



Community Engagement Guide



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Why this guide

Keepmoat's Vision is:
**Building Communities,
Transforming Lives.**

The power of homebuilding is that this really is in our gift to achieve, and there is a lot of responsibility which comes with it. The impact of our developments will be felt by communities for decades after the construction has stopped. So it's important that we listen to understand how.





WHY THIS GUIDE

Crucial to creating new communities is to understand the needs of the people living there currently – so a new development can help to alleviate problems and maximise the strengths and opportunities of a place.

Community engagement is therefore essential to placemaking and to social value.

This is reflected in the Social Value International’s first Principle – “*Engage stakeholders*”. It is also a key element of Home England’s Strategic Plan (2023-28) that quality development will “reflect community priorities by taking an inclusive and long-term approach.”

For these reasons, **Engaging and Empowering Communities** is a key theme of Keepmoat’s Sustainability Roadmap. Doing it well opens up opportunities to improve our understanding of sustainability and social value, create better places and secure new future land and partnership opportunities by sharing the same language as communities and development partners.

The suggestions in this guide allow us to shape development concepts with community involvement at an earlier stage, and with more effectiveness and social inclusion than we could through the planning system alone, aiming to smoothing the planning journey. In some cases, planning applications will require a Statement of Community Involvement and this guide can act as an aid in creating such a statement.

KEY POINTS

- Understanding the needs of the local people will alleviate problems and maximise opportunities for a place.
- Engaging and Empowering Communities is a key theme of Keepmoat’s Sustainability Roadmap.
- Early community involvement to shape developments can smooth the planning journey.





How to use this guide

Keepmoat purchases land from many different owners, creating developments in different places with varying requirements. In the same way that the right approach to housing mix and sales prices will be different across different localities, so too are the appropriate levels of community engagement.

This guide is not intended as a minimum standard or Keepmoat requirement but to make sure that we always consider the most appropriate levels of community engagement for the developments we are creating.

KEY POINTS

- Always consider the most appropriate levels of community engagement for developments.
- Start community engagement at the earliest opportunity.

A different level of community engagement will be appropriate for a development based on a private land sale, to a sensitive regeneration project in an existing residential area.

The timing for the use of this engagement guide also needs to be considered carefully. Generally, the time for community engagement is at the earliest opportunity – to help identify constraints and opportunities for the local area. There will occasionally be a need for asking residents to comment on layouts and masterplans at public consultations – but generally speaking there will be less value in engaging residents on an existing design which may need a level of expertise to comment on.

Understanding **local authority** objectives





UNDERSTANDING LOCAL AUTHORITY OBJECTIVES

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL AUTHORITY OBJECTIVES ARE BELOW:

Local authorities will generally have a Corporate Plan, Vision or Strategy that outlines their greatest priorities. These plans will have undergone scrutiny by elected politicians representing ward level areas and public consultation exercises.

Usually, our housing developments will contribute to those priorities to a greater or lesser extent and a useful exercise is to use these to map the contribution that we aim to make on these priorities. This can help us to think about any ways in which we can contribute even more to Council objectives.

This is a good way to structure bid writing for partnership opportunities with local authorities. It is also a good way to structure planning responses and communications with Councillors and Council officials.

	Birmingham City	Oldham	Somerset
Strategy	Birmingham City Corporate Plan 2022-26 	Oldham Corporate Plan 2022-27 	Somerset Council Plan 2023-27 
Pillars / priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A Bold Prosperous Birmingham 2. A Bold Inclusive Birmingham 3. A Bold Safe Birmingham 4. A Bold Healthy Birmingham 5. A Bold Green Birmingham 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Healthy, safe and well supported residents 2. A great start and skills for life 3. Better jobs and dynamic businesses 4. Quality homes for everyone 5. A clean and green future 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A greener, more sustainable Somerset 2. A healthy and caring Somerset 3. A fairer, ambitious Somerset 4. A flourishing and resilient Somerset



UNDERSTANDING LOCAL AUTHORITY OBJECTIVES

A response to a bid framed in this way could read:

“ We are delighted to present a new sustainable development in Birmingham that will further the city’s **bold priorities**.

Canal Wharf will aid a **Prosperous Birmingham** by attracting new working people into the area, with great access to local businesses situated in the x area of the city. We anticipate xx% of supply chain spend for the development will be within 30 miles, supporting local trades.

Canal Wharf will aid an **Inclusive Birmingham** through providing training opportunities for disadvantaged groups in the construction process, making use of our Bricklaying Training Hub partnership with NHBC.

Etc.



UNDERSTANDING LOCAL AUTHORITY OBJECTIVES

Limitations

This should be seen as the most basic approach to community engagement.

- While considering local authority corporate objectives demonstrates interest in local government priorities – environmental, social and economic - ultimately these are high level strategies with objectives that cover a very wide area and are not tailored to the interests of ward-level communities.
- While local authority strategic objectives are likely to remain consistent, it should be considered that their emphasis and prioritisation may change over time – including objectives for a development project.



Understanding ward-level profiles



UNDERSTANDING WARD-LEVEL PROFILES

Many local authorities have ward profiles that show the issues likely to be experienced by the very local community around where a housing development is situated.

A medium or large development could have a considerable impact on the profile of the ward in which it is situated.

Some ward profiles will even feature results from surveys and research that have been conducted in the area, such as the example on the next page.



EXAMPLE OF A WARD PROFILE:

Ashley, Bristol [🔗](#)

Sample page:

Crime

Crime and Policing

Ashley

Further Information

Data
Figures for crime offences and youth offenders are a total for the respective year. The number of youth offenders are used as the indicator rather than the number of offences committed. Quality of Life data is from the 2022-23 survey.

Calculation
Crime offence and youth offender data is expressed as a rate per 1,000 of the ward population within the cohort selected (i.e. crime data). Census 2021 population data has been used for data from the year 2023. Quality of Life data is weighted by age and sex. Percentages are rounded to 1 decimal point.

Comparing wards against the Bristol Average
Wards are colour-coded to show any significant difference from the Bristol Average. To measure whether the gap is significant; crime offences and youth offenders data uses standard deviation whilst the quality of life data uses the statistical 't-test'.

Significantly Better ●
Not Significantly Different ●
Significantly Worse ●

All Crimes 2022/23

134.6

Rate per 1,000

Bristol Average 2022/23

113.8

Rate per 1,000

All Crimes 2022/23

Ward	Rate per 1,000
Central	476.6
Hotwells & Harbourside	366.9
Lawrence Hill	202.9
Southville	145.2
Ashley	134.6
Hartcliffe & Withywood	131.2
Eastville	129.2
St George West	124.8
Lockleaze	118.8
Brislington West	117.8
Filwood	114.1
Easton	112.0
Horfield	108.8
Avonmouth & Lawrence Weston	104.2
Hengrove & Whitchurch Park	98.0
Henbury & Brentry	97.3
Southmead	96.1
Bishopsworth	92.7
Frome Vale	91.4
Bedminster	85.3
Brislington East	81.5
St George Central	75.9
Stackwood	73.5
Knowle	71.8
Windmill Hill	70.6
Hillfields	66.1
Clifton Down	63.5
Clifton	63.4
Cotham	55.6
Bishopston & Ashley Down	53.2
Westbury-on-Trym & Henleaze	48.0
Redland	45.7
Stoke Bishop	44.9
St George Troopers Hill	36.2

Crime Indicator	Period	Measure Type	Ward Statistic	Bristol Average
% who feel anti-social behaviour is a problem locally	2022	Percentage	37.1	35.6
% who feel safe outdoors after dark	2022	Percentage	59.4	57.5
% who have been a victim of crime in the last 12 months	2022	Percentage	12.8	13.0
Anti-Social Behaviour incidents	2022/23	Rate per 1,000	23.4	19.3
Burglary	2022/23	Rate per 1,000	6.3	5.3
Violent & Sexual Offences	2022/23	Rate per 1,000	47.2	41.8
Youth Offenders	2022/23	Rate per 1,000	2.5	4.5

UNDERSTANDING WARD-LEVEL PROFILES

They will often compare the ward level area to the local authority average. This information could be pulled out for innovative bid responses likely to chime with community concern.

An innovative bid response example:

- “ Our research into the local area has identified three aspects that we will prioritise in our offer around this development:
- 1. Obesity levels above the city area average.**
We will place particular emphasis on a development which can facilitate healthy lifestyles and active travel routes to local amenities, working closely with the Council's Healthy City Team. We will do this by...
 - 2. High levels of young people not in employment, training or education, beyond the city average.**
We will put particular emphasis on engaging local schools and local authority youth teams with information on the attractiveness of construction careers and how to start careers in homebuilding.
 - 3. Etc.**



UNDERSTANDING WARD-LEVEL PROFILES

Alternative options

If you are unable to obtain a ward profile, or would like to use a different source, at the time of writing Keepmoat's Digital Marketing Team has a license for Experian Mosaic. This tool uses financial data to provide a psychographic profile of the people living in a local area. For example, 'City Prosperity' reflects very high income city dwellers.

Limitations

The information you will find from a Ward profile or Experian Mosaic is quantitative in nature, based on data and statistics. Often the most valuable information we could gain from communities when it comes to a new development cannot be easily expressed by data – such as the history and culture of the place, how they like to spend their weekend, their favourite local shop or landmark. Qualitative information is often preferable.

Particular care should be taken with Mosaic psychographic groups for placemaking purposes. While local data is used to establish which psychographic segments are most prevalent in an area, the segments themselves are stereotyped based on national characteristics.

Direct community engagement



DIRECT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The best form of community engagement is direct engagement. There are different levels that can be gone to when engaging the community directly.

Informal direct engagement

At the lower end is informal engagement – simply getting a feel of a place from a few existing residents at random in a ‘vox pop’ exercise. This might be asking people how they feel about a place, what they associate with it, what they like and don’t like. The ideas can be integrated into creative site vision and into bid documentation to add extra flavour and colour.

Our digital marketing team used this approach in a very simple way to aid the marketing for our Cable Wharf development at Northfleet in Essex. On the journey down, a passenger on the train was asked how they felt about the area, along with a taxi driver and local office worker buying lunch. Their views were incorporated into a creative marketing concept for the development.

While this approach was used for marketing an existing development, the same approach could easily be used to help develop a site concept simultaneously with a site walk round.

Limitations

This approach is by nature very unrepresentative, and care should be taken not to imply that views are representative of a community. However, it is a very simple and cost-free way to help stimulate ideas for the vision of a new development and stand out a little from the crowd.



DIRECT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Formal direct engagement

At the highest end of community engagement is a formal community engagement process. This involves holding usually several publicised workshop events at times and locations which make them accessible for a good level of community representation, including for those with mobility problems, who work during the day or at night.


Given that the attendees will not have a technical knowledge of design and layout, workshops will need to be both entertaining and accessible – as well as generate some meaningful outcomes.

They may need to be held at different stages – in advance of layout and after a first layout has been created.

This type of engagement requires a certain skill set, and due to the time implications and complexity a specialist provider will likely be required if this approach is taken.

Limitations

The limitation of this type of exercise is that it is potentially resource heavy and requires expertise which may not always be available internally. It is therefore not an approach which is likely to be practical for all developments. It should be considered for developments that are particularly sensitive in nature – for example regeneration of residential areas or a development on an area of land particularly highly valued by the community for a different existing purpose. Whatever approach is taken, findings are unlikely to ever be statistically valid and an exercise such as the one outlined can best achieve good qualitative findings – quality over quantity should be the aim.



A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
ACTIVITY AT KEEPMOAT'S
REGENERATION OF ANFIELD,
LIVERPOOL RUN BY EXTERNAL
EXPERTS.

DIRECT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public consultation

Public consultations are similar to the previous approach, but may have additional formality attached as determined by a local authority and there may be specific steps which must be taken.

Public consultations can involve online surveys, online meetings, and in-person events. The risk of some public consultation formats is that involvement can be heavily skewed towards groups within the population with more time and money if the format is too technical, long, or complex for harder-to-reach parts of the population.

Distribution of a survey by social media runs a high risk of being circulated round particular sections of the population rather than others.

It's important to ensure that any consultation or engagement exercise is capable of reach parts of the population, in an accessible way, beyond what can be achieved in the usual planning process.

Limitations

The potentially enhanced formality of a formal public consultation may mean there is a temptation to understand responses as being more representative of a general population when that is unlikely to be the case. The aim should be to engage in a more inclusive way that the formal planning process is capable of facilitating.



Conclusion

This guide has outlined some different approaches that can aid the way our developments respond to the needs of local communities. These approaches range from very simple, to resource heavy. While we do not always need to deploy the most intensive forms of community engagement to our developments, our options for community engagement should always be considered in order to find the best suited approach to the specific project.

