

Approaches to Place-Based Community Planning – a review of best practice

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July 2013

Introduction

The Welsh Government commissioned this review of different approaches to community visioning and planning as part of the development of the Cynefin programme. This report summarises the approach of different organisations and projects from across the UK. The review was primarily a desk-based exercise and is based on resources available on-line, evaluations where they exist, and conversations with key stakeholders.

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Listening workshops – Connecting Communities

★ A co-production approach for when communities feel unheard and distant from service providers

Connecting Communities (C2) “brings residents together with service providers to work together as equals, forming a self-sustaining, resident-led operational partnership to make neighbourhoods better places in which to live and work.”

The model is informed by an asset based community development approach, led by true partnership between residents and agencies, and delivering the aspirations of the community rather than solving problems as defined by the agencies. It uses insights from complexity theory and systems thinking to see communities and the systems in which they operate as dynamic and interlinked.

The C2 model is based on a 7 step process, to which Hazel Stuteley (who developed the model in Falmouth) has added a step 0:

Step 0 – Find out who residents trust and go walkabouts with them asking the simple question “What is it like to live here?”. Get strategic buy-in and start to identify who the key agencies and community members are.

Step 1 – Establish a committed group of frontline service providers to deliver the listening workshop (Community Needs Assessment) – likely to include Police, Health, Education, Fire and Rescue – bring them together and support them to establish a functioning group.

Step 2 – Hold a listening workshop in a central community location, where residents are encouraged to say what they like about an area, what they don’t like, and what they want to change. These ideas for change are then ranked to create community priorities for action.

(See video 3 for an example listening event http://www.t-coe.org.uk/_page.php?id=131)

Step 3 – Report back quickly on the findings of listening workshop and establish a resident-led multi-agency partnership with commitment to take action on identified priorities.

Step 4 – Create an environment for co-learning between the community and agencies – take part in exchange visits to places where communities are successfully self managing.

Step 5 – Monthly partnership meetings with positive feedback from early wins creating and maintaining momentum for action among residents and agencies.

Step 6 – Community strengthening and self-organising by setting up new projects, with input from agencies as partners, to meet the needs of different groups in the community.

Step 7 – Range of sustainable improvements leading to transformational change. Measurable outcomes across a range of indicators including health, community safety, education. Gains for service providers. Potential for community members to be employed as part of the programme.

The C2 approach developed from groundbreaking work on the Beacon and Old Hill estate outside Falmouth where two health visitors (one of them Hazel Stuteley) identified that people on the estate were suffering from extreme disadvantage, poor health, high crime and a poor local environment,

combined with a sense that the estate had been abandoned by the statutory agencies. The engagement approach they used became the C2 model.

The impacts felt on the estate were dramatic – reduced crime, improved health, reduced unemployment, increased educational attainment and improved physical environment. The partnership established on the Beacon estate in 1996 is still going strong, delivering regeneration activities across the area, and has now expanded to cover neighbouring communities and developed several social enterprises.

The C2 approach has since been used extensively in south west England (Falmouth, Redruth and Camborne), led by the Strategic Health Authority, and has since been used in other places by organisations such as the Police and Sport England. The Health Empowerment Leverage Project was commissioned by the Department of Health to demonstrate the health benefits of community development using the C2 approach in various locations. The evaluation of the Townstal Community Partnership, developed using the C2 approach, identifies several key issues to consider:

- Partnership – needs to involve all the relevant agencies, community leaders will be key to its success, relies on good communication starting with the active listening workshops and community walkabouts.
- A can-do approach – developed from the partnership and the listening events, and the community feeling a sense of empowerment and ownership of the project.
- Importance of quick wins – tackling low-level crime and graffiti demonstrated immediate improvements as a result of the project.
- Fun – although the partnership is tackling serious issues they also had many fun events celebrating festivals and getting the community together.
- Developing and maintaining community engagement – organising activities that are open to all encourages more people to get involved.
- A community school – the school became a community resource and its role in shaping the future and aspirations of the community was recognised and supported.

Resources:

Background to the C2 approach

http://www.healthcomplexity.net/content.php?s=c2&c=c2_main

Videos and presentations on the C2 approach and its impact

<http://www.t-coe.org.uk/page.php?id=131>

The Beacon Community Regeneration Partnership

<http://www.bcrp.org.uk/>

Research report evaluating how the Beacon approach transferred to Redruth

http://www.healthcomplexity.net/content.php?s=research&c=research_crest

Evaluation of the Townstal Community Partnership

<http://www.healthempowerment.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Townstal-Community-Partnership-baseline-indicators-final-sept-12.pdf>

The Sustainable Development Tool – PLANED

★A card game to encourage sustainable community planning

PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development) is a well established community led integrated rural development initiative in south west Wales. Their Sustainable Development Tool was developed in partnership with nef (The New Economics Foundation), using nef's Democs as a starting point. Democs is a conversation game developed to enable small groups of people to come together, find out about an issue, discuss their views and seek common ground. Cards are used to provide information and spark debate, and through the act of sorting and clustering the cards discussions take place and projects can be developed. The cards are used in community workshop settings where people are organised in to small discussion groups.

The first workshop is all about visioning, and PLANED suggest doing an exercise where people say what is special about their community and do a quick audit of what is already in existence in their community. Groups then use the yellow cards to understand how global issues impact upon their community, and how community actions can have a global impact.

- Information cards (yellow cards) set out what sustainability is all about. These include statements such as:
 - Money: “Only when the last tree has died, and the last river has been poisoned, and the last fish has been caught, will we realise that we cannot eat money” (Chief Seattle)
 - Ecofootprint: This shows that if everyone in the world consumed as many resources as the people of Wales, we would need three planets. The US would need nearly five planets.
 - Ready meals: British consumers spend £7,000 a minute on ready meals. That’s three times more than any other country in Europe.

The cards are dealt out among the group, and each person is encouraged to find the two cards which speak the most to them. The group then look at which cards have been chosen, what the links might be between them and to generate three themes which are of importance to them. These will be the themes the group will work on.

In the second community workshop, the group are supported to go from ideas to action. The workshop might start with discussion of what their ideal community might look like, and what skills and resources are available in the community. The blue cards are then used for developing project ideas.

- Issue cards (blue cards) are about how sustainability can inspire new community projects. They include:
 - Running cars on cooking oil: A Pembrokeshire famer is running his car and farm vehicles on biodiesel and has received support from the Sustainable Development Fund to convert other vehicles in the locality.
 - Local purchasing: 86% of people in Crymych purchased locally produced food from independent shops in Crymych.

- Cardboard to caviar: A Huddersfield project for unemployed young people supplies shredded cardboard as animal bedding, then uses worms to compost it, and uses surplus worms to feed sturgeon fish, with the aim of producing caviar.

Each group is encouraged to think about their project idea, and then identify which of the cards are most relevant to that project, and to use the cards as springboards for adding to their idea.

The final set of cards is used in the project planning process.

- The third set of cards (white cards) suggests issues to consider to make the project more sustainable and impact on wider issues. These include:
 - History and heritage
 - Health
 - Work units

These cards might encourage a group looking at transport issues to consider the health impacts of increased cycling.

As well as using the tool to develop community plans, it can be used to review and add to existing plans. The messages on the cards could be tailored to specific places and issues.

Resources:

Planed Sustainability Tool Manual

Example Community Action Plans:

<http://www.planed.org.uk/community-action-plans.html>

Imagination for change – the TYF approach

★ From ideas to business plans

TYF were commissioned by Welsh Government to develop and try out approaches to community visioning as part of the development of the Sustainable Communities programme. This work has been piloted in Wrexham at different scales of engagement. Their approach starts with imagination and the ability people have to develop solutions to the challenges they face. Their approach uses two main frameworks: R10 and the 5Es.

The R10 model encourages people to consider what is *really* good enough, knowing what we already know. So for example, knowing what you already know about current and future challenges, what percentage of children would you want to leave school understanding nutrition and able to cook healthy meals? A traditional target might say 60%, but an R10 answer would say that is not good enough and we should be achieving 100%. The 5Es is a model which encourages people to explore, evaluate, envision, enable and execute. These two approaches encourage the imagination and visioning aspects of the TYF model, encouraging communities to think big and aim high.

Their “Imagination for Change Toolkit” provides a step by step process for delivering a workshop which will support communities to go from understanding the need for change in the context of issues such as climate change, economic downturn and rising food and fuel costs to developing an action plan to deliver projects which will support the creation of a resilient future.

The Imagination for Change workshop is designed for local residents plus development officers from key agencies, and is a 6 step process:

Step 1 – Context – setting out what the challenges are and encouraging participants to record what is special about the place they live in.

Step 2 – Responses – creating a vision of what participants want the community to be like in the future, then generating examples of good practice which are already happening locally and rating them on the R10 scale.

Step 3 – Creation – using themes such as energy, food and biodiversity, participants are encouraged to create project ideas which would help their community become more sustainable and resilient.

Step 4 – Potential – the groups are encouraged to collaboratively question their big idea, to explore what resources would be necessary to take it forward, and then to see where it would sit on the R10 scale. Where big ideas are not at R10, the wider group are encouraged to suggest ideas to help move it forward.

Step 5 – Action – each group plans out the next steps needed to get their big ideas moving and puts their actions on a shared timeline.

Step 6 – Conclusions – the workshop is wrapped up and then followed up by a report and action plan.

This approach has been tried out at community level in Penycae, with the Communities First teams for Wrexham, and at the county level. Projects developed included community growing, community energy, and linking community groups and businesses.

In Wrexham, the Imagination for Change workshop was followed up with a business planning workshop to develop the big ideas into more rounded business plans. This involved small group working, using the ideas generated in the previous workshop and developing them using the Wrexham Ready Business Planning workbook. The workbook guided the groups to develop:

- Vision: in less than 30 words, describe what you are building
- Mission: why does your idea need to exist?
- Objectives: what are the successes that you'll measure?
- Strategy: what are the activities that will make your project successful?
- Results: who will benefit most and how?
- Supporters: who do you need to get on board who could otherwise be threatened?

Groups were also encouraged to consider the principles of Sustainable Development as set out in the SD Bill:

- Results: identifying outcomes that increase the wellbeing of your community
- Evidence: make decisions using better information
- Collaboration: work with others across organisational boundaries
- Long term: fix the causes rather than the symptoms
- Connect: focus on the economic, social and environmental benefits
- Transparency: measure and report on the difference you make

However, this proved too much for most groups to consider during the workshop. All the groups completed their business plans and pitched them to the wider group. The project plans are being developed further and delivered with support from the Place Coordinator.

Resources:

Imagination for Change toolkit

Wrexham Ready Business Planning workbook

Creating savvy citizens – Your Square Mile

★ Building consensus and prioritising action

Your Square Mile (YSM) is “an organisation that offers practical support to people who want to make a positive change in their local community. We join the dots between local individuals, community groups and charities, local authorities and businesses to create real lasting change.”

(<http://www.yoursquaremile.co.uk/ysm-home/about-us/>). The organisation is a not-for-profit mutual, run by and for citizens, with membership costing £10 per year.

Started in 2011, and influenced by the Big Society agenda, YSM aims to create savvy citizens who are empowered to take action to achieve positive change in their local community. Their approach is based on finding local solutions to the challenges which are unique to places by using the knowledge and enthusiasm of local people. YSM aims to be an accelerator, and to help communities see that change is possible, that communities can drive change themselves, and that although it may take years, change can happen.

In their first year, YSM was supported by funding from the Big Lottery’s People Power Change programme, as well as sponsorship from the private sector including ASDA, and they worked with 16 communities from across the UK.

Their approach involves holding a YSM workshop where residents from an area come together to:

- Talk in small groups about their area, its strengths and weaknesses, and come up with ideas to make their area better
- Pitch these ideas to the wider group and to vote (using dot voting) which 4 projects they want to tackle first
- Collectively develop the projects and contribute ideas
- Identify a resident to volunteer to take the project forward

The workshops are well facilitated with small group activities rather than more formal large group meetings to ensure everyone can take part and prevent the meeting getting bogged down in local politics.

Ideas generated included: a youth-led music festival, community food growing, self build affordable housing, youth clubs and community centres. The issues and ideas generated are unique to the specific places, although a lack of youth activities, a disconnect between the generations and a loss of knowing your neighbours seem to have been common for many of the places.

According to the Big Lottery, in its pilot year YSM achieved some positive results increasing social capital: “doubling regular, constructive contact between citizens and the local authorities; increasing from 50 percent to 63 percent of people who feel they can influence local decisions and from 37 percent to 50 percent of people having weekly contact with their neighbours.”

(<http://bigblog.org.uk/2012/03/29/people-powered-change-your-square-mile/>)

The Big Lottery funding also enabled the creation of the YSM website, which offers local knowledge of your area (through the Fix My Street, Flickr, Local Giving and Do It services), ideas on community projects including tips on how to achieve them and testimonies from communities who have been

there (such as community cinema or street parties), as well as information on local services to help create savvy citizens who know their rights and responsibilities and how to access services (such as the Job Centre).

In 2012, YSM entered a partnership with Heineken who funded their work for the year and enable them to work in 3 communities where Heineken is a major employer. These projects have followed the same processes of ideas generation and prioritising action. Each of the 3 communities has their own website which is designed as an interactive tool to help people engage with their local community. All of the YSM projects are listed and described, along with “Call to Action” sections showing how people can get involved. Events are advertised and people can post local information. There is an interactive map where local assets, such as community centres, have been identified.

One of the 2012 YSM communities is Moss Side and Hulme in Manchester, where the local community are working to challenge the stereotype of their area as rife with gangs and guns, to become a ‘Can Do’ community. Their projects include a befriending service to reduce isolation in the over 55s, a Yes We Can local forum to meet to take action on local issues, and Our Bright Future which aims to bring together local businesses to offer apprenticeships to young people to help them get ready for work.

Resources:

Your Square Mile website:

<http://www.yoursquaremile.co.uk/>

Videos about the 16 pilot communities, and the 3 YSM communities for 2012:

<http://www.yoursquaremile.co.uk/ysm-home/about-us/the-project/>

Website for Moss Side and Hulme, YSM 2012 project:

<http://moss-side.yoursquaremile.co.uk/>

Making a Difference – Prince’s Charities approach

★Creating new connections between organisations

The Making a Difference programme came from a pilot project in Burnley where the Prince of Wales instructed all of his charities to work together in a more co-ordinated way within the town to help Burnley to become a more sustainable place. Through a two day Planning by Design workshop the objectives for the programme were agreed as:

- Supporting the regeneration of the built environment, especially Burnley’s heritage buildings
- Raising educational performance, achievement and aspiration in Burnley schools
- Developing entrepreneurs in Burnley and supporting local businesses
- Supporting opportunities for young people in Burnley to give them the skills to move into the labour market
- Promoting community cohesion and developing the appreciation of a multi-faith, mixed heritage community
- Instilling local pride and creating a positive image of Burnley in the region and nationally for it to become attractive for investors and big employers.

The project has brought together people and organisations from across the whole of Burnley – community organisations, businesses, and the public sector – to work collaboratively with the Prince’s Charities.

Community visioning or planning in Burnley was relatively unstructured and informal. David Feldman, who led the Burnley work, reflected that although objectives were set at a strategic level by aligning visions with other organisations about, for example, job creation, engagement on the ground with communities was less structured. Rather than holding visioning workshops, David and his team would approach community groups on a 1-1 basis, ask about their experiences and concerns, and ask if they could work together. This practical approach was seen by David as “good for engagement and for credibility”, it was about “engaging through doing” rather than asking people to come to yet another workshop.

The Making a Difference programme has now been rolled out to several other places across the UK.

Business Connectors

Business Connectors is a programme from the Prince’s Charity Business in the Community, and is funded by the lottery. The programme uses a model of long-term secondments from businesses of individuals who work as Business Connectors in places of need. The Business Connector brings their skills and experience in to the community setting, making new connections between business, the third sector and the public sector. At the end of their secondment, they take new skills learnt whilst working in the community back to their organisation. So far, 77 Business Connectors have worked in 53 of England’s most needy communities.

As the Business Connectors come from a wide variety of backgrounds and with different skill sets, they are all provided with a set of resources to help them get started in their new role. These include:

- Training – a three day training session which introduces them to the types of stakeholders active in communities, their roles and responsibilities, and different ways to engage with them. Existing Business Connectors also meet with new Business Connectors to share their real life experience of moving from the corporate world to the community setting.
- Landing Pack – a set of background information on their area which includes statistics such as the MIDS, data from local authorities, initial contacts from Business in the Community, suggested groups to contact from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. This Landing Pack is framed as a good start, rather than the only source of information.
- Regional Co-ordinators – each region has a co-ordinator who provides ongoing support to the Business Connector. These co-ordinators have an overview of the areas in which Business Connectors are working and can provide ideas for ways of working in these places. They support the Business Connectors to work through any challenges.

After receiving the training and landing pack, the Business Connectors are encouraged to spend the first couple of weeks meeting people, listening to their experiences and views, and building up a wider network of contacts by asking each person to suggest others. This period gives the Business Connector time to get to know a place and to understand where their involvement can have most impact.

From this exploration of the area, the Business Connector begins to build up a list of potential projects and areas of work, which they prioritise in discussion with their Regional Co-ordinator. The ambition is to create a portfolio of projects which range from small scale interventions to longer term, larger projects. The Business Connectors come with no grant funding, and so there is an emphasis on leveraging in other resources and building capacity within groups and organisations.

Each Business Connector is responsible for recording the contacts they make which will go towards an updated Landing Pack for any future Business Connector.

Resources:

Making a Difference in Burnley evaluation by Cass Business School:

<http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Princes%20Charities%20Full%20Report.pdf>

Business Connectors programme:

<http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/business-connectors>

Community-Led Planning - Action with Communities in Rural England

★ Building capacity through community planning

The Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the umbrella organisation for the Rural Community Councils in England. They have been developing their approach to Community Led Planning (CLP) over the past 40 years. Their CLP approach is underpinned by 3 core principles:

- Plans are owned, managed and led by the community
- Everyone in the community should have an opportunity to get involved and to have their say
- Actions should be based on evidence and address a range of different issues important to the community

ACRE identifies 3 key benefits of the CLP process:

- Communities will grow stronger and more cohesive
- Communities will become more resilient and better able to take action to meet its own needs
- Communities will be better able to take advantage of new Government policies and get its voice heard

ACRE suggests their CLP approach takes approximately 18 months and involves 4 stages and 9 sub-steps:

Stage	ACRE 9 step process
Launch the plan	Getting started Establishing the steering group Taking stock and planning ahead
Evidence local need and aspirations	Understanding your community
Agree and prioritise actions	Prioritising and planning action Drafting your plan Finalising your plan
Deliver and monitor actions	Implementing and monitoring actions Reviewing your plan

The CLP approach enables communities to include all the issues that are of concern to them in their plan – this could include food growing, transport, heritage and tourism, care for the elderly, or provision for young people.

The process of putting together a plan contributes to increasing community cohesion and capacity. And similar to the CREW approach, ACRE place emphasis on understanding how people experience life in the community.

ACRE suggests that communities engage well with their town or community councils, and that the process needs independent facilitation and support from the Rural Community Councils, along with support from local authorities. Further information on the CLP process is only available through the Rural Community Councils.

ACRE situate CLP in the context of the localism agenda and enabling communities to engage with the rights set out in the Localism Act (2011) – the right to buy, to bid, to challenge and to reclaim public land. ACRE encourages communities to carry out CLP in partnership with Town and Community Councils. Although CLP does not carry the same legal power as a Neighbourhood Plan, it can cover a wider range of issues beyond land-use planning.

Action for Communities in Cumbria has delivered the CLP process with many local communities. Dentondale Parish used the process to help the Parish Council understand what the community wanted and what their priorities should be. Their plan was based on the results of a large community survey, along with a series of focus groups which included a Pie and Pint night for farmers, a coffee meeting for businesses and pictures and ideas developed by school children.

The plan has produced some tangible outputs, such as new allotments and children's play area, an extension to the local bus service, a litter picking group and village signs. Other less tangible outcomes have been the sense that the community is changing and seeing that something is happening, and a strengthening of the relationship between the community, the Parish Council and the National Park Authority.

The evidence generated through the survey and focus groups has been a useful resource for applying for funding and influencing stakeholders – the community plan group are using the results to demonstrate the demand for broadband.

Lessons learnt by the group include the importance of managing people and their engagement in the planning process, and that involving the local authorities can really help the group keep their targets realistic.

Resources:

CLP toolkit:

<http://www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning/Resources/Community+Led+Planning+Toolkit/>

Example CLPs:

http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/resources/case_studies/661

[http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/images/uploads/CS014 - ACT Case Study - Melbreak Communities Action Plan - March 2012.pdf](http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/images/uploads/CS014_-_ACT_Case_Study_-_Melbreak_Communities_Action_Plan_-_March_2012.pdf)

<http://www.devonrcc.org.uk/i/documents/58.pdf>

<http://www.devonrcc.org.uk/i/documents/59.pdf>

Neighbourhood Planning in England – Locality

★ Enabling communities to engage with the formal land-use planning system

In 2011, The Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning as part of the wider planning process. Neighbourhood Planning is designed to provide a formal way for communities to engage with the planning process and have a greater say over development in their community.

Locality was formed in 2011 through a merger of the British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres and the Development Trusts Association in England. It is a membership organisation for community-led action groups, and provides support and advice around issues such as community asset ownership and social enterprise. Locality also manages the support and grant funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government to support the Neighbourhood Planning.

In this context, As Neighbourhood Plans carry statutory weight within the wider planning process, there is a specific 5 stage process which must be adhered to:

Stage 1: Defining the neighbourhood – local people must decide how they want to work together, through the Town or Parish Council, or through establishing a new organisation. They must register their interest in developing a Neighbourhood Plan with the local authority, who is responsible for keeping a check on where plans are being developed to prevent overlap, and to ensure the group meets some basic standards of representativeness and has a suitable constitution. This group becomes the Neighbourhood Forum and has the legal power to develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

Stage 2: Preparing the plan – the Neighbourhood Forum gathers local people’s views, ideas and priorities and start to draw up a plan. These plans must generally be in line with existing development policies (for example, if the local authority say an area must grow, the local community cannot block this, but they can have a say in where development happens and what it looks like) and must promote sustainable development.

The local authority has a Duty to Support Neighbourhood Forums in this process, by, for example, taking part in meetings, providing information on relevant policies, helping with community engagement and advising on technical issues such as design.

The plan can only cover land-use planning issues, and as with all planning issues, there is a statutory requirement that community engagement and consultation takes place. Locality provide clear guidance in their Neighbourhood Planning Roadmap about how to approach community engagement, and Neighbourhood Forum’s can apply to Locality for funding and support to carry out engagement activities. Engagement activities vary from place to place. In Dartmouth Park they have begun with a stall at their local summer festival and a community walkabout.

Stage 3: An independent check – the draft plan must be reviewed by an independent examiner who will check whether the plan meets certain standards. If it doesn’t the plan must be amended, and this may involve a further round of community engagement.

Stage 4: Community referendum – the local authority must hold a referendum which allows anyone on the electoral register in that area to vote as to whether they support the plan. If 50% of local residents support the plan, then the local planning authority must bring it in to force.

Stage 5: Legal force – once the plan has been approved through the referendum, it then carries legal weight and the planning authority must consider planning applications and proposals for development against this plan.

Alongside the use of the Neighbourhood Plan as a document which must be considered in the planning process, Neighbourhood Forums are encouraged to work with other partners to deliver the plan in a proactive way, for example partnerships to develop affordable housing.

The Neighbourhood Planning process is still in its early stages; however, a review of rural areas who are taking part in the process highlights some of the achievements to date. These include: a community in Northumberland creating their own definition of 'local' and 'local need' which will be used in housing allocation; a group of 11 parishes coming together to plan development at a larger geographical scale; and a local community working with landowners and developers to identify sites for new housing. An initial review of the support needed by groups undertaking Neighbourhood Planning process found that:

- Support needs vary, and so each group needs an assessment of their needs and the provision of tailored support, with a commitment of support over 2 years
- In the early stages most groups need support with capacity building and community engagement before more technical support on the planning process
- Sharing learning between groups is vital – both through the provision of online resources and through facilitated peer to peer learning
- Training needs to be provided, and it needs to be tailored to the groups' needs rather than to the delivery organisations' agendas.

Resources:

Locality website:

<http://locality.org.uk/>

Neighbourhood Planning portal:

<http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/>

Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Planning website:

<http://www.dpnf.org.uk/>

Review of support needed by groups doing Neighbourhood Planning:

http://planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/sites/planning.communityknowledgehub.org.uk/files/supporting_neighbourhood_planning_lessons_learned.pdf

Review of the impact of the first Neighbourhood Plans in rural England:

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=18469#Description>

Shropshire Place Plans

★ A tailored approach from Shropshire

Shropshire Council has developed a network of Place Plans which cover the major market towns and their surrounding hinterland. The 18 Place Plans bring together the 80+ parish and community plans which exist in Shropshire. The Plans are focussed on delivery of the other plans which make up the local planning context, and are part of the Council's approach to delivering sustainable places through locality working. The new Neighbourhood Plans sit underneath the Place Plans (operating at a smaller geographical scale).

The Place Plans bring together what are seen as the top down infrastructure and investment requirements that are necessary to achieve the growth levels identified in the Local Plan, with the bottom up community priorities and aspirations that are critical in effectively targeting investment to achieve local community benefit. The Plans are not about whether a community wants a development, but about how a development can be made best use of to provide benefit to a community. The Place Plans are designed to:

- Identify the local requirements we will ask developers to contribute to through developer contributions
- Enable discussions between developers and local communities about their needs
- Help communities to develop the work plans for their areas, including Parish plans or emerging Neighbourhood Plans
- Provide a focus for service delivery
- Identify opportunities to bid for external funding
- Provide transparency to local communities on local investment priorities

All the Place Plans are based around the same themes: housing and cohesive, sustainable communities; economic investment and opportunity; social and community infrastructure; environment and climate change and transport and accessibility.

The Place Planning process is led by the Local Authority, and involved the local community through engagement events. Each place has a single toolkit event where the community are asked to provide a snapshot of how they think their locality is functioning, based on their responses to a series of statements. For example, on the subject of transport, community members are asked to discuss: are people able to travel to work to shop and to access education and other services using either public or other alternatives or are they reliant on the private car?

People are asked to rate their community against a set of criteria which produces a colour wheel, which is a tool to provide a visual expression of their discussions. Participants are also asked their views on the levels of importance they place on local activities, facilities, services or infrastructure, for instance better public transport.

Resources:

Shropshire Place Plans:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/planningpolicy.nsf/open/1491504211DB408180257922004CC907>

Atmosphere, Landscape and Horizon – CREW approach

★ Understanding the lived experience of people in places

CREW's approach to community auditing enables people to gather an understanding of the lived experience of people in place. The Atmosphere, Landscape, Horizon (ALH) model can be used to gather a baseline to support community planning or to evaluate regeneration activities. The model is based on a holistic understanding of poverty which looks beyond income levels to the total experience of living in poverty, the day to day lived experience of people in poverty.

The three components of the ALH framework are:

- Atmosphere – how a place feels, is it a good place to live?
- Landscape – the physical elements of a place and how they impact on quality of life
- Horizon – how people in that place connect with the outside world

Although distinct, these three concepts should be seen as connected, fitting together like cogs whereby if you turn one cog you turn them all. For example, improving green space (Landscape) can encourage people to spend time outside talking to each other (Atmosphere), which could then increase someone's confidence to enrol on a course at college in the next town (Horizon).

The ALH model combines quantitative data on key indicators such as crime rates along with qualitative data on the lived experience of place such as community perception of crime. Secondary sources of data can be found in places such as Stats Wales, and the toolkit provides a step-by-step approach to collecting the primary data using a Placecheck, community survey, focus groups and critical person interviews.

Placecheck is a simple process of community audit which can be carried out by anyone without expert facilitation. It was initially developed by the Urban Design Alliance, and is now supported by English Heritage. The process is based around a walkabout, or walk and talk, where people who are interested in the future of a place walk around together exploring what they like about the place, what they don't and what they might want to change. The Placecheck model provides a wealth of prompt questions which a group might want to consider as part of their walkabout. This is followed up by a discussion of the key points at a sit down meeting, and the development of some next steps around how they might influence change and who else needs to be involved in the process. An external evaluation of Placecheck highlights the way the method can be used by any groups of people, regardless of skill, to take stock of their own community.

The ALH model recommends carrying out a Placecheck, which could also be supported by a survey of local views. CREW provide a questionbank of potential questions which could be used in a survey – however they come with a health warning that many communities have been surveyed extensively, and so there may be suitable information gathered already and many communities would not welcome another survey. It may be possible to gather fresh information in a more informal way – through conversations as part of the walkabout, or holding informal focus groups with existing groups such as a youth club or at the local pub. Critical person interviews can also be used to gather the views of local stakeholders.

The results of the ALH review can be collated in a report and used to stimulate further discussion and action planning.

Resources:

CREW toolkit and questionbank:

http://www.regenwales.org/resource_17_The-Atmosphere--Landscape-and-Horizon-Regeneration-Impact-Toolkit

Placecheck website:

<http://www.placecheck.info/>

Strong Roots – Cynnal Cymru, One Voice Wales and The Climate Change Consortium Wales

★ Town and Community Councils taking the lead in Wales

Strong Roots is a project from One Voice Wales, Cynnal Cymru–Sustain Wales and The Climate Change Consortium Wales, which aims to increase the capacity of town and community councils to both lead and support sustainable development, and to partner with the Welsh Government to create sustainable, resilient and low carbon communities. The partnership has produced a guide to sustainability and a training package to increase the understanding of sustainability among town and community councils. The guide introduces some of the key issues around sustainability, provides prompts to start discussions within councils about how those issues are relevant to the places they represent and lists examples and resources for tackling these issues.

The Strong Roots project website also provides case studies of community councils who have embraced community planning in partnership with their local community and other organisations in order to deliver sustainable development:

Radyr and Morganstown Community Plan

Radyr and Morganstown, on the outskirts of Cardiff, have experienced rapid growth through new housing. The community council, together with the local residents' association, aimed to use community planning as a way of increasing cohesion between the new and old housing developments by creating a clear, shared vision of where the community wanted to go and how people could get involved.

The steering group identified three main areas of work: data collection to capture the needs and views of the community; developing the structure of the plan; and reviewing existing and needed facilities. The group secured support from Cardiff University and the City Council who supported the group in gathering data about existing and planned developments, and in conducting and analysing a large scale community questionnaire. This research gave the group a sound evidence base from which to form their plan.

The outcomes from the planning process include:

- Creating a guide listing all the clubs, resources and facilities available in the area
- Key local activities were identified including the management of green spaces, environmental events, music festivals and other celebrations, and the community website and Church rooms were identified as key local resources
- Unusually for this kind of process, community food growing and renewable energy did not come up in the community plan

Unlike the Neighbourhood Planning process in England, community plans in Wales hold no legal weight within the planning system.

Although there has been no formal evaluation, the stakeholders involved in producing the plan are confident that the process of collecting local views and producing the plan and the resources booklet has increased community cohesion. They put their success down to:

- Skilled and experience volunteers, especially with experience of project management
- A strong relationship between the Community Council and the Residents' Association
- Access to technical support from Cardiff University and Cardiff Council

Resilience planning in Cardiff

Cardiff 's Emergency Planning Team joined forces with Environment Agency Wales to find ways to engage local communities in developing resilience to emergencies, including the impacts of climate change such as flooding. The Team work with schools, community councils, tenants associations and any other organisation that is willing to engage. They work to increase the acceptance that emergencies might happen and to encourage people to have a plan as to what they would do until help from the emergency services arrives. The Community Councils are seen as a key way of getting information and enthusiasm out to the communities on the outskirts of the city.

The Council promotes the UK Government's guide to community resilience planning which provides a toolkit to guide communities through developing an emergency plan. This process includes:

- Identifying who your community is and who are the key individuals and groups that need to be involved – hold an open meeting inviting people to get involved
- Choose Community Emergency Champions and a planning group who will develop the plan and liaise with the key services
- Gather information on risks and vulnerable groups
- Assess your community's skills and resources – is there a need for training on specific issues, resources to enable activities to be carried out, where are your key locations for safety, who are your key contacts
- Communicate and practice your plan
- Review and update your plan at regular intervals

Creating a biodiversity plan

Llandough Community Council in the Vale of Glamorgan have formed a partnership with the local school, Guides and Scout groups, the Church and other local volunteers to develop a biodiversity plan inspired by Biodiversity Action Plans. Using funding from the local precept and support from the Local Authority's ecologist, a biodiversity action group has developed a plan for all of the green space managed by the community council which aims to increase the biodiversity of these sites.

So far, the outcomes include: planting of native species, installing bird boxes and creation of winter shelters for animals and insects, planting vegetation to attract pollinators and the control of invasive species.

They put their success down to:

- An inspired and inspiring councillor who proposed the idea of a biodiversity plan, and a confident and ambitious council that has supported and championed the project

- An historic move by the council which led to them managing significant pieces of green space in the community

Resources:

Strong Roots project website:

<http://www.cynnalcymru.com/project/strong-roots>

Strong Roots case studies:

<http://www.sustainwales.com/sites/default/files/Strong%20Roots%20Case%20Studies%2019.7.12.pdf>

Radyr and Morganstown Community Plan case study:

<http://www.cynnalcymru.com/casestudy/radyr-and-morganstown-community-council-community-plan>

Radyr and Morganstown community website:

<http://www.radyr.org.uk/home>

Cardiff Council's resilience planning case study:

<http://www.cynnalcymru.com/library/community-resilience-plans-innovative-approach-cardiff-council>

Cardiff Council's community resilience information:

http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/content.asp?nav=2870,3141,6394&parent_directory_id=2865

UK Government Guidance on community resilience planning:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-resilience-resources-and-tools>

Energy Descent Action Plans – Transition Towns Network

★ Taking a creative approach to make a positive vision happen

Energy Descent Action Plans (EDAPs) come from the Transition movement. There is no fixed methodology about how they should be developed or what they should turn out like, rather it is an evolving process developing through trial and error and shared experience within the Transition Community. Developing these action plans is a community based activity, which, according to the Transition Network website, is “as much about storytelling and visioning as it is planning”. Some of the early EDAPs were developed by just a small group within the community (students, or the core Transition group) but the method is developing to become more engaging with the wider community.

Most EDAPs are based around creating a positive vision of what a place might be like in the future, say in 2030, and working backwards to create the steps needed to achieve that vision. Although described as Energy Descent Action Plans, they encompass all aspects of becoming a resilient place in times of energy crisis, climate change and economic challenge, including food, transport, economy, skills.

The Transition Network suggests that to produce an EDAP a community will need:

- A dedicated group of people, involving and representing the views of as many other organisations in the community as possible (the local council, schools, other environmental groups, community groups and so on)
- Funds (these seem to be for delivering engagement events)
- Strong Transition working groups who pull together
- Plenty of early awareness raising
- Good web facilities to enable discussion of ideas, joint editing of drafts, promotion of events

The town of Worthing has started the process of creating an EDAP, which features on the Transition Network website. Their process developed over two years and was as follows:

Step 1: Creation of a Transition Timeline for Worthing - a fold-out board on to which people added post-it notes was showcased at every opportunity for over a year, asking people to add a note to a year between 2011 and 2031

Step 2: Visualising a positive future – Transition Town Worthing ran sessions which have taken people on a guided visualisation to a future where the transition to a low-carbon economy has happened. For Worthing, it was important that the vision was positive, something hopeful to aim for

Step 3: Oral histories – there was great enthusiasm amongst members for ‘heritage’ issues and so the group used oral histories to gain insight into how Worthing operated before cheap fossil fuels

Step 4: Views from 2030 in the *Post Carbon Gazette* – Transition Town Worthing’s monthly newsletter has featured numerous articles based on food, transport, reskilling, and energy, written from the viewpoint of someone in a successful decarbonised future

Step 5: Setting up a Transition Tales group – the group wanted to provide a creative outlet for people to express their ideas, including agony-aunt columns, cartoons, poems and news stories

Step 6: Collecting data – some of the Transition group were keen to collect statistics and evidence on trends

Step 7: Several EDAP events – including films, a launch evening and an EDAP World Café to carry out some backcasting with the timeline, with local councillors and business leaders invited

Step 8: Writing funding bids – the group would like to publish the EDAP and distribute as widely as possible and need some funding to make this happen

Some of the ambitions within their EDAP include:

- 2011-2015 – get local shops to keep their doors shut in winter, start a car club, set up Worthing Edible in Bloom, everyday farmers’ market
- 2016-2020 – major retrofit programme for Worthing’s homes, tax on lawns introduced, all children can safely walk/cycle to school, Worthing wind farm opens
- 2021-2025 – 50% of residents work from home, Tesco car park turned in to allotments, Worthing declared a ‘waste free zone’
- 2026-2030 – small local businesses thriving with a local currency, young people educated in sustainable technologies, cooperative farms producing organic fruit and vegetables

Resources:

Transition Network’s approach to Energy Descent Action Planning:

<http://www.transitionnetwork.org/ingredients/building/energy-descent-action-plans>

Worthing EDAP:

<http://transitiontownworthing.ning.com/page/energy-descent-action-plan-for>

Worthing EDAP blog:

<http://energydescentforbeginners.wordpress.com>

Totnes’ EDAP as an online book:

<http://totnesedap.org.uk/>

Creating Sustainable Places – The Welsh Development Agency

★Standards for regeneration from the Welsh Development Agency

The former Welsh Development Agency (WDA) developed the Creating Sustainable Places guide to improve the design process and support sustainable development. The guide sets out the WDA's expectations for regeneration and development projects in terms of community engagement and sustainable design. All projects which the WDA was asked to support were expected to meet these standards.

The guide sets out 6 principles for effective community engagement:

- Partnership – development must be based on strategies developed in partnership between the organisations active in a place and the people who live there. Partnerships may already exist, or new ones may be needed. There will be variety of the makeup of partnerships across Wales, but they must all include representatives from local communities and businesses, local authorities and other public sector agencies or voluntary bodies, and should represent diverse social, economic and environmental interests.
- Community engagement and participation – local communities (the people who live and work in a place and the organisations who represent them) must be involved from the beginning of a regeneration process. The capacity of partnership members should be increased to enable as wide a spectrum of people to participate as possible. Equality and diversity issues must be taken in to account. Challenging decisions and opinions coming from the community must not be ignored.
- Vision – any regeneration process needs a vision which people can engage with. The vision needs to recognise the benefits of a particular place and of where that place is heading.
- Sustainable solutions – developments must contribute to the sustainable development ambitions of the Welsh Government and must be supported by a rigorous triple bottom line assessment. Where conflicts arise between different interests, creative solutions must be found.
- Local delivery – actions must be clearly identified and assigned to local actors, including individuals, groups and businesses, and capacity built to enable local actors to engage in the delivery of regeneration activities.
- Evaluation and review – clear targets needs to be set, and they need to be reviewed regularly to ensure the desired outcomes are being reached.

Resources:

Creating Sustainable Places is archived here:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20080306073937/new.wales.gov.uk/topics/sustainabledevelopment/publications/creatingsustainableplaces?lang=en>

Other sources of ideas and information:

Lottery-funded toolkit for community planning – including a section on taking an outcomes approach – based on pilots in Northern Ireland:

<http://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/>

Plan Local's resources for involving people in community energy:

<http://www.planlocal.org.uk/pages/getting-people-involved>

Collection of international case studies, tools and resources:

<http://www.communityplanning.net/index.php>