including Locality Plans), place making and land-use planning decision-making. This guidance should be co-produced with the involvement of the community/third sector, local authorities, Community Planning partners and the private sector.
- The development of an overarching guidance statement on the alignment of the relationship between LPPs and policies designed to reduce inequality and support community empowerment, including the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, community-led regeneration and the place principle, Public Health Reform, and the socio-economic duty.
- The development of a route map to resources, including signposting and alignment of funding streams across central and local government (and other funders) to support the preparation and delivery of community-led LPPs.

Section 9: Further information and support

9.1: There is a considerable amount of information and support already available for community-led place planning, much of which can contribute positively to Local Place Planning. Whilst there will undoubtedly be a need for guidance and support for Local Place Planning to be a success as it becomes reality, the existing resources that are available provide a very useful starting point.

9.2: The [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) and [SP=EED](#) guide to community engagement in spatial planning provide excellent starting points to design community engagement processes for LPPs.

9.3: A number of local authorities have published their own guidance for community-led planning, such as Renfrewshire Council's [Local Place Plans "How to" Guide](#) and Argyll and Bute Council's [Community-led Action Planning Toolkit](#). Other local authorities are in the process of preparing similar materials.

9.4: The Scottish Government's [Place Principle](#) supports collaborative place-based action such as Local Place Planning, and the [Place Standard](#) is a commonly-used tool to help thinking about the quality of place and where action might be required.

9.5: In addition, a number of organisations can provide related support:

- [SCDC](#) (Scottish Community Development Centre) provides support for local community action planning as part of the Supporting Communities programme, advice and guidance on community engagement and community empowerment and support for community led research.
- [PAS](#) provides support on community engagement in planning.
- [DTAS](#) (Development Trusts Association Scotland) and its subsidiary programme [COSS](#) (Community Ownership Support Service) help community-based groups to take on land or building assets.
- Local authority land-use planning and community planning departments, [Third Sector Interfaces](#) and specialist consultants may be able to provide expertise or support to specific local communities. Please note that the level of potential support and expertise varies in different parts of the country.

For more information about
Supporting Communities contact
info@scdc.org.uk or call 0141 248 1924.

