



“Planning for Real”

*Enabling positive change in your
community*

Local Facilitators Manual
European Practitioners Toolkit

Planning for Real – what is it?

Planning for Real took shape in 1977 when residents in Dalmarnock, East Glasgow, were offered one of our early packs consisting of a 3D model of an imaginary neighbourhood. They said, “*Very interesting, but we would like it to be Dalmarnock, not any place. Dalmarnock for real.*”

It is an eye-catching, ‘hands on’ process which, by using a 3D model as a focus, enables local residents to put forward suggestions to “show” how an area can be improved, or to highlight specific problems and to go on to work out how to turn their ideas into reality.

How’s it done? Find a few “moving spirits” in your community – not necessarily the leading lights, but ordinary people who want to **DO** something not just talk about it!!

First with local residents, including children, make a large 3D model of the neighbourhood – the way it is, the good bits and bad bits.



The model is made up of sections of polystyrene board, about 1 metre square, so that it is easy to take around and reassemble wherever people gather. The scale of the model, roughly 1:250 or alternatively 1:500, means that front doors are visible so it is easy for everyone to identify their homes and meeting places.

Next display the model wherever people gather - it will attract attention, generate interest, and get conversations started.

Meanwhile with some of the “moving spirits” begin a Neighbourhood Skills Survey to find out about local skills and use the “Spotter” Cards to find out about wasted or underused local resources. Display the results for everyone to see.

It’s time to hold the events with the model as the centre of attraction. This time the model is there to be USED not just looked at. Displayed all around the model are sets of suggestion cut outs with blanks available for new suggestions.



Residents select cards, or write their own, and place these on the model to show what their needs and concerns are. These cards are colour coded: red for traffic, yellow for housing, dark green for environment / open space and so on. This enables all those taking part to see at a glance, issues of concern by the dominance of colour(s) on the model.



Once the residents’ views have been gathered, it is time to do some sorting and sifting and work out Priorities. Using **HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW** charts, residents, working in small groups supported by experts, begin the process of identifying what matters most to them and in so doing options are narrowed down, so that a clear picture of what needs to be done and what is achievable emerges.

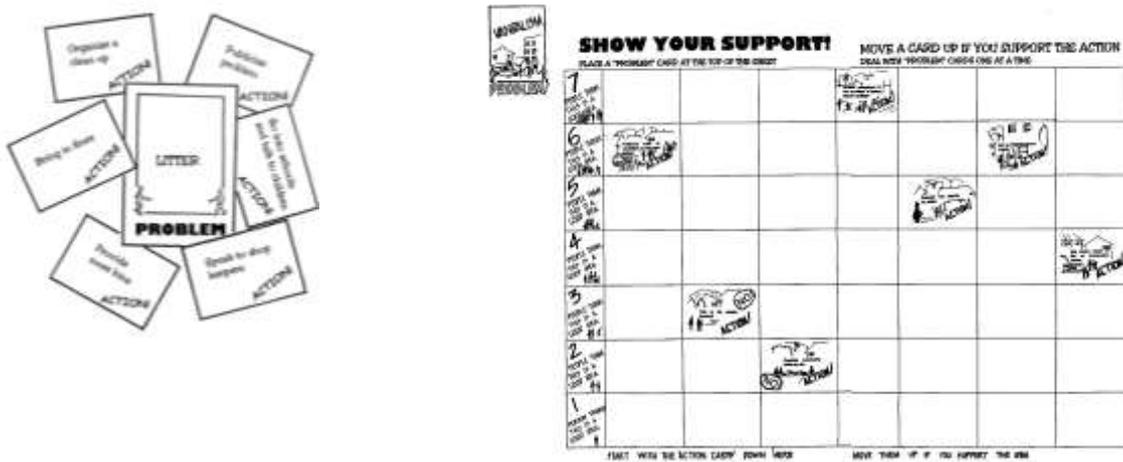
There may be differences of opinion – if so a card is turned face-down on the chart. When everyone has had the chance to express disagreement it’s easy to take stock. The suggestion cards that stay face up show how much is already agreed on. The “disagree” cards (face down) can be discussed and reposition accordingly.



Now you can get on to developing an Action Plan by sorting the suggestions according to what kind of support is needed and who could help to do each job, the “**WHO**” and “**HOW**” – *residents on their own, with a little money and expert advice, in Partnership, or by the Council or other agency.* The information gathered through the Neighbourhood Skills Survey and the “Spotter” Cards will come in useful at this point.

WE CAN DO IT on our own	WE CAN DO IT with a little money	WE CAN DO IT with a little money and expert advice	WE COULD DO IT in partnership	WE CAN'T DO IT but we can tell the Council (or another agency) what needs to be done	WHO ELSE could help?
PRIORITY	PRIORITY	PRIORITY	PRIORITY	PRIORITY	PRIORITY
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM
LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW	LOW

You may find that there are “problems” or “concerns” which have been prioritised and the “who” we need to help us take them forward have been identified, but how to tackle them has not been worked out. Not to worry, the PFR process provides you with a way to generate suggestions for “action” and to find out which “action” or “actions” are most supported.



Most people coming fresh to Planning for Real[®], whether they are residents or professionals, expect the strongest personalities to dominate, and that different factions will form and fight to the last. However, compromise and consensus become easier, not least because everyone’s line of vision converges on the subject matter — the model itself — allowing for practical and non-threatening ways of communicating and participating. Therefore, there’s less scope for face-to-face confrontation. Once an option card is laid on the model, it becomes anonymous. It has no personality attached to it, as can happen when someone speaks up at a meeting. Of course, there is a buzz of conversation, but it mainly consists of people comparing ideas about possibilities, in a non-committal way, which allows anyone to have second or third thoughts, without losing face.

1. Principles & practices underpinning the Planning for Real process ...

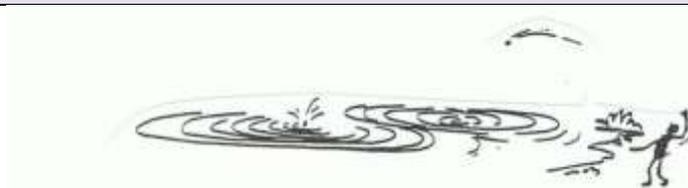
Solidarity

- People working together to overcome disadvantage and discrimination through identifying, and finding solutions to, common problems and needs



Democracy

- Maximum participation by all (residents and key stakeholders) in the process
- Inclusive of the wider community
- Openness and transparency of the process
- Commitment to achieving equality
- Inclusive decision making processes building common ground and consensus



Empowerment

- Mutual education and exchange
- Enhance individual and group skills, knowledge and capacity
- Enable individuals and groups to gain a voice within decision making and political systems
- Enable individuals and groups to take action themselves to bring about change in their community.



2. “Planning for Real” – Our Ethos

Explicit Process - Success comes from the careful, thoughtful 'design' of a coherent overall process, that is transparent, and appropriately independent of those commissioning and funding it.

Openness, honesty, & trust - Commitment can only be secured if all parties are open and honest, and if the process builds trust through communication based on two-way listening and questioning.

Inclusiveness – All those individuals and groups that make up the community need, as early as possible, to be involved to ensure that a wide range of views about issues are generated.

Shared responsibility for success - Those involved are not passive actors waiting for the mythical 'someone else' to solve things for them; everybody must take an active role in seeking progress.

Common information base - A “Planning for Real” process pays attention to sharing information, seeking common agreements, and seeking further information which can take things forward.

Building common ground - It is important to seek out and build on those points of agreement and common ground that nearly always exist or can be developed quite quickly. The process naturally builds consensus without debate, leaving the few contentious issues to be debated openly.

Mutual 'education' and exchange - If information, attitudes and values are in the open, and shared between everyone at all stages, there will inevitably be a shifting of perceptions and a development of personal and group knowledge.

Multiple options are identified - Though there are disadvantages when people come at things from different directions, this can bring into the room the advantage of diverse and innovative options and solutions - and a base for a more creative agreed solution.

Decisions made by consensus - Working toward decisions that are supported by all greatly increases the chances that those people will be back, rather than scupper later implementation.

Commitment to abide by outcomes - There is little point in entering a process which aims to bring people closer together around common solutions, if one or other party retains some eventual veto over any results. Both they, and those they represent, have agreed to an outcome or they haven't.

Shared responsibility for outcomes and implementation - Once a decision has been reached by consensus, those involved take on a responsibility to back the decision (and how it was reached) through any verification process, and then into the stages of implementation.

3. Getting Started

The involvement in, and ownership of, the process by local residents right from the start is vital.

FAMILIARISATION WITH YOUR COMMUNITY / INITIAL CONTACT WORK:

Communities are now very diverse and often difficult to engage, not least because of the day to day pressures on people's lives. It is important that some time is spent understanding the challenges to engaging your community. Walking around the area, getting a feel for the people and the places they meet, is crucial. This is also an opportunity to begin raising awareness and seeking out, through meetings with local residents and workers, the "doers" and "local messengers" within the community, who are prepared to become involved.



GOING ON TO FORM A LOCAL WORKING GROUP:

Now is the time to bring together the active residents (the "doers") and the "outside experts" (the professionals) to work as one, to share their knowledge and begin to work as a team on developing a plan of how the process will work best for their community, overcoming some of the challenges and barriers identified during the initial contact work. Explaining the "Planning for Real" process to your local Working Group will enable them to play an active part in partnership with others.



WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED:

A stakeholder analysis needs to be undertaken by the Working Group that you have pulled together. It draws on local knowledge in order to develop a clear picture of the make up and diversity of the community. This, in turn, helps the Group to go on to identify:

- Best methods of wider contact work – letter, phone call, attend group meeting, speak to residents as they go about their lives e.g. at the school gates, at the local shops etc.

- Best methods of promotion and publicity – leaflets, word of mouth, local papers, local radio.
- Best opportunities for consultation events – open access public events, targeted events e.g. for elderly, young people, young parents, or even “piggy backing” onto other community events that are already happening.

How to carry out a stakeholder analysis:

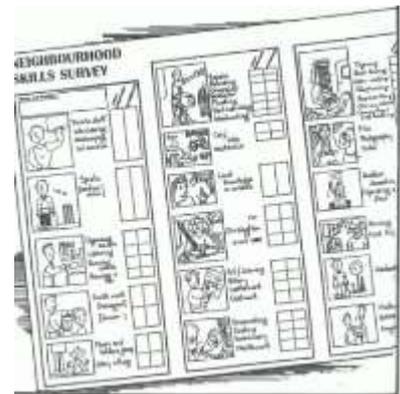
Arrange tables together so that they create a solid area measuring approximately 6 ft. x 6 ft. (200mm x 200mm). Lay the cloth concentric circle from the Pack out on the tables. Now spread out the pre written Stakeholder Cards and select those representing the stakeholders relevant to the project. The blank “stakeholder” cards can be used to identify any missing stakeholders.



Next place all the selected stakeholder cards around the outer edge of the circle. Then, as a group, review these to make sure that no stakeholder is missing and that there are no duplicates. Having done this, the activity that follows will help identify who should be involved. This is achieved by each person moving forward one space those cards representing the stakeholder they feel should be involved. Those cards reaching the centre, or close to it, represent the stakeholders who have gained the most support and are seen as the most important to engage / involve.

IDENTIFYING NEIGHBOURHOOD SKILLS:

In local communities there are many hidden, and probably undervalued, skills. The Neighbourhood Skills Survey seeks to find out about the "everyday" skills people have.



Start this off by undertaking a survey amongst the members of the newly formed local Working Group. Having practiced carrying out the survey on each other, they take it out into their neighbourhood each taking on a small patch - their street, their block of flats – starting with the people they know and eventually onto other residents - house to house, face to face.



As the information comes back, it can be displayed and continually updated for all to see.

Whilst on the “doorstep” it is likely that you will hear about events or activities that other groups and organisations in the neighbourhood may be putting on which would offer additional opportunities to gather views.

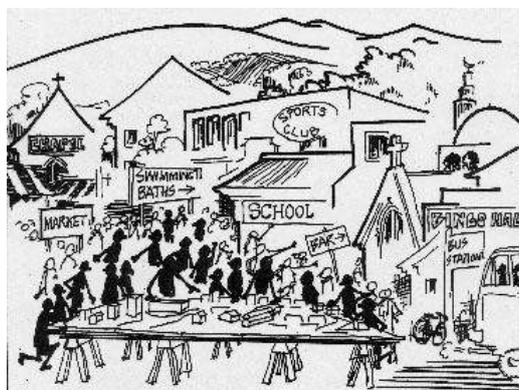


PUBLICITY:

Work with your Group, tapping into their knowledge and expertise, to create and target publicity using as wide a range of methods as possible: leaflets, local radio/press, door knocking, and social media e.g. face book, blogs.

ATTRACT ATTENTION / PROMOTE YOUR PROJECT:

When the model has been made, take the model (or parts of it) to all sorts of places which local people use as part of their everyday lives. This offers a chance to view the model, check it for accuracy, and begin to identify the issues that need to be tackled through the project.



Taking the model out and about will also (a) reinforce the message being promoted through other forms of publicity, and (b) reduce the reliance on local residents reading (or not reading) the publicity material you are putting out.

SPOTTER CARDS - MAKING THE MOST OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

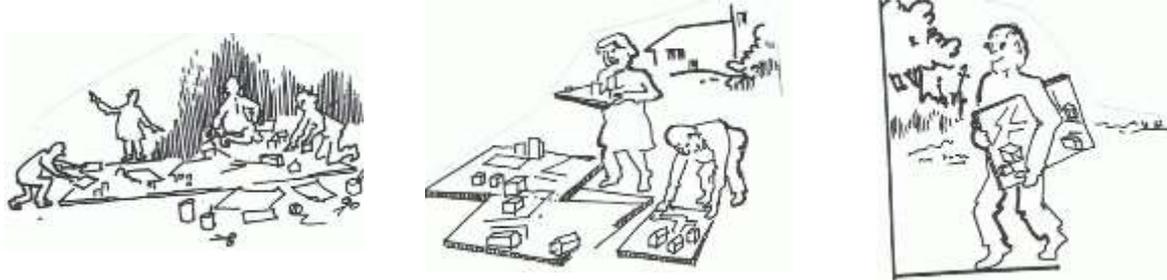
Just as with the Neighbourhood Skills Survey (used to identify the “human” resources) the Spotter Cards can be used to identify what else might be available.

Residents with the time can use the **Spotter Cards** to list all sorts of materials, equipment, premises, waste ground, and transport which might be going free or at low cost. Boxes to store books, a van available one day a week – might be the start of a mobile library. Spare materials which can be converted into play centre equipment, or for children to make things with. Scraps of cloth could be turned into quilts or shopping bags and sold.



4. Model Making

This is the activity which will create the 3D model of the neighbourhood – it will show the neighbourhood as it is now – good and bad bits. It is made in sections (600mm x 600mm) so it is easily carried around.



This is an early, informal opportunity for local residents to be involved in creating the model of the neighbourhood and, at the same time, to share some of the history of the area and how they feel about where they live.

Models are often made with involvement from children at a local school, usually aged around 9 - 11, many of who will probably live in the area. Alternatively, local adults and children can come together to make the model, perhaps using your newly formed Working Group as a channel to bring everyone together.



Models are traditionally made to a scale of about 1:250, but for larger areas the scale used is 1:500, which allows local residents to recognise their own front doors and identify landmarks easily. Scales will vary depending on the extent of the area to be represented by the model and the size of available local venues.

What you will need and how to make your model

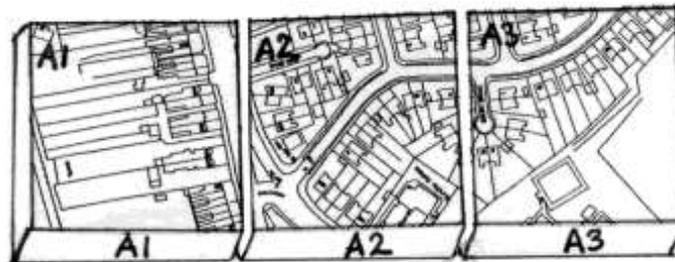
The base material is polystyrene board, 1 inch thick which can be bought from most builders' merchants. Get them to cut the polystyrene boards into squares of 600mm x 600mm. To protect and strengthen the model, back these squares with cardboard using Copydex (glue). Weight the squares down and leave to dry - this prevents them from bowing - and then tape the edges with parcel tape.

Next you need a map of the area, enlarged to whatever scale you are using – 1:250 or 1:500. Cut this up and stick onto the squares - the best glue to use for this is PVA. It's useful to number the backs of the squares to make it easy to assemble. Don't forget to keep a record of how you have numbered the squares!

Sample of a grid

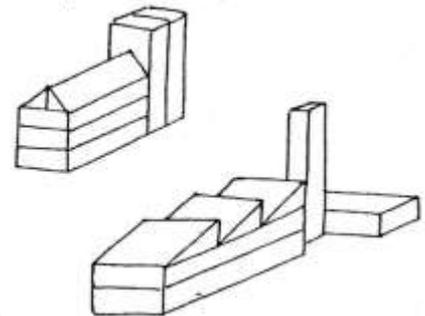
A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	
B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6
C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6
D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6

How the letters / numbers appear on the map / squares



Paint or felt tips can be used to colour in the plan to make the model more recognisable and eye-catching. Remember not to paint over the street / road names.

Next, folded card scale-models representing the house types and other buildings e.g. school, shops, faith buildings, in the area are stuck onto the model. Photos and labels can be stuck onto the model for extra clarity, and / or special models made of local landmarks.

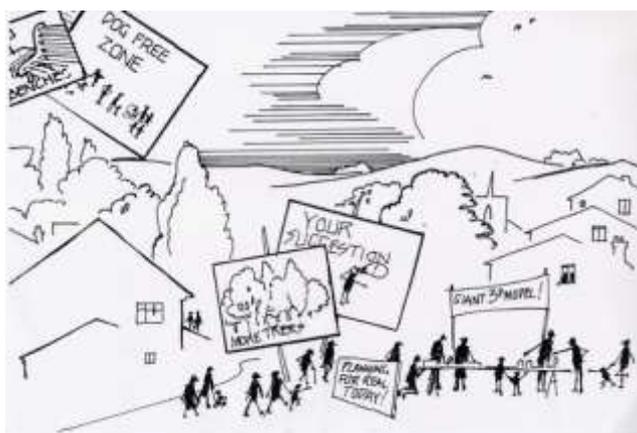


It is possible to make a contoured model by using layers of thinner polystyrene to build levels up. Having a map marked with contours would be a great help!!

5. Using the Model

The stage has now been reached where the model has been made, the events well publicised and local residents (the inside “experts”) invited along to put their views forward.

This can be done as part of a "Fun Day"; as a "drop in" event in order to maximise on local participation; or by hanging around where people naturally gather e.g. at the school gates.



The model takes “centre stage” giving a bird’s eye view of the neighbourhood. Everyone - local residents and the outside “experts” e.g. housing officers, highway engineers, environmental health officers and the local beat policeman - all “mill” around it.

Having the "outside" experts present will give local residents the chance to ask questions and seek advice and information - quietly and without having to stand up in front of an "audience" as would happen at a public meeting.



Displayed all around the model, or better still on separate tables around the room (if there is space available), are sets of the pictorial, colour coded suggestion cards and lots of blanks for residents’ own ideas. Each colour of card represents a different “issue” area e.g. yellow cards are for housing, dark green cards for the local environment, orange cards for crime

and safety etc. Local residents look through these cards, select those covering issues that are important to them (or write their own using the blank cards) and place them on the model. With all the activity going on around the model cards can be placed quite anonymously.



THE ONLY RULE AT A "PLANNING FOR REAL" EVENT IS THAT NOBODY IS ALLOWED TO MOVE (OR REMOVE) SOMEONE ELSE'S SUGGESTION CARDS.



At the end of the event, it will be clear to everyone present - because of the dominance of a particular colour and / or the sheer volume of cards placed in a particular location - what the most important issues are and the areas generating the most ideas or causing the most concern.

All the suggestions which have been placed on the model are recorded by noting the issue (e.g. housing, leisure, traffic; the suggestion (what is written on the card); the location (a description of where it was placed on the model); and the number, if any, of identical cards placed on that exact spot.

Ashram HA and Arden Park Residents Association			
"The BUZZ" Event			
Venue: Arden Park, Tile Hill		Date: Saturday, 8th March 2014	
Issue	Where	Suggestion	Number
Environment	Alan Marcel Close	Park with gate round edge for safety	1
Environment	Alan Marcel Close - grassed area	Formalise informal "path" across this grass area - tarmac?	2
Com Safety	Arden Park	Set up a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	3
Traffic	Alan Marcel Close	Speed bumps needed	1

Note - Consultation events offer the opportunity to:

- (a) Recruit interested residents – forms can be made available to be filled out to enable interested residents to provide their name and contact details.
- (b) Promote the follow on Prioritisation and Action Planning sessions.

6. Prioritisation and Action Planning

This is where “Planning for Real” differs from some other consultation techniques in that it involves residents beyond just giving their views and puts them in the “driving seat” to turn their ideas into realities where feasible.

This stage uses similar methods of engagement - again pre-written cards are placed, not on a model this time but onto a chart, which can then be moved around. It also brings to the fore, local residents’ knowledge and experience of their area and the issues. It provides an opportunity to bring together the "inside expert" and the "outside expert" to share information and knowledge in a positive setting.

PRIORITISATION STAGE:

Having now identified “WHAT” is needed and “WHERE” (using the model) - this initial stage of the Action Planning process enables residents to take their “wish list” of suggestions and concerns and begin to sift and sort them into a deliverable Action Plan by first identifying the “WHEN” (the priority).

This is the cue to form small Groups based on the issue cards used, e.g. a traffic group, a community facilities group, a leisure group, an environment group, etc.; or a group to look at a particular location or site which requires imaginative treatment, e.g. the park or a large open space or the local shopping precinct.

PRIORITY		
High	Medium	Low
Short Medium Long		
Location		
Hill Road near school		
Suggestion		
Crossing patrol		
Number		
10		

In preparation for the Workshop: the Working Group needs to decide on the themes and / or locations which will form the small discussion groups.

All the information about each suggestion (location, suggestion, and number) from the “Planning for Real” event(s) needs to be transferred onto Priority cards and allocated to the relevant Theme / Location Group.

At the Prioritisation Workshop – the Steps:

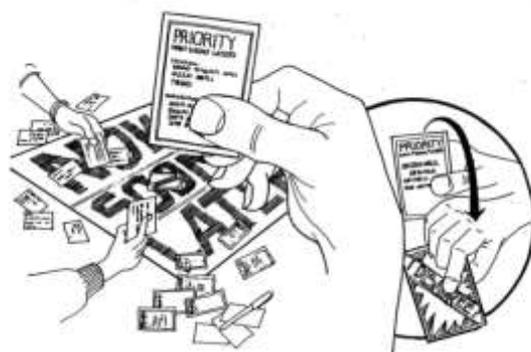
Step 1 – Residents attending the Workshop join the group that represents the theme / location which is of most importance or interest to them.

Step 2 - The “HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW” charts (or header labels cut out and arranged on a large piece of paper e.g. flipchart) are laid out on each Theme / Location Group table with the relevant priority cards around them.

Step 3 – Each group has a good look at their set of cards and some initial sorting and sifting occurs - anyone unhappy about a suggestion can turn that card over to show “I disagree!” These “disagreed” cards are then put to one side to be looked at later.

Step 4 - The remaining “face up” cards, which everyone agrees on, can then be looked at again to identify any similarities and, where appropriate, to begin grouping ideas together. Local knowledge plays a role in deciding how this is done.

Step 5 – Group members are now invited, as individuals, to place the Priority Cards into a category on the chart they feel is the most appropriate: HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW.



Step 6 – Once the cards have all been placed, group members have the opportunity to look them over. If anyone is unhappy or disagrees with the priority placing of a card, they can turn that card over retaining its position to reveal the words "I disagree".

Step 7 – All cards that remain face up on the chart can be taken as "agreed" and do not need any lengthy discussion. The "disagreed" cards need to be looked at one by one – no-one needs to know who made a particular suggestion - or indeed who was against it, if the person who turned the card over wishes to remain anonymous. The main thing is to consider the suggestion itself, on its own merits. These cards are resolved through discussion or the "disagreement" is agreed with and is backed up with a reason that needs to be recorded on the white “Disagree – why” cards

Step 8 – The position of all the agreed cards needs to be recorded by circling the appropriate word – “HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW” - at the top of the card.

Step 9 – Those cards “disagreed” with at the **very start** of the process are now brought back for consideration. Following discussion, priority cards that are agreed should be included can now be placed onto the chart, or where they are rejected a reason can be written onto a “Disagree – Why” card and attached to the rejected card.

PRIORITY		
High	Medium	Low
Short	Medium	Long
Location		
Hill Road near school		
Suggestion		
Crossing patrol		
Number		
10		

Step 10 - Next the heading cards “QUICK AND EASY” (reverse = SHORT TERM), “GOING TO TAKE LONGER” (reverse = MEDIUM TERM), “GOING TO TAKE A LONG TIME” (reverse = LONG TERM) are placed across the top of the HIGH, MEDIUM OR LOW chart, The priority cards on the chart are now moved horizontally so that they are placed under one of the headings – thereby helping everyone to understand the time-frame (rather than the priority which has already been set) in which something can happen.

SHORT TERM	MEDIUM TERM	LONG TERM
PRIORITY		
HIGH		
MEDIUM		
LOW		

Step 11 - Again once agree the position of the cards needs to be recorded by circling the appropriate word – SHORT, MEDIUM, or LONG - at the top of each priority card.

All cards relating to a particular discussion group should, if possible, be kept together as this makes it easier to bring the cards out again for further meetings.

This stage is, more often than not, the subject of a separate meeting (approximately 2 hours in length) called at a later date and again well advertised. It is possible to undertake this activity on the same day as using the model; but it will mean holding a "Planning for Real®" event that covers a much longer time span of say 3 to 4 hours with local residents expected to be there at the start and stay for the duration.

Please note that the Pack also provides alternative “NOW, SOON, LATER” header labels which may be more suitable for the work you are undertaking with your community.

ACTION PLANNING STAGE

The Prioritisation stage has enabled residents to identify the things of greatest importance. The Action Planning stage will show us “HOW” and “WHO” can begin to take the ideas to reality.

Step 1 - Using the same “HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW” sheets (lay 3 out next to each other), place the next set of header cards across the top of the charts to create 6 columns:

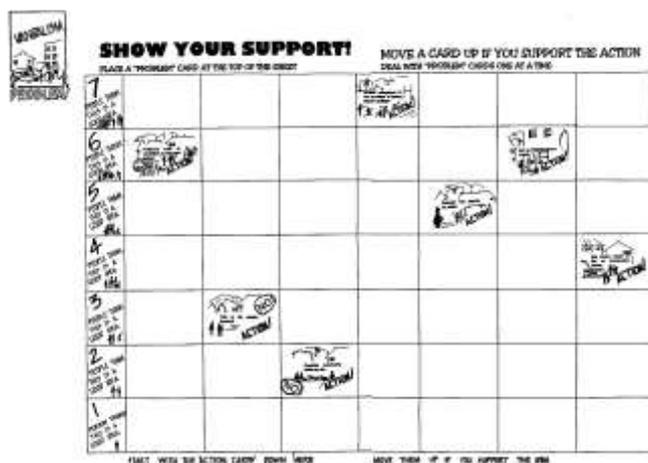
WE CAN DO IT on our own	WE CAN DO IT with a little money	WE CAN DO IT with a little money and expert advice	WE COULD DO IT in partnership	WE CAN'T DO IT but we can tell the Council (or another agency) what needs to be done	WHO ELSE could help?
PRIORITY	PRIORITY	PRIORITY		PRIORITY	
HIGH	HIGH	HIGH		HIGH	
MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM		MEDIUM	
LOW	LOW	LOW		LOW	

Step 2 - The Priority cards can now moved horizontally (retaining their priority position) until they are under the appropriate column. Again, at this point in the process the “outside experts” are particularly valuable. This is where the two-way exchange of information and views, education and bridge-building process between residents and professionals really begins to develop

Step 3 - “Training” buttons can be added to any suggestion to highlight a training need; “Partner” cards can be added to those suggestions under the “WE CAN DO IT IN PARTNERSHIP” column to identify relevant partners; and “Who” cards can be added identifying a specific person / department / agency to those suggestions under the “WE CAN'T DO IT ...” and “WHO ELSE” columns.

Step 4 – Once the re-positioning of all the cards under the various column headings has been done and agreed these decisions will need to be recorded.

It is important to find small projects or actions which can be taken forward easily and quickly. These should be a mixture of those found under the headings where the “Council



Step 3: When this activity has finished the group examines the results. At a glance everyone can see the “actions” that are:

- well supported – those reaching the top or near the top of the chart without any “NO” buttons placed on them.
- Those which might be worth considering further – those reaching the middle band
- those receiving little or no support – remaining at the bottom of the chart.

Any well-supported “actions” which also have one or more “NO” buttons need to be discussed, to see if a compromise can be reached. Results can now be recorded. The agreed “action” for each “problem” can then be progressed further by looking at “who” needs to take the action.

This process is repeated until all the “problem” cards have been dealt with.

TAKING POSITIVE SUGGESTIONS FORWARD – CREATING A “TIME LINE”

The Action Planning process will contain many positive suggestions that need to be considered in more detail. The activity described below is a very simple technique for creating a “time line”. It, again, is a visual activity and one that encourages the inclusion of all. It also aims to share the workload amongst those participating to avoid the situation where everything is being done by one or two people.

PROCESS:

Step 1: Place the card with your objective / aim on it, e.g. *play area to be created*; or *recycling facility*, somewhere prominent on a table. Get the whole group involved in writing out “Action” cards - one for each action. Review all the “Action” cards and eliminate duplicates.



Step 2: Use a long piece of lining paper, or similar, as the basis on which to create your timeline - you will need to split it into time frames. If your timeline needs to be over a long period it may be necessary to break time periods down into yearly segments. A short period may be broken down into weeks/months.

Step 3: On your timeline lay the “Action” cards out in a sequence which reflects the order in which the actions would be undertaken. Allow plenty of time for rethinking the position of the various cards. This is where invited outside “experts” can provide valuable advice and information.

Step 4: Having placed the “Action” cards into a sequence, go back and see where you can place the “Who” cards, using them to identify individuals by name or perhaps, at this point, Council Departments. Using these cards will help to share the workload amongst the group and the “outside” experts supporting them.

Step 5: You now have an “Action Plan” for achieving your aim. It can be brought out time and time again to check on progress or to make changes in the light of experience / further knowledge gained.

That's it folks! Over to you!





Part of the Accord Group

Planning for Real Unit
Innovation Works @ Rubery Owen
Booth Street
Darlaston
West Midlands
WS10 8JB

Tel: 0121 568 7070

Fax: 0121 526 8088

Email: info@planningforreal.org.uk

www.planningforreal.org.uk

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