

BERWICKSHIRE AREA PARTNERSHIP – 9 JUNE 2022 PLACE MAKING WORKING GROUP

Progress Report

1. Introduction

This paper:

1. Describes the formation of the Berwickshire Area Partnership (BAP) Place Making Working Group (PMWG)
2. Summarises initial discussions related to communication and terminology.
3. Discusses the issue of prioritising community support and proposes a model for identifying and supporting all interested communities in Berwickshire
4. Indicates some of the next steps

2. Recruitment of the Working Group

To help strengthen the role of the BAP as a key community engagement platform, and to promote community consultation and involvement in Place Making, BAP proposed the creation of a PMWG. The Terms of Reference for the PMWG were agreed at the BAP meeting held on 3rd March 2022. Subsequently invitations to join the WG were publicised widely through SBC communities contact lists, websites, and social media. Eight individuals came forward to join the group and, together with four SBC officers, met for the first time on 30th March 2022. Since then, there have been a further two meetings. Membership of the Working Group is set out in Appendix 1. The majority of the PMWG also attended a workshop on the 7th April.

As the PMWG was formed in the run up to the SBC elections it was not possible to include Councillors in the membership. BAP is now asked to nominate 2/3 councillors to join the PMWG for future meetings as per the original Terms of Reference agreed at the March BAP.

We recognise the importance of hearing the voices of as wide a cross section of our communities as possible and so we are making further efforts to supplement the current membership – in particular, how we involve younger people.

3. What is Place Making

Crucial to engaging with our communities is our ability to clearly articulate what “Place Making” means to us. We need a shared understanding of place making and place making terminology. Some of our initial discussions related to definitions. For example, what is the difference between Place Making and Place Planning? The advantage of the term Place Making is that “Making” describes a

process which should engage a community in the broad sense. In doing so it will create a legacy of community involvement. Some would argue that Place Planning implies the development of a free-standing document which might gather dust in a drawer and lack sufficient ownership to be implemented.

Following our discussions, we have attempted to develop a plain English explanation of what Place Making is and why it is so important (see Appendix 2) However, recognising the need for clear communications with many of those we wish to engage with, we are also working on a simple and more visual message to encourage participation.

We have also considered, refined and developed the joint principles proposed in the earlier SBC papers. A copy of our draft Place Making Principles is set out in Appendix 3.

4. Prioritising Communities – an alternative model

The Working Group were initially asked to develop the methodology for determining which communities should receive place making priority. The communities across Berwickshire differ greatly, with towns, villages, and rural communities all seemingly competing. The PMWG quickly recognised that any prioritisation scheme was likely to create unhelpful tension. The very process of making judgements in favour of one community over another, will create a divisive rather than collaborative environment within Berwickshire.

In the PMWG we discussed 'why is there a need to prioritise'? Some suggest that it is necessary in order to focus scarce resources. What are these resources? If "resources" are the support that is being provided by SBC what exactly is to be provided to communities? Is that what they need? What happens if you are a community that isn't initially identified? If any community wishes to create a plan, why would we wish to hold them back rather than support them? Would the prioritisation model create a culture that suggests communities cannot do this themselves, thereby undermining the concept of plans being truly community led and bottom up?

Having considered these questions, we wish to challenge the prioritisation model. We suggest an alternative "opt in" model for Berwickshire. As a first step, we have contacted communities, development trusts and community trusts from across Berwickshire seeking expressions of interest in becoming involved in Place Making activity. Next we propose to:

1. welcome all communities interested in working on their own or in collaboration with others on an individual plan
2. turn away no one – the process must be inclusive
3. identify potential leaders / champions who will form a group dedicated to the development of each proposed plan.
4. help develop a peer support network of leaders / champions
5. recognise the capacity and skills pressure on volunteers undertaking Place Making and therefore

6. concentrate whatever resource is available on the group of leaders / champions, by providing mentoring, support and capacity building opportunities.
7. identify community planning partners, who have a statutory responsibility, and seek their commitment to provide support for Place Making.
8. Identify other organisations with expertise in Place Making such as Scottish Community Development Centre and, if resources allow, access their support in developing the skills of the leaders/champions.

5. Next Steps

Guidance for the Development of Place Plans

In order that future Place Plans have a measure of consistency and fit within a framework of Development Plans, Locality Plans and South of Scotland Economic Development Plans we believe it important to provide community planning leaders with the necessary frameworks and planning tools.

We seek agreement from the BAP to the proposed approach and will continue to work with SBC officers and others to identify resources and analyse the responses to the initial communication, which seeks to gauge initial interest and activity.

6. Recommendations

BAP is asked to:

1. Note the progress of the Working Group
2. Nominate 2/3 Councillors to join the Working Group
3. Feedback on both the draft Place Making Definition and Principles set out in Appendices 2 and 3
4. Endorse the opt-in approach set out in section 4 above
5. Note the next steps set out in 5 above.

K W Dickinson
Chair
Place Making Working Group
Berwickshire Area Partnership

Berwickshire Area Partnership Place Making Working Group Membership

Keith Dickinson – Gavinton, Fogo & Polwarth CC (Chair)

Juliana Amaral - BAVS

Lindsay Wood - A Heart for Duns

Alison Campbell - Coldstream CC

Anne McNeil - A Heart for Duns

Andrew Mitchell - Duns CC

Alice Fisher – Sea the Change

BAP Place Making Working Group Place Making – Draft Definition

What is Place Making?

Place Making is about everyone in a community – people of all ages and interests who live there, work or visit there, local businesses, voluntary organisations and public service providers – working together to determine what matters to them and their communities and to plan and to explore what is good and what needs to change.

There are at least 4 key points about Place Making:

- **Communities are in the driving seat!** – It is a grass roots movement led by, driven by and for the people – and recognises that communities are the local experts.
- **It's about working together** – It involves **everyone** who lives, works, visits, and provides services in a community.
- **It provides a solid foundation** – It builds on what really matters to people forming a strong basis for all plans and applications for funding.
- **It's an ongoing conversation** –and plans are reviewed and renewed on a regular basis.

Why is Place Making Important?

Place making looks at a community as a whole and recognises that local people have the expertise, knowledge and understanding of what is important and what needs to be done. It involves improving people's lives by:

- a. improving safety and security and protecting the most vulnerable
- b. improve people's health and wellbeing
- c. tackling disadvantage and social isolation
- d. build pride and a sense of belonging to the place we live and work in
- e. create stronger, more interconnected and inclusive communities
- f. support local economic growth, regeneration, job creation, learning and training
- g. attract investment and funding
- h. raising levels of ambition and achievement
- i. increase cultural activity

It is about genuine community planning – local place plans, feeding up into locality plans which, in turn, inform the Borders-wide community plan. This bottom-up approach can build trust and ownership of plans and, over time, help to align services with community needs and priorities.

For this reason, Place Making is also an increasing part of both UK and Scottish Government policy, legislating and funding offering unprecedented opportunities for communities to access funds, and shape local services and public spaces.

BAP Place making Working Group Draft Place Making Principles

Purpose

These high-level principles are all about identifying how we want to work together to progress Place Making in Berwickshire. They are aimed at everyone who will be involved in place making – community members and groups, third sector organisations, businesses and public service providers.

They inform the development of our place making approach and arrangements – including, the development of a memorandum of understanding for the Berwickshire Area Partnership in its role in facilitating Place Making in the communities across the locality.

Our approach to Place Making should be:

1. **Inclusive.** Place Making should include everyone – not just the loudest voices. Place Planning projects must be able to evidence inclusive engagement with, and support from, all those who have a stake in a Place. Clear, open and regular communication between all involved is vital, along with the inclusion of seldom heard voices.
2. **Holistic.** Place Making should cover all aspects of life in our communities – ideally based around the themes of the national Place Standard tool.
3. **Community-Led.** Place Making should be Community-led and community-driven
4. **Collaborative.** Place Making, and the development and delivery of plans and activity, should be a collaborative endeavour –not just within communities, but with public service providers and, where appropriate, between other local communities (e.g. between towns and surrounding villages). A collaborative approach requires building trust and mutual respect and a change in culture and mind sets of, not only public service providers, but of all who are involved in Place Making
5. **Informed.** Place Planning should be informed by relevant published data (health, population, social and economic disadvantage, environmental etc.) which can support and confirm locally determined needs, wishes and priorities. Public service providers should share and facilitate access to such information across communities.
6. **Communities, themselves, should determine the physical boundaries for their plan.** Locality Plans should, wherever possible, be based on Community Council boundaries – or combination of Community Council boundaries or recognised communities within those combined boundaries.
7. **Focussed on improving people’s lives.** The focus of place making, place plans and activities should be on improving local people’s lives and should recognise the contribution of young people in shaping the future of their communities.
8. **A foundation for planning Services in Berwickshire and the Borders.** Community-led Place Plans should form a foundation for, and build a grass-roots approach to, the development of the Berwickshire Locality Plan, Statutory Plans such as the Community Plan and Local Development Plan and the Strategies and Service Plans of local public service providers and other members of the Berwickshire Area Partnership.
9. **Mindful of the national net zero targets** and how communities and community-led projects can help achieve these.
10. **Effectively Resourced.** All partners, including communities and community groups, should collectively seek to optimise current and potential capacity, capability and funding to resource place making effectively.

Message to Communities in Berwickshire

Expressions of interest in becoming involved in Place Making activity

The [Berwickshire Area Partnership](#) has set up a Working Group (WG) to make recommendations on the way forward regarding Place Making in Berwickshire. We have summarised below what Place Making is, why we think it is important and who is involved.

A key question for the WG relates to the number of communities, or groups of communities, that currently have plans, are in the process of producing plans or would like to create their own Place Plan. We would therefore like to hear your initial views. We have asked some specific questions at the end of this email. **Please add your comments under each question and email them back to us at CommunityEngagement@scotborders.gov.uk by Tuesday 31st May.**

At this initial stage an indication of your preliminary thoughts is probably more important than a detailed, formally agreed response. We plan to use replies to this email to gauge broad interest and help us develop a support model to take Place making in Berwickshire to the next stage.

What is place making?

Place making is a community focussed, bottom up, planning system. It recognises and builds on a community's uniqueness, aspirations, and potential to create public spaces, places, events and activities that promote people's health, happiness and wellbeing.

Why is place making important?

By engaging with and listening to our community, we can help to

- tackle disadvantage and social isolation
- raise levels of ambition and achievement
- support local economic growth, regeneration, job creation, learning and training
- create stronger, more interconnected and inclusive communities
- improve people's health and wellbeing
- increase cultural activity
- build pride and a sense of belonging to the place we live and work in
- attract investment and funding

Who is involved in place making?

Everyone in the community. We want to ensure that this is not a top-down approach, imposed on our community by local and central government so it needs to involve everyone.

We believe developing Place Plans will show that we:

- are able and keen to work together as a community
- can look to the future with strong local insight
- are able to identify what needs to be improved
- have clear, creative, sustainable plans for the future
- understand how we will achieve change and deliver the plan

To do all of this we need to engage with all age groups and sectors of the community such as schools, businesses, statutory services, representatives of community groups and clubs, Community Councils and Trusts but most of all we need to hear from individuals living and working in the area.

The Berwickshire Area Partnership will act as co-ordinators and link to Local Government and South of Scotland Enterprise. So please give us your views on as many questions as possible.

Kind regards

Keith

K W Dickinson
Chair
Place Making Working Group
Berwickshire Area Partnership

Some questions:

- 1. Name of Group**
- 2. Contact email address**
- 3. Does your community currently have a town/village plan?**
- 4. Are you in the process of developing a town/village plan?**
- 5. Are you interested in creating a specific plan for your community or as part of a wider initiative?**
- 6. Where do you consider is your 'place' or 'community'?**
- 7. Who are the key people and organisations you need to engage with?**
Please list as many as you can.
- 8. What do you see as unique and valuable in your community?**
- 9. What makes you proud to live here?**
- 10. What are the negatives of living here?**
- 11. List some of the things you think would make this a better place to live and work**
 - a. Short term - quick wins**
 - b. Medium term projects**
 - c. Longer term plans**