



Community guide: Masterplanning

What is a masterplan?

A masterplan presents a vision for the future of an area and considers the way the land is used, the design and look of a neighbourhood, the kinds of community facilities needed and a range of other factors such as business needs, transport and green space. A masterplan should provide a long-term strategy for a place, considering the needs over many years or decades. It should remain flexible to be able to adapt to changing circumstances, and have regard to financial, economic and social impacts as well as proposals for how change will be paid for and delivered. Most masterplans contain a detailed illustration to show the proposed scheme.

Some examples:

[Node Urban Design](#)

[UCL Bloomsbury](#)

[East Croydon Masterplan](#)

[Shaping WoodWharf](#)

What is the masterplanning process?

[CABE: Creating a successful Masterplan](#) outlines some of the features that a masterplan should consider:¹

- The general layout of an area and how streets, squares and open spaces are connected
- What activities will take place in different locations (e.g. offices, shops or housing)
- Looking at how and where people move: on foot, by bicycle, car or public transport
- The service needs of an area including refuse lorries and delivery vehicles
- What utilities are needed such as gas, electric, water and broadband
- How any changes will fit in with the wider area

A good masterplanning process will involve the community over a period of time to identify areas of concern and work collaboratively to develop realistic solutions. It requires a clear brief developed through an understanding of local issues and challenges, as well as an appreciation of local assets. It should also raise aspirations and build a consensus for people to work together and implement the plan.²

[BREEAM Communities: An introduction for master planners](#) provides advice and guidance for those involved in masterplanning to assess the sustainability of developments of all scales.

Who is involved in creating a masterplan?

Who commissions the masterplan (**the client**) is often particularly dependant on who owns the land and who will be financing the development. Regardless, local communities should be given a chance to give their views. A core function of masterplanning is to “reconcile the needs of stakeholders across public, private and community interests”.³

Some of the more likely situations where a masterplan may be used, and the main stakeholders in the process are shown below.



When is a masterplan required?

There is no formal requirement for masterplanning in national planning policy. However, they can be useful for the creation of sustainable places,⁴ especially if the scale of change is significant (for example urban extensions, large new settlements or where more than one landowner or developer is involved).⁵ A masterplan helps partners to understand how different elements will fit together. Like any part of the planning process a masterplan must comply with the relevant local and national planning legislation.

Community Masterplanning Case Study

Sheffield City Council harnessed the value of a community-led process taking place at the neighbourhood level to plan the future of a large part of the city.

In the late 1990s, parts of north Sheffield, home to 10 per cent of the city's population, were earmarked for large-scale housing demolition and redevelopment. Sheffield City Council established the Southey Owlerton Area Regeneration (SOAR) Partnership to manage the regeneration.

However, after strong opposition from the affected communities the proposals were abandoned. Instead Sheffield City Council developed a "programme of creative engagement with local communities" to improve the local environment and facilities before dealing with the housing.

The council and SOAR, supported by CABE, began to focus on community-led strategies. Two community representatives from each of the six neighbourhood wards involved joined the SOAR board. Each area developed a neighbourhood strategy using participatory workshops. These actions supported the development of a shared vision for the whole area as the strategies were used to create a single spatial regeneration framework. Only after this framework had been completed was more detailed masterplanning work commissioned. This allowed for the local strategies to feed into this work and truly inform the masterplan.

A series of events including workshops and site visits allowed the SOAR client team to develop the knowledge to assess, select and brief designers and developers as well as taking a role in estate design and the redevelopment of green spaces. Additional skills such as brief-writing and project management have given the community a long-term stake in how public investment is targeted.

Through a series of [neighbourhood planning exercises](#), local residents helped to plan improvements to local parks, the physical renewal of the housing stock, and the provision of new facilities.⁶

Routes for community involvement⁷:



Representation – engagement with specific representatives of a community such as parish, town or district councillors.

Consultation – publishing or displaying various design options for comment.

Participation or deciding together – stakeholders are asked to generate ideas and options, not just react to them.

Collaboration or acting together – a partnership approach to decision-making and implementation.

Delegation – almost all power and responsibility is devolved to local stakeholders.

The masterplanning process offers a number of different opportunities for communities to provide input. CABE has produced an [interactive diagram](#) to describe the process, with community engagement recognised as integral throughout. Masterplanning will not necessarily be community-led and the extent of consultation involved will rely on who leads the process (the client).

Support for Community Involvement

There are a number of different organisations providing advice, information or funding for community based or community led initiatives. The following list is for information purposes only. BSHF does not endorse any particular organisation and welcomes suggestions for new resources.

[Locality](#) provides a wide range of services to support community led organisations, including grants to assist with the development of neighbourhood plans.

[Big Lottery Fund](#) has numerous funding programmes available for community groups and projects.

[UK Community Foundations](#) is an umbrella organisation that can direct you to a local community foundation to access support for issues relating to community development and the environment. Visit the website to find your nearest foundation.

[Planning for Real](#) supports communities to take an active role in neighbourhood planning, new housing and regeneration projects. The organisation initiates a number of different meetings to engage a range of community representatives and residents. This process results in an event where community members use a scaled model of the area to identify concerns, suggestions and ideas. Follow up sessions then prioritise suggestions and develop an action plan to tackle the issues. This process will often [inform](#) a more formal masterplanning initiative.

[Enquiry by Design](#) uses workshops to assess a complex range of design requirements for the development site or place, with every issue tested by being drawn. Technical experts work alongside local experts to share expertise and inform the design.

[Placecheck](#) provide online resources for communities to assess their local area and identify ways to improve it through 'walkabouts'. The resources are designed for anybody to use and do not necessarily require professional input.

[The Glass-House](#) Community Led Design provides "independent advice, training and hands-on support to community groups and organisations, housing associations, developers, local authorities and other stakeholders, to help them work more effectively together to create better quality places and spaces".

[Community Guidance](#) is a section of the Building and Social Housing Foundation website which provides information and resources for communities wanting to get more involved in local development.

¹ CABE: Creating a Successful Masterplan

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/masterplans>

² Urban Taskforce, Towards an Urban Renaissance, ODPM, 1999, from DCLG (2008) Devising and delivering masterplanning at neighbourhood level Some lessons from the New Deal for Communities Programme http://extra.shu.ac.uk/ndc/downloads/general/masterplanning_neighbourhood_level.pdf

³ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/244134/0068213.pdf>

⁴ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/viability-guidance/what-does-the-national-planning-policy-framework-expect-on-viability-in-planning/>

⁵ CABE: Creating a Successful Masterplan

⁶ CABE: North Sheffield regeneration framework (Southey Owlerton)

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/masterplans/north-sheffield>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/masterplans/soar>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/case-studies/soar/background>

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/case-studies/soar/process>

⁷ Adapted from CABE Forms of community engagement and Partnerships on-line: Framework for participation <http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/frame.htm>