

# Cheltenham Engaging Communities Project Toolkit

2016



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government



**CHEL TENHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Gloucestershire  
Rural Community  
Council  
established in 1920

## Introduction

This toolkit is designed to guide communities in Cheltenham Borough to input to the composition of the Cheltenham Plan- a ‘forward Planning’ document that will be used to determine future planning applications within the Borough. Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) has aspired to encourage proactive contribution by communities to shape the Plan rather than simply relying on reactive contributions through responses to consultations.

Funding from Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) during 2016 has made it possible for Cheltenham Borough Council to further this aspiration and the local charity GRCC (Gloucestershire Rural Community Council) has been commissioned to work in partnership with CBC to support communities through the process of determining and voicing their communities’ aspirations to inform the Plan.

GRCC is using this toolkit as the basis for discussions with community groups (neighbourhood co-ordination groups and parish councils) and to form their approach to gaining widespread community input to determining the aspirations of each neighbourhood or parish. GRCC will also provide practical ‘hands on’ support to help with consultations, facilitate workshops and support to research, analyse and present engagement responses.

Communities will also find that the information gathered through this work will serve as a building block to a community led plans such as a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### Quick reference

GRCC Contacts – 01452 528491 [www.grcc.org.uk](http://www.grcc.org.uk)

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## Finding your way around this toolkit

The toolkit is divided into a number of sections. Parts 1 to 6 will enable each community to produce a community profile to inform the Cheltenham Plan and its policies. Part 7 describes how communities can use this information as the basis for developing a community led plan, including a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Each Part contains guidance and templates to prevent each community having to ‘reinvent the wheel’.

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## Part 1: Research your area to form a Community Profile

A community profile will give an overview of the facilities and characteristics in your area and this part of the toolkit contains two tables. The first table (in Sub section A) contains links to various online resources and statistics which can be used as a starting point. Sub section B) contains a template grid on which you can record information you find.

In the Cheltenham Engaging Communities Project GRCC has provided a Draft Profile as a starting point for each community.

### A) Desktop Research- table of useful sources of information and links

What you want to find out about	Where you'll find it	Link	Comments
Information on the population and housing types in your area	Neighbourhood Statistics section of Office for National Statistics website (see also below)	<a href="http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk">www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk</a>	The left-hand (blue) portal gives you access to in-depth Census information collected in 2011. 1. Enter the area name 2. Select the type of area (for parish councils, select 'Parish'; for wards select 'ward'; for other boundaries, identify the ward(s) that best fit your area and, if necessary, average out the results between two.
Summarised information on population and housing in your area	Neighbourhood Statistics section of Office for National Statistics website (see also above)	<a href="http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk">www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk</a>	The right-hand (green) portal takes a postcode and produces a report displayed across several themed tabs. Unlike the above data, the report uses percentages, making it easier to instantly compare local figures with the district and national averages.
A collection of visually represented statistics by wards and <a href="#">Lower</a>	Understanding Cheltenham	<a href="https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/get/S/howResourceFile.aspx?ResourceID=154">https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/get/S/howResourceFile.aspx?ResourceID=154</a>	Link will open a PDF of this report, which contains borough statistics and information. "Understanding Cheltenham has been produced to provide an understanding of the district and its communities. It looks at the needs of communities and how we expect them to change in the future and assesses current

<a href="#">Super Output Areas (LSOAs)</a> in Cheltenham			and future health and social care needs of the citizens of Cheltenham.”
Planning strategy for the Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and Gloucester area	Joint Core Strategy	<a href="http://www.gct-ics.org/">http://www.gct-ics.org/</a>	The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is a partnership between Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, and Tewkesbury Borough Council, supported by Gloucestershire County Council. The JCS was formed to produce a co-ordinated strategic development plan to show how this area will develop during the period up to 2031. The JCS is steered by officers and elected members from each of the three local authorities.
The current local plan for the borough.	Cheltenham Plan (adopted 2006)	<a href="https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3031/schedule_of_saved_local_plan_policies">https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3031/schedule_of_saved_local_plan_policies</a>	Web page features a link to view and download a PDF version of the Local Plan. It is worth noting that Cheltenham Borough Council are working towards the new Cheltenham Plan, which will replace the 2006 plan. It is the new plan that your consultation will be feeding into.
River catchment and flood plan	Cheltenham Borough Council’s flood map	<a href="http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/776/cheltenhams_flood_zone_map">http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/776/cheltenhams_flood_zone_map</a>	Web page features a link to view and download a PDF version of flood zones map.
Nature conservation and biodiversity	MAGIC interactive map	<a href="http://magic.defra.gov.uk/">http://magic.defra.gov.uk/</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click on ‘Get Started’</li> <li>2. Click on the ‘Designations’ box on the left hand bar.</li> <li>3. Expand ‘Land-based Designations’</li> <li>4. Click on the boxes next to any items in the list that appears to display any designated areas such as Area of National Beauty, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and many other ‘layers’ of mapping.</li> </ol>
Listed buildings	English Heritage Listed Buildings Map Search	<a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search?clearresults=True</a>	An interactive map of all listed buildings in the UK. You can zoom in to view individual locations and then simply click on the marker for a summary of the building’s details and a link to view the full listing.

		<p>or</p> <p><a href="http://maps.glosdistricts.org/map/Aurora.svc/run?script=\Aurora\CBC+ListedBuildings.AuroraScript%24&amp;nocache=1762328048&amp;resize=always&amp;workflow_Id=FindListedBuilding#workflowId=b5b2e14c61f24bf2bb3e548e0a4a0096">http://maps.glosdistricts.org/map/Aurora.svc/run?script=\Aurora\CBC+ListedBuildings.AuroraScript%24&amp;nocache=1762328048&amp;resize=always&amp;workflow_Id=FindListedBuilding#workflowId=b5b2e14c61f24bf2bb3e548e0a4a0096</a></p>	This link takes you to Cheltenham Borough Council's listed buildings map, but this also includes buildings of local interest.
Information on public rights of way in your area	Gloucestershire County Council's Public Rights of Way map	<a href="https://gloucestershire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=B75apJt4Qgo&amp;HideToolbar=1">https://gloucestershire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=B75apJt4Qgo&amp;HideToolbar=1</a>	A customisable, zoomable map displaying all public rights of way in Gloucestershire.
Cycle paths	Sustrans Cycle Map	<a href="http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map?lat=56.54737192673878&amp;lng=-3.142090281250036&amp;zoom=5&amp;route-type=all-routes&amp;filters=">http://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map?lat=56.54737192673878&amp;lng=-3.142090281250036&amp;zoom=5&amp;route-type=all-routes&amp;filters=</a>	Zoomable map of all cycle routes in the UK with a key.
Past and current planning applications	Cheltenham Borough Council's planning portal	<a href="http://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/">http://publicaccess.cheltenham.gov.uk/online-applications/</a>	The 'Advanced Search' option is particularly helpful in narrowing down where and when you wish to focus your planning application search.
Deprivation information	'Indices of Multiple Deprivation' section of Inform Gloucestershire	<a href="https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/viewpage.aspx?c=page&amp;page=-Deprivation">https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/viewpage.aspx?c=page&amp;page=-Deprivation</a> (Requires Adobe Flash to be downloaded on your PC.)	"The Indices of Deprivation 2015 are national measures based on 37 indicators, which highlight characteristics of deprivation such as unemployment, low income, crime and poor access to education and health services." The 'Interactive Report' button leads to an interactive map of the county which reveals, by LSOA, deprivation.
Report on green spaces in Cheltenham from 2015 GRCC	LGS Study	<a href="http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/4178/local_green_space_study_report">http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/downloads/file/4178/local_green_space_study_report</a>	Includes completed toolkits from all communities who engaged with the project, along with a list of all green spaces considered for the project.

project			
Number of vacant housing in Cheltenham	Cheltenham Borough Council's 'Housing performance statistics' page	<a href="http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/995/performance_indicators/3">http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/995/performance_indicators/3</a>	On this page you can view the rates (and types) of vacant housing in the borough, and you can see, on the graphs provided, how the number has changed in recent years.
Report of the most pressing needs of Cheltenham now and in the future	Cheltenham Needs Analysis	<a href="http://www.cheltenhampartnership.org.uk/cheltenhampartnership/downloads/file/693/cheltenham_needs_analysis">http://www.cheltenhampartnership.org.uk/cheltenhampartnership/downloads/file/693/cheltenham_needs_analysis</a>	Similar to 'Understanding Cheltenham' but not as detailed.
Where the Green Belt around Cheltenham lies	MAGIC interactive map	<a href="http://magic.defra.gov.uk/">http://magic.defra.gov.uk/</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click on 'Get Started'</li> <li>2. Expand the 'Designations' box on the left hand bar.</li> <li>3. Expand 'Land-based Designations'</li> <li>4. Expand 'Non-statutory'</li> <li>5. Tick box next to 'Green Belt'.</li> </ol> <p>*Please note that some designations may be subject to change upon adoption of the Joint Core Strategy</p>
The location of any scheduled monuments in your area	MAGIC interactive map	<a href="http://magic.defra.gov.uk/">http://magic.defra.gov.uk/</a>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Click on 'Get Started'</li> <li>2. Expand the 'Designations' box on the left hand bar.</li> <li>3. Expand 'Land-based Designations'</li> <li>4. Expand 'Statutory'</li> <li>5. Tick box next to 'Scheduled Monuments'.</li> </ol>
Footpaths	Gloucestershire County Council interactive map	<a href="https://gloucestershire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=B75apJt4Qgo&amp;HideToolbar=1">https://gloucestershire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=B75apJt4Qgo&amp;HideToolbar=1</a>	Zoomable map of the footpaths throughout Gloucestershire. Further detailed maps can be viewed at Gloucestershire County Council's offices, Shire Hall, Gloucester.
For neighbourhoods in the central	Cheltenham Borough Council	Central Conservation Area Character Appraisals & Management Plans <a href="http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/20002">http://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/info/20002</a>	Information on the conservation areas throughout the borough, the location(s) and what this means in terms of planning etc.

conservation area, details about specific 'character area' management plans		<a href="#">3/conservation/644/cheltenhams_conservation_areas/3</a>	
Which services and facilities are in your area of the borough	Cheltenham Borough Council 'What's in my community?' map	<a href="http://maps.glosdistricts.org/map/Aurora.svc/run?script=\Aurora\CBC-FindNearest.AuroraScript%24&amp;resize=always">http://maps.glosdistricts.org/map/Aurora.svc/run?script=\Aurora\CBC-FindNearest.AuroraScript%24&amp;resize=always</a>	Select an option on the right of the screen to view a particular element. Click on the little markers that appear on the map and a pop-up summary box of that facility/service will appear.
Cheltenham's strategy to maintain and strengthen its economy	Cheltenham economic strategy: developing Cheltenham as a business location	<a href="https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&amp;rct=j&amp;q=&amp;esrc=s&amp;source=web&amp;cd=3&amp;cad=rja&amp;uact=8&amp;ved=0ahUKEwixnaqXuvXMAhWHB8AKHa-MD8wQFggqMAI&amp;url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cheltenham.gov.uk%2Fdownload%2Fdownloads%2Fid%2F4174%2Ffinal_report_-_evidence_to_support_the_cheltenham_economic_strategy&amp;usg=AFQjCNFoLb5yuZ6LwyUBNGIH4YVrxeesA">https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=t&amp;rct=j&amp;q=&amp;esrc=s&amp;source=web&amp;cd=3&amp;cad=rja&amp;uact=8&amp;ved=0ahUKEwixnaqXuvXMAhWHB8AKHa-MD8wQFggqMAI&amp;url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cheltenham.gov.uk%2Fdownload%2Fdownloads%2Fid%2F4174%2Ffinal_report_-_evidence_to_support_the_cheltenham_economic_strategy&amp;usg=AFQjCNFoLb5yuZ6LwyUBNGIH4YVrxeesA</a>	Opens a PDF of the final report

## B) Community Information Grid: recording your research information

You can use the following grid to record information you find about your locality. It's tempting not to bother with the 'Sources' column but if used, it will help you to reference any figures when you write up any findings. As you are the experts in your community it will be possible for you to complete some of the information without the need for further research, and community engagement (see Part 2) will enable you to check with the community that the information is accurate.



This information can be used to form your community profile. An annotated map is often the easiest way to summarise some of the information - especially about location and spread of facilities and services.

<b>Subject/prompts</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Source(s) – page number, URL</b>
Population characteristics Total number of people Household types Population distribution by age, ethnicity		
Healthcare services and facilities – pharmacies, GPs, hospitals, dentists		
Retail facilities – shops and Post Office		
Vets		
Restaurants, cafes, take-aways and pubs		
Education – Early years settings, Schools, colleges, libraries		
Sports and play facilities - indoors		
Green spaces		
Community meeting places (halls), including churches		
Geographical features Roads around/through Character – layout of streets Character of buildings Features		
Designations		

Conservation Area Listed Buildings AONB SSSI		
Previous work on finding out about community issues – surveys, door knocking, parish or Neighbourhood Development Plan (what, when, findings)		
Employment		
History		
Major planning applications which could impact upon the local community		
Any further information, please list...		

## Part 2: Engage with the community to gain people's perspectives

The desk top research and audit of facilities and services will provide details of the physical characteristics of the community but does not give an insight into the perspectives and aspirations of the people who live and work there. This part (Part 2) of the toolkit gives guidance on engaging with the community to find out what they value about the area and the issues they feel need to be addressed.

### A) Reaching people

The community groups involved in this Cheltenham Engaging Communities Project have been keen to reach as many people as possible to gain their perspectives.

#### Who to engage with

In order to ensure that you are reaching all groups in your community the table to the right can be used to identify different groups of people in your area and how they might be reached. The table takes into account one of the most important hints relating to engagement - *Don't expect everyone to come to you: Go to where people gather*. Think of their natural 'bumping places' and also make use of events planned by other organisations to gather opinions.

<b>Groups in our community eg age groups, interest groups, families, businesses etc</b>	<b>Where might they gather/ what might interest them</b>	<b>Plans: How to reach this group</b>

#### Methods of engagement

A number of resources have been produced to explain different engagement methods. Most recently, guides have been produced by [The Eden Project and their guide to Community Consultation](#) (from page 16) includes sections on:

#### How they did it

Oakley community took advantage of a Fun Day planned for July 2016 to gain the perspectives of the wider community. However they already had information on what people valued and felt needed to be addressed from a survey conducted a few years previously. Therefore they presented the results of those findings and asked people to check them and list anything missing.

- Lead in activities
- Workshops (and focus groups)
- Questionnaires
- Fete stalls- and other pop up spaces such as shop fronts
- Hints on making consultation fun
- Making use of models and maps
- Digital engagement and use of social media
- Working across generations and using children as interviewers
- Walking 'the patch'
- Hints on getting people interested- through welcoming spaces and personal invites

Even though this guide has been developed for Neighbourhood Development Plan work, the principles are the same for any community engagement and consultation. The Locality [Top tips on Listening to Your Community](#) is also a useful reference document as it contains a list of eight things to consider when planning community engagement.

## **Making connections with groups and organisations in your community**

The parishes and neighbourhood groups/ associations involved in the Cheltenham Engaging Communities Project do not have limitless time to complete their contribution to the Local Plan and will need to make efficient use of time and resources. One of these resources is other groups in the community. In every community there is a wealth of contacts and groups who can both participate in the consultation and amplify your message to others. The following is a list of tips when working with other groups in your community to widen engagement

- Within your action group, identify who will contact whom and try to stick to these links throughout in order to build trust and a strong relationship.
- Keep your community contacts informed about the progress of your work. Don't just contact them only when you need something. That said, do be mindful of the frequency of messages so no one suffers 'inbox overload'.

- Be prepared to write a shortened message suitable for newsletters, as many groups and organisations have them and are often grateful for anything to help fill them. If you have a concise version of your message ready to go, you'll increase the likelihood of your information being included.
- Don't reinvent the wheel: When speaking to any local community contacts, try to find out what other consultations, if any, have been done in the area recently. Try not to repeat the same questions as in recent surveys but build on them.
- Explore whether other groups are keen to consult, and whether you could offer a 'one-stop shop' event to make the most of footfall. Likewise, is there an upcoming public event that you can piggyback onto?

**The table below shows the assets a typical community might have to capitalise on when trying to reach the wider community in order to gather opinions:**

<b>Contact</b>	<b>Who to contact</b>	<b>Possible activities</b>
Schools All excellent ways of reaching local families.	Phoning the school office is a good place to start, but follow up with an email with all of the details. Check with school office where this needs to go. One of your group may volunteer in / be linked to the school. Make use of such connections.	Ask if details could be conveyed in a newsletter, or announced in an assembly. If you have printed fliers, deliver enough for one per child (ask the school office how many needed). Consider which schools your community might use, even if they aren't within the neighbourhood.  Citizenship is part of the curriculum, so if you have time you could organise a session with a class of students to get their views. You could also create a 'buzz' by running a competition for children to design a logo for your community
Library	Most libraries have a library supervisor, who might be a good person to phone, ahead of emailing any information.	Libraries are a good place to display fliers and posters. They also work with community groups, so can pass the message on to others.
Shops	Shopkeeper	A good place to display a poster or fliers. You might also want to make an approach to investigate whether you could stand outside the shop at a busy time of day to give away fliers and talk to people.
Scouts, Guides, Brownies, Cubs etc.	The group leader's phone number or email address is usually on the group's	Ask if leader could make an announcement/distribute fliers. Similar to schools, if you have time, you could run a session with a group to get their

	website.	opinions.
Churches	Visit the church's website for contact details of the minister.	Plenty of churches have a notice board, and some have space for fliers. More obliging ministers may also be willing to make a short announcement during a service. Find out about any groups that meet at the church and add them to your contacts list
Neighbourhood policing team	Contact the receptionist or sergeant. Their email addresses are on their webpage – you can find it by going to your constabulary's website and then following a link to find your local policing team.	Generally, the police work with a lot of community teams, so may be willing to forward your message to these. They may also have poster/flier space available.
Early Years settings	From children's centres to playgroups in church halls to nurseries at schools, your area is bound to have at least one early years setting. Contact the centre manager, playleader or head of early years – you can usually find details on the group's website.	Poster and flier display is usually possible. If the group has a newsletter, ask if a message can be put in it.  You might be able to talk to parents about your work for a few minutes if you plan a visit to coincide with a stay-and-play session or with pickup time.
District/Borough Council	Depending on the focus of your work, you might want to contact one of several different departments. For anything to do with 'place', the planning department is your best bet.	Phone or email the manager of the planning team in the first instance. Ask that they forward your message to anyone who they think should know in their list of contacts, including colleagues.
Community Engagement officers	Many areas have a designated community engagement officer – details are often on the council's website.	Officers may be willing to deliver your message to hard-to-reach groups. They can also disseminate your message via email to their community network.  CE officers are also an excellent way to reach vulnerable members of the community. As there are special considerations around consulting with vulnerable sectors of society, it is essential that you work with, and follow advice from, your CE officer(s).

Elected officials	Councillors and MPs – you can find email addresses and/or phone numbers for the elected representative for your area on council websites.	Some may be able to forward your message to useful contacts, but the main aim is so that they all know what's happening in their area – or close to it. Many local councillors will be willing to recommend certain groups worth speaking to, and ways of going about consulting with local people.
Developers and owners of large sites	Check local planning applications and local news for details of plans for development. Some sites may have hoardings boards branded with the developer's name and logo.	Phone the developer or land owner. Ask to speak to the representative for that particular site if it's a large company. Developers are often most interested in what's being asked (especially if it concerns their site) and how people responded.
Business owners	Local business club coordinators  Local businesses	Ask if you can attend clubs as a guest to give a brief announcement.  Drop leaflets off at businesses – so the business owners know, and so customers can pick them up.
Via social media	Your group's social media, if applicable  Local council's social media  Partners' social media	Identify your channels of social media and draft several short messages to be sent out, referring people to a webpage or event. Remember to send updates including where and when results are available.
Youth clubs	Youth club coordinator (the club's website will usually feature their contact details)	Ask to attend a session to spread the word, or ask for coordinator to pass on the message / hand out leaflets.
Pubs	Phone or pop in to talk to the owner/manager	Good place for leaving some leaflets or a poster.
Community Transport	Area coordinator	Phone or email the coordinator. Some services may be willing to give leaflets out to their customers.
GPs	Practice manager – phone or check website for a name and email address.	Phone and then follow up with an email with all details. May be willing to display leaflets.
Day services	The manager – usually listed on website.	Email to share information on the activity and to ask them to pass onto customers. They may be willing to pass on some leaflets too.

Emergency Services	Area manager / team leader for fire service and paramedics (police – see above)	Send information so that employees can take part and be aware of process.
Leisure Centres	Centre manager – phone up to establish who this is.	Phone first, and then send information email. May be willing to display leaflets/posters.
Citizens' Advice Bureau	Manager – you may need to phone to establish who this is if not on website.	Phone the manager first, and then send an email. May be willing to display leaflets/posters.
Jobcentres	Centre manager – may be able to identify by visiting their webpage or by phoning.	Phone the manager first, and then send an email. May be willing to display leaflets/posters.
Newspaper	Editor – usually listed on the paper's website.	Press release and/or a paid advert.
Hospital	Reception – usually the generic email address, as listed on website.	Phone ahead to notify reception, and enquire about possibility of displaying leaflets
Community Centre	Centre manager – phone to establish who this is.	Initial phone call plus email. Potential for leaflet display.
Public Advice and Service Centre	Local council in first instance	Contact local council and then specific centres to pass on information and to ask about leaflet display.



### **How they did it: Getting people interested in 'our place'**

The Fairview Community Association used a number of methods to get people talking about 'our place' during their Fairview Day in June 2016.

They set up a number of activity 'stations' in different parts of the community, encouraging people to walk around the whole area. This enabled participants to become more familiar with the extent of the Fairview area and the facilities within it (as well as having fun through activities, fetes, displays and shows)

A number of 'Did you know..?' posters were put on display showing some key facts about Fairview. These were taken from the profile which had been developed.

There was a display of historic photographs of buildings and spaces in the area.

A large map was used to show the extent of the Fairview area.

This drew people in to talk about 'our place' and a survey then provided them with the opportunity to provide their perspectives.

## Thinking of composing a community survey?

### Design Top Tips

A questionnaire survey can be an effective way of gaining opinions from individuals who might be too shy to make their voice heard in a focus group or public meeting.

1. Focus on **what you want to find out** rather than ‘creating a questionnaire’. Start by defining what pieces of information you want to gain through the questionnaire. You’ll find it much easier to then construct precise and effective questions once you’ve done this.
2. Don’t be tempted to include questions just because you’ve seen them on other surveys. For instance, asking for age is only helpful if you’re going to analyse answers by age.
3. When planning delivery of your questionnaire, keep in mind that **questionnaires delivered and collected by hand** have a much higher response rate than those sent via post – not to mention the cost of postage.
4. Be mindful of the effects of asking numerous **personal questions**. Even if the responses are anonymous it can put potential respondents off, resulting in a lower response rate.
5. Try to avoid numerous **‘open box’ questions** if tick boxes would be a suitable alternative. Not only are ‘open box’ questions harder to analyse but they are more daunting for respondents to complete too.
6. Ask ‘do **you** need...?’ or ‘would **you** use...?’ rather than ‘does the area need...?’. This avoids the issue of respondents ticking ‘yes’ to everything because they think someone else may use a certain facility or aspect while they themselves would not.

## How they did it

Community Survey—Example  
Your Views on \*\*\*\*

1. What are the three things you like most about \*\*\*?

1.	
2.	
3.	

2. What are the three things you like least about \*\*\*?

1.	
2.	
3.	

3a. What is your opinion on the following in \*\*\*? (tick one per row)

	Very good	Good	Poor	No opinion
Play facilities				
Meeting rooms				
Event space for hire				
Sports facilities				
Buildings - condition				
Buildings - design				
Pathways				
Cycle paths				
Open spaces				
Employment opportunities				
Other – please specify:				

3b. Use the space below to explain your answers further and give ideas for improvement.

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4. What type of housing do you think is most needed in \*\*\*?

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5a. Are you aware of the \*\*\*Community Association website?  
5b. Which of the following \*\*\*Community Association website sections would you find useful?

<input type="checkbox"/> Community news	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and wellbeing issues
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6. How can we build a stronger community in \*\*\*\*?

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7. If \*\*\*\* had an indoor Neighbourhood Community Space, what would you use it for?

<input type="checkbox"/> Social gatherings (e.g. children's parties, quiz nights, parent and baby sessions etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs/societies (e.g. bridge, chess, astrology, martial arts etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Health and wellbeing (e.g. therapy, exercise, Age Concern, Weight Watchers etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Business networking (e.g. shared work/office space for lone workers etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Other ideas (please write them down below):
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8. Which of the following neighbourhood activities do you support? (tick all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Community Association continuing to consult with and work for our community <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers working to help enhance our neighbourhood and community
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9. Please use the box below to write any further comments you have about \*\*\*.

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This survey was prepared by \*\*\* Community Association in partnership with the following organisations:

 
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Thank you for completing our survey.  
Keep in touch through \*\*\*

7. Be aware of subtle differences of **phrasing** affecting responses to questions. Use neutral language to avoid producing leading questions. Think about how ‘what development would you **like?**’ versus ‘what development would you find **acceptable?**’ would achieve different results overall.
8. If you’re providing numerical tick boxes, make sure none of them **overlap**, e.g. 1-2 and then 2-3. The respondent whose answer is 2 won’t know which to tick.
9. If you’re asking for people to **register an interest in volunteering**, remember to include a slip for contact details – separate from the main questionnaire so they can maintain anonymity.
10. If you’re asking respondents to **rate facilities** or other elements, it can be easier all round to use a balanced scale from ‘very good’ through to ‘very poor’. If you’re using numerical ratings (e.g. ‘On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the following’), **be very clear on what the numbers mean** as it’s easy for respondents to confuse which end is good and which is poor. It can be useful to link words to each number.
11. **Incentives work!** Consider whether you can run a prize draw for respondents – and make sure you tell everyone about it. Ask around local shops and businesses for donated prizes.
12. Think about whether you can put the **survey online** too. This means that people don’t have to physically return the questionnaire to you, and responses will be put into a table straight away, which means no data entry for online responses. Favourite online survey tools are Survey Monkey, Google Forms and Polldaddy, all of which provide basic survey building tools for free (but do check for limits placed on, for example, number of respondents or number of questions to make sure that particular tool will suit your purpose).
13. Give thought to **accessibility** when designing your survey, in other words making your survey easy to read and use for everyone. Stick to the same font throughout a document, and use **bold** for emphasis rather than italics or capitals, again for readability. It’s tempting to try to include as many questions as possible on your questionnaire but try to keep the font size at 14 or above

## Connecting with businesses

It is important to try to speak to businesses in your community and the following prompts could be used in a questionnaire or to interview business managers and owners. People often appreciate a personal invitation therefore response rates can be increased if you drop off and pick up surveys in person. Alternatively you can interview each business. This is more time consuming but can provide opportunities to follow up on answers, yielding better quality of data.

### Ideas for questions for businesses:

- Type of business (sector)
  - Size (number of staff- part time/ full time/ local (if known))
  - How long they have been operating
  - Why they located there
  - Positives about location/trading here
  - Biggest challenge
  - 3 key issues restricting growth
  - Top 3 changes to improve trading
  - Plans and aspirations for the future
- 
- You can also ask about travel to work- eg how far employees travel on average to get to work; method used; suitability of forms of public transport to enable people to come to work

### How they did it

The West Cheltenham NDP group, covering parts of Hester's Way and St Marks used the technique of holding a workshop with a smaller group (open invitation) around 20 attendees. The next step is to present this information as 'This is what came out from our workshop session. Please list anything that is missing and add your comments.'

### The workshop comprised:

1. In theme groups, list what you have got in your community (for this theme)
2. Which aspects are valued and why
3. What are the issues to address

## Part 3: Establishing the vision and objectives for your community

Most Neighbourhood Development Plans include vision and objectives and they are useful to summarise your community's aspirations following consultations. This can also be included as an open question in your community survey or workshop.

Don't ask people to compose sentences initially- just bullet point the important points and then form them into sentences.

### Hint box

The simplest way to define vision is by giving the prompt In 15 years time \*\*\* will be a place where .....

Objectives can be described as 'in order to achieve this vision the following will need to be tackled:

Objectives would relate to specific aspects eg – 'allow scope for the medical practice to grow to accommodate additional patients'.

## Part 4: Green Spaces

Communities in Cheltenham have been invited to make the case for inclusion of Local Green Spaces in the Cheltenham Plan. A full toolkit and related resources such as a Q+A sheet have been produced to support communities to submit an application but the basic process can be summarised as:

List all the green spaces in your area/neighbourhood

Complete the following table to establish which might benefit from Local Green Space designation and thus additional protection

Complete the full toolkit submission for those you wish to apply for designation. This will involve gaining community letters and support – explaining how people and organisations feel each space is special to them.

Question/Aspect	Response	Notes/tips
1. Site name:		Give all known names for the site
2. Site location and address		
3. Size of site (please give units used eg hectares)		No 'extensive tracts of land' can be designated as Local Green Spaces but there are no guidelines about size
4. Is the site allocated for development (planning permission granted, pending or named in the current Local Plan or emerging JCS or Local Plan)? Give details.		A site allocated for development cannot be designated as a Local Green Space (although a Local Green Space could be accommodated within the development).
5. Where is the site in relation to the community it serves? How does it connect physically, visually and socially to the local area? How is it reached?		A site must be 'in proximity to the community it serves' eg if public access is important it should be within easy walking distance.
6. Describe how the site is used by the community Try to give some idea of scale of use		Could be for recreation (sport), play (formal and informal), sitting, picnicking, leisure, sledging, viewpoint.
7. What is the site noteworthy for? Eg <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beauty (views out and in or the site itself)</li> <li>• Historic significance (heritage connections)</li> <li>• Recreation (formal and informal sport)</li> </ul>		The site must be demonstrably special to your community and hold a particular local significance  Note any designations eg AONB but also record subjective thoughts.

<p>and play, walking, allotments)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildlife (important species, land use designations)</li> <li>• Tranquility (absence of road noise, dark skies)</li> <li>• Or other reason</li> </ul>		<p>Consider, where relevant, views out as well as the site itself. During consultation people will add their thoughts</p> <p>Can include ponds and spaces around</p>
<p>8. Are there any current designations of the site? Eg Site of Special Scientific Interest, conservation area. If so give details.</p>		<p>Use maps provided which show designations</p>
<p>9. Ownership of site- if known</p>		<p>If there is a decision to proceed to designation, CBC will discuss with the landowner</p>
<p>10. Any other comments</p>		
<p>11. Your conclusions: Will you pursue this as a suggested Local Green Space by completing a full assessment using the CBC toolkit (including photos, evidence of how special)? Why/why not?</p>		<p>Remember that open/green spaces are already protected. You are considering additional protection over and above that afforded by the NPPF paragraph 74</p>

## Part 5- Community priorities: Spatial planning and action planning

Not all community aspirations and issues are appropriate to include or represent in a Local Plan (such as the Cheltenham Plan) as these are specifically planning policy documents. If matters do not fit into land use and spatial planning category they will usually be appropriate for a Community Action Plan.

### How to decide

Earlier consultation and engagement will have encouraged people to consider a variety of community matters and when considering these it is a good idea to separate them into those which are relevant to land use and spatial planning, and those which relate more to community activity actions. The following template may help and GRCC and Cheltenham Borough Council can support your group to check the categories.

#### Decision making template- planning/ non planning issues

Aspect	Spatial planning/land use? (yes or no)	Reason (please explain why)

Cheltenham Borough Council officers have provided a 'Starter for ten' list of items which may be relevant to land use and spatial matters and these are shown below. If some of your issues do not fit under spatial planning and land use category then you can form these into an action plan for your community. A template action plan is shown below.

#### Action Plan template

Theme	Action	Lead	Other partners	Timescales



## Starter for Ten: Aspects relating to land use and spatial planning

### Aspects of relevance to land use and spatial planning

#### Built Environment:

- Care of current buildings
- Integration of new development
- Identifying buildings which need extra protection ie through listing etc.
- Green spaces- not just LGS but parks and gardens etc
- Building uses eg. Should the majority of buildings in the area be protected for a specific use office, single residential use, student accommodation etc.

#### Natural Environment:

- Identification of key areas of natural environment deserving of protection, not already protected.
- Use of renewable energies etc on new or existing developments such as solar panels etc.
- Flooding- anything that needs addressing in the local area
- Conservation areas- areas- needs for reviews/ further appraisal work

### Aspects of relevance to land use and spatial planning

#### Economy:

- Is there a part of the neighbourhood which should be actively promoted to attract more retail offer or businesses? Or are there any areas that are already in use but are failing
- Are there any retail areas that should be protected as a local retail area? Or any that are no longer used?

#### Culture and Recreation:

- Identify any unmet needs in the local community in terms of community facilities such as meeting places; sports facilities; allotments etc, but be realistic about what can be achieved

**Transport:** (Please be aware that the local planning authority only has limited powers regarding transport)

- Identify issues that may need addressing such as regular congestion
- Improvements to transport networks including footpaths and cycle routes, or are there any routes that should be further promoted.

## Part 6: Bringing it all together

You will now have a number of sections to incorporate into a full community profile comprising not only desk top research and auditing but also community aspirations in relation to each of the issues. Vision and Objectives can form a separate section of your profile but community perspectives can be added to research and audit information under theme headings. Amend the draft profile your have received from GRCC to add in this community perspectives work. GRCC will then check it with you prior to submission to Cheltenham Borough Council.

## Part 7: Next steps

The work on the Cheltenham Engaging Communities Project will have opened up further avenues for conversation about Forward Planning between communities and CBC. Communities will be interested in how this information is used by CBC and how elements of their profiles are being referenced and used to inform the Cheltenham Plan. The Cheltenham Local Plan page on the CBC website and contact with elected representatives will be important to keep track of the Cheltenham Plan progress. The C5 (Cheltenham Parish Councils) and Neighbourhood Co-ordination Group meetings will also provide opportunities for feedback on progress.

For some communities this exercise will spearhead further community led planning initiatives such as Parish Plan (action plans for communities) or Neighbourhood Development Plan (a document which includes planning policies for a specific neighbourhood , parish or area). Whichever road you take, the community profile produced will be invaluable- in essence you will have completed a major part of any such plan.

Find out more about [community led planning](#) on the GRCC website

The [‘My Community’](#) website is invaluable in gaining more information on Neighbourhood Development Plans.