

Initiatives needed

A checklist of general policy initiatives that may help make community planning more effective. Customise to suit your country, place and circumstances.

- Build locally**
Locally based building activity should be encouraged so that the economic benefits of development stay within the community. Provision for the employment of local labour and training of local people in building skills should be considered for inclusion in any building contract.
- Career incentives**
Community planning expertise should be recognised and encouraged with more effective and systematic training programmes and career opportunities.
- Centres of activity and information**
New centres, or networks of centres, on community planning should be established at national and regional level to disseminate good practice, provide advice, and evaluate and follow up on events and activities.
- Community development briefs**
Development briefs should be produced with communities for all major sites and should preferably become mandatory as a basis for land valuation and acquisition.
- Culture of participation**
A general culture of participation should be encouraged so that participation in planning becomes natural and inevitable.
- Delegated planning powers**
Planning powers should be delegated to the lowest possible tiers of government, with regional government retaining powers to intervene only in the event of local corruption or for major strategic issues.
- Derelict land and buildings**
Derelict land and buildings (both public and private) should be made available for community-led initiatives and be made the subject of punitive taxes to encourage their productive use.
- Educating enablers**
The curricula of architecture and planning schools should include relevant training for professional enablers. Live project units - urban design studios - should be set up at all schools, to undertake community projects.
- Environmental education**
Environmental education programmes for the public should be expanded so that people learn how the built environment works and how they can take part in improving it. Environmental education should form part of primary and secondary school curricula, and comprehensive networks of urban and rural studies centres should be established. There should be special emphasis on local vernacular architecture and building techniques.
- Establishing parameters**
Responsible authorities in charge of any community participation programme should set out at the outset what can and cannot be changed as a result of the participation. (Source: APaNGO project)
- Freedom of information**
Land ownership should be public information and always kept up to date.

When property in public or social ownership is sold, there should be public debate on its use beforehand, and it should not automatically be sold to the highest bidder.

□ **Good practice information**

More good practice guidance needs to be produced, made available and kept up to date. Specific items include:

- Catalogues of information already available;
- Detailed how-to-do-it information on methods;
- Toolkits of sample documents and formats;
- Contact data for people and organisations with relevant experience.
- Well presented case studies in print and on film.
- Training packs and programmes.

□ **Gradual development**

Planning policies should generally encourage incremental, evolutionary development with large development sites broken down into smaller packages.

□ **Independent resources for participation**

Both voluntary sector bodies and governments should recognise a responsibility to provide independent resources for community participation in planning in all major development areas. (Source: APaNGO project)

□ **Information**

Information systems should be established to make data about successful examples of community planning and development widely available. Programmes should be established to encourage more exchange of experience between the various groups involved in the process - public, private, professional and voluntary. Methods

should be devised for exchanging information internationally so that relevant lessons may be learned in the shortest possible space of time.

□ **Integration with decision making**

Government bodies should better integrate community input in its different forms in decision-making processes. (Source: APaNGO project)

□ **Legal agreements with communities**

Agreements between government and communities on development should be legally established and then maintained with integrity in order to ensure ongoing trust. (Source: APaNGO project)

□ **Lobbying for resources**

Multi-agency co-ordination, resources and leadership are needed to lobby for increased resources for participatory planning activity at local level and supporting services at national or regional level.

□ **Long-term support**

Funding programmes for the voluntary sector need to be long term to allow the support infrastructure for community involvement in planning to be maintained. (Source: APaNGO project)

□ **Marketing**

The importance and effectiveness of community planning should be more forcefully marketed.

□ **Percentage for participation**

All significant developments should include in their budgets a specific amount of funding for effective participation at all stages.

□ **Planners out in the community**

More professional planners should be physically located in multidisciplinary offices in the communities they serve. In urban areas no one should be more than a few minutes' walk from such an office. Architecture centres, community design centres and neighbourhood planning offices should all be promoted.

- **Planning applications**
Proposals by property owners for development should be encouraged or required to include visual details and policy statements. It should also be possible to view proposals nearby, ie in a local shop or cafe, rather than having to travel to remote government offices. Ideally, proposals should be displayed visually at the site in question.
- **Planning decisions**
All relevant social and environmental issues should be considered in planning appeals, public inquiries and local planning decisions. The recommendations of public inquiry inspectors should not be overturned by central government except for overriding reasons, such as national security. Community groups should be given access to the necessary resources to present their case effectively.
- **Practitioner listing service**
Registers of experienced community planning and community architecture practitioners should be established to help local authorities, developers and community groups obtain the best expertise available.
- **Professional payment**
Recommended professional fee scales should be adjusted to take account of the extra time needed to involve end-users.
- **Public funding**
Accountability procedures for the receipt of public funds should be redefined to encourage community initiatives and provide voluntary organisations with consistent, long-term funding, to facilitate forward planning.
- **Public sector enablers**
Central and local government should learn to trust community organisations and actively assist them in their formation and growth. There should be a fundamental policy shift from 'providing' to 'enabling'.
- **Public participation statements**
Developers of significant projects should be required to produce a 'public participation statement' identifying those affected and setting out how they will be involved in the development process. This should be an integral part of planning application procedures.
- **Quantify benefits**
Funding needs to be allocated to systematic analysis and quantifying of the benefits of community planning approaches.
- **Research**
Far more resources should be devoted to research on the built environment by government and the development industry to avoid making the same mistakes over and over again. Research and development programmes should be undertaken on the long-term cost effectiveness of different approaches and the results widely disseminated. Special attention should be directed towards the development of techniques in participatory planning and design.
- **Review statutory procedures**
Planning, development and management procedures need to be constantly reviewed to ensure they incorporate the best participatory practice available. This might cover:
 - Preparing local plans;
 - Preparing development briefs;
 - Planning application procedures;
 - Public inquiry procedures;
 - Urban management procedures.
- **Simplify language**
Planning legislation should be re-written in straightforward language.
- **Technical aid**
Networks of community-controlled, publicly funded multi-disciplinary

technical aid facilities should be established and maintained.

- Voluntary sector empowered**
Voluntary organisations - representing geographical communities and communities of interest - should willingly demand and accept more responsibility for the creation and management of the environment and should strengthen and restructure themselves in order to become more effective as developers and property managers. Special emphasis should be put on encouraging the formation of housing cooperatives, special project groups, development trusts, neighbourhood forums and development partnerships.

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