

reach

Your Guide to...

Rural Projects

HOW TO DEVELOP ONE

A sustainable rural community is often built on cross-cutting and inclusive ideas that respond to the reality of living in rural areas.

Rural Project Development requires a good deal of thought so that your project stands the test of time and makes a positive step towards making rural areas more sustainable.

www.bridgendreach.org.uk
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Step by Step

This chart is easy to use, follow each step.

Once you have read each issue, tick the boxes as you go along to track your progress:

You're not quite sure what to do next

You need to do more work on this issue but you know what needs to be done and who to talk to

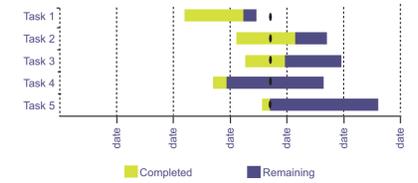
You're confident you've got this issue covered

Doing this will help you see what work needs to be done. It will also help the reach team and the organisations we work in partnership with know what support you need and who is best to provide it.

As you go through developing your project you'll also be able to see the progress you're making.

Some tools that may help

GANTT Chart



SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

1 The Need

-
- What are the problems or issues faced in the community?
-
- Which problem(s) are you seeking to address?
-
- Why is this a priority?
-
- What research and evidence is there to support the need for the project?
-
- How will the project meet the identified need?
-
- Who will benefit from the project?
-
- Who has been consulted?
-
- How have they been consulted?
-
- How have those who may be the hardest to reach been consulted and involved?

2 The Detail

-
- What is the aim of the project?
-
- What are the key objectives of the project?
-
- What are the project outcomes - the differences that the project will make?
-
- How will the project and activities meet the aim and achieve the outcomes?
-
- What gaps in existing provision will the project fill?
-
- What other options have been considered for the project?
-
- How will those intended to benefit from the project be involved in setting up, running and contributing to the project?
-
- Has a Project Plan been compiled?
-
- Are the necessary policies and procedures in place?
-
- Are there any legal and regulatory issues relevant to the project?

3 The Sustainability

-
- Whilst not all of the following may be relevant, have you considered how your project is impacted by or impacts on:
-
- Tackling climate change and adapting to it
-
- Preserving and enhancing biodiversity and green spaces and using sustainable design
-
- Reducing consumption of natural resources and managing waste sustainably
-
- Buying green, ethical and local goods and services
-
- Supporting the local economy
-
- Providing training and educational opportunities
-
- Promoting healthy, safe and sustainable communities and lifestyles
-
- Equality

4 The Money

-
- Has a budget been set for the project?
-
- Has cash flow been considered?
-
- Is there any finance in place for the project?
-
- Have there been any fundraising activities?
-
- What financial procedures are in place to manage the money?
-
- Are you aware of the most common reasons why applications for funding fail?
-
- Are there any legal or regulatory issues to consider?
-
- Will the project be financially sustainable?
-
- What other resources might be needed?

5 The People

-
- What skills do the project group need to have to make the project a success?
-
- How are other people involved in the project?
-
- How will you encourage new people to get involved with your project?
-
- How will those involved in the project communicate with one another?
-
- How will you end people's involvement in your project if you need to do so?
-
- How will volunteers be involved in the project?

6 The Progress

-
- What information about your project might you need to communicate?
-
- What will be the best way(s) for you to communicate?
-
- Who will you be communicating with?
-
- Do you need to market your project, and if so how will this be done?
-
- How will the project be monitored?
-
- How will the monitoring information be used?
-
- How will you know the project outcomes are being met?
-
- How will the project be evaluated?
-
- How will the evaluation information be used?
-
- What will happen when the project ends?

7 Legal & Regulatory Issues

-
- To a greater or lesser degree there may be a number of legal and regulatory issues that affect your project.
- These may relate to:
-
- People
-
- Money
-
- Health and Safety
-
- Equal Opportunities
-
- Insurance
-
- Criminal Record Checks
-
- Policies and procedures
-
- Necessary permissions and consents, e.g. planning

reach

Your Guide to...

Rural Action Plans

HOW TO DEVELOP ONE

A Rural Action Plan is a process through which people can voice their opinions on what action they would like to see taken in rural areas – action that relates to specific issues or action relevant to specific communities.

A Rural Action Plan recognises that rural areas are different to urban ones but doesn't lose sight of the fact that neither exists nor develops in isolation. A rural action plan will highlight what currently happens and what needs to be done to keep it happening as well as highlighting what's missing and what could be done to address that. When the process is complete it may identify actions that can be taken by individuals, actions that need support of others and actions that need some money.

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Doing this will help you see what work needs to be done. It will also help the reach team and the organisations we work in partnership with know what support you need and who is best to provide it. As you go through developing your project you'll also be able to see the progress you're making.

There are 7 steps in developing a successful rural action plan, and reach can assist you tick all the boxes every step of the way.

Some things to consider before you start

Timescale:

There's no minimum or maximum time to develop your community action plan although you should expect it to take somewhere around 12 months. This will vary and may be affected by:

- Seasonal and school holidays
- The time that people have available
- The amount of consultation that you do
- If you decide to buy in some help
- The size of your community
- The complexity of the issues facing your community

Finance:

The process of developing a community action plan will cost money. There are a range of options for funding the cost, and reach can advise you on on this. Some of the potential costs may be:

- Telephone and postage
- Producing maps
- Consultation processes, e.g. questionnaires
- Hire of venues
- Refreshments
- Publicity
- Designing, writing and printing your final community action plan

People:

You will need a range of people with a range of skills to support the development of your community action plan. The tasks will need to be shared out and anyone with the following skills will support the process:

- Conversation skills
- Co-ordinating activities
- Analytical skills
- Listening skills
- Information gathering
- Knowledge of the history of your community
- Fundraising skills
- Catering skills and much, much more

Contacts

A range of organisations will be able to assist you to develop your community action plan to make sure the process is rewarding and the actions achievable and realistic:

- reach
- Your Community Council
- Your local councillors
- Your Local Authority
- Your Local CVC
- The Welsh Government
- Local businesses
- Local community and voluntary organisations
- The police
- The Health Authority
- The Environment Agency
- Local press and media
- Other communities

And many, many others

1

Getting started

Make people aware that you're thinking of doing a rural action plan and see whether others want to get involved.

If others are interested get together to discuss how you're going to develop your rural action plan.

It's at this point you'll want to give some early thought to how much it will cost to create a rural action plan and who you'll need to involve. For more information on this please see the 'some things to consider before you start' section of this document.

You might want to think about who will lead the development of your rural action plan

You will find it valuable in the long term to inform key organisations and authorities as early as possible that you are developing your plan

Use this time to listen to people's views and concerns and find out how they would like to be involved. Contact reach if you would like help with who you should involve.

2

Getting your group together

The group steering your rural action plan should ideally be a cross section of representatives from relevant public, private, voluntary and community organisations and groups.

Initially think in terms of 8-12 people, although this may grow and shrink as the process develops and will vary depending on your issue or community. The group should be made up of the sorts of people your plan will affect.

Agree how you are going to communicate with one another, discuss one another's skills and experiences and agree what each will be doing.

Consider the costs involved in developing your rural action plan and where the money will come from

No one organisation should dominate the group, however it is useful to have a lead. They could be responsible for keeping a track of what's happening, be a central point of contact, keep records and may lead on any applications for money. If there is no one suitable to take on this role reach can help you find a way of forming a group if needed.

At an early stage you will need to start developing:

- Aims - what you want to achieve by developing a rural action plan
- Objectives - why you want to do it
- Activities - how you are going to do it

3

Reaching out to others

Investigate what information and research is already available to avoid repetition.

Identify what gaps there are in the information: are the views of certain groups or organisations missing? Is the information current?

Decide what consultation techniques you want to use to ensure the actions that end up in your action plan are realistic, evidence based and supported rather than unachievable 'pet projects' only relevant to a few people. reach can assist you in a number of ways in relation to your consultation from planning your consultation techniques to supporting you to deliver consultation events and activities to make sure you get a balanced opinion.

Make sure all those who may have a role to play in helping implement potential actions are involved.

Make sure you have enough money, the right skills within your group and enough time to make your consultation meaningful.

Many people are already fatigued by consultation so the last thing you want to do is keep going back to them to ask more and more questions.

Some people may have difficulty getting involved. reach can help you find ways of involving them in the process to strive to make your rural action plan as inclusive as possible.

Make sure all those who may have a role to play in helping implement potential actions are involved. It is advisable to involve as many affected organisations and agencies as you can to increase sharing of information and creation of applicable expectations and actions.

Make sure you talk to as many people as possible about what should go in the action plan. Good consultation is essential to make sure that there is enough support for the plan within the community.

4

Preparing for action

Once you've reached out to others gather together all the information from your consultation.

Key actions and issues should now be appearing

Identify how long these actions might take to achieve and how much they could cost. Are they realistic and achievable actions? Don't set yourself impossible goals. reach can work with you to develop study visits to similar projects elsewhere and through our networks put you in touch with others facing similar issues or looking to implement similar actions.

Identify actions that are achievable in the short, medium and long term.

If an action needs money, identify how it can be paid for. Plan well in advance bearing in mind that it can sometimes take months to gather together the money you may need. You will need a bank account to manage any money you receive.

Identify whether the people involved in your rural action plan have the skills, knowledge and experience needed to take forward your actions and if not who else needs to be involved.

5

Forming your plan

You can now bring all your work together in a draft action plan.

Circulate your draft plan to all the people and organisations that you have consulted with so far to ask for their feedback.

Once feedback has been collected, and any changes made, the plan can be agreed and published.

Carefully consider the design, layout, printing and distribution of your rural action plan. reach can help you with this.

Launch the plan and publicise it widely. Send copies of the final plan to relevant authorities and those you have worked with. Make sure the plan is available to all members of the community.

6

Stick to the plan

Now put your plan into action.

Your group should be communicating regularly, making sure you're keeping to your planned actions.

Break your actions down into smaller tasks if it helps and try to complete them to the agreed deadlines.

If you need to apply for money make sure you give as much detail as possible. Be mindful of funders' guidance notes – put yourself in their shoes.

It is possible that reach can assist you by providing money for certain actions. The project development chart has been developed specifically for you to use as a checklist before submitting an application for money.

Simply having an action plan will help funders to see that there is local support for the project before they make their decision.

Keep working well together with those who can help deliver your rural action plan.

7

We love it when a plan comes together

Monitor and review your plan as you go along.

Make sure you celebrate and publicise your successes.

You may want to evaluate it after a year or so to see if it has achieved what you had hoped and whether it still meets needs. There may be new project ideas coming forward.

Keep people informed about how you are progressing

Remember that success often breeds success