

What is a Community Plan?



- It is a document prepared by the community to develop a shared understanding of the features and characteristics of their community.
- It identifies what they want to improve or achieve in their area including a range of actions that can be delivered for the benefit of everyone locally.

A Community Plan will enable Parish and Town councils to engage with their communities in an inclusive and meaningful way to address their needs and ambitions as they recover from the impact of the pandemic.

The Community Plan will be developed through the community engagement process that we will outline in this document.

The Community Plan will include an Action Plan that will be SMART:

- **S**pecific (simple, sensible, significant).
- **M**easurable (meaningful, motivating).
- **A**chievable (agreed, attainable).
- **R**elevant (reasonable, realistic and resourced, results-based).
- **T**ime bound (time-based, time limited, time/cost limited, timely, time-sensitive).

There is no set length or style to a Community Plan, it must however reflect the needs and ambitions of your Parish. It should be accessible to the community, so consideration should be given to the style and format as well as where your residents can access it. After all this is a document that hopefully a good portion of the Parishes residents will have taken time to contribute to and they will want to see the findings and maybe support you in taking the Community Plan forward. The notion of ownership by the wider community needs to be thought through as to how this is going to be achieved.

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What are the Benefits of doing a Community Plan?

How beneficial a Community Plan is will depend on the community engagement process and follow up and whether it truly reflect the aspirations and needs of the community.

- It will help the residents of the parish be more engaged in the decisions and democratic process that take place within the Parish Council. Ideally you want the residents of the Parish to have a sense of ownership over the Community Plan.
- Encourage renewed enthusiasm and engagement in local services from the residents.
- It will help the Parish Council understand what aspects of work need to be prioritised to ensure it is serving the needs of your community, the community plan can be a tool to measure these decisions against and their success.
- It should help to maximise the impact of public spending ideally achieving the best value for money.
- To enable as many local people as possible to identify their needs and aspirations for the future of their area.
- Stimulates community spirit and pride.
- Can help service providers to plan how to deliver future services.
- Sets out evidence, which can support future funding bids.
- Raises issues that may feed into statutory development plans (i.e. the Local Plan and/ or a Neighbourhood Plan) or policies of other organisations.
- It becomes a supporting key document in the overall Planning process influencing the overlapping plans and strategies for your area
- To enable the community to grow stronger and more cohesive
- To help the community to become more resilient and better able to take action to meet its own needs
- To ensure the community will be better prepared to take advantage of the new Somerset Council and new government policies and get its voice heard

How to do a Community Plan - the steps

Stage	9 Steps
Launch the plan	Getting started Establishing a steering group Taking stock and planning ahead
Evidence local need and aspirations	Understand your community
Agree and prioritise actions	Raising awareness of the Community Plan in as many ways as possible to attract interest and support for the process.
Deliver and monitor actions	Organising and arranging events including recruiting volunteers for the events