

Developing your community benefit plan

Best practice tips for More than a Pub applicants



What makes a good community benefit plan?

Power to Change

Power to Change is an independent charitable trust endowed by the Big Lottery Fund in 2015 (now the National Lottery Community Fund).

Its programmes disburse funding and support in line with the organisation's charitable objectives, with a mission to support and develop community businesses in England. Power to Change funds the More than a Pub programme.

More than a Pub 2

The second phase of More than a Pub opened in June 2019 and will close at the end of December 2020. It builds on the success of the first phase which supported more than 40 pubs (which had either closed or were threatened with closure) to move into community ownership and start trading.

The More than a Pub programme is delivered by the Plunkett Foundation in collaboration with Co-operative and Community Finance, Key Fund, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), Co-operative Mutual Solutions, Pub is the Hub, British Beer and Pub Association, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government and Locality.

The new programme continues to offer adviser support, events, resources, a help line and bursaries to groups wishing to develop plans for taking over their pub. Additionally around 16 grant and loan packages of £100k can be applied for by groups that become ready and able to purchase their pub.

Loan and grant applicants will need to ensure they have high quality, robust and realisable plans for generating significant community benefit. As the programme name suggests, we really are focused on supporting propositions that offer more than just a pub, and we want to see you've got the research to back this up.

We want to see community pubs as real community assets that are responsive and addressing local needs - more than might be possible when a pub is under private or commercial ownership.

This guide highlights the tools and approaches that have been used by the best applicants to the programme so far. And as such, can assist you in developing high quality proposals for assessment by the selection panel.

Before applying you should familiarise yourself with the programme guidance. Please note in particular the community business criteria on page 4 and the necessity of achieving a broad community impact.

For more information, please [see the More than a Pub Applicant Guidance Notes](#).

The best community benefit plans are developed by:

- collecting detailed relevant information about your community/ locality.
- interpreting what it says about the profile, needs and aspirations of the community.
- translating these into a plan that works to and with the particular characteristics of the community and its asset, exploiting the strengths they offer and addressing any weaknesses.

A good community benefit plan can also be considered excellent market research and is likely to add value to your business plan and any other applications for investment, loans and grants.

The components of a high-quality Community Benefit Plan

1. Researching your locality and the people within it

A good starting point is always a review of the publicly available information that has been collected about the locality. Many plans show local area data from the Census and review the Indices of Multiple Deprivation ratings (particularly the index for access to services, quality of housing and the environment). *See the Appendix at the end of this document for how you can access this information.*

Typically, good plans will start with an analysis of the numbers and proportions of households, those people providing unpaid care, people's state of health, age, income and employment status and, in rural areas those with/without cars.

Alongside this it is important to collect other information about the presence of local organisations and associations and appreciate the cultural history of the community.

Additional research, such as talking with existing groups, services and businesses can enhance your understanding of where strengths, skills and support

lie as well as deficits and challenges that you may need to address, for instance where important services (like transport, surgeries, lunch clubs, libraries, post offices, shops) have recently left the area.

2. Interpreting the findings

It is important to perform a realistic interpretation of this information – to try and understand what it tells you about the particular strengths and assets of the community as well as the parameters and limitations within which you have to operate. For instance if you are a village without a centre, strung out along a road, how this affects the far-flung residents and how you will enable them - particularly those with limited mobility - to access and benefit from your community pub.

3. Uncovering the views and preferences of your community

From this interpretation the group can start to put together viable ideas about what the community pub can provide and to whom. These can be tested along with more general points in meetings and consultations. Most groups start with a questionnaire, to work out the essentials of what the community wants and who is prepared to be involved. Questionnaires can be delivered in paper format door-to-door, with support, as well as uploaded online using programs such as SurveyMonkey. It is good practice to hold consultations over a series of meetings, building a plan of action by consensus.

Application assessors are always interested in seeing how many people in the community participated in these activities and responded. If you are planning to carry out a community share offer in due course, these are a great way of raising awareness and building momentum for this further down the line. It will also help for when your community pub opens for trade.



The components of a high-quality Community Benefit Plan

4. Developing a plan that provides community benefit in the context of the specific features and opportunities of your locality and community asset

Particularly useful alongside the activities that you describe is an explanation of how these will operate *within the characteristics* of the community asset – for instance, how groups will meet outside of pub opening times (because the rooms will be able to be accessed separately) and how the asset will enable activity by - for instance - being fully accessible to users with poor mobility. And that will include explaining how people with poor mobility or confidence will be supported to reach and participate in activities at the pub. A good explanation of how the building will change and be adapted to serve the community is always useful. Building modifications for accessibility should be clearly written into *initial* refurbishment costs rather than ear-marked for a later phase.

Clear plans on the way the pub will be run are also helpful – explaining how either the managed or tenanted model will work. And in the case of the tenanted model, showing that arrangements will be made to protect and promote the community activity as part of the tenant agreement.

You should also think about who will deliver services in the pub, and your community consultation should help you to identify willing groups, service providers and volunteers to run activities. This could be an established group that will make use of the space, for example a local book club who will make the pub their permanent base; or a health worker who would utilise a side room monthly. It could also be a new group or activity for the locality - perhaps a group of parents who would like to run a kid's craft club or youth club, or a low-cost lunch club for the elderly.

Your pub may have potential to be physically expanded, or the land used for other purposes like community gardens, fairs, community led housing, community energy generation etc. Or your pub group may have future plans to acquire other assets. We are interested to hear how these 'more than' activities fit into your overall long term plan, but longer term aspirations are not sufficient alone to evidence your commitment to community benefit.



Activities that community pubs have developed and run

Activities that community pubs have successfully developed and run:

- **Providing opportunities for meaningful volunteering and for employment or employment training.**
 - **Providing some form of community transport such ride-sharing or a minibus.**
 - **Hosting an after school club, a post office, a shop, a prescription pick-up point or a library bus.**
 - **Providing access to woodland, a garden or allotment and safeguarding or developing it with the help of volunteers.**
 - **Organising charity fundraising and community events, and providing the hub for getting the local community involved in these activities and celebrating their achievements.**
 - **Providing meeting room space for community groups and councillor surgeries.**
- Connecting with others – expanding social networks
 - Resuscitation training Talks on supporting those with dementia
 - Walk and Talk
 - Library/book exchange
 - IT classes
 - Volunteer opportunities and making new friends in your 60s
 - Business networking group
 - Affordable housing
 - Book club
 - Chatty café – reducing isolation
 - Talk on climate change
 - Community cinema
 - Local food
 - Dinner delivery – to isolated local farmers
 - Digital scams and fraud workshop with Barclays Bank
 - Story telling with children
 - Cycling club hosts
 - Bridge club hosts
 - Youth drama class
 - Book corner
 - Allotments and community orchard
 - Computer corner
 - Local employment
 - School meals
 - Pop-up Post Office

Here are further examples from the community pubs we have supported:

- Dementia café
- Prayer group
- Children's drama class
- Dance classes
- Supporting local business/buying local
- Children's craft club



Useful tools and tips

Appendix

1. CENSUS 2011

The local level information can be retrieved through the Nomis Local Area Report. This report is targeted at users such as parish councils who want a quick overview of their locality. There is a link to it on the Nomis homepage or you can access it [here](#).

Enter your pub's postcode into the search box. The search results will give a list of areas in which the pub is located including the LSOA and ward. Clicking on an area will produce a report for that area including data on population structure, households, health and employment.

So that you can understand the distinct nature of their community, you can ask for the relevant local authority and country figures to be shown in the report alongside the ward/LSOA figures. To do this you need to check the box at the bottom of the search results page

This will allow you to see how your area compares to the wider local and national contexts.

If you have any queries you can contact the Nomis helpdesk by calling: 0191 334 2680, or email: support@nomisweb.co.uk, or visit: www.nomisweb.co.uk

2. Deprivation data – English Indices of Deprivation 2019

You can look up this data by entering your pub's postcode [here](#).

You can download the information as a spreadsheet.

In the columns you will be able to find an overall IMD score plus individual scores for different elements. A high score (up to 10) means minimal deprivation. A low score means more deprivation. A score of one means your area is in the 10% most deprived areas in England.

Where groups have found this information useful is in looking at the individual scores. If these are low rated for elements such as living environment, housing and services and health and disability, then there is greater justification for running activities in your community pub that address these.

3. Good practice notes on consultations

Plunkett provides an array of [resources](#) and [case studies](#) on their website that will inspire and inform your community consultation. This includes a community pub questionnaire template which you can access [here](#).

The template will help you think about:

- Determining the extent to which people are supportive of the community taking over and running the pub
- Which kinds of services and activities people would like the community pub to offer
- The extent that local people plan to visit the pub and for what reasons
- What people are prepared to contribute to the project, in terms of volunteer time, their skills and their commitment to purchasing shares

If you are receiving Adviser support from Plunkett then your Adviser will also be able to assist with this.

It is important to involve as many residents in the local community as possible. It is good practice to make positive efforts to reach and involve those who are less able to participate in the most typical channels, such as social media, on-line questionnaires or attend and be heard at local meetings.

The wider the variety of people involved, the richer the consultation, and, the better the odds that you will develop a plan that will provide real and lasting benefit to the community.