



*Western Bay of Plenty  
District Council*

# COMMUNITY PLANNING READINESS TOOLKIT

October 2018



## Purpose of this toolkit

This Community Readiness Toolkit is designed to assist communities to determine whether they need a Community Plan, and if so, if they are prepared to undertake the process. Once complete the information can be used to apply for funding from any contestable fund or Council's Community Matching Fund / Community Board funds. It can also form the basis of a report to Council. Ultimately, the toolkit is designed to ensure that whatever planning process the community undertakes, it's a successful one.

**Audience for this toolkit** - Communities of the Western Bay District.

**Contact for this toolkit** - The Community Team.

## Introduction

Community Plans are effective tools for capturing and prioritising the aspirations of communities, and providing a 'roadmap' for how to get there. Developing a Community Plan is a comprehensive exercise that covers a broad range of community goals and issues. Many communities in the Western Bay have undertaken this process, and found it to be a very rewarding and positive experience. Community Plans for Waihi Beach, Katikati, Omokoroa, Te Puna, Te Puke, Paengaroa, and Maketu - can be found here:

[www.westernbay.govt.nz/community-plans](http://www.westernbay.govt.nz/community-plans)

The word "community" refers to those things that we hold in common unity with each other. It is important that any community planning exercise is as inclusive and representative of the people it affects as possible.

The process seeks to gain general agreement on a number of actions for community improvement that can be actioned and delivered by a range of providers. The providers can include social and government agencies, business groups, not-for-profit and service groups, iwi, Community Boards, regional and territorial Councils, the planning group itself, or individuals and private enterprises.

### This comprehensive approach:

- Enables the community to establish a vision for its future and implement projects to achieve the vision
- Helps ensure community projects and programmes are well thought through, make sense, and are the best use of resources
- Identifies all other plans and strategies that affect the community.

### Community Plans are created for the community, and are led by the community.

They are not Council plans, but they usually have - and we recommend - Council input, as they can inform and influence Council decision making. Most Community Plans involve levels of Council support and funding. This level of support and funding can be dependent on how well the identified actions align with existing Council plans for the community and/or the District, but the first step in this process is gaining 'readiness endorsement' from Council's Community Team.

Ideally the Community Plan project steering group will include a range of stakeholders from various sectors of the community. This group are often called the 'Connectors' under the assumption that they bring together and connect diverse elements of their community.

### The Connector's role is to:

- Drive and manage the project. This includes activities such as communicating with the community, facilitating workshops and meetings, setting timeframes and collating information.

### Council's role, if involved, can be to:

- Provide technical support and advice and funding where approved
- Offer peer review and administration support (such as assisting with formatting, design and creation of the plan)
- Help with publicity and communication, and
- Other assistance as negotiated within the project parameters. Council would also consider items in the plan designed for their action
- One or two Elected Members, including Community Board representatives, can be very valuable partners and would usually be invited to become part of the Connectors Group.

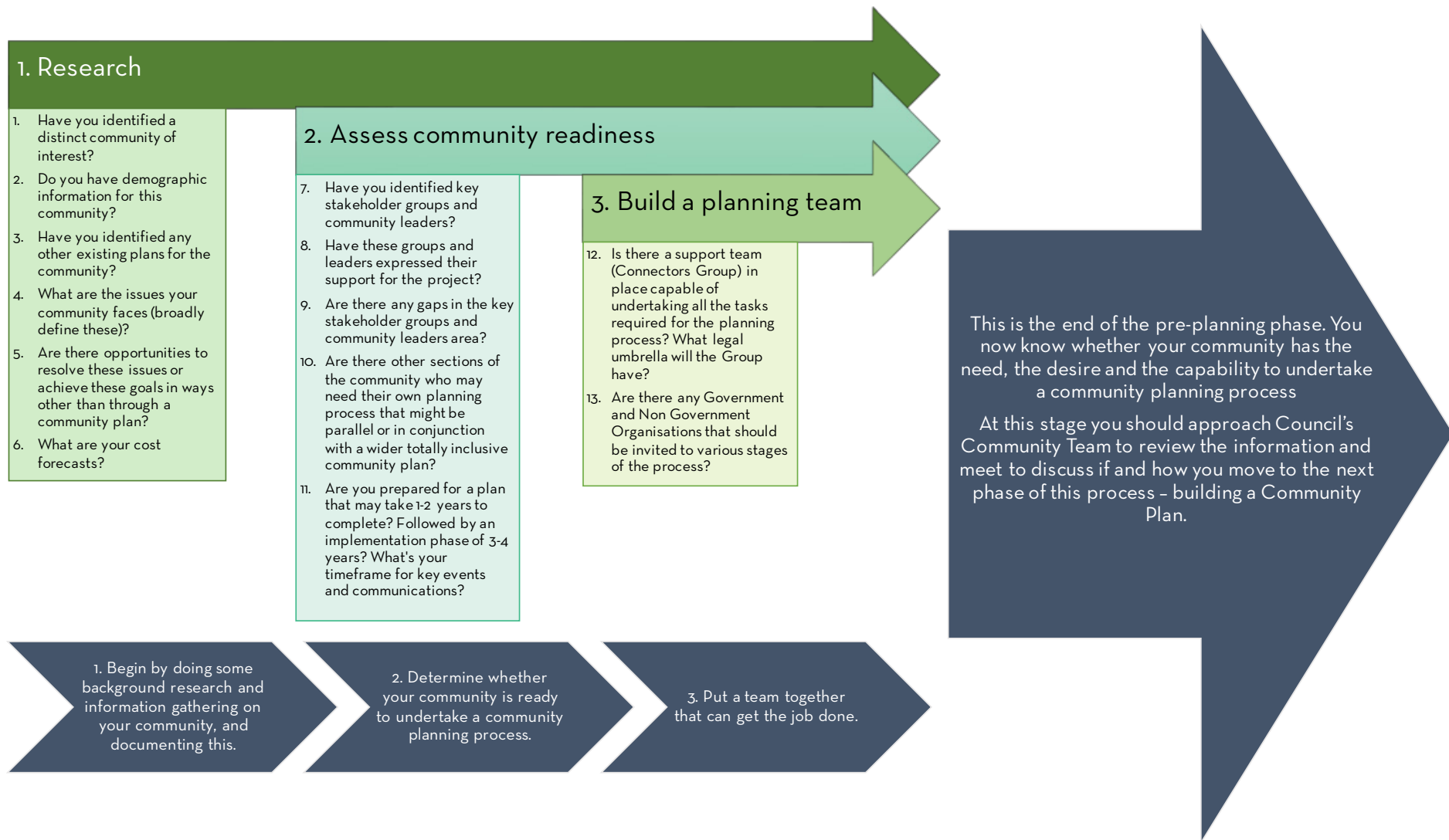
The community planning process can be very rewarding, and also time consuming. Planning processes usually run in 3-5 year cycles. It is important to ensure **a community is ready to undertake this work**. It's also essential to be sure **the plan is the right tool for the job**, as there are other ways to realise community aspirations, such as through Council's District Plan processes.

### Summary

- These plans are Community plans, not Council plans
- A group of connectors from diverse sections of the community needs to be established to drive the plan, to review the plan and to update the plan
- Comprehensive community involvement prior to the completion of the plan is essential to ensure buy-in during the implementation phase after plan has been completed.

## Getting started - the pre-planning or 'readiness' phase

The following diagram gives a high level overview of the pre-planning or readiness phase which consists of three steps (research, assess community readiness and build a planning team). For more detail, please see overleaf.



## Getting started - the pre-planning or 'readiness' phase

The following checklist and action sheet is designed to help determine whether you are ready to begin or review a community planning process. Each of the three steps (research, assess community readiness, and build a planning team) must be completed to ensure your community has the need, the desire and the capability to undertake a community planning process. When you have completed the pre-planning phase you will have developed a scoping document that outlines what your community of interest is; broadly what you are trying to achieve for the community; key people and groups that have expressed interest and support for the process; and you will have a framework for decision making.

1. Research - Begin by doing some background research and information gathering on your community, and documenting this.				
	Question	Comment	Action	Achieved Yes / No
1.	Have you identified a distinct community of interest?	You do not need to identify the exact geographical boundaries, as different sections of your community will each have varying boundaries, rohe (tribal boundaries), service areas, or areas of interest and influence.	Document approximately where and for whom the community plan is for.	
2.	Do you have demographic information for this community (population, ethnicities, income etc)?	This can be sourced from census information, Council website, libraries, and from the community itself.	Document enough information about your community to provide a brief, yet effective overview.	
3.	Have you identified any other existing plans for the community (or future planning processes that may be in development for the community)?	Has the community - or sections of it - undertaken, or been involved in planning exercises before?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out whether plans exist and what they tell you about your community. For example, SmartGrowth strategy, iwi / hapu management plans, neighbourhood plans, Council plans, environmental strategies, etc.</li> <li>Get guidance from Council's <a href="#">Community Team</a>.</li> </ul>	
4.	What are the issues your community faces (broadly define these)?	These can be validated and prioritised throughout the process.	Write a bullet point list of what your community wants to achieve through the community plan.	
5.	Are there opportunities to resolve these issues or achieve these goals in ways other than through a community plan?	This is where you confirm that the development of a community plan is the best solution.	You may decide to address some issues through other processes. If so, you should document this.	

## 1. Research - continued...

- Begin by doing some background research and information gathering on your community, and documenting this.

	Question	Comment	Action	Achieved Yes / No
6.	What are your cost forecasts?	Show examples of costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of electronic or hard copy plan</li> <li>• Open day event</li> <li>• Translation charges</li> <li>• Professional design</li> <li>• Website development.</li> </ul>	Consult with Council's <a href="#">Community Team</a> .	

*If, through addressing these issues you confirm that a community plan is required, you are ready to move to the next phase.*

## 2. Assess community readiness

- Determine whether your community is ready to undertake a community planning process.

	Question	Comment	Action	Achieved Yes / No
7.	Have you identified key stakeholder groups and community leaders?	You will give the process the best chance of success if you involve a wide range of groups and individuals who represent key sectors of your community.	Create a list of key stakeholders.	
8.	Have these groups and leaders expressed their support for the project?	Discuss the process with key people and groups in your community to gain their support.	Provide notes; letters; or minutes of this support.	
9.	Are there any gaps in the key stakeholder groups and community leaders area?	It's not uncommon for some groups and individuals to choose not to get involved.	Identify groups and individuals who may not participate in the process.	
10.	Are there other sections of the community who may need their own planning process that might be parallel or in conjunction with a wider totally inclusive community plan (e.g. Sikh community; tangata whenua; schools)?	Some groups may be unlikely to participate in mainstream consultation due to any combination of things such as language barriers, age barriers, etc.	Meet with affected community groups to ascertain their needs.	

## 2. Assess community readiness - continued...

- Determine whether your community is ready to undertake a community planning process.

	Question	Comment	Action	Achieved Yes / No
11.	Are you prepared for a plan that may take 1-2 years to complete? Followed by an implementation phase of 3-4 years? What's your timeframe for key events and communications?	You and other current Connectors don't necessarily have to commit to seeing the whole project through, but you do need to ensure that someone does.	Think about how you might phase membership of the Connectors group over time to ensure continued energy and input into the process.	

*If your community is ready for the challenge, it's time to start building the team.*

## 3. Build a planning team

- Put a team together that can get the job done.

	Question	Comment	Action	Achieved Yes / No
12.	Is there a support team (Connectors Group) in place capable of undertaking all the tasks required for the planning process? What legal umbrella will the Group have?	Ensure you get the right people in this group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put your team together.</li> <li>Identify who your Connectors represent.</li> <li>Identify the leader. List your team and their key roles.</li> <li>Get the "Connector's" job description from Council staff.</li> </ul>	
13.	Are there any Government and Non Government Organisations that should be invited to various stages of the process?	You may find that some of these organisations have information, and resources to assist and add value to the development of a community plan.	Invite them to attend and identify their areas of interest and what they would be prepared to be involved in.	

*This is the end of the pre-planning phase. You now know whether your community has the need, the desire and the capability to undertake a community planning process. At this stage you should approach Council's [Community Team](#) to review the information and meet to discuss if and how you move to the next phase of this process - building a Community Plan.*



## Roles

### Instigators (Interest)

The Instigator's role is to gauge community interest, determine whether a community plan is the right process and gain commitment from individuals and organisations to form a Connectors Group and possibly an action group.

### Connectors Group (Connect)

The job of the Connectors Group is to literally connect all of the people in their community. Domination by any one group/section of the community on the Connectors Group tends to result in a definite sway towards that Group's aspirations and frequently coincides with a drop off in interest and attendance by other groups/sections of the community. Connectors Group should be prepared to spend a lot of time talking to residents, ratepayers and various community and key stakeholder groups. It is quite appropriate to have a Councillor or Community Board member, or a member from the local Residents Association on this Group. This Group should be comprised of good communicators who have the need, desire and capability to undertake the community planning process (around 8-10 people).

### Council staff (Support)

The role of Council staff is to assist the Connectors Group with administration support, advise on funding, and attend meetings. Staff can assist with facilitation in workshops or when presenting, although a community plan should be led by the community at every opportunity. Staff can also put you in touch with other communities who have completed community-led plans and have shaped their own future.

### Action Group (Action)

The role of the Action Group is for those individuals who want to get on and do something. As projects emerge during the community planning process, this Group should endeavour to choose one (or two of these projects), recruit from a broad spectrum of the community and complete actions.

### Implementation Group (Manage)

At the conclusion of the community planning process, a group of individuals and/or community group representatives is needed to ensure that actions are carried out. Failure to form this Implementation Group often results in non fulfilment of a community's goals.





## The Community Planning Process On A Page

### Scoping phase - Allow for up to 6 months

Community issues or aspirations lead to discussions about whether a Community Plan is required.

Use the Readiness Toolkit to gather background information on your community and its need, desire and capability to undertake a community planning process.



### Peer review phase - Allow 2-3 months

Submit scoping work to Council's Community Team for peer review, recommendations and readiness endorsement.

Discuss the recommendations with your group and make a decision on whether to proceed with a community planning process, or to pursue the community's aspirations through other mechanisms, strategies and processes.

### Apply for funding

If the decision is to choose a community planning process you can apply for funding from Council's Community Matching Fund and/or other funders.



### Connectors phase - Allow for up to 1 year

Start developing your plan.



### Implementation phase - Allow 3-5 years

Once you have a published plan you begin the implementation phase.



### Evaluation and review phase - Allow for up to 6 months

Review how things have gone and where to from here. This may include scoping the need for an updated plan.



