



Community Plans

Supplementary Planning Guidance
December 2016

Contents

Part One: What is a Community Plan?

1. Introduction.....	3
2. What is a Community Plan?	3
3. What can a Community Plan achieve?	4
4. What is the status of a Community Plan?	5
5. Why prepare a Community Plan?.....	6

Part Two: How to prepare a Community Plan

6. Part Two: Introduction.....	7
7. Main stages of preparing a Community Plan	8
8. Key requirements of the Community Plan process	10
9. Good practice	11

Part One: What is a Community Plan?

1. Introduction

1.1. This Supplementary Planning Guidance explains what a Community Plan is, what they can achieve, and the value of preparing a Community Plan. It outlines the main stages and requirements to help communities produce their own Community Plan.

1.2. The Strategic Land Use Plan (approved by the States in November 2011) introduces the concept of Community Plans to Guernsey. It requires the Island Development Plan to consider the specific role of Community Plans for the Local Centres and to set out the community's role in influencing development within a specific area.

2. What is a Community Plan?

2.1. A Community Plan is a document which sets out how those who live, work and spend time in an area would like to see their local area change in the future. The Community Plan must comply with, and will not override, the policies of the Island Development Plan (2016) and any other statutory Plan. A Community Plan cannot override any provision of the planning legislation.

2.2. Once approved by the Development & Planning Authority, the Community Plan will be taken into account during the assessment of planning applications. However, it will not have the same status as the policies of the Island Development Plan (2016) and other statutory plans where the Authority must refuse permission if proposals are more than a minor departure from the statutory plans. Also, the Community Plans policy in the Island Development Plan (2016) states that the Authority will not resist proposals which do not conform to the Community Plan but otherwise do accord with the policies of the Island Development Plan (2016) and any relevant statutory plans. It seems unlikely that this would arise often in practice as the Community Plan would have to conform with the Island Development Plan (2016) and other relevant statutory plans.

2.3. In considering a planning application the Authority may also need to consider other material considerations under the planning legislation in addition to those set out in Plan policies.

2.4. However, Community Plans provide a valuable opportunity for members of the public

to come together and express the needs and aspirations of the local community and to decide on what they want to improve and achieve in their areas. It can cover all aspects of community life including services, facilities, roads, community safety, access to health services, playgrounds, open spaces, social clubs and many more topics.

2.5. It is envisaged that Community Plans will be produced by the community for areas within the identified Local Centres. However, they could also be produced for other areas of the Island where a community has come together to identify, within the constraints of the planning legislation and the policies in the Island Development Plan (2016) and any relevant Subject Plan or Local Planning Brief, how an area might be shaped in the future.

2.6. The purpose of a Community Plan is not to stop development, but to present an opportunity for a community to set out a vision for improvements and change to a particular area.

3. What can a Community Plan achieve?

3.1. The scale and scope of a Community Plan will vary depending on its purpose. For example it could simply involve improvements to the public realm, future development concepts for existing housing estates, how development might be used for example Co-housing¹ or it may aim to provide a comprehensive vision for the future development of a Local Centre. Once approved by the Authority as Supplementary Planning Guidance, the aspirations in a Community Plan would be taken into account by the Planning Service when assessing proposals for development within the area and would inform potential applicants on the general form of development which would have the support of the local community prior to the submission of a planning application.

3.2. Community Plans could be used to:

- Provide a vision for an area describing the sort of place the Community would wish to be, how it might be used and what it may look like, including establishing local needs and aspirations, highlighting issues and priorities, identifying existing key services and facilities to be retained and additional services and facilities which are desired;
- Bring about enhancements to the built and natural environment such as improvements to the public realm, public walkways, traffic calming and landscaping;
- Establish how an area might be altered over time, for example residents of a single storey housing estate might decide upon a design approach to create first floor accommodation for the whole estate.

¹ Co-housing communities are intentional communities which are created and run by their residents. Each household has a self-contained, personal and private home but residents come together to manage their community, share facilities and activities such as eating together.

3.3. Community Plans may also include particular issues affecting the community and resultant actions which would not require planning permission but are integral to the wider vision of the community. For example, issues of funding and management of public spaces or community facilities.

3.4. To implement Community Plans and address issues raised by them, Community Plans may include the development of short term goals and actions which might be achieved through private sector investment and/or by the private sector and the community working in partnership with the States. A Community Plan could also identify ways of working with other organisations in order to influence the coordination of investment and spending from existing budgets. For example, it could identify how to work with the States of Guernsey to ensure programmed road surfacing/repair works are able to deliver the objectives of a Community Plan that identifies certain changes to the public highway, where this is compatible with the overall objectives of the States.

3.5. The Authority will not resist development proposals that would otherwise be acceptable when assessed against the policies of the Island Development Plan (2016) and any other relevant Subject Plan or Local Planning Brief. A Community Plan must be in accordance with the policies of the Island Development Plan (2016) and any other relevant statutory plan. For example, a draft Community Plan which proposed the development of new build housing beyond the Main and Local Centres would not be approved by the Authority.

4. What is the status of a Community Plan?

4.1. A Community Plan will be a non-statutory planning document. It must comply with, and will not override, the policies of the Island Development Plan (2016), any relevant Subject Plan or Local Planning Brief. It cannot override any provisions of the planning legislation. Where a Community Plan complies with the Island Development Plan (2016) and any other relevant statutory plan and the provisions of the planning legislation and is demonstrated, through public consultation, to have been the subject of satisfactory community engagement and agreement, the Development & Planning Authority may approve it as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Once approved, the Authority will take the aspirations in it into account in assessing proposals for development within the area to which it relates.

4.2. This means that, once adopted, the Community Plan will be taken into account during

the pre-application negotiation stages and general negotiations with developers as well as during the assessment of submitted planning applications. However, it will not have the same status as the Island Development Plan (2016) and other statutory plans where the Authority must refuse permission if proposals are more than a minor departure from those plans. The Community Plans policy in the Island Development Plan (2016) also states that the Authority will not resist proposals which do not conform with the Community Plan but otherwise do accord with the policies of the Island Development Plan and any relevant statutory plans. As a Community Plan must conform with the Island Development Plan (2016) it is unlikely that this would happen often in practice.

4.3. The Development & Planning Authority must also consider additional matters under the planning legislation when considering planning applications.

4.4. Community Plans will be a complement to and not a replacement for the existing statutory plans in Guernsey which have a special status set out in the planning legislation. However, Community Plans will be able to set a vision for an area and provide guidance for development if they accord with the policies of the Island Development Plan (2016) and any other relevant statutory plan.

5. Why prepare a Community Plan?

5.1. As well as guiding the assessment of proposals for development within the area to which it relates, a Community Plan aims to influence the thinking and actions of the private sector, service providers and States' Committees by providing evidence of the type of things that people want in their communities and what they see as important.

5.2. Community Plans are produced at a very local level, thereby representing those actually living, working and spending time in a particular area. Local people are an invaluable source of knowledge and wisdom about their surroundings that, if harnessed, can result in better decision making. In addition, by providing a plan for the future that is based on wide community involvement, it gives service providers more accurate information which can then be used to shape services to meet local need.

5.3. Community Plans could also result in the following positive outcomes:

- Enabling communities to come together to discuss their physical environment and to look at holistic solutions to existing problems or to understand neighbours' aspirations and expectations for a local area;
- Enabling local community groups to understand the decision making process affecting

the future of their area and taking a proactive role in shaping its future;

- The process of working together can help to create a sense of community and can encourage community actions;
- They can help people feel more attached to an environment they have helped create. They will therefore manage and maintain it better, reducing the likelihood of vandalism, neglect and subsequent need for costly replacement;
- They can encourage partnership working by highlighting projects that need help from the community itself or from external agencies;
- They could contribute towards quicker planning decisions as people gain a better understanding of the options available and are likely to start thinking positively.

Part Two: How to prepare a Community Plan

6. Part Two: Introduction

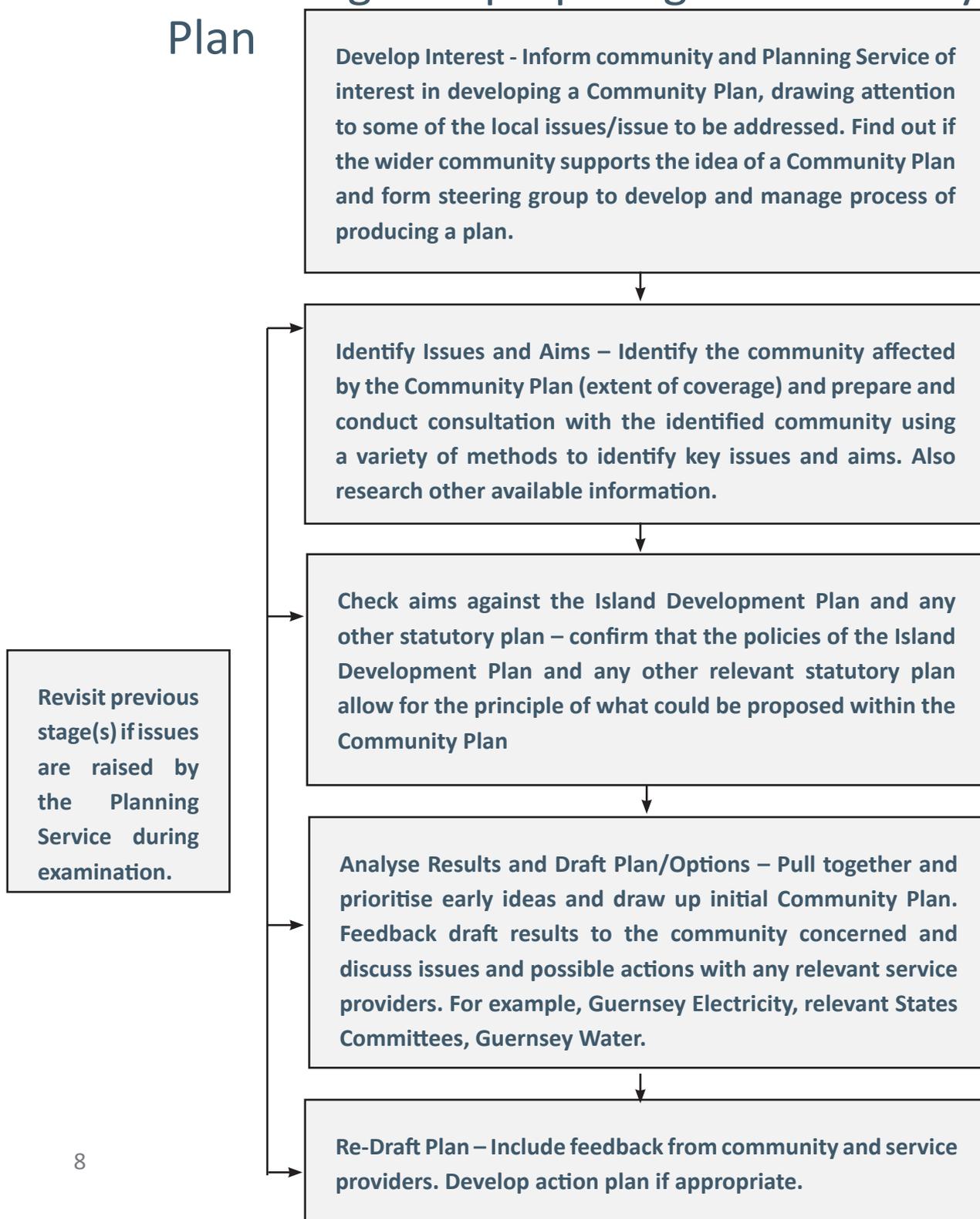
6.1. Where a local community elects to produce a Community Plan, it is the responsibility of that community to prepare the plan. To make your Community Plan a success, you need a group of enthusiastic community volunteers that will lead the process and bring others on board, right at the outset.

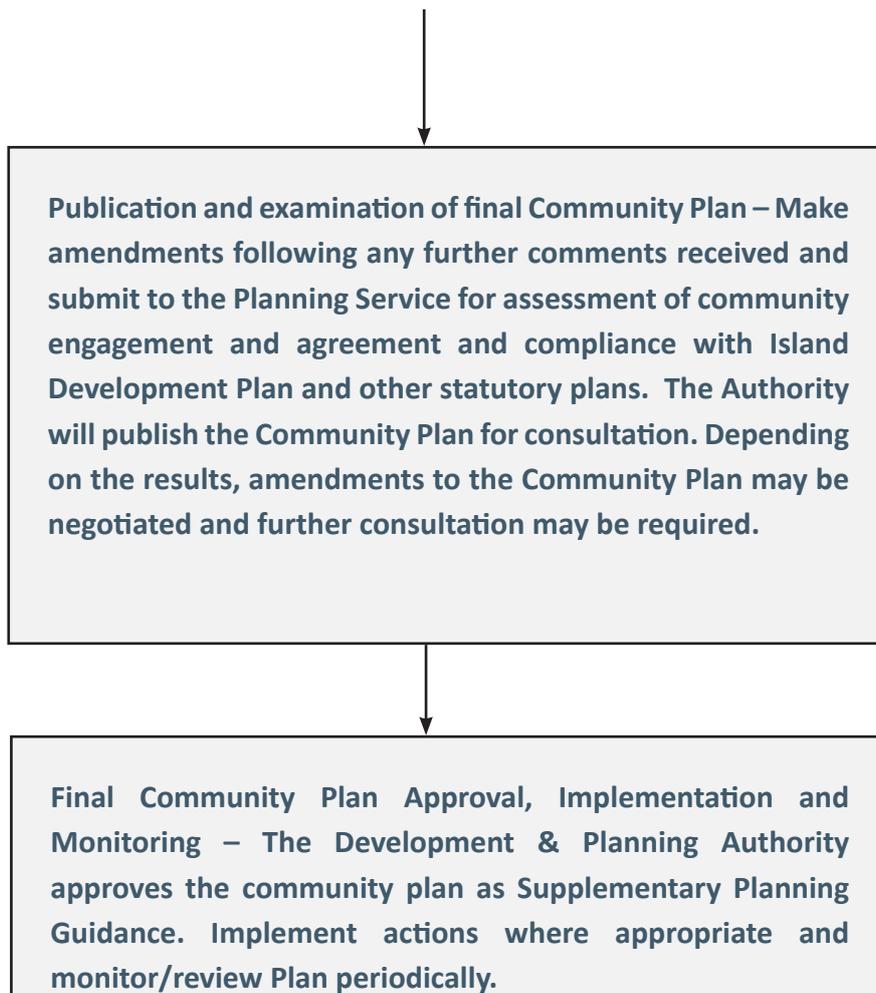
6.2. The Planning Service will generally not be involved with the production of the Community Plan but will be available to provide support and advice where necessary including methods of consultation; identifying principal planning policies and legislation; providing information on key contacts, stakeholders and other best practice plan-making activity; providing sources of information and checking the Community Plan prior to formal submission.

6.3. There are several steps to work through to ensure that any Community Plan is based on the needs and views of the whole community. It might be useful to initially draw up a plan for preparing the Community Plan (rather like a project plan) which identifies key stages, actions and an indicative timetable for the various stages. Figure 1 outlines the main stages of an approach that could be adopted to prepare a Community Plan but it is up to the community to decide how to conduct the Community Plan making process.

6.4. Depending on the purpose of the Community Plan, following the initial public consultation stage, it may be appropriate to develop an action plan to deliver specific projects that aim to address identified issues, including timescales for delivery. At this stage, it is recommended to discuss your findings with service providers to ensure that actions identified are appropriate and realistic and to find out areas in which you can get assistance. Service providers could include States' Committees, voluntary agencies or private sector companies.

7. Main stages of preparing a Community Plan





8. Key requirements of the Community Plan process

8.1. Whatever process is undertaken there are some key requirements that will need to be fulfilled. The fundamental principle of the Community Plan is that it is a plan by the community for the community. It is essential that the Community Plan is developed after detailed consultation with the whole identified community to make sure that the final Community Plan reflects its needs, views and interests. Consequently, appropriate public consultation, including the methods used, is vital in order to get views from as many people as possible.

8.2. Community engagement is also important to develop consensus, to create and maintain community support and public confidence and to avoid misconceptions of the purpose and scope of the Community Plan. It helps achieve better informed outcomes and it can help to avoid conflict, delay and costs at later stages. Community engagement should be undertaken using a range of methods such as public meetings, workshops, exhibitions, questionnaires and a community website.

8.3. For the Community Plan to be accepted by the Development & Planning Authority as Supplementary Planning Guidance and to be taken into consideration during the assessment of development proposals, the Community Plan must demonstrate that it has been the subject of a satisfactory level of community engagement and agreement through public consultation. This includes providing clear evidence in the Community Plan of:

- who was consulted,
- how people engaged,
- the feedback received, and
- how comments received were incorporated in the Community Plan.

8.4. The Development & Planning Authority will publish the Community Plan for a period of 6 weeks to gather further feedback on the final Plan (this may include consultation with other States' Committees, relevant stakeholders and other community or special interest groups as appropriate to the scale, nature and content of the Community Plan) to confirm community agreement and to verify that there are no reasonable objections to the Community Plan. If the Authority is not satisfied that the Community Plan has been subject to satisfactory community engagement and agreement, or reasonable objections come to light, this will be raised with the community who will then be responsible for addressing those concerns. In addition, for the Authority to approve the Community Plan, it must be in

accordance with the policies of the Island Development Plan, any other relevant statutory plan and the provisions of the planning legislation.

8.5. Once the Community Plan is accepted, it is time to implement any actions identified by the local community and to periodically review/monitor the progress and impact of the Community Plan.

9. Good practice

Publicity and Awareness: Publicise the proposed Community Plan as widely as possible using different media right at the beginning of the process;

Local Partnerships: Identify key partners and stakeholders who can provide easier access and support in involving residents, the business community, hard-to-engage communities, etc.;

Front Loading: Community engagement should be undertaken before work commences on the Community Plan (this is called front-loading). The purpose of the first stages of community engagement is to help define issues and aims for the Community Plan and to inform an overall vision;

Avoid Tokenism: The purpose of undertaking community engagement is to inform the preparation of the content of the Community Plan. If the outcomes have already been determined, then community engagement is tokenistic (marketing);

Be Creative: Community engagement needs to engage people. It should be stimulating and enjoyable. Too often it is dull and inaccessible;

Manage Expectations: Too often, community engagement exercises raise unrealistic expectations, leading to disappointment and cynicism. It is necessary to explain the scope and limitations of the planning system and the role and status of Community Plans, in particular that they are a means to an end, not the end itself;

Targeting: Whilst some people will naturally want to get involved in Community Plans, with other people targeting will be necessary. This could include the elderly, young people, and other hard-to-engage groups;

Accessibility: Careful thought needs to be given to make events accessible, including location, timing, media, format, etc. Events should be informal and unthreatening.

Community Plans SPG 2016

Contact Us for further information and advice at: Planning Service, Sir Charles Frossard House, St Peter Port. GY1 1FH Telephone 01481 717200 Email planning@gov.gg

Have you visited our website? Go to www.gov.gg/planning_transport_waste for additional guidance material and other planning information, including how to book a pre-application discussion.

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is issued by the Development & Planning Authority to assist understanding of the provisions of the Island Development Plan (2016) and, where applicable, relevant legislation, by offering detailed guidance but is not intended to be exhaustive or a substitute for the full text of legislation or the policies within the Island Development Plan (2016). This SPG does not form part of the Island Development Plan (2016). It represents the Development & Planning Authority's interpretation of certain provisions of States of Guernsey policy or legislation. The guidance is merely indicative of the Development & Planning Authority's likely approach to Community Plans and is not binding on the Development and Planning Authority. This SPG does not prejudice the Development & Planning Authority's discretion to decide any particular case differently according to its merits and it does not relieve the Development & Planning Authority of any obligation, restriction or liability imposed by or under the Land Planning and Development (Guernsey) Law, 2005. Copies of the text of the Island Development Plan (2016) are available from Sir Charles Frossard House and also available electronically online at www.gov.gg/planningpolicy. Copies of legislation are available from the Greffe. Electronic copies are also available at www.guernseylegalresources.gg. Substantive queries concerning the guidance or a specific site should be addressed to the Planning Service by telephone on 717200. The Development & Planning Authority does not accept any liability for loss or expense arising out of the provision of, or reliance on, any advice given. You are recommended to seek advice from an independent professional advisor where appropriate.