LOCAL PLACE PLANS – 'HOW TO' GUIDE

LITERATURE REVIEW AND FINAL REPORT

March 2021

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Contents

Executive Summary

1. Introduction and background

In November 2020 the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) and Nick Wright Planning were commissioned by the Scottish Government to develop a draft 'How to' Guide for Local Place Plans in Scotland, following their formal introduction in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 to "significantly enhance engagement in development planning, effectively empowering communities to play a proactive role in defining the future of their place".

This report describes how we undertook the process and the range of evidence we drew on in producing the draft 'How to' Guide (the Guide).

2. Desk research and literature review

We identified three key elements to the literature review:

1. Analysis of existing community-led plans, including pilot Local Place Plans and other community-led visions, plans and strategies. Our analysis encompassed preparation, development, presentation and delivery of plans.

2. Analysis of existing toolkits and guides, including an analysis of online and offline toolkits and guides, identification of good practice and ideas to inform the development of the Guide.

3. Analysis of techniques, skills, resources and information, to collate relevant existing toolkits, guides, advice, information, policy and data sources that support community-led Local Place Planning.

3. Reference Group and key informants

From the outset we felt that it was important to hear the experiences of key voices across the sector from community groups, support agencies (local and national), planners and people with particular expertise in community-led planning, inclusion and engagement. In order to maximise their input to the draft Guide over a relatively short time period, we established three main methods of engagement:

- an advisory 'Reference Group';

- a targeted online survey; and

- a series of interviews;

each of these methods and their outputs are described in the full report.

4. Structure and content of the Guide

The structure and content of the draft Guide was an iterative one with our ideas being considered, developed and refined through our work with the Reference Group and our contact with the key informants.

The Guide is set out in four main sections which take people stage by stage through a Local Place Planning process:

Section 1 - Getting Ready

This section is intended to help people think about their Local Place Plan, why it is needed and what it is for. It will also help people to think through what needs to be in place in terms of support and resources before they begin to develop their plan.

Section 2 - Developing your Plan

This section takes people through the process of developing their plan from undertaking local research to engaging their community, to getting the plan down on paper. It provides useful examples and possible scenarios which will help groups to develop a robust and inclusive local planning process.

Section 3 - Presenting your Plan

This section helps people to think about how they structure, lay out and design their plan and the different audiences they may need to communicate with during the plan process. It helps people to think about accessibility, readability and the different formats that they should consider.

Section 4 - Delivering your Plan

This section focuses on how people can best ensure that their plan is delivered and has real impact. It helps people to understand the importance of collaborative working, governance and ownership of the process, achieving quick wins, monitoring and reviewing progress.

The Guide has been designed to be a standalone website, with all key content able to be produced as a pdf document. Reference Group participants stressed that the online Guide should have a simple structure and design, reflecting the audience for the Guide being community groups who may have limited access to resources for graphic design.

5. Conclusions

It is clear from the research consultations that Local Place Plans are a major opportunity to advance a number of important government agendas, including:

- To deliver national strategic policy objectives at the local level.

- To support planning reform and implementation of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019.

- To support delivery of the community empowerment agenda.

- To build more trusting relationships between communities and local government.

- To provide intelligence from local communities to inform future public services.

- To provide an opportunity for Government to communicate its priorities, objectives and constraints.

Our full report contains 25 detailed points relating to Local Place Plans in general and to the draft Guide. They are presented under a number of headings:

A. Defining characteristics of Local Place Plans

Building on the definition of Local Place Plans in primary legislation, we suggest that the eight defining characteristics of Local Place Plans identified in Section 1 of the draft Guide should be incorporated into formal guidance:

1. Local Place Plans must, if they are to be registered by your local authority, comply with legal requirements.

2. Local Place Plans must belong to the local community. Aspirations, priorities and projects should emerge from and be co-designed with the local community, through inclusive and robust community engagement and development.

3. As proposals for the development and use of land, Local Place Plans should express a clear vision for the future, including a spatial map, and key actions to deliver that future vision.

4. Local Place Plans may contain a variety of proposals, from physical proposals like improvements to community facilities, new homes, and better streets and public spaces; to less tangible proposals like action to support mental and physical health, economic opportunity or community activities.

5. Local Place Plans should be solutions-focused. Actions should be as specific as possible. For example, if a local community aspires to have more homes or jobs, the Local Place Plan should specify what kinds of homes and where they should go, or what type of jobs or enterprise and where.

6. Proposals contained in Local Place Plans should be realistic and deliverable. Some may be quick wins that can be completed in a few

months, others might take a lot more planning and many years to deliver.

7. Local Place Plans are tools to support community empowerment, to shape future land use planning policy, to influence public service delivery, and to tackle strategic agendas such as the climate emergency, health and wellbeing, inequalities and economic opportunity.

8. Where possible, Local Place Plan boundaries should reflect local community boundaries.

B. Targeted resourcing to support established priorities

There have long been concerns amongst communities and local authorities about the availability of resources for Local Place Planning. Points 9-12 in the full report contain suggestions about targeting resources to support policy priorities such as reducing inequalities.

C. Registration of Local Place Plans

The registration process for Local Place Plans should not undermine the basic concept that Local Place Plans must belong to the local community. Points 13-15 in the full report contain suggestions for guidance to local authorities.

D. Local authority collaboration in preparation and delivery of Local Place Plans

Local authorities have a number of critical roles in supporting preparation and delivery of Local Place Plans, which could be usefully laid out in secondary legislation and/or guidance. Points 16-19 in the full report contain more information.

E. Preparation of draft secondary legislation and guidance

To maximise the opportunity presented by Local Place Plans, points 20-21 in the full report relate to how secondary legislation and guidance is prepared.

F. The draft Guide as a live online resource

Points 22-26 in the full report relate to presentation, promotion and update of the Guide as a live online resource.

1. Introduction and background

1.1 Legislative Context

In November 2020 Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) and Nick Wright Planning were commissioned by the Scottish Government to develop a draft 'How to' Guide for Local Place Plans in Scotland. The Planning (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2019. The Act defines a statutory part Local Place Plans can play within Scotland's planning system; being proposals by community bodies about the development or use of land and setting out why those bodies think Local Development Plans should be amended. In this legislation Local Place Plans were formally introduced with a key objective being to "significantly enhance engagement in development planning, effectively empowering communities to play a proactive role in defining the future of their place". Further arrangements for the preparation and use of Local Place Plans will be set out in regulations, on which the Scottish Government will be consulting.

1.2 Practice context

There is a strong recent history of community-led action planning in Scotland (historically a separate activity from land use planning with little crossover except for isolated recent examples) as well as a range of other local planning initiatives including charrettes, local spatial masterplans, and community land use plans. All of this provides a rich context for the development of Local Place Plans. This context is also informed by how people have engaged with local planning processes and their experiences of this over the past few years and longer.

In the absence of regulations (due later this year) and statutory guidance the study team has, to some extent, had to make reasonable assumptions about the scope and possible impact of Local Place Plans. These are described in the 'defining characteristics' of Local Place Plans in Section 1 of the draft 'How to' Guide, and are founded on good practice in community-led planning and the Scottish Government's community empowerment and local governance agendas.

1.3 About this report

This report describes how we undertook the process and the range of evidence we drew on in producing the draft 'How to' Guide (the Guide) to Local Place Plans.

In it, we explore the key elements of the desk research that have underpinned the literature review, the process of engaging with key informants, and working with the external reference group as we developed the Guide. It will outline the draft structure and key content of the Guide which has been produced, along with the thinking behind this and key reference sources.

2. Desk research and literature review

We identified three key elements to the literature review which are described in more detail in the following sections.

2.1 Analysis of existing community-led plans

To understand and learn from the extensive pool of Scottish experience in community-led planning, we assembled a range of over 50 community-led plans for analysis; the full list can be seen in Annex A. The aim was not to create a complete directory of community-led action planning activity in Scotland, but to ensure that we were tapping into a range of communities, approaches, experiences, contexts and geographies.

The list of plans analysed covers a broad geographical spread and a range of urban and rural communities. The types of plan that we analysed included:

- Pilot Local Place Plans

- Community-led action plans

- Community vision statements and plans

- Community land use plans

- Reports of Charrettes and Making Places initiatives

- Spatial plans with strong community input (e.g. town centre 'masterplans')

These plans came from a range of sources and provided a broad mix of lead community organisations (e.g. Community Councils, Community Development Trusts and local environmental groups) and support agencies (e.g. local authorities, National Parks, PAS, Coalfields Regeneration Trust, Local Energy Scotland and voluntary sector agencies like Community Action Lanarkshire and Community Links). We included a number derived from analysis of the Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning and SURF Awards over the last decade.

In addition, we looked at Neighbourhood Planning in England and Wales; although the statutory requirements and purpose of Neighbourhood Planning has a number of distinct differences from the concept of Local Place Plans, we wanted to ensure that we were tapping into all available best practice. Our analysis of Neighbourhood Planning included:

- Neighbourhood Planning guidance and toolkits

- a number of English Neighbourhood Plans

In order to help us analyse the full range of 50+ community-led plans listed in Annex A, we created a working matrix which assessed the plans against the various stages of creating a Local Place Plan (preparation, development, presentation and delivery). This

helped us to identify good practice across the 50+ plans and identify important elements to inform the content of the Guide. It also helped us to identify a range of illustrative examples that have been included in the Guide, and which provide a resource from which to derive further examples or case studies as the Guide develops in the future.

The outputs from that analysis can be summarised under four headings:

1. **Preparing for and developing plans**: This covers the essential phases of capacity building, community engagement and facilitating the transition from gathering ideas to establishing deliverable priorities. Key themes identified were:

   - Community capacity building (developmental and specialist support)

   - Partnership working/working together

   - Establishing need and purpose

   - Alignment with existing plans and boundaries

   - Community engagement

   - Inclusion

2. **Presenting plans:** This element focuses on simplicity, accessibility, graphics and different means of communication. Key themes:

   - Plan structure and design

   - Accessibility and inclusion

   - Production formats

3. **Delivering plans:** This element focuses on how the plans will be delivered and support for this to happen across a range of local service and support providers. Key themes:

   - Supporting and embedding delivery

   - Community involvement

   - Monitoring and evaluation

4. **Other sources of evidence, data and guidance** for this part of the desk research included:

- [Coalfields Regeneration Trust 'Community Futures' webpage](#)[1] - information on the 46 CAPs that the programme has supported since 2011, link to the [CRT Connect](#)[2] platform.

- Information on [East Ayrshire Community Action Plans](#)[3] supported through the Vibrant Communities programme, and associated Placemaking Plans.

- Information on the [Cairngorms National Park community action planning webpage](#)[4].

- [West Dunbartonshire Council LDP2](#)[5] policy section on pages 72-73 relating to "Locality Place Planning".

2.2 Analysis of toolkits and guides

This element of the literature review focused on an analysis of toolkits and guides, identification of good practice and ideas that will inform the development of the Guide for communities.

Our analysis focused on both online and offline toolkits for community organisations from Scotland and the UK. These toolkits ranged from community action planning toolkits and draft Local Place Plan 'how to guides' to other practice guides and toolkits which are not specifically planning-focused – e.g. community engagement toolkits and community-led action research toolkits.

Our analysis focused on three main elements:

1. **How toolkits and guides present and communicate information**

   In particular exploring the following elements:

   - the use of graphics and visuals to communicate simply

   - the pros and cons of different levels of content and detail

   - the issues of accessibility presented by different formats

   - how to use the additional functionality offered by an online presence.

2. **How toolkits and guides are updated**

   In particular exploring:

---

[1] [Coalfields Community Futures · Coalfields Regeneration Trust (coalfields-regen.org.uk)](#)
[2] [https://crtconnect.org.uk/moodle30/](#)
[3] [Community led action plans · East Ayrshire Council (east-ayrshire.gov.uk)](#)
[4] [Community Action Planning - Cairngorms National Park Authority](#)
[5] [https://www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/media/4319309/wdc_ldp2_2020_web-26.pdf](#)

- updating of information – how easily and regularly this can be done for different formats

- collaborative updating – how this is done, supported and moderated

3. How toolkits and guides are promoted to their target audience

In particular exploring:

- how key information and messages about the resource are developed

- clear, consistent branding

- consistent and planned approaches to communication and use of varied methods for promotion e.g. social media, web, face-to-face

- evidence and examples of how the dissemination of the resource has been supported e.g. through information campaigns, events or training

- evidence and examples of how the resource has been used and evidence that the use is being monitored and evaluated

2.3   Analysis of techniques, skills, resources and information

The desk research for this section was heavily informed by our contact with the Reference Group as well as a range of other key informants across the sector. These key informants include support organisations such as PAS[6], Coalfields Regeneration Trust[7] and Architecture and Design Scotland[8]; and community organisations who have experience of being involved in local community-led planning processes.

We identified and analysed key sources of evidence as summarised below.

2.3.1 Existing toolkits, guides, advice and information that support community-led Local Place Planning

To inform this part of the research we sought the views of community groups and organisations as to what support has worked and is most valuable to them in helping them to develop local plans. We also spoke to a range of support providers about the tools, advice and support they provide. We reviewed existing relevant guides and resources for community-led planning to identify key elements that could inform the structure and content of the draft Guide, including:

---

[6] Welcome to PAS - PAS
[7] The Coalfields Regeneration Trust (coalfields-regen.org.uk)
[8] A&DS – Architecture and Design Scotland

- [Local Place Plan Guide: the PAS approach](#)[9]

- [Local Place Plans: challenges and opportunities: a framework for draft guidance](#)[10] (SCDC and Nick Wright Planning)

- [Renfrewshire Council How-to Guide for Local Place Plans](#)[11]

- [Argyll and Bute Community Action Planning toolkit](#)[12]

- [Cairngorms National Park community action planning guide](#)[13]

- [SCDC Knowledge is Power Toolkit](#)[14]

- [Place Standard](#)[15]

2.3.2 Existing toolkits, advice, guidance and information that support community engagement in Local Place Planning

To inform this part of the research we sought the views of community groups and organisations about their experience of engaging communities in the development of local plans, and what has helped them to do this. We also reviewed key resources such as the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#)[16], [VOiCE](#)[17] and [SP=EED](#)[18] to identify the main elements that would help to support effective community engagement in Local Place Planning.

2.3.3 Analysis of available information on data, policy and funding for Local Place Planning

A key function of the Guide will be to help community groups find their way through the 'maze' of policy, data and funding information that is available. As part of the desk research we therefore reviewed key sources of information on:

- 'Hard' objective data about communities and places, to complement 'soft' data generated through community engagement. This included identifying the most

---

[9] [Local-Place-Plans-Guide-PAS-Approach.pdf](#)
[10] [Local Place Plans: Challenges and Opportunities | SCDC - We believe communities matter](#)
[11]
[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/media/9367/Local-Place-Plans-How-To-Guide/pdf/Local_Place_Plans_How_To_Guide_SC_final.pdf](#)
[12] [Community-led Action Planning Argyll & Bute (communitytoolkit.net)](#)
[13] [Community Action Planning - Cairngorms National Park Authority](#)
[14] [Knowledge is Power](#)
[15] [Place Standard](#)
[16] [7 National Standards (voicescotland.org.uk)](#)
[17] [VOiCE (voicescotland.org.uk)](#)
[18] [SP=EED - PAS](#)

relevant, useful, and up-to-date sources for issues like demography, economy, deprivation, accessibility, heritage, local protective designations, flood risk etc.

- Public policy at national, regional and local level which groups should have regard to. This included identifying the most useful, relevant and up-to-date policies and strategies.

- Funding and other resources to support delivery of Local Place Plans. As well as carrying out desk research in this area we spoke to Reference Group members and other key informants (see section 3) to understand their experiences of accessing funding and support.

3. Reference Group and key informants

3.1 Introduction and background

From the outset we felt that it was important to hear the experiences of key voices across the sector from community groups, support agencies (local and national), planners and people with particular expertise in community-led planning, inclusion and engagement. In order to maximise the input of these 'key informants' to the process over a relatively short time period, we established three main methods of engagement:

- a 'Reference Group'

- a targeted online survey

- a series of interviews

Each of these methods are described in more detail below.

We are very grateful to everyone who volunteered their time, experience and knowledge to contribute to the draft Guide.

3.2 Reference Group

The formation of the Reference Group was a critical element of our engagement with the sector in the development of the Guide. The role of this group was advisory and was intended to help the Guide to reflect the needs of people who are most likely to be involved in developing Local Place Plans themselves (i.e. in communities), as well as others who might support the development of Local Place Plans.

We planned to involve the Reference Group at key stages of the process – beginning, middle and end – to ensure that the Guide is firmly grounded in the experience of people living and working in communities and reflects their needs.

Using the team's extensive contacts across the community, voluntary and public sectors, many of whom we had engaged with during previous research into Local Place Plans in 2019[19], we developed an invitation list. There was a very positive response from those invited, who also had suggestions of other people to include.

From this we established the Reference Group of 24 people in the following categories:

---

[19] Local Place Plans: Challenges and Opportunities | SCDC - We believe communities matter

Community organisations (e.g. Community Councils, Community Development Trusts)	8 participants
Support organisations (e.g. Local Authorities, National Parks, intermediary organisations, consultants)	7 participants
Equalities/inclusion organisations (e.g. Inclusion Scotland, Glasgow Disability Alliance)	3 participants
Local authority officers (e.g. planning, community planning, community learning and development)	3 participants
National and professional bodies (e.g. Architecture and Design Scotland, Royal Town Planning Institute Scotland, Community Learning and Development Standards Council Scotland)	3 participants

We facilitated three meetings of the Reference Group through the process - one in the early stages, one at the midpoint and one towards the end. Not all participants were able to attend all the sessions, but we created a dedicated mini-website to share materials and encourage people to contribute their thoughts and ideas by email or phone. A number of members took advantage of this opportunity. The sessions themselves took place online and were interactive in nature. A summary of the three sessions is provided below.

Session 1 - 10th November 2020

The first session focused on the key themes that should be covered in the Guide. It was generally agreed that these should include:

Preparing plans

- The need for community capacity building support – both developmental and around specific areas (e.g. planning, design, policy, etc.).

- Involving partners and working together – the importance of collaboration.

- Establishing need and purpose, and gathering/presenting appropriate evidence for this.

- Building on or aligning with other community plans and having clear links to Local Development Plans and other local planning processes such as Local Outcome Improvement Plans and Locality Plans.

- The need for a clear and consistent process that underpins Local Place Plans.

- The need for robust community engagement in the development of Local Place Plans.

- The need to pay attention to issues of inclusion and equality.

Presenting plans

- Clear plan structure is important.

- The accessibility of Local Place Plans is a key priority – this includes language, layout and design, and formats (e.g. online, video, audio, hard copy, etc.)

- Support for the production of plans (e.g. funding, graphic input) is a key consideration.

Delivering plans

- The need for support to embed the delivery of Local Place Plans. This includes practical measures, funding, and strategic support from statutory authorities.

- The importance of on-going monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Local Place Plans.

- The need to ensure on-going community involvement in Local Place Plan processes and not just view them as a one-off.

Session 2 - 8th December 2020

This session built on Session 1 and considered a draft of the structure and headline content. Participants developed their thinking about the key themes and proposed 4 main sections of the Guide as follows:

1. Getting ready - including thinking about the purpose of the Local Place Plan, the area/themes to be covered, and the stakeholders who would need to be involved.

2. Developing the Plan - including undertaking research into community needs and aspirations, wider research on demographics and existing land use plans, engaging with the wider community about their vision, consulting with them about the plan content, and setting realistic aims, outcomes and actions in the plan itself.

3. Presenting the Plan - including being clear about the audience for the plan, having clear structure and layout, and making the plan fully accessible in both language and design.

4. Delivering the Plan - including having a clear line of sight between what is planned and what is delivered, having close collaboration between community and statutory agencies to ensure best chance of delivery, having 'quick wins' and robust monitoring and review systems built in.

Session 3 - 8th February 2021

This session gave the Reference Group an opportunity to feedback on the first full draft of the Guide's content. Each section was covered in the session, with participants feeding back specifically on:

- the balance of content across all sections of the Guide - both in terms of length and in level of detail in each section

- the general flow and order of the content

- the design and accessibility of the materials

In addition, the Group considered and offered examples of good practice that could be included in the Guide and supportive quotes which would help to bring it to life.

3.3   Key informants - survey and interviews

Recognising that the Reference Group could only give us the views of a relatively small, albeit diverse, group of people and that others would have valuable knowledge and experience to contribute, we drew up a list of key informants with whom to conduct a survey and semi-structured interviews over the course of November and December 2020.

There were 3 key questions which framed both the survey and the interviews:

- In your experience, what should communities consider when preparing Local Place Plans?

- What do you think are the key elements to be considered in the presentation of a Local Place Plan?

- What should communities and support organisations consider when they set out to deliver the Plan?

Survey and interview responses to these questions are summarised below, along with additional comments and views about Local Place Plans and their development.

The responses helpfully informed both the development of the draft Guide and this report.

3.3.1 Survey

The online survey was sent to 26 key contacts across the sector, some of whom further cascaded it round their own local networks. A particular example of this was in Aberdeen where our local contact circulated the survey to Community Councils in the area, many of whom responded promptly and with detailed comments.

Generally, we were pleased with the high level of return both in numbers (we received 29 responses) and in the level of detail in the responses, particularly given the proximity to the Christmas period.

The respondents ranged from community projects and Community Councils to local authorities, national intermediaries and academia. The responses are summarised below.

Q1. In your experience what should communities consider when preparing Local Place Plans?

- Communities should develop Local Place Plans with a clear understanding of what they want to do with the plan. In some cases, the Local Place Plan will replace an existing community plan and may contain themes like heritage, active travel and wellbeing.

- Good quality community engagement will be essential, and any engagement process should involve as many people in the community as possible so that the community can have a sense of ownership.

- It is important to include the local authority and other relevant public bodies in the plan development process and to keep them engaged/involved in its delivery. This hopefully will bring expertise and resources to the delivery of the plan.

- Understanding how to access expert advice and support will be important, as will understanding that delivery of the plan needs to be distributed amongst community agencies and co-ordinated via a steering group rather than individuals.

- Communities should be supported to access financial resources to help them help themselves.

- Building capacity in the community is critical, as is encouraging key community voices to come forward during the community engagement and take ownership of the preparation of the plan.

Q2. What do you think are the key elements to be considered in the presentation of a Local Place Plan?

- The Local Place Plan should be short and easy to read with plenty of graphics to make it accessible to everyone in the community.

- If budget is available, 3D models and a website can be useful to convey the spatial elements of the plan.

- Background statistics and comparisons with other areas or wider geographies are also helpful to provide context.

- When the plan is complete it should be made available to the community to comment further and to lend their support to realise the projects or themes.

- The Local Place Plan should consider and make clear what the community can influence and what organisations and agencies should be involved.

Q3. What should communities and support organisations consider when they set out to deliver the Plan?

- Think about how the delivery of the plan can be joined up with neighbouring plans, there may be themes or projects which cross boundaries e.g. transport, environment, heritage, etc.

- Where possible, the volunteers who deliver the plan should represent a cross section of the community.

- Funding to deliver the plan can come from agencies or through fundraising and sponsorship and the Local Place Plan should consider what communities can do directly.

- The plan should clearly state what communities can influence or deliver and what they can expect from local organisations (community and voluntary sector) and agencies.

- The Local Place Plan will have to be funded to realise the themes or projects. This should be considered as the plan is being developed and conversations should be taking place with local organisations and agencies so that the plan can be delivered as soon as possible when it is launched.

- Quick wins are important to keep people engaged in the relevance and practicality of the plan.

- Having an embedded working group or champion to lead on different aspects of the plan is important.

- Those leading on the delivery need to be realistic about timescales and resources to deliver different elements of the plan as not every project can or will be delivered simultaneously, so it is important to prioritise activities.

- Momentum must be maintained throughout the process which includes celebrating quick wins and supporting volunteers, organisations and agencies to be involved and learn from the process.

3.3.2 Interviews

A total of 28 people with experience in community-led planning were interviewed, drawn from community organisations, support organisations and local government. Those approached were either involved in one or more plans that we had analysed (see section 2.1 and Annex A) or known to be involved in community-led planning.   The interviews took place over the course of four weeks in November/December 2020.

The interviews were semi-structured, using the three survey questions as an initial guide (see above), and focusing on particular topics that we or the interviewee wished to raise. The interviews were particularly useful to explore particular questions on interviewees' experience, derived from our analysis of plans that they had been involved with.

The responses from interview participants largely reflected those of the survey respondents. In addition interviewees had a range of views, opinions and ideas about Local Place Plans in general and how these might build on and add value to community involvement in existing planning processes. These are captured and reflected in Section 5 of this report.

4. Structure and content of the Guide

4.1 Introduction

The desk research and the engagement described in the preceding sections have contributed significantly to our draft Guide to Local Place Plans. The process has been an iterative one with our ideas being considered, developed and refined through our work with the reference group and our contact with the key informants.

4.2 Guide structure and headline content

The Guide is set out in four main sections which take people stage by stage through a Local Place Planning process. The structure is not overly prescriptive as we recognise that people will be coming to Local Place Planning from very different starting points. We have therefore made it as easy as possible for people to dip in and out of the Guide as required.

Each section is laid out below with a short description of the purpose of the section and a summary of the contents.

Section 1 - Getting Ready

This section is intended to help people think about their Local Place Plan, why it is needed and what it is for. It will also help people to think through what needs to be in place in terms of support and resources before they begin to develop their plan. The section covers the following themes:

- What is a Local Place Plan?

- Why prepare a Local Place Plan?

- Who needs to be involved and why?

- How should you define your local community?

- What resources and commitment will be needed?

- Is a Local Place Plan right for your community?

Section 2 - Developing your Plan

This section takes people through the process of developing their plan from undertaking local research to engaging their community to getting the plan down on paper. It provides useful examples and possible scenarios which will help groups to develop a robust and inclusive local planning process. The section covers the following themes:

- Doing your research

- Engaging your community

- Planning ahead - includes sub sections on how to create a plan including setting priorities, outcomes, actions and monitoring

Section 3 - Presenting your Plan

This section helps people to think about how they structure, lay out and design their plan and the different audiences they may need to communicate with during the plan process. It helps people to think about accessibility, readability and the different formats that they should consider. The section covers the following themes:

- Think about the user

- Think about your format

- Use simple language

- Keep the Plan structure simple

- Think about your design

- Sharing your Plan with the local authority and others

Section 4 - Delivering your Plan

This section focuses on how people can best ensure that their plan is delivered and has real impact. It helps people to understand the importance of collaborative working, governance and ownership of the process, achieving quick wins, monitoring and reviewing progress. The section covers the following themes:

- Collaboration - taking a joined-up approach

- Finding support for delivery

- Governance structures

- Funding and timescales

- Monitoring progress

- Celebrating achievements

- Reviewing and updating your Plan

- Resources

4.3 Guide layout, design and format

As outlined in our original proposal, the Guide has been designed to be a standalone website, with all key content able to be produced as a pdf document. We understand that some people will want or need to have a 'static' printed or pdf version (and indeed may not have internet access), so the online Guide should be capable of being easily printed out in full or in part.

This approach was overwhelmingly supported by the Reference Group as it will:

- Maximise access to and use of the Guide.

- Create a 'living' document which can be updated with new examples and emerging best practice, giving the flexibility and responsiveness needed in what will be a rapidly developing area of practice.

- Enable people to easily navigate the content and pinpoint/share specific elements like checklists for quick reference, downloadable content and links for more detailed information.

- Enable the use of video and other interactive media in the Guide, to engage more people and allow information to be conveyed in the most effective ways.

Reference Group participants stressed that the online Guide should have a simple structure and design. There was a strong preference for simple hand-drawn sketches rather than 'flashy' graphic design - remembering that the audience for the Guide is community groups who may have limited access to resources for graphic design, so the Guide should inadvertently not send out mixed messages. (It is worth noting that Cairngorms National Park and their partners, in supporting community-led action plans in recent years, have deliberately encouraged all community action plans in the National Park not to employ specialist graphic designers in preparation of plans.)

4.4   Designing, updating and promoting the online Guide

Our desktop research included analysis of other online guides and toolkits, as explained earlier. A note summarising this analysis has been prepared and submitted separately. This note includes suggestions and annotated visual examples on the following topics:

- Presenting and communicating information

- Updating an online Guide

- Reaching target audiences

5. Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The Scottish Government will be consulting on the detailed arrangements for introducing Local Place Plans into the Scottish planning system and all planning stakeholders are being invited to share their views on the Scottish Government's proposals. This section is not intended to pre-empt the consultation outcomes, but contains our key findings and conclusions taken from our research, divided into two sections:

- Section 5.2 summarises our conclusions on Local Place Plans generally, and is intended to feed into the Scottish Government's ongoing preparation of secondary legislation and guidance, and also into consideration of future resourcing and support for Local Place Plans.

- Section 5.3 summarises our conclusions specifically in relation to the draft 'How To' Guide for communities.

5.2 Local Place Plans

It is clear from the research consultations that Local Place Plans are a major **opportunity** to advance a number of important government agendas, including:

- To deliver **national strategic policy objectives** (e.g. zero carbon, health and wellbeing, homes, fairness, inclusive growth) at the **local level** (through actions such as local food growing, easier walking and cycling, and access to housing, greenspace, jobs and so on).

- To support **planning reform**[20] and implementation of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, including steps to reduce conflict, improve community engagement and build public trust in planning matters.

- To support **delivery of the community empowerment agenda** at the local level.

- To build **more trusting relationships between communities and local government**, which is such an important element of delivering effective local governance.

---

[20] Home | Transforming Planning

- To provide **intelligence from local communities to inform future public services**, investment and policy making.

- To provide an **opportunity for government to communicate its priorities, objectives and constraints**, and collaborate with communities on their delivery locally.

Bearing these opportunities in mind, our conclusions relating to secondary legislation, guidance and resourcing cover five areas:

A.   Defining characteristics of Local Place Plans

Building on the definition of Local Place Plans in primary legislation, we suggest that the eight defining characteristics of Local Place Plans identified in Section 1 of the draft Guide should be incorporated into formal guidance:

1. Local Place Plans must, if they are to be registered by your local authority, comply with legal requirements.

2. Local Place Plans must belong to the local community. Aspirations, priorities and projects should emerge from and be co-designed with the local community, through inclusive and robust community engagement and development.

3. As proposals for the development and use of land, Local Place Plans should express a clear vision for the future, including a spatial map, and key actions to deliver that future vision.

4. Local Place Plans may contain a variety of proposals, from physical proposals like improvements to community facilities, new homes, and better streets and public spaces; to less tangible proposals like action to support mental and physical health, economic opportunity or community activities.

5. Local Place Plans should be solutions-focused. Actions should be as specific as possible. For example, if a local community aspires to have more homes or jobs, the Local Place Plan should specify what kinds of homes and where they should go, or what type of jobs or enterprise and where.

6. Proposals contained in Local Place Plans should be realistic and deliverable. Some may be quick wins that can be completed in a few months, others might take a lot more planning and many years to deliver.

7. Local Place Plans are tools to support community empowerment, to shape future land use planning policy, to influence public service delivery, and to tackle strategic agendas such as the climate emergency, health and wellbeing, inequalities and economic opportunity.

8. Where possible, Local Place Plan boundaries should reflect local community boundaries.

B. Targeted resourcing to support established priorities

In the Guide we have highlighted how Local Place Plans can be prepared with minimal resource cost and stressed the importance of quick wins which can be implemented with a small amount of resource. However, there have long been serious concerns amongst communities and local authorities, who are anticipated as being the primary partners in Local Place Planning, about the availability of sufficient resources to undertake Local Place Plans effectively and in response to potential demand. To address these concerns positively we make the following suggestions, based on the research findings:

9. Resourcing should include resources not only for preparation of Local Place Plans, but also for their delivery. Ensuring that resources are available for delivery need not always require new resources being made available, but could be achieved by aligning existing national and local government resources to deliver Local Place Plan outputs.

10. Available resources should be targeted to those communities where Local Place Planning will make the greatest contribution to tackling fairness and inequality, identified through the Local Outcome Improvements Plans and Locality Plans produced by each Community Planning Partnership.

11. Where such communities need support or additional capacity to prepare Local Place Plans, capacity-building support could be provided by the local authority or other agencies to help them to 'get ready' to prepare and deliver Local Place Plans.

12. The primary recipients of resources for Local Place Planning should be local communities, because preparation of Local Place Plans will be their responsibility should they wish to take it on. Resources will also be required by others to support community-led activity, particularly local authorities as the main collaborative partner.

C. Registration of Local Place Plans

The registration process for Local Place Plans should not undermine the basic concept that Local Place Plans must belong to the local community. To ensure that this is the case, we suggest that guidance to local authorities covers the following issues:

13. Registration should be a positive and light-touch process which is intended to proactively support communities to produce Local Place Plans, rather than being conceived as a regulatory process in which local authorities "judge" the content of Local Place Plans.

14. Procedural requirements should be set to an absolute minimum and should be framed nationally to avoid unhelpful discrepancies between local authorities. The content of the draft Guide should be the starting point for defining what those minimum requirements are, and those requirements should be co-designed as explained in recommendation 20.

15. Existing community-led action plans should be able to be registered as Local Place Plans where they accord with the defining characteristics of Local Place Plans.

D.   Local authority collaboration in preparation and delivery of Local Place Plans

Local authorities have a number of critical roles in supporting preparation and delivery of Local Place Plans. This has been reflected to us by people in planning roles as well as community development and community capacity building. Secondary legislation and/or guidance could usefully lay out those roles, including:

16. The distinct roles of officers in land-use planning, community planning (or Community Learning and Development) and other departments in supporting communities to get ready, develop, present and deliver Local Place Plans (the four sections of the draft Guide) should be made clear. These roles are laid out in Section 1 of the draft Guide.

17. The ways in which Local Place Planning will feed into planning policy and other public services should be clearly explained, using the many examples of good practice that already exist in local authorities around the country. For example, secondary legislation and/or guidance should explain that the intelligence gained from community engagement on Local Place Plans can be a vital input to preparation of development planning policy or other planning decisions such as Section 75 'planning gain', as well as the formal input of the completed Local Place Plan.

18. The specific role of Councillors in Local Place Planning should be made clear, taking legislative requirements in the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the content of the draft Guide (Section 1) as starting points.

19. The registration process for Local Place Plans should be clearly defined (see above).

E.   Preparation of draft secondary legislation and guidance

In order to maximise the opportunity presented by Local Place Plans outlined at the start of this section:

20. Secondary legislation and guidance should be co-designed with representatives from communities and local authorities in particular, with the key informants involved in this research being a good starting point.

21. The co-design process should be facilitated to ensure that community interests are placed front and centre of the discussions.

5.3   The draft Guide

Our final suggestions relate to the draft 'How to' Guide itself:

22. **The Guide should be published as a standalone website.** For the reasons explained in section 4.3, the Guide should be published as a website rather than a report or pdf, with the ability for users to easily print or save all or parts of the Guide. This recommendation was strongly supported by the Reference Group. We believe that there is an opportunity for the website to complement the new suite of websites that the Scottish Government is currently preparing for the Place Principle, Place Standard and Town Centre Toolkit.

23. **The online Guide should be conceived as a live resource which is regularly updated as practice develops**. There are no Local Place Plans yet: it is therefore vital that the Guide develops rapidly, particularly within the first two years, to incorporate emerging practice and experience. Those updates should include personal experiences of communities involved in Local Place Planning, drawing on the experience identified in Annex A as a starting point. The additions should include video content to add another medium of learning and communication. This suggestion was strongly supported by the Reference Group.   We suggest a two year programme of content reviews and updating should be put in place, with content reviews and updates at 12 month intervals.

24. **The style of the online Guide should be appropriate for its target community audience and should reinforce the Guide's message that Local Place Planning need not be a daunting, professionally-led or technical exercise**. The Reference Group particularly recommended that the graphic style of the Guide should not use graphics which are expensive to produce or 'flashy', but which are simple and low cost. The use of sketches, as in the draft Guide, was particularly recommended.

25. **The development of additional resources should be considered.** The Reference Group recommended that summary or easy-read versions of the Guide or particular sections - in leaflet or video format - would help community groups to use it and would make the Local Place Planning process less daunting.

26. **A communications plan should be put in place to promote the Guide.** We would suggest that a 3-6 month promotional plan should be developed to accompany publication of the Guide and promote its

benefits. This should encompass social media content, engagement with close contacts and partners, and development of a mailing list.

Annex A: List of Community-led Plans

1. Alexandria Neighbourhood Action Plan

2. Applecross Community Land Use Plan

3. Astley Ainslie Community Vision, Edinburgh

4. Buckhaven Community Action Plan and Spatial Masterplan

5. Callendar charrette

6. Cambuslang

7. Catrine Community Action Plan

8. Craignish Community Plan

9. Crail Local Place Plan

10. Crianlarich Community Action Plan

11. Cumnock Community Action Plan

12. Cupar Could Report and Community Proposals

13. Dunbar

14. Elie and Earlsferry Community Place Plan

15. Fauldhouse Focus

16. Feughdee West Community Action Plan

17. Foxbar pilot Local Place Plan

18. Glenrothes West report and Action Plan

19. Grantown-on-Spey Town Centre Community Action Plan (and SG evaluation)

20. Hamiltonhill, Glasgow

21. Huntly Room to Thrive and Campus for Learning and Play

22. Johnstonebridge Community Action Plan

23. Killin Community Action Plan and Review

24. Kingussie

25. Kirkfieldbank Community Action Plan

26. Kirkwall Place Plan

27. Knutsford Neighbourhood Plan

28. Langholm Alliance

29. Laurencekirk Community Vision Statement

30. Leith

31. Lewes Neighbourhood Plan

32. Linlithgow Plan for the Future

33. Lochgelly Community Action Plan

34. Lochgoilhead Community Action Plan

35. Mill o'Mains Community Regeneration Masterplan, Dundee

36. Nairn Links development framework

37. Neilston Town Charter

38. New Cumnock Community Regeneration Masterplan

39. Orkney Three Villages Masterplans

40. Pollokshields Charrette

41. Prestwick Charrette

42. Rum Community Land Use Plan

43. Scalloway Local Place Plan

44. South Islay Community Action Plan

45. Strathard / Kinlochard Community Life Plan

46. Stromness Local Place Plan

47. Thornhill Community Plan

48. Three Towns Charrette, North Ayrshire

49. Turriff Local Action Plan

50. Twechar Community Action Plan

51. Udny Action Plan and Spatial Masterplan

52. Wester Hailes Local Place Plan

53. Woodside Making Places

54. Woolfords, Auchengray and Tarbrax Community Action Plan