

**FINDING
FACTUAL INFORMATION
RESOURCE PACK**

Introduction

The Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) was established in 1929 as a registered charity which aims to improve and enhance the quality of life for those who live and work in the rural areas of Essex. It encourages self-help community projects and speaks out to the relevant authorities on issues that matter to people living in rural Essex.

The work of the Rural Community Council of Essex is based on enabling communities to become strong, active and empowered, capable of doing things for themselves – defining the problems they face and then tackling them together. An Information Pack, 'Involving the Community in Your Project', provides guidance about different types of surveys – the advantages and disadvantages of different methods, good practice in carrying out surveys and how to use the information gathered.

This Resource Pack provides examples and practical advice about how to find Factual Information. Other resource packs are available for 'Questionnaires', 'Participatory Methods' and 'Workshops'.

Assistance and support is available to help you design and use community involvement methods that are appropriate for your project and your community. Please contact your local field officer at the Rural Community Council of Essex at the address below for further information:

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Statistics

Demographic and Census Information

The government carries out a census every 10 years, the most recent being in 2001. The findings are on the Office of National Statistics (ONS) website www.statistics.gov.uk

For statistical purposes of the census, the country is divided into small blocks of land called Output Areas. These allow us to look in more detail at smaller local areas. Output Areas are then combined to form two layers of Super Output Areas known as Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) and Middle Layer Super Output Areas (MSOAs). For background information about output areas see www.statistics.gov.uk/geography/soa.asp

When you go onto the web site www.stastics.gov.uk, click on 'Neighbourhood' (at the top of the page in pink text) and you will be invited to search for statistics for a particular area. Think about the geographical area affected by your project; the website can provide statistics for each Output Area, LSOA or MSOA. In addition it can provide information for the following areas with organisational boundaries: Parish, Ward, Local Authority, Parliamentary Constituency, Primary Care Organisation, New Deal for Communities, Health Authority or Education Authority.

The search facility on the right hand side of the screen provides a summary for the LSOA which contains that postcode. The summary contains statistics for the LSOA and a profile for the larger area within which the LSOA is located. The summary contains information on the location, people & society, health & care, deprivation, economic activity, education skills & training, housing & households, and crime & safety.

The search facility on the left hand side of the screen provides statistics for any of the other types of areas. Enter the name of the 'area' and click on the type of area (e.g. enter 'Uttlesford' and click on 'local authority' or enter Rivenhall and click on Parish), then click 'Search'. The next screen will show you a map of the area and its boundary and a list of the statistics available for that area. More data sets are available for the larger geographical areas. If you enter a post code and click on an area type, you will see a map and list of statistical information for the selected area that contains that postcode.

Local Authority Information

District and borough councils carry out a number of surveys as part of their statutory duties e.g. Community safety audits, residents attitude and satisfaction surveys, housing needs surveys, street scene audits etc. This information may be only available for the district as a whole, or may be analysed to ward or parish level.

Contact somebody who deals with 'policy and information' (or similar) at your local authority to find out if they have any statistics that are relevant to your project.

Project Profile

It is important to have a clear and accurate picture of the current level of services and facilities relevant to your project. The nature of this profile will vary depending on the project; some examples are given below.

Community hall project

The profile will include details of the 'accommodation' – numbers of rooms, floor area, square footage, kitchen facilities, toilets, storage space, staging etc. The age of the building, maintenance requirements, type of heating.

It will also include details of current usage – number of groups and nature of their activities in the hall, frequency of bookings, vacant times, waiting lists for bookings etc

A project to improve a 'service'

The profile will include details of supply and demand – the number of people who provide the service (volunteers and paid employees), the numbers that use the service and details about them, frequency of the service, waiting lists for the service etc. If the service uses a building the profile would include details of the accommodation.

A transport project

The profile will include details of any existing service – routes, frequency, costs

Parish Plan

The profile will list all services and facilities available in the parish – post office, shops, school etc – and if not available the location of the nearest. A sample of a parish profile is included.

Strategies and Plans

It is useful to find out how your project relates to strategies and plans that are produced by the district/borough council and other statutory organisations. Your project may provide or contribute towards a local level solution to issues raised at a strategic level. For example, your project to improve the play area in your village may complement objectives in the Community Strategy and the Green Space Strategy for your district or borough. A Community Strategy may highlight that there is 'not enough for young people to do' in the area and include a priority 'to create more opportunities for young people to get together informally'. A Green Space Strategy may discuss the need for a network of high quality open space and have an objective 'to improve leisure opportunities and facilities in the district for young people and other groups in the community'.

If you can show that your project complements strategic plans, it may be easier to obtain support and funding to take actions forward. It is therefore worth finding out if there are any relevant objectives within statutory strategies and plans. Some suggested strategies and plans are shown below (this is not a comprehensive list). Most are included on the web sites of the local authority.

Community Strategy (social, economic and environmental topics)

Local Development Framework; formerly the Local Plan (all topics but related to land use)

Local Area Agreements (all topics)

Rural Strategy (all topics)

Housing Strategy

Local Transport Plan / Strategy

Town Centre Strategies

Green Space Strategy

Leisure Strategy

Economic Regeneration Strategy

Cultural Strategy

Community Safety Strategy

Biodiversity Plan

Integrated Strategy for Older People

Health; Local Delivery Plan (produced by the Care Trusts)

Impact Assessment

You will need to assess the impact your project will have; whether it will have a positive impact and what measures you will take to reduce any potential negative impacts.

For example you will need to assess whether a new or improved service in your town or village will threaten a similar service in another area by attracting their users.

You may also like to assess your project on the basis of 'health' or sustainability criteria. Sample 'checklists are included.

PARISH PROFILE

This profile identifies **number** of each type of service or facility that exists in the parish or, if zero, where the **nearest** service is located.

Service	Number	Nearest
<i>Example question – is there a theatre in your village?</i>	0	Colchester
<i>Example question – is there a park seat in your village?</i>	2	-
1 Is there a grocery store?		
2 Are there any other shops? (Please list – use an extra sheet if necessary)		
3 Are there any mobile retail services? (Please list)		
4 Is there a Post Office?		
5 Is there a Post Box?		
6 Is there a Doctor's practice?		
7 Is there a private only dentist/ NHS patient dentist*?		
8 Are there any mobile health services? (Please list)		
9 Is there a Police Station / mobile police unit service*?		
10 Is there a venue for indoor sports? (Please specify)		
11 Is there a sports pitch or court? (Please specify)		
12 Is there a playground / play equipment*?		
13 Is there a bank or building society?		
14 Is there a cash point?		
15 Is there a public house?		
16 Is there any accommodation (hotel, B&B, etc)?		
17 Is there a café?		
18 Is there a village hall or community centre?		

19 Is there a veterinary practice?		
20 Is there a library / mobile library service*?		
21 Is there any community ICT access?		
22 Is there a Pre-school, play-school or nursery?		
23 Is there a Primary school?		
24 Is there a Secondary school?		
25 Is there an after school club?		
26 Is there a youth club / mobile youth facility*?		
27 Is there a club for the elderly?		
28 Is there a church / faith group meeting place? (please list denominations / faiths)		

* please delete as appropriate

29 Is there a parish office and information point?	YES / NO*
30 Is there a Parish Magazine? (If YES, please provide contact details)	YES / NO*
31 Is there a Parish Guide to organisations and services?	YES / NO*
32 Is there a guide to local businesses?	YES / NO*
33 Is there a guide to parish walks/footpaths?	YES / NO*
34 Is there a parish web site? (If YES, please give address)	YES / NO*
35 Is there a local information notice board?	YES / NO*
36 Is there a Good Neighbour scheme?	YES / NO*
37 Is there a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme?	YES / NO*
38 Does your parish have broadband?	YES / NO*
39 Does your parish have any small business units?	YES / NO*
40 Is there a community bus?	YES / NO*
41 Is there a public car park?	YES / NO*
42 Are your community facilities generally in a good condition? (if NO, please provide details of any defects)	YES / NO*
43 Which is your nearest 'service centre' town or village?	
44 By car – what is the average journey time to this town/village?	
45 Is public transport available to this town/village?	YES / NO*
46 How frequent is the bus service to this town/village?	

* please delete as appropriate

CARADON DISTRICT COUNCIL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST

Every project has an impact on the community, the economy and the environment, therefore, every project can contribute to a more sustainable society. The following checklist outlines what a more sustainable society consists of. The aim of the checklist is to enable you to identify areas where you can make improvements to your project to contribute to this necessary shift from a less sustainable to a more sustainable society. You will find that you are already contributing in different ways, but there may well be some you can improve on. Use the checklist as a stimulus for ideas and as a basis for discussion as well. The issues can be complex and there may not be one 'right way' of improving.

Guidance for using the checklist:

1. Read the issues all the way through before you begin. This will give you an idea of the breadth of issues involved.
2. Then identify whether or not each issue is applicable to your project. Is there any connection between your project and this issue? If there is a significant impact, write **yes**, if it is not applicable, write **no** and move on to the next question.
3. If there is a significant impact, consider whether the impact makes a positive (**+ve**) contribution to sustainable development or a negative (**-ve**) contribution and put a cross in the appropriate column. The factors may be complex but go with your first reaction if you need to. Be honest.
4. If you are unsure of any questions, or the impact a service may have, then put a cross in the **unclear** column.
5. Use the 'Other Issues' boxes at the end for issues not already identified.
6. The checklist can be used annually to document your year-on-year improvement, actions, and targets.

Contribution to sustainable development	Is it relevant (yes/no)	+ve (x if appl)	-ve (x if appl)	Un-clear (x if appl)
MINIMISING ENERGY USAGE for heat, light, power and vehicles by service users, staff and contractors?				
a) Minimising energy use in buildings, and in machinery and computer usage?				
b) Minimising fuel use through improved technology or efficiency?				
c) Increasing the percentage of energy obtained from renewable sources?				
DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT USE by service users, staff and contractors?				
a) Minimising the number and length of car, van and lorry journeys and the need to travel?				
b) Actively making public transport use, a more attractive and viable option?				
c) Improving access to services or facilities for people				

**CARADON DISTRICT COUNCIL
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST**

Contribution to sustainable development	Is it relevant (yes/no)	+ve (x if appl)	-ve (x if appl)	Un-clear (x if appl)
with no car?				
d) Improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists?				
MINIMISING RESOURCE USE AND WASTE by service users, staff and contractors?				
a) Minimising the use of all resources, materials and water?				
b) Maximising the re-use and recycling of resources, materials and water?				
c) Maximising the use or re-usable and recycling products?				
d) Minimising the quantity of packaging and other waste going to landfill?				
IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT?				
a) Reducing noise or light pollution?				
b) Minimising air pollution from buildings, vehicles and machinery?				
c) Improving or protecting the water quality of any water source?				
d) Reducing or preventing any land contamination?				
e) Actively promoting a reduction in litter and dog mess?				
f) Improving or maintaining public access to open spaces and the countryside?				
g) Protecting or increasing native wildlife habitats and habitat diversity?				
h) Protecting or enhancing landscape quality and retaining open countryside?				
PROMOTING THE SUSTAINABLE USE OF BUILDINGS AND LAND?				
a) Using brown-field sites or vacant or underused buildings not green-field sites?				
b) Ensuring buildings or conversions are designed to enable multi-purpose use, long-spans and future changes of use?				
d) Providing access to affordable housing?				
e) Reducing homelessness and unfit housing?				
DEVELOPING A SUSTAINABLE LOCAL ECONOMY?				
a) Increasing local employment opportunities for local people?				
b) Increasing local trade by linking local producers with local consumers?				
c) Enabling local people to set up and develop private or community enterprises?				
d) Promoting responsible business practices, including energy usage, waste minimisation and transport issues (as above)?				
e) Improving access to work e.g. through the support of public transport, childcare provision, work experience,				

