Devon Local Strategic Partnership
A TOOLKIT FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

ROGER TYM & PARTNERS
Planners and Development Economists

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TOOLKIT (Version 1)
December 2008

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CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

This toolkit is the result of work commissioned by a wide range or organisations (from within and beyond Devon) [1] in order to inform the production of Local Development Frameworks, Sustainable Community Strategies, further Community Led Planning and specifically implementation of the Devon Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011.

The need for the work was identified through considering the question "how to make sure that rural communities thrive". Traditionally, planning and housing policies have focused rural development almost entirely at locations selected as sustainable due to the current availability of public transport, shops, facilities and services. This has meant that some places without such facilities attract minimal investment and their ability to evolve to meet changing conditions is constrained. Other places where facilities are at capacity are planned to take more growth. The need for change to maintain balance, and the readiness and ability of small settlements to manage sustainable change can be missed by a rather too simple analysis. The study partners felt that planning and development processes needed to be more sophisticated if we are to encourage a more sustainable approach that recognises how places and communities really work in practice.

This toolkit is designed to help public authorities, professionals and local communities reach a balanced view about the current and future sustainability of rural communities. It will help those who use it to arrive at an informed judgement as to how a community is working now, and to point to the things which could make it more sustainable in future.

The toolkit does not take a narrow view about what is "sustainability" – a sustainable community needs to have the right balance of economy, community and environment, and all of these factors are considered. Hopefully, discussion around these issues will help to focus attention on the issues which matter most and encourage discussion and agreement about what is needed to improve the sustainable future of our rural settlements, and the contribution that they make to the overall sustainability of the region and beyond.

The toolkit itself is set out in the following pages, and can hopefully be used without modification in many situations. It is however designed to be versatile and can be adapted in the light of local circumstances. It always calls for an amount of discussion and judgement on the part of the users.

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[1] Commissioning Partners for the project: Devon County Council, Devon Strategic Housing Group, Torridge District Council, West Devon Council, SWAN, Commission for Rural Communities, South West Regional Assembly, Housing Corporation and SPARSE (the Sparsity Partnership of Local Authorities)

The original partners to the study (see below) are keen to stay in touch with those who use the toolkit and to hear about how the process can be improved.

The remainder of this Document is structured in Chapters:

2. The Structure of the Toolkit

3. Toolkit Resources

4. Guidance on Sources and Use of Data

5. Worked Example

6. Guidance Note on the Community Testing Stage of the Toolkit

7. Guidance for Communities using the Toolkit

8. Guidance for Local Strategic Partnerships using the Toolkit

9. Guidance for Local Planning Authorities using the Toolkit

2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE TOOLKIT

A TOOLKIT FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Purpose of the Toolkit

This toolkit will help users to assess the current sustainability of rural settlements and the impact that change (or lack of change) might have on that sustainability.   It is designed to improve the evidence available to local planning authorities and public service providers to support them in delivering their statutory responsibilities, and to act as a common framework for discussions between local communities and professionals about the current and future sustainability of rural districts, towns and villages.

The toolkit is based on the assumption that there are no places that are inherently 'unsustainable', but that the way we use our towns and villages (for living, working and leisure) and the manner in which they change in the future, will make them either more or less sustainable.

What do we mean by Sustainable?

Our aim is to help our rural communities embody the principal of sustainable development at local level by:
- Balancing and integrating the social, economic and environmental components of their place
- Meeting the needs of both existing and future generations , and
- Respecting the needs of other communities in the wider region and internationally to make their own communities sustainable

It practical terms being sustainable means healthy living within environmental limits in an economically successful but just society which benefits from and submits to good governance.

The 8 Characteristics of a Sustainable Community

The toolkit is structured around eight characteristics which have been developed by Governments across Europe[2] to define what a successful sustainable community would look like. We have adapted the description of these characteristics slightly to make them more relevant and timely. A successful sustainable community will be:

A. Active with a strong sense of community

B. Well run and well represented

C. Well connected

D. Well served

E. Environmentally sensitive

F. Well designed with appropriate housing and public spaces

G. Thriving with a successful local economy

H. Fair

[2] UK Sustainable Development Strategy and the "Bristol Accord - UK Presidency EU Ministerial Informal on Sustainable Communities", Dec 2005 ; diagram by Inspire East

Who can use the Toolkit?

The toolkit has been designed for use in rural towns and villages - essentially in smaller settlements of under 10,000 population.

The toolkit has been developed to help local planning authorities, local partnerships and public service providers improve their local evidence base and develop their understanding of the towns and villages within their territory. It will specifically help local planning authorities in the preparation of their Local Development Framework and Local Strategic Partnerships in preparation of Sustainable Community Strategies

The involvement of local communities is integral to the successful completion of the toolkit. Communities can also use the toolkit independently if they wish – either individually or as groups - perhaps to help develop a community plan, or to assess the likely impact of any proposed change or new policies to their place.

How does the toolkit work?

The toolkit helps users come to an informed judgement about the current sustainability of a place (town or village). It does this with reference to the 8 characteristics described above. These are used to define what a successful community might look like; they provide a 'line in the sand', against which it is possible to assess the current and future position of the subject town or village. Actions or change which take a community closer to this 'line' will improve its sustainability whilst actions or change (maybe even lack of change), which takes a community further away from this 'line' will diminish its sustainability.

The toolkit poses a number of questions under each characteristic. These questions are designed to help users come to a judgement about the position of the subject settlement when judged against the headline statement for that characteristic.

These questions should be addressed in two stages which, collectively, bring together the local authority, partnership or service delivery organisation(s) with the community of the subject settlement in a discussion and joint assessment. Both stages are required for a proper use of the toolkit. It is important that the widest possible opportunity is given to the community to contribute to, and take part in, completion of the toolkit. The involvement of local business owners, the self-employed and those that work locally will also be valuable.

STAGE ONE: EVIDENCE BASED ASSESSMENT

DATA
Local authorities or other organisations prepare basic data sets for each characteristic

Communities may lead this work and prepare data themselves

INITIAL REVIEW
Comments & conclusions on each characteristic

Important that initial judgements are recorded and summarised

STAGE TWO: COMMUNITY TESTING

SHARING FINDINGS
Evidence base and initial conclusions discussed with community representatives

Structured process using the toolkit

COMING TO A JUDGEMENT
Using evidence and discussion to agree findings

Judgements are recorded and summarised in toolkit notes

CONCLUSIONS
Sustainability Characteristics of the Community

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Stage One: Evidence-based Assessment

The local authority, partnership or service delivery organisation completes the initial evidence based assessment for each characteristic. Those completing this section will need a high level of local knowledge; they may well need to go to the subject settlement and look around in order to answer some of the questions as well as use comparative data where appropriate. When using data users will need to take care to include information which most accurately fits the subject settlement. In order to do so it may be necessary to extrapolate some figures or to use data compiled for a larger geographical area. Care should be taken when using data – in itself it will not provide an answer; rather it should be used to inform your conclusions. Please refer to the supporting guidelines on using data for more help [3].

On completion of each question users are asked to set out their comments and conclusions in the toolkit proforma. Users are also asked to note whether their findings are positive or negative – in terms of the position of the subject settlement as measured against the headline statement for the characteristic. This simple distinction will prove useful when coming to the final judgement, and can be used to guide the community as to the way public sector authorities and statutory partnerships view certain issues (for example. the positive impact on sustainability of working locally within a community compared to the negative impact of outward commuting for work and access to services).

The initial evidence based assessment will then be used as the starting position for engagement with the community (Stage Two of the process – Community Testing). The evidence based assessment will not be 'cast in stone'; indeed it is likely to contain a number of errors and omissions. In some instances it is only the community who will have the appropriate local knowledge to respond comprehensively to the question. Presented in an open manner, the initial evidence assessment will form the basis for an informed and managed discussion involving the community during Stage Two and ultimately to a valid and robust judgement against each characteristic.

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[3] See Chapter 4 Guidance on Source and Use of Data

Stage Two: Community Testing

Having completed the evidence based assessment, the public sector body/partnership must then share and debate it with representatives and members of the community from the subject settlement. The use of maps and aerial photographs of the settlement, annotated to show service points, main routes, public space etc has proven very useful in similar exercises and can be used as supplementary information alongside the toolkit.

This process should be open to as many different people from the community as possible; care should be taken to include voices from those with specific positions such as young people, those suffering from restricted personal mobility or new to the community[4].

The community should be asked to respond to each of the questions posed within the toolkit, with the ability to utilise the factual information already collated in Stage One. It will be for the team running the session to decide whether everyone should work through all 8 characteristics, or whether it is appropriate to split into smaller groups to consider individual characteristics.

The community will find the initial evidence based assessment helpful as a starting point but should be encouraged to challenge it and add in their local knowledge and personal experiences when answering the Stage Two questions. The outcome of the discussions relating to each Stage Two question should be recorded in the toolkit pro-forma, and a decision made by those involved as to whether the findings for each question are positive or negative (in terms of the position of the subject settlement when measured against the headline statement for the characteristic). It is important that the answers recorded include reasons and any 'qualifying' comments.

Detailed guidance on the Community Testing phase of completing the toolkit is offered in Chapter 6.

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[4] It may be possible to cover more than one settlement in a single workshop - this was achieved successfully in Plymouth - see the chapter on Community Testing.

Coming to a Judgement

Having answered the Stage Two questions for each characteristic with the community it is then necessary to make a judgement about how far the subject settlement matches the headline statement for each of the characteristics. These 8 judgements will be made based on the evidence and information collected and recorded by answering the questions for each characteristic. As such they will be transparent and open to challenge.

The judgement against each characteristic should be made jointly by the public bodies/partnerships and community following appropriate debate and discussion.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 will mean that the user strongly disagrees that the headline statement describes the subject community (at the time of assessment or subject to any scenario that is being tested) and 5 will mean that the user strongly agrees that the headline statement describes the subject community. A position in between the two extremes can be indicated by use of the appropriate number in the scale (2, 3 or 4). The toolkit asks for the judgement to be recorded for each characteristic.

Ideally there should be a joint and agreed judgement between the community and statutory body. However it is possible that a common judgement cannot be reached. For example if the statutory body wishes to make comparisons with other places (e.g. to inform the LDF), it will need to retain the right to disagree with a 'dissenting' community judgement when they think that this is necessary to ensure the validity of comparisons. The toolkit allows for this but requires that differing views are fully explained and documented.

Using the Results – The Colour Wheel

The number chosen for each section will then be translated into a colour and used to create a 'Colour Wheel' to represent the overall assessment of sustainability.

Strongly Disagree ➝ Strongly Agree

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
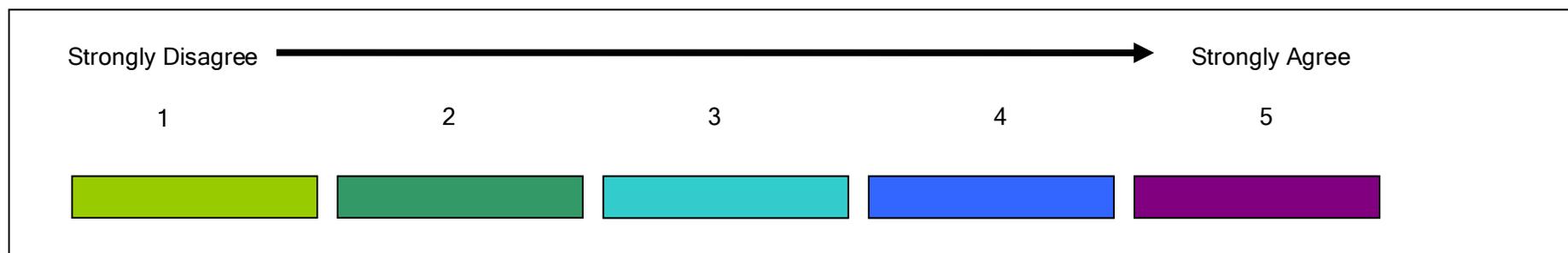
Each level of the scale will translate to a colour to create the colour wheel.

Characteristic	Assessment 1 - 5	Colour
A. Active with a strong sense of community	4	
B. Well run and well represented	3	
C. Well connected	2	
D. Well served	2	
E. Environmentally sensitive	4	
F. Well designed with appropriate housing and public spaces	3	
G. Thriving with a successful local economy	2	
H. Fair	4	

How to use the completed toolkit

Local Evidence Base

Having completed the toolkit users will be able to consider the relative performance of the subject settlement as a whole against the headline sustainability characteristics, and also to assess areas where it performs well and those that undermine its sustainability. For example it may benefit from good existing service facilities but be relatively weak economically.

The completed toolkits will provide a high quality and locally valid evidence base – offering real understanding of the conditions, role and function of towns and villages, developed in association with, and therefore substantiated by, the local community. This is exactly the quality of evidence that the Planning Inspectorate is looking for to underpin sound Local Development Frameworks and that the Audit Commission inspectors will be looking for to underpin local priorities and the related policy response in the Comprehensive Area Assessment.

Actions and Response

As well as offering a clear assessment of current sustainability the toolkit can be used to stimulate a response – in terms of policy or local action – to improve future sustainability. This process would comprise reviewing each judgement and thinking through what needs to be done to increase the 'score' awarded. This activity could be carried out by a statutory authority perhaps in the early stages of considering a policy response or by a community looking to develop local actions or change in behaviour. Community and statutory bodies could also respond together to develop a shared response or to develop a plan for change.

Comparative Analysis

Once the toolkit has been applied to a number of settlements it will be possible for users to compare the colour wheels for each settlement in order to identify commonalities and to better understand the respective role and functionality of a group of settlements. It will be important that those making the comparisons have been involved in developing all the relevant Colour Wheels so that they compare a set of judgements made from a consistent approach and 'value system'.
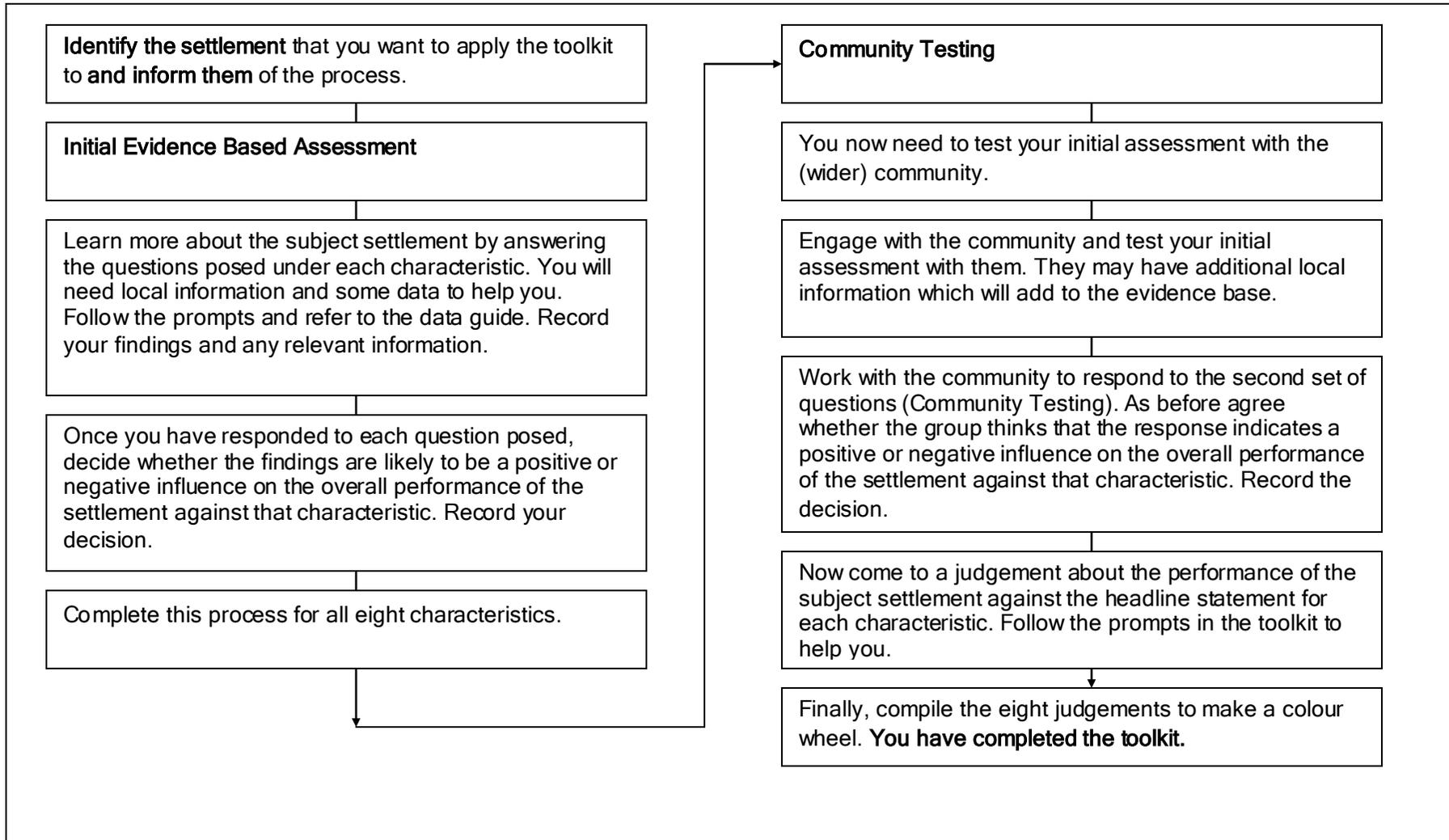
Scenario Testing

The toolkit can be used for 'scenario testing' by completing an assessment for current conditions and then factoring in changes that are likely to result from specific development proposals, issues such as service withdrawal or simple demographic change such as the ageing of the population, changes in value of housing stock, the impact of inward migration etc. This approach could also be used to engage the community in a visioning or master planning process, factoring in social change alongside a shift in conditions created by specific developments such as new housing provision, a new road layout or change in service provision.

Measuring Change Over Time – Impact Assessment

The toolkit could be used to measure change over time - simply by completing the toolkit at the beginning and end of any required time period. Used in this way it could assess the impact (direct or indirect) of any specific policy or activity on a community's sustainability. It could also be used to assess whether policy or publicly funded interventions have made any perceived difference to people's lives within the target community. Used in this way the toolkit would offer high quality local intelligence for use alongside, and perhaps to cross reference or 'sense check' more generic survey based assessments such as the Place Survey.

3. TOOLKIT RESOURCES

TOOL 1: FLOW DIAGRAM – PLAN AND COMPLETE EACH OF THESE STAGES

Identify the settlement that you want to apply the toolkit to **and inform them** of the process.

Initial Evidence Based Assessment

Learn more about the subject settlement by answering the questions posed under each characteristic. You will need local information and some data to help you. Follow the prompts and refer to the data guide. Record your findings and any relevant information.

Once you have responded to each question posed, decide whether the findings are likely to be a positive or negative influence on the overall performance of the settlement against that characteristic. Record your decision.

Complete this process for all eight characteristics.

Community Testing

You now need to test your initial assessment with the (wider) community.

Engage with the community and test your initial assessment with them. They may have additional local information which will add to the evidence base.

Work with the community to respond to the second set of questions (Community Testing). As before agree whether the group thinks that the response indicates a positive or negative influence on the overall performance of the settlement against that characteristic. Record the decision.

Now come to a judgement about the performance of the subject settlement against the headline statement for each characteristic. Follow the prompts in the toolkit to help you.

Finally, compile the eight judgements to make a colour wheel. **You have completed the toolkit.**

TOOL 2: Context and Headline Description of Place

The first element of completing the toolkit is to define and record a short over view of the subject settlement. Information that would be useful to include will be:

Settlement Name

The parish in which it is located

The electoral ward in which it is located

The local authority district in which it is located

A map identifying the settlement and its situation within the district

Population

- total population
- age profile of population
- % of working age residents that are economically active
- % of residents with no qualifications
- % of residents with L2 qualifications
- % of residents with L4 or above qualifications
- % of residents with access to only one private car or van

In each case, compare the data with the ward, district, sub-regional and regional averages

TOOL 3: Evidence Base and Judgement Records

Headline Statement A: Active with a strong sense of community Sustainable communities are active places where there are a range of events, clubs and societies (many/all of which are run by the local community). People living in sustainable communities identify with their place and believe that everyone in the community is important. They communicate effectively, and look out for and after one another, helping each to feel valued and keep safe.					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Testing	+ ve / - ve
A1: Shared Activities		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
Does the community organise events and activities for itself and others?	*Population size and age breakdown. List of clubs, societies and events*	*Review the list of activities, comment on the range and type compared to the population profile*		Are there shared activities which create a strong sense of community?	
Do these activities appeal to / cater for all sections of the community or are there some groups (e.g. young adults) whose interests are less well catered for?	*As above*	*Comment on any obvious gaps in relation to the profile of the population*			
A2: Looking After Each Other					
How self reliant is the community? Do people help themselves and each other?	*% of the community providing unpaid care % of the community suffering from a limiting long term illness*	*Review the statistics and compare with district and regional averages. How does the provision of care and incidence of illness tally?*		How well do people look out for each other and help create a strong community?	
Are there any social enterprises or local organisations involved in delivering services or looking after vulnerable people?	*Local information, parish newsletters, notice boards etc.*	*Review organisations / businesses providing services locally; how does this compare with the possible need given the age profile and incidence of illness?*			

Headline Statement A: Active with a strong sense of community
Sustainable communities are active places where there are a range of events, clubs and societies (many/all of which are run by the local community). People living in sustainable communities identify with their place and believe that everyone in the community is important. They communicate effectively, and look out for and after one another, helping each to feel valued and keep safe.

A3: Communicating With Each Other					
Is there a parish newsletter or similar widely available within the community?		*Review provision and comment*		How well do people within the community communicate and engage with each other? Does everyone to feel included and informed or are there groups that may be excluded?	
Do local clubs and societies use e-mail and the internet to communicate and promote their activities?		*Review via a web search and comment*			
Are there focal points where people can meet to discuss things and pass on information to each other? If so, what are they?		*List local facilities and comment*			
A4. Safe					
What level and what type of incidents have been recorded on police logs within the settlement? What proportion of incidents of this type does this represent across the local police team's area?	*Neighbourhood Policing Team*	*Review and record information*		Do people feel safe within the community?	

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town or village is …….. an active place where there are a range of events, clubs and societies (many/all of which are run by the local community). People living in ..*the subject town or village*….. identify with their place and believe that everyone in the community is important. They communicate effectively, and look out for and after one another, helping each to feel valued and keep safe.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Headline Statement B: Well run and well represented

Sustainable communities are well run with a combination of strong formal governance and informal structure and committees. They maintain effective relationships with local councils and service providers and make good use of their elected representatives.

	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
B1: Formal Governance		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
Does the community benefit from active local governance?	*Information on parish or town council. E.g. How many seats on the council are filled; What % elected or co-opted; How regular are elections? What proportion of the electorate vote? How many seats are contested? Is there a council clerk? Has anyone from the parish council completed any accredited training in local governance?*	*Review the information gathered and comment. Use information to illustrate equality, democracy, transparency and how representative of the community the local parish or town council is.*		How does the local council help make the community a better place to live in for all?	
How reflective are local councillors of the community?	*Profiles of councillors; demographic and socio-economic make up of the community*				
B2: Informal Structures					
How involved is the community with its own governance?	*Evidence of local activity*	*Are there any community committees or planning groups? Is there a parish*		Do people feel that they are able to have a say in the way that the community is run and to influence	

Headline Statement B: Well run and well represented					
Sustainable communities are well run with a combination of strong formal governance and informal structure and committees. They maintain effective relationships with local councils and service providers and make good use of their elected representatives.					
		plan, vision or village design statement?		decisions that are made there?	
B3:Effective Relationships					
Does the community communicate well with the local authority? Is it active in local forums? Do representatives engage with the local authority and initiatives like neighbourhood policing?	*Evidence of local activity in relevant forums.*	*Do village representatives attend area forums (e.g. for district or county Association of Parish Councils)? Are community members involved in Local Strategic Partnerships or Community Safety Partnerships? Has the community produced a parish or town plan, if so, do you know about it?*		How well connected to the local authority and other service providers does the community feel? Do people feel that their views are taken into account by the public bodies and organisations that make decisions which affect them?	

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town or village is .... well run with a combination of strong formal governance and informal structure and committees. It maintains effective relationships with local councils and service providers and makes good use of elected representatives.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Headline Statement C: Well Connected Sustainable communities benefit from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
C1: Transport Services					
Is the community well served by conventional public transport services (bus and/or train)?	*Evidence of services*	*Record the services that are available and make a judgement. Consider also any comments about the settlement, or the area in which it is located from the Accessibility Strategy within the Local Transport Plan. In making a judgement remember that you need to factor in the type of settlement and the level of public transport services that it can expect - it is not fair to compare a village to a sub-regional centre*		Are people able to travel to work to shop and to access education and other services using either public or other alternatives or are they entirely reliant on the private car?	
Are there sufficient means in place to help people access employment, education and services without reliance on a private car?	*Additional evidence of schemes or local arrangements. Mode of travel to work.*	*What proportion of the community travel to work by public transport - how does this compare with the district and sub-regional average? What proportion of people travel to work by car - how does this compare with the district and sub-regional average? Do these figures*			

Headline Statement C: Well Connected

Sustainable communities benefit from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.

		make sense when considered against type of place, residents needs and the availability of public transport r do they perhaps point towards local culture and attitudes			
C2: Communications					
How well connected to the road system is the settlement?	*Evidence of provision and location.*	*Set out the community's position relative to the road network. Does it have good access to A roads, and the motorway network? What impact is this likely to have? Does it lead to outward commuting or more self-containment?*		How well connected is the community internally, with other settlements and the 'outside world'? How does this affect the way that the community works, or the sort of people that live in it?	
How well electronically connected is the settlement?	*Evidence of provision*	*Consider the availability of broadband and the speed of the connection. Is hi-speed broadband widely available or are sections of the settlement situated beyond the range of the exchange. Are there any 'points of presence' - facilities within the community which have high speed connectivity such as schools, community centres, business premises etc*			
Is it easy to move around the settlement by foot and cycle?	*Local investigation*	*Consider the layout, scale and style of the streets; are they relatively free of traffic? Do*			

Headline Statement C: Well Connected					
Sustainable communities benefit from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.					
		they provide easy and safe access between dwellings and service points / facilities? What of the topography – does it encourage or prevent movement on foot or cycle?			
C3: Local Networks					
Does the community form strong local networks with other towns / villages which act together as local service centres?		*Consider any evidence from travel to work data, Accessibility studies or parish plans.*		Does your community have close ties to other local settlements? If so, what are they and what form do they take?	

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Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town or village is .... well connected, it benefits from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Headline Statement D: Well Served

Sustainable communities benefit from public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to peoples needs and accessible to all.

	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
D1: Facilities					
Is there a range of community facilities consistent with the needs of the population and demographics of the settlement? Community facilities include shops, religious meeting places, community halls, etc.	*Available facilities*	*Are the available facilities appropriate for the size and nature of the settlement?*		Do you feel that your place has an appropriate range of facilities? How well do you feel that these meet the needs of every one in the community?	
Are there places for formal sports, play and informal recreation in the settlement?		*Record the facilities available and consider whether they are appropriate for the size and function of the settlement*			
Are there places to meet and socialise for all ages and interest groups in the settlement?		*Record the facilities that are available and consider whether they are appropriate for the size and function of the settlement and the profile of the local population.*			
Do these facilities serve only those from within the village or do / might they form part of a local service centre supporting a wider catchment?		*Are the available services likely to meet the needs of the local population, both within and beyond the settlement? How might this position be affected by any envisaged change in the future?*		Do you share your facilities with people from other communities? Do they attract visitors from further away?	

Headline Statement D: Well Served					
Sustainable communities benefit from public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to peoples needs and accessible to all.					
D2: Services					
Do people have access within the community to key services (see below)? If not, where is the nearest fixed service point? • Pre School Care • Primary School • Secondary School • GP premises • Supermarket or convenience store • Post Office		*Record the services points that are available, and for those which are not available, the nearest fixed service point. Where these services are available, consider (with reference to population and demographics) their future viability and ability to support growth and strengthen other local communities. Where service points are not available, consider whether they are in near by settlements which act as part of a network with the subject settlement.*		Do you feel that the community has access to what it needs in terms of local service provision? If not, what is missing and how does it affect people's quality of life? Are the services that are available in the community well used or are any under threat through lack of use? If so, how might use of these services be increased?	
Are any mobile or out-reach services available within the community?		*Record any mobile or out-reach services that are available (e.g. mobile libraries, supermarket internet shopping delivery, health or social care). Where such services are available consider (with reference to population and demographics) their future viability and ability to support growth and strengthen other local communities. What is missing? Where service points are not available, consider whether they are in near by*			

		settlements which act as part of a network with the subject settlement.			

Headline Statement D: Well Served
Sustainable communities benefit from public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to peoples needs and accessible to all.

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

*The subject town or village is ….*well served and benefits from public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to peoples needs and accessible to al

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
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Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Headline Statement E: Environmentally Sensitive Sustainable communities care for and manage their environment, they play their part in tackling global climate change and live within environmental limits					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers in the space below		*Provide your answers in the space below*	
E1: Local environment					
What quality of local environment does the community enjoy?		*Is the environment within the community of good quality? Is the air quality good, are there local pollutants? Is there traffic congestion or any adverse environmental health factors?*		Do you feel that the whole community enjoys positive environmental conditions? Are there any areas which are blighted by adverse environmental issues?	
E2: Wider Environment					
Is the community set within high quality or designated landscapes?		*Record any relevant designations*		Does the village / town flood? If so where and how often? What impact does it have?	
Are there areas of high quality biodiversity and a network of biodiversity features?		*Record any designations such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves*			
Are parts of the community or immediate environs at risk of flooding?		*Refer to Environment Agency maps and record the position re flood risk.*			
E3: Well related and connected to the surrounding environment					
Is access to the surrounding countryside good? Is it possible to gain access on foot, cycle and horseback via paths and bridleways?		*Consider the relationship of the settlement and surrounding countryside, are the local highways conducive to use by walkers and cyclists? Is there a network of footpaths and bridleways*		Do you feel that it is easy to move between the town / village and the countryside?	

Headline Statement E: Environmentally Sensitive				
Sustainable communities care for and manage their environment, they play their part in tackling global climate change and live within environmental limits				
		connecting people to the countryside?		
E4: Global Impact				
The UK is committed to achieving an 80% reduction in its carbon consumption 2050.What impact does the community have on the global environment in the way that they live their lives?				How high is awareness of climate change in your community? How strong are the efforts being made to combat it?
Is the community likely to be a high consumer of carbon?	*The following will have impact on the level of carbon consumption - car use, number of cars per household, distance travelled work and mode of travel, the size, age and type of housing stock*	*Consider characteristics that point towards high domestic carbon consumption. What sort of commercial activities are hosted in the community? Are these likely to be high consumers of carbon and energy?*		
Is there evidence of local efforts to reduce carbon consumption?		*Consider any efforts to reduce carbon consumption e.g. the use of renewable energy, the quality of design in new development and the planting of new woodland*		
Carbon consumption is not the only environmental challenge that we face - there is pressure on natural resources such as water and we have very little more capacity for landfill. Are there other steps that the community takes to make it more environmentally sustainable e.g. provision of allotments or community recycling schemes?		*What else is happening in the community to reduce its environmental impact? Examples include recycling schemes, growing of local food, initiatives for the reduction in the consumption of water, habitat restoration and creation.*		

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
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The subject town / village is ….. environmentally sensitive, its people care for and manage their environment, they play their part in tackling global climate change and live within environmental limits

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

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Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Headline Statement F: Well Designed with appropriate housing types

Sustainable communities are well designed and attractive with good quality buildings and public spaces. It provides sufficient decent homes to meet the needs of a range of household sizes, ages and incomes.

	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / -ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / -ve
		Provide your answers in the space below		*Provide your answers in the space below*	
F1: Well Designed and Attractive					
Are there high quality buildings, streets and public spaces?		*Consider whether there are designations such as Conservation Areas and the incidence of Listed Buildings within the settlement. Consider the quality of design and construction of the built environment and of additions and new development. Consider the availability and quality of public open spaces and the contribution that they make to the community.*		Do people have pride in the community? Do you feel that your place is in good condition and well looked after or are there areas which concern you?	
F2: Appropriate Housing					
Does the existing housing stock provide a range of different tenures with a good mix of affordable and private housing?	*% of housing stock owner-occupied, rented from social landlords and from the private sector. Housing Strategy Statistical Appendices.*	*Consider the proportion of stock that is owner-occupied and rented from social landlords or the private sector. How does this compare with district and regional averages? How well does this fit with the socio-economic profile of the community?*		Does the housing stock that is available meet needs of local people? Is it likely to continue to do so in the future?	
Does the existing housing stock provide a range of different types of housing with a good mix of smaller and	*Type and proportion of housing stock*	*Consider the type of housing stock available, what proportion is detached, semi-detached or*			

Headline Statement F: Well Designed with appropriate housing types					
Sustainable communities are well designed and attractive with good quality buildings and public spaces. It provides sufficient decent homes to meet the needs of a range of household sizes, ages and incomes.					
larger homes?		*terraced, how does this compare with the district and regional average? How well does this fit with the demographic profile of the community?*			
F3: Housing Affordability					
Does the affordability of the housing stock provide equal opportunity for people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes to live in the community?	*Average weekly earnings. Land Registry records on sale prices of housing stock. Asking prices for sale and open market rental. Council house waiting lists, parish plans and housing needs surveys. Council tax banding*	*Consider the ratio of lower quartile average earnings to lower quartile house prices. Consider open market rental values with lower quartile average earnings. Consider the relative sales and rental values of stock in this settlement compared to the district and regional averages. Consider evidence of housing need. Consider the allocation of local housing stock across the Council Tax banding and compare with the district and regional averages.*		Does the price of housing create problems for the community? Does it prevent people who work locally from living locally?	

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Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:

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The subject town or village is …….. well designed and attractive with good quality buildings and public spaces. It provides sufficient decent homes to meet the needs of a range of household sizes, ages and incomes.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

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Headline Statement G: Thriving Sustainable communities have a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
G1: Successful Economy					
Are there a range of strong established local businesses? If so, do these businesses provide the opportunity for residents to work locally? Are businesses growing or declining?	*Business stock - type and industrial sector Travel to Work patterns for residents and employees.*	*Consider the business stock in the community. How many jobs does it provide? Are these jobs filled by people from within the community or do people travel in to work. What proportion of the community travel away to work? Is this through choice or necessity?*		Does the local economy provide employment opportunities for people in the community who need or wish to work there?	
Are wage levels from work in the local economy above average for the district / county / region?	*Average weekly earnings (work based). Average weekly earnings (resident).*	*How do local earnings compare to the district and regional averages? What is the relative difference between work based and residence based earnings?*			
Does the local labour market contain the skills needed by local businesses?	*Skill levels of resident population. GCSE and A level attainment at local schools.*	*What are the skill levels of the resident population? How do they compare with the district or regional average? How do they fit with the needs of local businesses? What proportion of school leavers go on to higher education / how many are looking for work locally?*			

Headline Statement G: Thriving					
Sustainable communities have a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities					
G2: Diverse Economy					
Is there a diverse range of sectors and activity in the local economy?	*Sector of business and local employment*	*How does local business activity compare with the profile across the district?*		Are there a range of employment opportunities available for local people or is the community reliant upon one or two big employers?	
Is there evidence of change in the local business stock? Have new sectors of activity been introduced?		*Is there evidence of change in the type of business activity carried out locally? Is this likely to be positive for the local community?*			
G3: Local Economy					
Are business owned and operated by local people?		*Consider the type of businesses. Do they form part of the local economy or is their ownership and management divorced from the community?*		How do local businesses contribute to / support the local community?	
Is wealth created retained within the local economy? Do businesses employ local people, source their supplies and services locally and invest in the community?		*Is there evidence of local supply chains and labour markets?*			

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
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The subject town / village is ….. thriving, with a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
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Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Headline Statement H: Fair Sustainable communities are fair for everyone, including those from other communities, who use its facilities and services					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
1: The Community					
Who makes up the community – what type of people? What is their ethnic and religious background? How old are they?		*Consider the demographic characteristics of the population, their ages and backgrounds. How does this compare to the district and sub-regional profiles? Are there sections of the community which stand out as different or in the minority?*		Do you feel that your community is fair for everyone or are there certain types of people who don't enjoy all that is has to offer?	
2: Do People Get a Fair Deal?					
Are there any groups within the community that are not well catered for in terms of activities, facilities and services?		*Consider the answers given re activities, facilities and services earlier in the toolkit*			
Are there any tensions between different groups within the community?		*Consider evidence on fear of crime of anti-social behaviour. Refer to the parish or town plan to pick up intelligence.*			
Are all young people from the community getting access to fair life chances?		*How well are the local children doing at school? How do the results of the local schools compare with the district or sub-regional averages? What proportion of young people are going on to further and higher education? How does this compare with the district and sub-regional average?*			

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town / village is ….. fair for everyone, including those from other communities, who use its facilities and services.

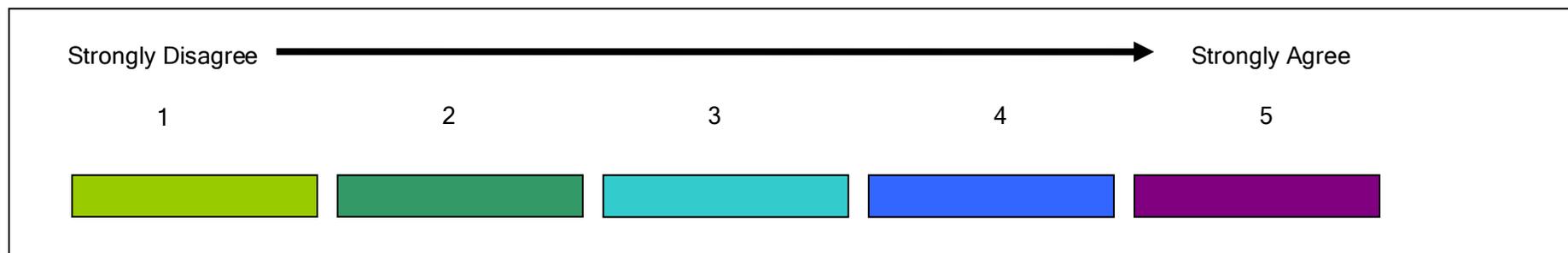The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
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Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Collating the Results – The Colour Wheel

The number chosen for each characteristic needs to be translated into a colour and then used to create a 'Colour Wheel' to represent the overall assessment of sustainability.

Strongly Disagree →→→→→→ Strongly Agree

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Characteristic	Assessment 1 - 5	Colour
A. Active with a strong sense of community	4	
B. Well run and well represented	3	
C. Well connected	2	
D. Well served	2	
E. Environmentally sensitive	4	
F. Well designed with appropriate housing and public spaces	3	
G. Thriving with a successful local economy	2	
H. Fair	4	

The final working version of the toolkit will need a method to create the colour wheel.

4. GUIDANCE ON SOURCES AND USE OF DATA

Guidance on Sources and Use of Data for completing the Rural Sustainable Toolkit

This data guide supports the Toolkit for Sustainable Rural Communities and is designed to assist gathering of statistical data and factual information for the evidence-based assessment. The guide provides useful information on data sources and meaningful use of data for applicable indicators in the Toolkit. The suggested datasets are starting points; in many cases there is other useful data which will add extra information.

Headline Statement A: Active with a strong sense of community			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
A1: Shared Activities			
Does the community organise events and activities for itself and others?	Number and range of clubs, societies and events. Size of population.	Local information.	Are there enough societies, clubs and events? Is there community support for such activities?
Do these activities appeal to / cater for all sections of the community or are there some groups (e.g. young adults) whose interests are less well catered for?	What is the age profile of the community?	Age structure (Census 2001 table KS02), and/or Resident Population Estimates by Broad Age Band (ONS website, 2001-07)	Use data to workout the proportion of residents in different age bands for the community and compare to other comparators such as district, region and national averages of other local settlements. Is there a under or over representation of certain age groups? Are they well catered for in the community?
A2: Looking After Each Other			
How self reliant is the community? Do people help themselves and each other?	How many people are providing unpaid care and how many have a limiting long term illness.	ONS Census 2001- Unpaid Care dataset UV21, limiting long term illness dataset (UV22).	How many involved in unpaid care compared with other areas/average statistics? What are the levels of illness? May need to convert figures to % of population.
Are there any social enterprises or local organisations involved in delivering services or looking after vulnerable people?	List of enterprises and organisations.	Local information.	Is provision for vulnerable people adequate?
A3: Communicating With Each Other			
Is there a parish newsletter or similar widely available within the community?	Yes/no? One group or more? How often?	Local information.	
Do local clubs and societies use e-mail	Email communication,	Local information.	

Headline Statement A: Active with a strong sense of community			
and the internet to communicate and promote their activities?	websites		
Are there focal points where people can meet to discuss things and pass on information to each other? If so, what are they?	What facilities exist, how available/suitable are they for community groups.	Local information.	
A4. Safe			
What level and what type of incidents have been recorded on the police logs within the settlement? What proportion of incidents of this type does this represent across the local police team's area?	Data on crime incidents.	Data for district is normally available from the force area websites (e.g. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary). Local area data should be available on request. Local knowledge may also be relevant for incidents that may not have been reported.	Review data and consider levels and types of incident and how they compare with other areas. Identify any concerns if necessary. Do people feel safe within the community?

Headline Statement B: Well run and well represented			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
B1: Formal Governance			
Does the community benefit from active local governance?	Information on parish or town council. E.g. How many seats on the council are filled; % elected or co-opted; how regular are elections; election turnout; Parish Council Quality status?	Local information. List of Devon Quality Parish Councils is available on the Devon Association of Parish Councils website (http://www.dapc.org.uk/site/303/ default.aspx)	Use information to illustrate equality, democracy, transparency and how representative of the community the local parish or town council is.
How reflective are local councillors of the community?	Average age of councillors? Socio-economic category of councillors?	Local information. Census 2001 data – Occupation Groups, KS12A (ONS website). Or more detailed Socio-Economic Classification (KS14A).	
B2: Informal Structures			
How involved is the community with its own governance?	Are there any community committees or planning groups? Is there a parish plan, vision or village design statement? Is there a council clerk? Has anyone completed any accredited training in local governance?	Local information.	
B3:Effective Relationships			

Headline Statement B: Well run and well represented			
Does the community communicate well with the local authority? Is it active in local forums? Do representatives engage with the local authority and initiatives like neighbourhood policing?	Do village representatives attend area forums (e.g. for district or county Association of Parish Councils)? Are community members involved in LSPs or SSPs. Does the Parish Council have regular contact with the local authority ward member?	Local information.	

Headline Statement C: Well connected			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
C1: Transport Services			
Is the community well served by conventional public transport services (bus and/or train)?	What services are available?	Bus route information in Devon is available on the County Council website: http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/transport/public_transport/buses/bus_maps.htm	Consider whether public transport enables daytime or evening travel? Weekdays or evenings? Does local transport support access to services, leisure and work? Is frequency and coverage acceptable?
Are there alternate means in place to help people access employment, education and services without reliance on a private car?	Possible schemes could include car share schemes; wheels2work (not for profit scheme to help young people and unemployed access work and training); demand responsive transport schemes; school bus service. What sort of times do public transport services operate? Are these conducive to work and college commuting?	Local authority and County Council websites. Devon Car Share website: www.carshredevon.com	To what extent are other means of transport, alternative to the private car available? Are they accessible by all? Consider how many of those who work or study outside of the community use, or are capable of using public transport and alternative transport means.
C2: Communications			
How well connected to the road system is the settlement?	Distance to trunk roads and A-roads. Connectivity and journey times to local centres and regional service centre.	Web-based journey planners are good sources of information for journey times and distances.	
How well electronically connected is the settlement?	Is there internet access, especially broadband? What connection speeds are available?	Broadband connectivity can be checked here: www.broadbandchecker.co.uk Local information.	

Headline Statement C: Well connected			
Is it easy to move around the settlement by foot and cycle?	Consider settlement design, paving, parking problems, road crossings and access to key services such as schools, church, pub and shops. Is it safe for children as well as adults?	Local information.	
C3: Local Networks			
Does the community have strong relationships with other towns / villages which act together as local service centres?	Do people need to travel to nearby settlements for essential services? Does the subject settlement provide for other surrounding settlements?	It is possible to obtain employment commuting pattern data from the 2001 Census Origin Destination dataset (data is obtainable from the ONS on CD/DVD).	Consider how reliant and/or cohesive the settlement is with other settlements.

Headline Statement D: Well served			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
D1: Facilities			
Is there a range of community facilities consistent with the population and demographics of the settlement? Community facilities include shops, religious meeting places, community halls, etc.	What facilities are present? What is the population / demographic profile?	Local information. Census data obtained for indicator A1 on demographic make-up should be useful.	
Are there places for formal sports, play and informal recreation in the settlement?		Local information.	
Are there places to meet and socialise for all ages and interest groups in the settlement?		Local information.	
Do these facilities serve only those from within the village or do / might they form part of a local service centre supporting a wider catchment?		Local information and views of the community.	Does this differ at weekends and during holidays?
D2: Services			
Do people have access within the community to key services (see below)? If not, where is the nearest fixed service point? • Pre School Care • Primary School • Secondary School • GP premises • Supermarket or convenience store • Post Office		Local information.	Do these meet the needs of the community? Are they well supported and viable? Are there key gaps or groups of the population that are not well served?

Headline Statement D: Well served			
Are any mobile or out-reach services available within the community?	For example mobile library, post office, GP, youth projects, mobile cinema, older peoples' outreach service.	Local information.	

Headline Statement E: Environmentally Sensitive			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
E1: Local environment			
What quality of local environment does the community enjoy?	Consider: noise, litter, congestion, physical condition and natural assets of settlement.	Local information as main source. Possible data sources include the Combined Air Quality Indicator 2004-06 (LLSOA coverage, ONS website) and Generalised Land Use Database (LLSOA coverage, ONS website).	If using the Combined Air Quality Indicator, a rating of less than one indicates the area has lower levels of pollution. A rating or more than one indicates higher levels of pollution (than average). Use the Generalised land Use Database to find the proportion of greenspace in the area. Average for England is 87%.
E2: Wider Environment			
Is the community set within high quality or designated landscapes?	List environmental or heritage designations that apply or are nearby.	Local information. Sources of information: Local Authority Local Plan proposals maps have environmental policies marked. www.nationalparks.gov.uk/ www.natureonthemap.org.uk www.aonb.org.uk	
Are there areas of high quality biodiversity and a network of biodiversity features?		Local information. Local Plan Proposals Maps.	
Are parts of the community or immediate environs at risk of flooding?		Flooding information is available from the Environment Agency. Use local information also.	Is there any risk, if so how much of the settlement is or could be affected. What is the level and frequency of risk?
E3: Well related and connected to the surrounding environment			
Is access to the surrounding countryside good? Is it possible to gain access on foot, cycle and horseback via paths and bridleways?	Footpaths, bridleways, national and regional routes, waymarked routes, surfaced trails.	Local information. Rights of Way network is available on the Ordnance Survey website. The Get-a-map feature provides 2x2km map tiles at 1:25,000 scales. www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk	Also consider the condition, maintenance and conflicts of use.

Headline Statement E: Environmentally Sensitive			
E4:Global Impact			
The UK is committed to reducing its CO2 emissions by 80% by 2050. What impact does the community have on the global environment in the way that they live their lives?			How high is the awareness of climate change in your community? How strong are the efforts being made to combat it?
Is the community likely to be a high consumer of carbon?	The following information and data will be useful: Levels of car use Cars per household Distance travelled to work Mode of travel to work Housing stock: size, age type.	Census 2001 data: KS17 cars or vans; UV39 method of travel to work; UV35 distance travelled to work; household spaces and accommodation type KS16 (ONS website) plus local information.	Could consider the ratio of car/vans to households? How far and by what means are people travelling to work? How far are the nearest services (GP, supermarket, bank, schools)? Does the type of housing stock inhibit energy saving improvements? How does the settlement compare with averages for the district, county, region?
Is there evidence of local efforts to minimise carbon consumption?		Local information and views of the community.	Any new buildings or housing with green credentials? Or environmental adaptation/conversions within existing built environment? Any local transport schemes?
Carbon consumption is not the only environmental challenge that we face – there is pressure on natural resources such as water and we have very little more capacity for landfill. Are there other steps that the community takes to make it more environmentally sustainable e.g. provision of allotments or community recycling schemes?		Local information and views of the community.	

Headline Statement F: Well Designed with appropriate housing types			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
F1: Well Designed and Attractive			
Are there high quality buildings, streets and public spaces?	Is there a conservation area? New regeneration or restoration scheme? Any listed buildings?	Local Plan Proposals Map; English Heritage (listed buildings).	
F2: Appropriate Housing			
Does the existing housing stock provide a range of different tenures with a good mix of affordable and private housing?	Information on housing tenure, e.g. owner occupied, private rented, social rented.	Census 2001 data UV63 on tenure of households (ONS)	Identify the % that fall into each tenure category. How does this compare to the district or regional average?
Does the existing housing stock provide a range of different types of housing with a good mix of smaller and larger homes?	Information on dwelling types. E.g. detached, semi, terraced, flats, bungalow.	Census 2001 data, KS16 on household spaces and accommodation type (ONS website) plus local information.	Convert to % of total stock and compare to other areas (district, region etc). Do properties have land and gardens?
F3: Housing Affordability			
Does the housing stock provide an equal opportunity for people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes to live in the community?	House price and earnings data.	Changes of Ownership by Dwelling Price Dataset, 2006 (ONS website). Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (workplace analysis) available on NOMIS. Local earnings obtained from the 04/05 Income Model-Based Estimates at MSOA Level (ONS website).	Compare median and mean house prices (in the MSOA) with the district level annual median gross workplace-based earnings to get a ratio of house prices to earnings. How does this compare to the MSOA earnings for the settlement (from the ONS Income Model)?

Headline Statement G: Thriving			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
G1: Successful Economy			
Are there a range of strong established local businesses? If so do these businesses provide the opportunity for residents to work locally? Are businesses growing or declining?	Business and employment number trend data. Data on home workers and people who travel very short distances to work.	Local information. Annual Business Inquiry (NOMIS website - licence required). Census 2001 datasets - Method of Travel to Work, UV39 (people working from home); distance Travelled to Work, UV35 (<2km).	Compile trend data to see how business and employment numbers have changed over the last few years. Check size of businesses (by number of employees). Use the data to estimate how many and what % of residents work locally.
Are wage levels from work in the local economy above average for the district / county / region?	Workplace earnings.	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (workplace analysis) available on NOMIS (district authority level). Local earnings obtained from the 04/05 Income Model-Based Estimates at MSOA Level (ONS website)	
Does the local labour market contain skills needed by local businesses?	Levels of qualifications. Occupation types. Education attainment levels	Census 2001 datasets - Qualifications, UV24; Census 2001 data - Occupation Groups, KS12A (ONS website). Read and Write Plus: Skills for Life Survey (Dept for Innovation, Universities and Skills) http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/readwriteplus_skillsforlifesurvey/index.shtml Gives data down to ward level for adult literacy, numeracy and IT skills. In Your Area website http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/inyourarea/index.shtml has data for school attainment, HE entrants and more (down to ward level).	Convert into % of working age or total population and compare with other areas, (district and region etc) to gauge relative local skills. Identify and compare adult and school attainment for literacy, numeracy and other indicators.
G2: Diverse Economy			

Headline Statement G: Thriving			
Is there a diverse range of sectors and activity in the local economy?	Businesses and employment data by sector type.	Local information to identify specific businesses such as: marketing companies, garages, electrical contractors, builders etc. Use ABI to identify business and employment in broad industrial sectors, e.g. agriculture, education, manufacturing, real estate etc (licence required to access data).	ABI data can be expressed as a percentage of the total business and employment stock to identify which sectors are dominant/important to the local economy.
Is there evidence of change in the local business stock? Have new sectors of activity been introduced?		Local information. Can also use VAT registrations/de-registrations data (NOMIS website - district level only). Can also use ABI data to show change in the number of businesses (either total or by sector).	What is the level of business churn in the district (are there many registering and de-registering VAT businesses or is it fairly static)? Which sectors are growing or declining?
G3: Local Economy			
Are businesses owned and operated by local people?			
Is wealth created retained within the local economy? Do businesses employ local people, source their supplies and services locally and invest in the community?		Inquire with the local Business owners and business advisors. Local information. Travel to Work patterns.	

Headline Statement H: Fair			
	Type of data or information required	Possible source for data/information	Potential use of data/information
1: The Community			
Who makes up the community – what type of people? What is their ethnic and religious background? How old are they?		Census 2001 datasets: Age structure, KS02; Resident population estimates by broad age band (ONS website, 2001-07); Religion, UV15; Ethnic group, KS06.	
2: Do People Get a Fair Deal?			
Are there any groups within the community that are not well catered for in terms of activities, facilities and services?		Local information and views of the community.	
Are there tensions between different groups within the community?		Local information and views of the community.	
Are all young people from the community getting access to fair life chances?		In Your Area website (http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/inyourarea/index.shtml) has data for school attainment, HE entrants and more (down to ward level).	How well are the local children doing at school? How do the results of the local schools compare with the district or sub-regional averages? What proportion of young people are going on to further and higher education? How does this compare with the district and sub-regional average?

5. WORKED EXAMPLE

Context and Headline Description of Place

Ribchester (Ribble Valley 0004D) is a small village. It has 648 households hosting a population of 1600.

The ecclesiastical parish is Ribchester. The ward is Ribchester. The village is in the district of Ribble Valley

A map identifying the settlement

The mid year 2006 population was 1,606 of which 794 were males and 812 females.
The age profile of the population is consistent with the overall district average. It is also consistent with the regional average for pre-school and school aged residents; however there are slightly fewer residents aged between 20 - 30 than the regional average and more residents in the 30 - 40, 40 - 50 and 50 - 60 age groups than the regional average.

67% if the working age population are economically active (compared to a regional average of 58% and national average of 61%).
Fewer people of working age have no qualifications than the national average and significantly more people of working age have L4 qualifications or higher than the regional and national average.

Headline Statement A: Active with a strong sense of community

Sustainable communities are active places where there are a range of events, clubs and societies (many/all of which are run by the local community). People living in sustainable communities identify with their place and believe that everyone in the community is important. They communicate effectively, and look out for and after one another, helping each to feel valued and keep safe.

	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Testing	+ ve / - ve
A1: Shared Activities		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
Does the community organise events and activities for itself and others?	*Population of 1600.*	*There is a diverse range of clubs and societies including sporting (football, cricket, tennis, tai kwondo), drama, history, music, art, mothers and toddlers, scouts, beavers, rainbows and brownies. The village hosts an annual fair (field day) and recreation of a roman battle.* *The range of activities appears considerable for a village of 1600 population.*	+ ve	Are there shared activities which create a strong sense of community? *Yes; there is a wide range of activity in the village which includes the whole community.* *There is perhaps least provision for young people between 15 - 21 that are not interested in sport or the arts. Concerns also expressed that some of the societies are a little 'cliquey' and not always welcoming of all sections of the community.*	+ ve
Do these activities appeal to / cater for all sections of the community or are there some groups (e.g. young adults) whose interests are less well catered for?	*The age profile of the community is relatively well balanced. The 20 - 30 age group is slightly under-represented; there are no dominant groups.*	*Good provision is made for young children, young adults (in sport and drama) and adults. There appears to be limited specific provision for the elderly beyond activities run by the Church*	+ ve		
A2: Looking After Each Other					
How self reliant is the community? Do people help themselves and each other?	*22% of people within the community are providing unpaid care, this compares with a district average of 30% and a*	*Fewer people are involved in provision of unpaid care than the district and sub-regional average yet there is a higher incidence of limiting long term*		How well do people look out for each other and help create a strong community? *Strong view expressed that there is a culture of helping each other.*	+ ve

Headline Statement A: Active with a strong sense of community

Sustainable communities are active places where there are a range of events, clubs and societies (many/all of which are run by the local community). People living in sustainable communities identify with their place and believe that everyone in the community is important. They communicate effectively, and look out for and after one another, helping each to feel valued and keep safe.

	regional average of 25%. *15% of people suffer from a limiting long term illness compared to a district average of 12% and a sub-regional average of 11%*	*illness. This could point to a certain level of insularity within the population or might be explained by the fact that there is good access to local health care and that residents in the village are highly personally mobile. Needs input from community to determine whether people who need care and support are receiving it from within the community.*		*Examples cited of neighbours taking each other to the GP, picking up prescriptions and looking after each others children.*	
Are there any social enterprises or local organisations involved in delivering services or looking after vulnerable people?	*Church Luncheon Club for over 60's*	*Appears to be limited. Check with community whether provision is adequate.*	+ ve		
A3: Communicating With Each Other					
Is there a parish newsletter or similar widely available within the community?	*Parish Newsletter produced monthly. Several clubs produce regular newsletters.*	*There appears to be a reasonable level of provision. Need to check with community whether it is any good - do people feel informed and involved?*	+ ve	How well do people within the community communicate and engage with each other? Does everyone to feel included and informed or are there groups that may be excluded? *Newsletters of interest to some but not all. People with limited mobility have difficulty in getting information.* *Can always find out what is going on in the pub, although not as*	- ve

Headline Statement A: Active with a strong sense of community					
Sustainable communities are active places where there are a range of events, clubs and societies (many/all of which are run by the local community). People living in sustainable communities identify with their place and believe that everyone in the community is important. They communicate effectively, and look out for and after one another, helping each to feel valued and keep safe.					
				easy for those who don't go into the pub since retirement of the sub-postmistress. Village notice boards are very well maintained.	
Do local clubs and societies use e-mail and the internet to communicate and promote their activities?	*Several clubs end electronic newsletters and use e-mail.*	*Need to check with community whether this makes people feel involved or whether it excludes certain groups.*	?		
Are there focal points where people can meet to discuss things and pass on information to each other? If so, what are they?		*The village has two pubs, a post office and a well used community hall. There are well used notice boards in each additional notice boards around the village.*	+ ve		
A4. Safe					
What level and what type of incidents have been recorded on police logs within the settlement? What proportion of incidents of this type does this represent across the local police team's area?	*Neighbourhood Policing Team*	*There have been reports of anti-social behaviour and theft from vehicles over the last 12 months. The level of reports has been consistent with that experienced for this part of the district over the last two years and is not considered by the local police team to pose an undue risk to householders*	+ ve	Do people feel safe within the community? *The old people down Winchley Close have concerns about young people hanging around the playground after dark, but generally the village feels a safe place to be.*	+ ve

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:

The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town or village is …….. an active place where there are a range of events, clubs and societies (many/all of which are run by the local community). People living in ..*the subject town or village*….. identify with their place and believe that everyone in the community is important. They communicate effectively, and look out for and after one another, helping each to feel valued and keep safe.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	X

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Ribchester is buzzing with activity - sometimes there is too much for some people! It is a safe place with a strong sense of community.

Headline Statement B: Well run and well represented					
Sustainable communities are well run with a combination of strong formal governance and informal structure and committees. They maintain effective relationships with local councils and service providers and make good use of their elected representatives.					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
B1: Formal Governance		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
Does the community benefit from active local governance?	*All seats on the parish council filled; 80% elected / 20% co-opted. Elections held every two years; average turnout for the last two elections of 45% . Not Quality Parish Council*	*It would appear so. The council holds regular meetings and elections. All seats are filled and most were contested at the last election.*	+ ve	How does the local council help make the community a better place to live in for all? *We have active parish council which deals with a lot of stuff that we have little interest in.*	+ ve
How reflective are local councillors of the community?	*The average age of parish councillors is 55. This is 10 years older than the average age of people in the village. Information on Parish Councillors is available from the PC website*	*Parish Councillors appear to come from a cross section of the community. There is good balance between men and women and they include a farmer, doctor, garage owner, teacher and retired butcher. Parish Councillors are slightly older than the average village age. Check with community view.*	+ ve		

Headline Statement B: Well run and well represented					
Sustainable communities are well run with a combination of strong formal governance and informal structure and committees. They maintain effective relationships with local councils and service providers and make good use of their elected representatives.					
B2: Informal Structures					
How involved is the community with its own governance?	*Village has a parish planning group, a field day committee, village hall committee and playing field committee.*	*There appear to be a range or structures or groups offering the community the opportunity to become involved in local governance* *Community Comment:* *These groups do a good job, however they rely on a small core of people and struggle to attract new participants.*	+ ve - ve	Do people feel that they are able to have a say in the way that the community is run and to influence decisions that are made there? *We certainly could if we wanted to or felt strongly about something.*	+ ve
B3:Effective Relationships					
Does the community communicate well with the local authority? Is it active in local forums? Do representatives engage with the local authority and initiatives like neighbourhood policing?	*Evidence of local activity in relevant forums.*	*The ward member reports a good relationship with the Parish Council and other 'management structures' in the village. The village regularly sends representatives to the area forum, PCT and area forum meetings. It has been successful in securing funding from the local authority for improvements to the playing field and church hall in recent years.*	+ ve	How well connected to the local authority and other service providers does the community feel? Do people feel that their views are taken into account by the public bodies and organisations that make decisions which affect them? *The community is familiar with the ward councillor and values the regular engagement between the Parish Council and the Police* *The parish planning group was disappointed that the Parish Plan did not lead to the allocation of a site for affordable housing or secure traffic calming measures requested.*	 + ve - ve

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
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The subject town or village is …….. well run with a combination of strong formal governance and informal structure and committees. It maintains effective relationships with local councils and service providers and makes good use of elected representatives.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	
4	**X**
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

We have an excellent parish council, local management groups and ward councillors. This would have been   a 5 if the parish plan group had got what they wanted from Highways!

Headline Statement C: Well connected Sustainable communities benefit from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
C1: Transport Services					
Is the community well served by conventional public transport services (bus and/or train)?	*Evidence of services*	*The village has bus services to the nearest market town with an onward connection to the sub-regional centre. Buses run from hourly from 0730 to 1830, then every two hours until 2230. There is no train station.*	+ ve	Are people able to travel to work to shop and to access education and other services using either public or other alternatives or are they entirely reliant on the private car? *The bus service provides daytime access to the local market town - this supports some access to services, work and leisure. It is no good for evenings or weekends however and most people rely on their cars to get around.* *People without cars have to find lifts or use the part time minibus service if they want to leave the village. However there are good services in the village; people get shopping delivered and many work locally so it is not really a problem most of the time.*	+ ve
Are there sufficient means in place to help people access employment, education and services without reliance on a private car?	*Additional evidence of schemes or local arrangements. Mode of travel to work.*	*The county school bus service takes pupils to 3 secondary schools. There is an on demand mini bus service to the local market town 3 days a week providing access to shopping, health services and transport connections to sub-regional centres.* *It should be possible to travel to a 9 to 5 job in the local market town but not to the business park at Grimsargh or the Furniture factory. There is a bus service to the local sixth form college but not to the FE or HE college in the sub-*	+ ve - ve		

Headline Statement C: Well connected					
Sustainable communities benefit from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.					
		regional centre.		*Quite a lot of people work locally (some from home, some on the land, some in the shops, hotels and restaurants and some in the new offices in the old farm yard. Those that do travel away to work tend to use their cars, several who work for the council share. The 7.30 and 8.30 buses are always busy in the mornings with people going to the local market town. It can be difficult to get to the HE college without using the car.*	
C2: Communications					
How well connected to the road system is the settlement?		*The village is on the A646, approximately 7 miles from the local market town and 14 miles from the sub-regional centre. It is well served by local roads with access to connecting routes to the N, S, E and W.* *More people leave the village to work away that the regional average - virtually all travelling by car.*		How well connected is the community internally, with other settlements and the 'outside world'? How does this affect the way that the community works, or the sort of people that live in it? *It is relatively easy to get to the motorway, especially since the new junction was opened (31a). This lets some people commute beyond the local towns. Driving into the main employment centres can be difficult however and without a train service people working part time tend to*	- ve
How well electronically connected is the settlement?		*The BT exchange is enabled for 2MB bandwidth but this is only available within the core of the village.*			+ ve

Headline Statement C: Well connected					
Sustainable communities benefit from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.					
Is it easy to move around the settlement by foot and cycle?		*The village has narrow small streets with many blind spots. It is often congested with on street parking. It is necessary to cross a busy road to get to the village centre and school site from the newer part of the village.*	- ve	*try and find work locally.*	
C3: Local Networks					
Does the community form strong local networks with other towns / villages which act together as local service centres?		*A number of surrounding villages look to Ribchester for services including food shopping, pubs and employment.*	+ ve	Does your community have close ties to other local settlements? If so, what are they and what form do they take? *People come in from surrounding villages to use the pub, take part in activities and increasingly for work. We tend to go to Longridge or Whalley for the doctors and use the community hall in Knowle Green as it is better equipped than ours.*	+ ve

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The subject town or village is ……… well connected, it benefits from transport services and communications which minimise carbon consumption whilst linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	X
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We are not very well connected in a sustainable sense. It is easy to get places in the car and we are close to the motorway , the city and several airports. It is very hard to conduct life without relying on the car however - our bus services are limited (although we do have connections to the market towns and commercial centres) and access to train services is very poor.

Headline Statement D: Well served					
Sustainable communities benefit from public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to peoples needs and accessible to all.					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
D1: Facilities					
Is there a range of community facilities consistent with the needs of the population and demographics of the settlement? Community facilities include shops, religious meeting places, community halls, etc.	*Available facilities*	*The village has: food shop, café, church, church hall, playing field, 3 pubs, car park. This seems reasonable for a population of 1600*	+ ve	Do you feel that your place has an appropriate range of facilities? How well do you feel that these meet the needs of every one in the community? *Pretty much, although there is no building or room which young people can use by themselves - only as part of a managed activity.*	+ ve
Are there places for formal sports, play and informal recreation in the settlement?		*Playing field, children's playground, ball court, tennis courts, river bank.*	+ ve		
Are there places to meet and socialise for all ages and interest groups in the settlement?		*There are three pubs, 2 cafes, a shop, two churches and two church halls. Also the playing fields and related infrastructure.*	+ ve		
Do these facilities serve only those from within the village or do / might they form part of a local service centre supporting a wider catchment?		*The village attracts significant numbers of visitors who use the playing field, car park, pubs and café.*	**+ ve**	Do you share your facilities with people from other communities? Do they attract visitors from further away? *Lots of visitors at the weekends and in school holidays. People from the smaller villages are part of the wider community and get involved with village activities.*	**+ ve**

Headline Statement D: Well served					
Sustainable communities benefit from public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to peoples needs and accessible to all.					
D2: Services					
Do people have access within the community to key services (see below)? If not, where is the nearest fixed service point? • Pre School Care • Primary School • Secondary School • GP premises • Supermarket or convenience store • Post Office		*Pre-School Care: there is a regular mothers and toddlers group and a pre-school nursery.* *Primary School - there is a CofE primary school. The nearest Catholic primary school is in the local market town.* *Secondary School: no - the children travel to the local market town* *GP Premises: no - the children travel to the local market town* *Convenience Store - yes, SPAR* *Post Office - part time hours in the SPAR.* *The level of provision feels fair for the size of village. It would be helpful to people without a car if there was an easier way of getting to the doctors.*		Do you feel that the community has access to what it needs in terms of local service provision? If not, what is missing and how does it affect people's quality of life? *The level of provision feels fair for the size of village. It would be helpful to people without a car if there was an easier way of getting to the doctors* Are the services that are available in the community well used or are any under threat through lack of use? If so, how might use of these services be increased? *The Post Office is not as good now that it is in the Spar. People*	+ ve
Are any mobile or out-reach services available within the community?		*The mobile library attends once a week.* *What is missing? Where service points are not available, consider whether they are in near by settlements which act as part of a network with the subject settlement.*		*have to travel from the village to do their main food shop, but we wouldn't want a food shop any bigger than the one we have.*	

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
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*The subject town or village is ....*well served and benefits from public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to peoples needs and accessible to al

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

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Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

We feel that we are relatively well served given the size of the settlement. This would not be the case were the shop to close however. It remains difficult for vulnerable people to access healthcare without relying on friends of family - perhaps this is something that the GPs could help with - they seem to have plenty of money and time!

Headline Statement E: Environmentally Sensitive Sustainable communities care for and manage their environment, they play their part in tackling global climate change and live within environmental limits					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers in the space below		*Provide your answers in the space below*	
E1: Local environment					
What quality of local environment does the community enjoy?		*The local environment is of good quality. There is a very low level of rubbish and no evidence of pollution. There is little traffic congestion and no sign of activities which might adversely affect environmental health.*	+ ve	Do you feel that the whole community enjoys positive environmental conditions? Are there any areas which are blighted by adverse environmental issues? *We are proud of our local environment and take steps to keep it in good condition. The Parish Council organises a 'village tidy' every year which is well supported. The church and school maintain the river bank and churchyard.*	+ ve
E2: Wider Environment					
Is the community set within high quality or designated landscapes?		*The village is in close proximity to the Bowland AONB.*		Does the village / town flood? If so where and how often? What impact does it have? *Some parts of the village suffer from regular flooding - we are at the bottom of several hills and by a river! People are used to it and help one another - it is making insurance harder to get for some*	- ve
Are there areas of high quality biodiversity and a network of biodiversity features?		*The village sits alongside the River Ribble. It includes a number of tributaries of the river. There are areas of water meadow adjacent to the village.*			
Are parts of the community or immediate environs at risk of flooding?		*According to EA records, the southern part of the village has flooded 3 times over the last 15 years*			

Headline Statement E: Environmentally Sensitive					
Sustainable communities care for and manage their environment, they play their part in tackling global climate change and live within environmental limits					
E3: Well related and connected to the surrounding environment					
Is access to the surrounding countryside good? Is it possible to gain access on foot, cycle and horseback via paths and bridleways?		*There is a network of well maintained cycle and footpaths linking the village to the river banks and wider countryside. The national cycle route and Ribble Way Path pass through the village.*		Do you feel that it is easy to move between the town / village and the countryside? *The footpaths and bridleways are well maintained, however we are experiencing increasing difficulties with cyclists and motor bikes during busy summer weekends.*	
E4: Global Impact					
The UK is committed to achieving an 80% reduction in its carbon consumption 2050.What impact does the community have on the global environment in the way that they live their lives?				How high is awareness of climate change in your community? How strong are the efforts being made to combat it? *People are certainly talking about*	- ve
Is the community likely to be a high consumer of carbon?	*The following will have impact on the level of carbon consumption - car use, number of cars per household, distance travelled work and mode of travel, the size, age and type of housing stock*	*Car ownership in the village is significantly above the district average. 62% of economically active residents travel out of the village to work, the majority of which use the car. The nearest supermarket and GP surgery is 7 miles away - most journeys will be made by car.* *Over 50% of the housing stock in the village is 19th Century terraced cottages which are difficult to insulate. There is no gas in the village. On the up side, there is a*		*it more - the church is considering putting a wind turbine in to generate electricity and it seems a shame to waste the power of the river. People are making more of an effort to car share and using the supermarket delivery services more often.* *The new workspace has a woodchip boiler and PV tiles. The latest housing built achieved the highest green design ratings.* *The village has a well maintained set of allotments which are all*	

Headline Statement E: Environmentally Sensitive				
Sustainable communities care for and manage their environment, they play their part in tackling global climate change and live within environmental limits				
		good bus service to the local secondary schools and much of the new workspace provided in the old farmyard has been occupied by people who live locally.		*rented currently. The school hosts a glass, paper and plastics recycling point. The local cafes and pubs work together to recycle packaging, plastics and glass.*
Is there evidence of local efforts to reduce carbon consumption?		*Consider any efforts to reduce carbon consumption e.g. the use of renewable energy, the quality of design in new development and the planting of new woodland*		
Carbon consumption is not the only environmental challenge that we face – there is pressure on natural resources such as water and we have very little more capacity for landfill. Are there other steps that the community takes to make it more environmentally sustainable e.g. provision of allotments or community recycling schemes?		*What else is happening in the community to reduce its environmental impact? Examples include recycling schemes, growing of local food, initiatives for the reduction in the consumption of water, habitat restoration and creation.*		

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The subject town / village is ….. environmentally sensitive, its people care for and manage their environment, they play their part in tackling global climate change and live within environmental limits

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	X
3	
4	
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

We do what we can, but we must accept that we all consume too much carbon. We need to find ways of harnessing our local environment to increase use of renewable energy and become more smart, and collaborative, about how we travel.

TYM & PARTNERS
ROGER
Planners and Development Economists

Rural Innovation
live. work. thrive.

December 2008   85

Headline Statement F: Well Designed with appropriate housing types Sustainable communities are well designed and attractive with good quality buildings and public spaces. It provides sufficient decent homes to meet the needs of a range of household sizes, ages and incomes.					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers in the space below		*Provide your answers in the space below*	
F1: Well Designed and Attractive					
Are there high quality buildings, streets and public spaces?	*Local Planning Authority, Listed Building Register, Schedule of Ancient Monuments*	*There is a conservation area within the centre of the village and a several listed buildings.*	+ ve	Do people have pride in the community? Do you feel that your place is in good condition and well looked after or are there areas which concern you? *We like it*	+ ve
F2: Appropriate Housing					
Does the existing housing stock provide a range of different tenures with a good mix of affordable and private housing?	*% of housing stock owner-occupied, rented from social landlords and from the private sector. Housing Strategy Statistical Appendices.*	*79% of housing stock is owner-occupied - higher than the district and sub-regional average. There is very limited stock available for rent, practically none from social landlords.*	- ve	Does the housing stock that is available meet needs of local people? Is it likely to continue to do so in the future? *There is a good range of stock, especially in the middle values. There are perhaps not enough very low cost houses, but not sure where you would put any more them - we are out of space given the river and the hills.*	+ ve
Does the existing housing stock provide a range of different types of housing with a good mix of smaller and larger homes?	*Type and proportion of housing stock*	*There is a range of housing provision including terraced, bungalows, semi-detached and detached. The only type of stock that is limited is larger houses set within their own plots.*	+ ve		

Headline Statement F: Well Designed with appropriate housing types					
Sustainable communities are well designed and attractive with good quality buildings and public spaces. It provides sufficient decent homes to meet the needs of a range of household sizes, ages and incomes.					
F3: Housing Affordability					
Does the affordability of the housing stock provide equal opportunity for people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes to live in the community?	*Average weekly earnings. Land Registry records on sale prices of housing stock. Asking prices for sale and open market rental. Council house waiting lists, parish plans and housing needs surveys. Council tax banding*	*Average house prices (2004) are 6.5 x the average weekly earnings from employment within the district.* *The Parish Plan mentions increasing concerns relating to affordability but the housing needs survey demonstrated very few households in need or potential demand. There are few low cost houses in the village but the stock is dominated by lower to mid value properties (Council Tax rates C&D) with provision significantly higher than district and regional averages.*	- ve	Does the price of housing create problems for the community? Does it prevent people who work locally from living locally? *The rise in prices over the last five years has made even the smallest terraces difficult to afford for young people or people on low wages. Many of the houses suitable for families are occupied by people who bought into the village in the 70's as families and are still in those houses even though their children have grown up and moved away.* *We now of some people that work for the marketing agency that would like to move into the village, but many prefer to live in the city and commute in.*	- ve

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:

The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town or village is …….. well designed and attractive with good quality buildings and public spaces. It provides sufficient decent homes to meet the needs of a range of household sizes, ages and incomes.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	X
4	
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

The village meets much of the aspiration in the headline statement, but it fails to allow young people on low incomes to be a part of the community, and, dare we say it, also has very limited opportunity for larger houses to attract successful people. The surrounding topography means that there are very few options for growth. Any growth at the expense of our employment space would be harmful.

Headline Statement G: Thriving					
Sustainable communities have a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
G1: Successful Economy					
Are there a range of strong established local businesses? If so, do these businesses provide the opportunity for residents to work locally? Are businesses growing or declining?	*Business stock - type and industrial sector* *Travel to Work patterns for residents and employees.*	*The village has a small business park which hosts a wide range of businesses. Most of these businesses are mature and have been in situ for more than 10 years. There is additional business space on the edge of the village and the shops, pubs and restaurants provide full and part time employment to local people.* *38% of the working population work locally. There appear to be a range of opportunities within the businesses located in the village.* *62% of the working population leave the village to work - mainly in the surrounding economic zone of Central Greenshire.*	+ ve	Does the local economy provide employment opportunities for people in the community who need or wish to work there? *A good number of people work locally, however they tend to be the owners of the businesses, people working part time or those on relatively low wages. Most people commute out to work - but then that is the same everywhere, even in cities.*	+ ve

Headline Statement G: Thriving					
Sustainable communities have a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities					
Are wage levels from work in the local economy above average for the district / county / region?	*Average weekly earnings (workbased) £445 pw* *Average weekly earnings (resident) £550 pw*	*The average weekly wage for the district is below the national average.* *There is a higher proportion of local residents engaged in the wholesale & retail and hotels & catering sectors than the district and sub-regional averages.* *Work based earnings are materially lower than resident earnings*	- ve		
Does the local labour market contain the skills needed by local businesses?	*Skill levels of resident population. GCSE and A level attainment at local schools.*	*The local people are generally highly skilled - fewer have no qualifications than the district and sub-regional average and far more have L3 or above than the district and sub-regional average.* *There is a higher incidence of management, professionals and skilled trades than the district or sub-regional average.* *The vast majority of school leavers go on to higher or further education (82%). Those entering the local workforce tend to do so in the land based or hospitality sectors.*	+ ve		

Headline Statement G: Thriving

Sustainable communities have a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities

		Over half of the jobs hosted in the village are filled by people who travel in to work (particularly in one major employer - a marketing and design agency).			
G2: Diverse Economy					
Is there a diverse range of sectors and activity in the local economy?	*Sector of business and local employment*	*The businesses located in the village include a large marketing agency, two garages, industrial laundry, software firm, a residential home for the elderly, supplier of fires and heating systems, electrical contractors, plumbers and panel beaters. In addition there are the shops, pubs and cafes, and three working farms.* *This is consistent with the profile of business stock across the district. The employment profile is similar but there are very few jobs in public health, education or administration hosted in the village so residents working in those sectors have to commute out to work.*	+ ve	Are there a range of employment opportunities available for local people or is the community reliant upon one or two big employers? *We have quite a wide range of businesses in the village - there is no dominant employer. There are plenty of opportunities for people who need local part time work. Opportunities for careers are more limited - but this is a village! There is quite a lot of workspace and it is good to see that the new conversions in the farm yard have allowed some local people to start new businesses as well as attracting a couple of entrepreneurs to settle here.*	+ ve

Headline Statement G: Thriving					
Sustainable communities have a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities					
Is there evidence of change in the local business stock? Have new sectors of activity been introduced?		*Several new business have been attracted by the new workspace provision - all in the knowledge based sector. This has improved the balance of economic activity in the village. Two new cafes have opened in the last three years - improving the attractiveness of the village to visitors and increasing footfall for other local retail and hospitality businesses.*	+ ve		
G3: Local Economy					
Are business owned and operated by local people?		*All businesses in the village are in private ownership. Most of the owners live within the district and many in the village.*	+ ve	How do local businesses contribute to / support the local community?

Definitely; they provide part time employment, support local activities and sponsor the local sports teams. | + ve |
| Is wealth created retained within the local economy? Do businesses employ local people, source their supplies and services locally and invest in the community? | | *38% of the working population are employed in businesses situated in the village.
There is evidence of local purchasing in the pubs, cafes and shops. Businesses on the light industrial estate trade together and share labour and equipment.* | + ve | | |

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town / village is ….. thriving, with a successful local economy which is diverse and provides a range of employment and business opportunities

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	
4	X
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

Our village has a strong local economy; but it is just that, local. It is not likely to offer all the children who grow up here jobs when they leave school or university. Some may come back to join their families business, or return in their 30's to set up their own businesses (as has happened). We have a good group of local businesses and the chance for new businesses to start as there is often space in the old mill which now operates as a small business park.

Headline Statement H: Fair					
Sustainable communities are fair for everyone, including those from other communities, who use its facilities and services					
	Sources of Facts and Data	Stage One: Evidence based Assessment	+ ve / - ve	Stage Two: Community Assessment	+ ve / - ve
		Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below		*Provide your answers by responding to the prompts in the space below*	
1: The Community					
Who makes up the community - what type of people? What is their ethnic and religious background? How old are they?		*Consider the demographic characteristics of the population, their ages and backgrounds. How does this compare to the district and sub-regional profiles? Are there sections of the community which stand out as different or in the minority?* *There are no obvious minorities - ethnic or demographic*		Do you feel that your community is fair for everyone or are there certain types of people who don't enjoy all that is has to offer? *Some of the teenagers have a hard time, but there is little for them really to complain about.* *We are worried about a cold winter - much of the housing stock is hard to heat, we have no gas and some of our elderly residents may have difficulties keeping themselves warm if the weather is bad.*	+ ve
2: Do People Get a Fair Deal?					
Are there any groups within the community that are not well catered for in terms of activities, facilities and services?		*Many groups in the community are well catered for. Those with least provision are young adults (15 - 19) and the very elderly without mobility.*	+ ve		
Are there any tensions between different groups within the community?	*Parish Plan; Community Safety Partnership*	*The parish plan survey shows a high level of satisfaction with living in the village but makes reference to disturbances caused by young people and petty vandalism.*	= ve		

Headline Statement H: Fair					
Sustainable communities are fair for everyone, including those from other communities, who use its facilities and services					
Are all young people from the community getting access to fair life chances?	*KS results and comparison from Neighbourhood Statistics*	*How well are the local children doing at school? How do the results of the local schools compare with the district or sub-regional averages? What proportion of young people are going on to further and higher education? How does this compare with the district and sub-regional average?* *Local children do well at school - the average GCSE and equivalent score on completion of KS4 significantly exceeds the district and regional average.*	+ ve		

Make your Judgement at the end of Stage Two:
The discussions involved in coming up with, and agreeing the answers will have helped you think about your community, and how it compares with the statement at the top of the section. Please now make a judgement about how the community performs relative to that statement. Try to think about the whole community when you respond, rather than just base your choice on your own views.

The subject town / village is ..... fair for everyone, including those from other communities, who use its facilities and services.

The judgement is made by applying a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means you strongly disagree that the headline statement describes the subject community and 5 means that you strongly agree that the headline statement describes the subject community.

Scale	Please tick one box
1	
2	
3	
4	X
5	

Please provide any comments that you wish to make to qualify or support your choice.

We feel that the community is a fair place to live.

Collating the Results – The Colour Wheel

The number chosen for each characteristic needs to be translated into a colour and then used to create a 'Colour Wheel' to represent the overall assessment of sustainability.

Strongly Disagree   →   Strongly Agree

1	2	3	4	5

Characteristic	Assessment 1 - 5	Colour
A. Active with a strong sense of community	5	
B. Well run and well represented	4	
C. Well connected	2	
D. Well served	4	
E. Environmentally sensitive	2	
F. Well designed with appropriate housing and public spaces	3	
G. Thriving with a successful local economy	4	
H. Fair	4	

The final working version of the toolkit will need a method to create the colour wheel.

6. GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE COMMUNITY TESTING STAGE OF THE TOOLKIT

Stage Two of the Toolkit – Community Testing

The toolkit has been developed primarily to help local planning authorities, local partnerships and public service providers improve their local evidence base and their understanding of the towns and villages within their territory. In completing the toolkit these authorities will need to work closely with their communities to arrive at a sound assessment of each place. The involvement of communities is an integral part of how the toolkit works. Where the toolkit is being used by the community independently, those leading the process will want to ensure that they apply Stage Two to as wide a representation of the community as possible.

The quality of the community testing stage will affect the reliability of the toolkit assessment and therefore its value to both statutory authorities and communities alike. The following notes give an indication of what 'quality' community testing might look like and outlines some key principles to consider when planning the community testing activities. Community Testing requires skilled facilitation.

The purpose of the community testing stage

Unlike the parish plan process, it is not the intention in the community testing stage to gather the views of the majority of the population of a settlement. The purpose is to test out the conclusions of stage one by working with as wide a group of local people as it is realistic to reach in a single event. The rationale for a single event is that the process requires arriving at a single and joint judgement (translated into a colour) for each characteristic[5].

Gathering the widest range of views

The first principle will be to encourage as wide a representation of the local community as possible. Certainly local councillors (parish and ward) should be there as representatives of their community. The challenge will be to include the perspectives of people who are unlikely to attend such an event – those suffering from ill health, more marginalised groups such as migrant workers, young people and those with young children or busy jobs who find it difficult to spare the time.

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[5] It would be possible to follow up the single event with other 'testing' activities, by posting results for comment on web-sites, or week-long public exhibitions to gather further comments etc. However, this would require more complicated amalgamation of results and require a further session with community representatives to arrive at a single joint judgement.

Publicity and communications should be designed with the purpose of gaining wide representation in mind. You may want to consider circulating the toolkit with Stage One completed in advance of the event, so that people have a chance to consider the evidence that has been gathered so far.

All effort should be made to make the event easy to attend and to encourage people with different perspectives to come along. For example by providing childcare, asking the school to find young people willing to attend, offering lifts to older/disabled people or those living in more outlying areas, identifying leaders of community groups who can bring the views of a particular constituency. However, it is in the nature of any sort of community workshop that some people will find it more difficult to be involved. For this reason, it will be important for the facilitator to encourage people (and to challenge them if necessary) to consider the questions from the point of view of other people in their community, and not just from their own point of view.

Running a Community Testing Workshop

As part of its development the toolkit has been tested in a workshop setting with groups of community representatives in two communities in Devon (Lifton and Holsworthy). The experience in Plymouth of running Community Workshops, using the 8 characteristics of a sustainable community and a colour wheel is also helpful[6]. Those workshops lasted a day and consisted of officers and invited community representatives, local people, representatives of organisations working in the community, and local members, plus anyone else who asked to be invited.

Experience suggests that the Community Testing workshop will need to last at least half a day (in order to work through the eight characteristics), although a day would be preferable. The event needs to be facilitated by someone who understands (and can explain clearly) the purpose of the toolkit and how it works. The facilitator needs to be experienced in working with community groups and preferably independent of the statutory authorities involved.

In all but the very smallest communities the workshop will need to be broken down into smaller groups, with plenary sessions to bring together the views and final judgement for each characteristic. Smaller groups stimulate the debate and ensure that all have a chance to voice their views.

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[6] Plymouth City Council have been conducting a series of neighbourhood community workshops as part of the Creating and Maintaining Sustainable Neighbourhoods strand within the development of their LDF, more information can be found on http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/ldf_leaflet_3rd_proof.pdf.

Making it fun

People will be giving up their valuable spare time to take part. Providing a light, airy room, laid out in an informal style, with plenty of good quality refreshments does make a difference to how people feel about taking part. You should consider holding the event in a place that people feel comfortable about attending - the local pub or social club is often a good alternative to the village hall.   Avoid inviting community representatives to the municipal headquarters, even where these are situated in the town you are discussing. The experience from the community testing events undertaken as part of the development of the toolkit was that local people enjoyed the open and wide ranging discussion that the toolkit provoked and the challenge of jointly arriving at a judgement for each characteristic.

Avoid Being Defensive

The first part of the session will inevitably contain challenges to the evidence -based assessment and the conclusions drawn by those who have completed it. Try not to be defensive - this is a key part of the process and helps the community to introduce their perspective and local knowledge. The initial assessment should therefore be presented as a starting point; be ready to add new information and to use the combined evidence to support the process of making a judgement.

Providing feedback

It will be important to let the people involved in the Community Testing Workshop know how the assessment is being used by the statutory authorities and (if appropriate) provide information about the outcomes of other assessments in nearby settlements. The use and results of the toolkit will need to be integrated into other local authority (and LSP) communication and community engagement activity.

Almost certainly there will be members of the community who were unable or unwilling to attend the event, who, nevertheless, are interested in the outcomes of the assessment. Publicising the results in the village newsletter, posting copies of the colour wheel in the local pub/school/shop could all be considered as ways of feeding back to the wider community.

7. GUIDANCE NOTE FOR COMMUNITIES USING THE TOOLKIT

WHAT IF A COMMUNITY WANTS TO USE THE TOOLKIT INDEPENDENTLY?

The toolkit has been developed primarily for use by statutory bodies (local planning authorities, local partnerships and public service providers) to help them assess the sustainability of rural towns, villages and smaller settlements, and how any proposed change (or lack of change) might affect those places. There is no reason however, why communities should not use the toolkit for their own purposes. Communities could do this independently or working in groups This Chapter is written as a guide for communities wanting to use the toolkit independently.

What does the toolkit help you do?

The toolkit will guide you through a process of discussing 8 characteristics used to define the way that a truly sustainable community might look in order to arrive at a judgement about just how sustainable your community is. These characteristics are:

A. Active with a strong sense of community
B. Well run and well represented
C. Well connected
D. Well served
E. Environmentally sensitive
F. Well designed with appropriate housing and public spaces
G. Thriving with a successful local economy
H. Fair

The idea is that in filling out the toolkit those taking part discuss and agree how active, well run, well served etc their community is, and what could make it more or less so.   The toolkit asks those using it to gather as much evidence and information about the community as they can and to use that information as the basis for their judgements.

When might you want to use the toolkit?

There are a number of situations where working through the toolkit might provide valuable information and evidence of your community's 'health' in terms of sustainability. The uses outlined below are some of these.

As part of a Parish Planning Process

The toolkit would provide an ideal starting point for a Parish Planning process, providing key evidence about the community, making an initial assessment of community 'health' in terms of sustainability, and high-lighting areas of weakness that the Parish Plan Action Plan should focus on.

The results of an initial assessment, using the toolkit, could be tested with the wider community by a variety of consultation methods – open day events, public exhibitions where the community can record their views and comments with 'post-its', targeted events with specific community groups (older people at a day centre, mothers and toddlers, youth clubs etc).

The eight characteristics and their associated questions could also be used as the basis of the Parish Plan questionnaire, combined with questions to gather community views on priority actions needed to tackle areas of weakness.

Those responsible for implementing the Parish Plan Action Plan could use the toolkit to monitor the impact of their activities - is what we are doing making it better or worse in relation to each characteristic (more or less active, safe etc.).

To test out the impact of development proposals

Communities (and specifically the Parish or Town Council) could use the toolkit to test out the impact of development proposals on the future sustainability of a settlement. It could be used to highlight both positive and negative impacts. The results could be used to generate a consensus view about a proposed development and to stimulate debate about possible gains for the community through the planning system.

To strengthen connections and action with neighbouring settlements

When a number of communities complete the toolkit, the results could be used to identify issues of common concern.   The evidence from toolkits could be used to develop proposals for addressing these issues together. This could be activity that the communities undertake themselves (e.g. provision of activities for young people) or to develop proposals that would need the

input of others (e.g. changes or improvements to rural transport services). Having the evidence from the toolkits would strengthen the case that the communities may want to make to the relevant authorities.

What would using the toolkit involve?

The toolkit asks you to go through two stages and to arrive at a judgement for each of the 8 characteristics. Take a look at the completed example in Chapter 5 to get an idea what is involved.

Stage One – Evidence Based Assessment

Firstly you need to work through the questions asked against each characteristic for the Evidence Based Assessment. You will need access to some specific information to answer these questions, and some local knowledge. The Guidance on Source and Use of Data (Chapter 4) will point you to the sources of this information. If you need further help with gathering the information, there are a number of sources of help and advice depending on where you live. Contacting the research department in your local council is a good place to start.

Run through the questions before you go looking for any evidence. This will allow you to work out what sort of information you need to go an find and how much you know already. The reason for using data is to help test your reactions – you may have a view about how many people work locally and how many work away, but the Travel to Work statistics will help corroborate that view.

This first stage could be completed by a 'core group' – for example the Parish Council or the Parish Plan Steering Group.

Stage Two

Having completed the 'evidence based' assessment, the next stage is to take the debate out to representatives of the community as a whole and to arrive at a joint assessment with them about the sustainability of your community against each of the characteristics.

Making a judgement

The judgements are made on a scale from 1 - 5, where 1 means you strongly disagree (that your community has this characteristic (i.e. that it is *not* active, strong, environmentally sensitive etc.) and 5 that you strongly agree (i.e. that it definitely is active, safe etc.).   Scores of 2, 3, and 4, lie in between the two extremes. These judgements can then be translated into colours and ultimately an eight section Colour Wheel, which will give you a strong visual representation of the strengths and weaknesses of your community in relation to its overall sustainability.

Who should be involved?

The guidance note on community testing will help you organise an event to work through the toolkit with representatives from your community. If it is possible it would be good to talk to someone who has already run a 'community testing' event to learn from their experience.

Depending on what you want to achieve from using the toolkit, it would also be worth considering asking your local planning department, your local strategic partners, or service providers, to be involved in either one or both of the stages. In this way you can gain the views of the statutory sector, and ensure that they are confident that the judgements are based on sound evidence and wide representation of the community.

8. GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS USING THE TOOLKIT

LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERS USE OF THE TOOLKIT

Though the toolkit is envisaged to have a particular use in developing formal spatial planning frameworks for rural communities, working through Local Development Frameworks procedures, it is potentially very relevant to various aspects of the work of LSPs and individual Strategic Partners.

The concept of a Sustainable Rural Community encompasses many facets of the responsibilities of Strategic Partners, including health, education, community safety, transport and the needs of particular groups within communities. Within these fields, and in integrating approaches between them, the toolkit approach can help to :

- draw together various sources of information about communities within an area
- provide a co-ordinated professional judgement about the characteristics and needs of these communities
- engage professionals and community representatives in dialogue about current conditions and future needs
- prioritise proposals for planned development and investment in specific communities

The toolkit approach can be used to supplement or replace various approaches to research, consultation, policy development and investment which are currently used by various Partners and communities, including local planning evidence base research, community planning, parish plans, parish profiles and various area profiles or research completed by PCTs, Housing Departments, and other agencies.

Working through a toolkit approach in co-operation with other Partners and with communities should therefore offer the possibility of achieving co-ordinated and efficient use or resources (through avoiding duplication of effort and use of different data sets); and a more coherent outcome, as the toolkit provides an agreed basis for development and investment flowing through the strategies and plans of the LSP itself and through the plans, policies and actions of individual partners.

This ideal scenario will of course depend on adapting current processes within local areas. This will take time and will have to be co-ordinated in relation to the currently established work programmes for various statutory and other processes. It may require some amendment to established working relationships and responsibilities.

However, it is hoped that LSPs will play a positive role in encouraging the use of the toolkit and will encourage partners to adopt its use by clearly defining a role for it in LSP processes. It is likely that Local Planning Authorities will play a leading role in its use - they have responsibility for preparing an evidence base, for consultation about future development, and for preparing spatial

plans within existing work programmes, and will thus likely to use the toolkit soon. However, a pro-active approach to co-ordination by these authorities and other partners could be encouraged by LSPs.

We therefore recommend that LSPs, in considering the development of their overall priorities and work programmes consider adoption the toolkit approach as follows:
- review the need for an evidence base and consultation processes around planning for sustainable rural communities
- review the current range and completeness of coverage of work in the rural communities, including parish plans and professional research
- assess the need for a toolkit approach in relation to immediate work programmes, particularly LDF processes, but also in relation to other LSP responsibilities and priorities
- encourage effective working arrangements between local planning (LDF) authorities and other partners engaged on research and consultation with rural communities
- seek to establish a clear toolkit work programme for defined areas (to meet the various requirements), co-ordinating the resources of relevant partners
- expect the findings of toolkit processes to guide priorities for investment and action with LAAs, LSP programmes and the actions of partners in relation to their rural communities
- encourage communities to respond to the toolkit approach

9. GUIDANCE NOTE FOR LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES USING THE TOOLKIT

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY GUIDANCE NOTE – USE OF THE TOOLKIT FIR SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES IN THE PREPARATION OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS
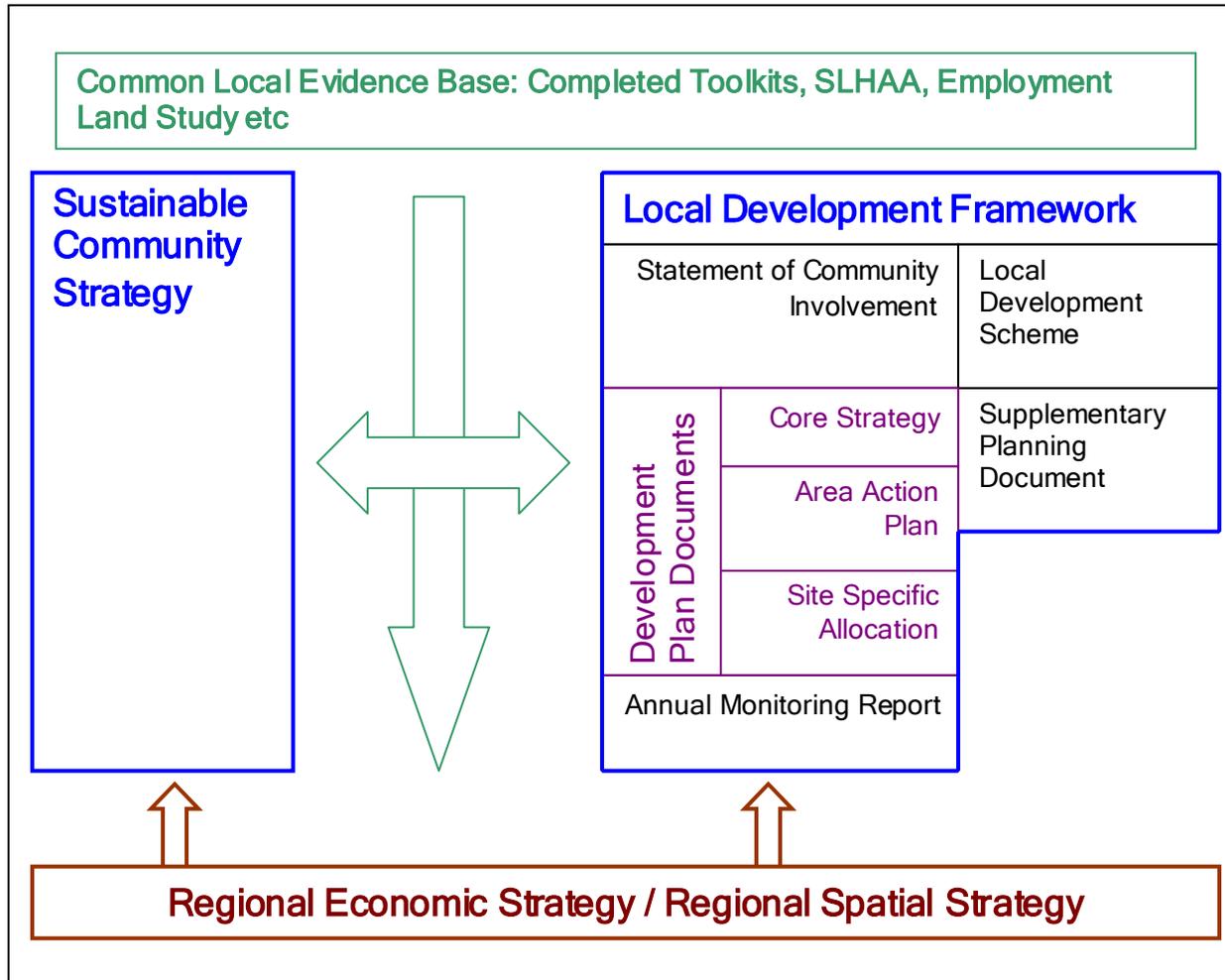
Introduction

This Chapter is particularly relevant to Local Planning Authorities, who have responsibility for planning for the needs of rural communities within Local Development Framework processes. It identifies how the Toolkit can be used to meet the Government's planning objectives and in particular how the Toolkit can help meet objectives for the creation of a sustainable plan that is founded on a robust and credible evidence base to inform the spatial strategy and distribution of development.

Sustainable development is at the heart of the planning system. PPS1 states that "Sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning". Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of development. PPS1 also stresses the importance of community involvement in the preparation of plans stating that "Community involvement is an essential element in delivering sustainable development and creating sustainable and safe communities. In developing the vision for their areas, planning authorities should ensure that communities are able to contribute to ideas about how that vision can be achieved, have the opportunity to participate in the process of drawing up the vision, strategy and specific plan policies, and to be involved in development proposals"

The Government's policy on Local Development Frameworks (LDF), set out in PPS12, aims to ensure that planning shapes the places where people live and work to support environmental and economic objectives and importantly to deliver sustainable communities. It also emphasises the importance of a robust and credible evidence base as the basis for decision making when creating spatial planning policy.

The Toolkit provides an approach which will support a local assessment of the current and future sustainability of a community and which recognises how places and communities really work in practice. The Toolkit can be used throughout the Local Development Framework (LDF) process, from preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), establishment of links with the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) through to individual Development Plan Documents (DPD). The diagram illustrates the links between the LDF and SCS. The importance of this link and how the toolkit can play a pivotal role in its demonstration is discussed next.

Diagram 1 – The toolkit and the LDF

The diagram shows where the toolkit can be included within three important elements of the evidence base for the LDF process:
- Embedded within the SCI

- Providing evidence and policy direction for the production of Development Plan Documents (DPD)

- Providing baseline information for the Annual Monitoring Report.

Sustainable Community Strategy

Recent government policy has increased the role that councils, delivery agencies and bodies have in determining how policy is applied locally. It also seeks to increase the involvement that service users, citizens and communities have in that process. This new approach has become known as 'place shaping', bringing together local politicians, service deliverers and communities to apply policy and publicly funded services in a way that is appropriate to the local context and which meets the needs and aspirations of local people.

Place shaping has a defined structure and set of processes. Lead responsibility rests with local authorities. They must, however, work through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and align their activity and policies to the strategic vision for the future shape of their territory developed in the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

The SCS for any area should be the leading strategic document at local authority level. Its role is to set out a vision which defines the way its cities, towns and communities will look if the aspirations of local people and partners are realised. This vision (and its related priorities) should be mirrored in the local authority's corporate plan. Service delivery plans (of local authority and wider organisations i.e. PCT, Police, Ambulance etc) should also align with the SCS and where possible will need to be designed to help achieve the vision.

A SCS must be evidence based. Where possible this evidence should offer an insight at community / neighbourhood level rather than simply at district level. Local Place Shaping is about individual and diverse communities rather than local authority territories.

The 2007 Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill introduced a new duty on statutory authorities to inform, consult and involve 'representatives of local persons' in their functions. This duty will be 'live' from April 2009 and imposes a

higher level of requirement than previously existed. The Empowerment White paper further reinforces the Duty, and extends it across a wide range of partner organisations.

Government guidance recommends that these document share a common evidence base and engagement strategy. The Toolkit has been developed to help secure the best possible local evidence base, and to support full engagement of communities in that process.

Relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework

The role of the local development framework is to turn the SCS's strategic vision into policy that guides and shapes development over 15 to 20 years after the plan's adoption. The core strategy should act as the spatial vision of the sustainable community strategy and it should aim to cover a wide range of policies and programmes. In PPS12, paragraph 4.33 states: "Local authorities should align and coordinate the core strategy of the local development framework with the unitary or district sustainable community strategy.".

The Local Government White Paper outlines the intention and advantages of integrating the sustainable community strategy into the broader local development framework process. It also outlines how the link between the two is founded on the principle of sustainability and the ability to collectively deliver sustainable communities. This integration is key to ensuring that delivery is at the heart of the plan making system.

Local authorities are encouraged to integrate the Core Strategy of the LDF within the unitary or district SCS to ensure that the key spatial planning objectives for the area are fully aligned with priorities identified in the SCS. Place-shaping requires a dynamic relationship between these critical high-level vision strategies within both unitary and two-tier areas. This can be promoted through a shared evidence base and analysis, and the proactive engagement of stakeholder partners, citizens and local businesses in their development and implementation through a shared approach to consultation. The *Local Area Agreement* acts as the delivery plan and the policies and plans of the LDF are key delivery mechanisms alongside other LSP and partner plans, the use of land and assets, and the application of private investment.

The toolkit is an important instrument to help with the integration of the SCS and the LDF. It is intended that the toolkit be used as part of the shared evidence which can then be fed into both the SCS and LDF process. By sharing a common evidence base through the use of the toolkit, it not only avoids duplication and potential for inconsistency but also allows the Local Authority to demonstrate that the LDF has regard to the SCS, which is part of the test for Legal Compliance that an Inspector will consider at Examination.

The Sustainable Communities Toolkit and the Local Development Framework

The following text provides a step by step guide as to how the toolkit can be used in the preparation of LDF documents.

Embedding the toolkit within the Statement of Community Involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement's (SCI) role is to inform your community about how and when they can expect to get involved in the preparation and revision of development plan documents and in the consideration of planning applications relating to their local area. Once adopted, the development of all other development plan documents must be in line with the commitments set out in the SCI.

Guidance by the PAS on the production and revision of SCIs suggests that LPA's need to look at their SCI and consider developing a broader approach to engagement. It suggests that LPA's ask themselves the following questions:

- How will you strengthen your links with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and incorporate the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)?
- Are there existing opportunities to combine engagement activities within your council?
- Could you develop a strategy for document preparation that could be easily modified to meet the new approach?

Following the recent amendments to the LDF process LPAs have been afforded greater flexibility in determining how and when engagement should take place in preparing documents. This means that the former consultation arrangements which required consultation on the issues and options stage and formal statutory requirement to consult on preferred options [Regulations 25 and 26] have been combined to create one period of plan preparation. This will potentially streamline engagement in the pre submission stages but will also allow a LPA to develop more meaningful processes. It will enable a broader range of community groups and individuals to participate in evaluating the different issues and options rather than simply being consulted on the selected preferred options.

Whilst many LPA's will have already adopted an SCI, the amended requirements set out in PPS 12 and the regulations, have provided an opportunity to reassess and where necessary make changes to incorporate the new commitments towards community participation in a revised version of the SCI.

The absence of formal stages of consultation will mean that LPAs will have to be more innovative in the way they engage with the public. By embedding the use of the toolkit within the SCI, the LPA will be able to provide the certainty to the community regarding its commitment to community engagement. The following table shows examples of expected content within the SCI as identified in the regulations and the PAS guidance on effective community engagement. Although it does not list all the requirements it does include those which can be met by the inclusion of the toolkit within the SCI.
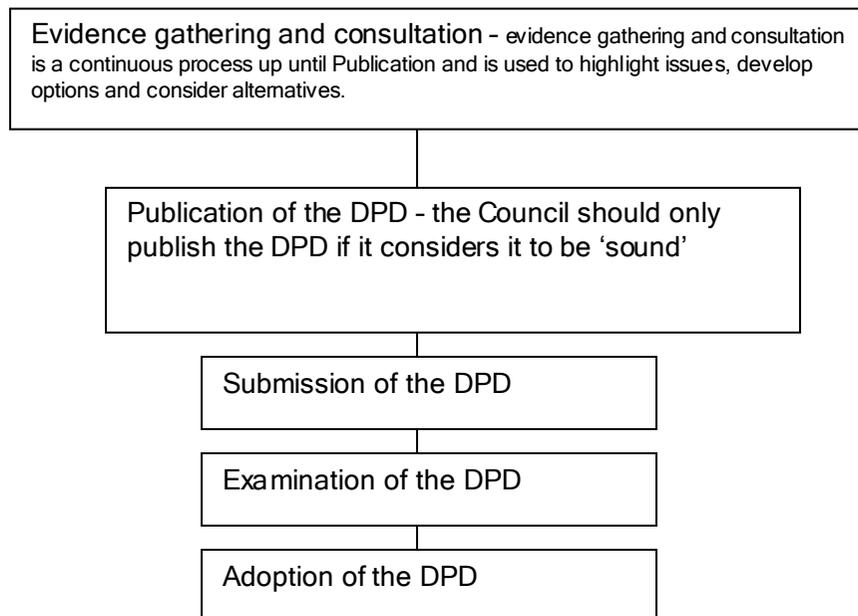
Table 1 - SCI content and Toolkit response

Regulations and PAS guidance regarding content of SCI. The SCI should set out:	Toolkit response
When in the plan preparation process your community will have the opportunity to participate	Toolkit will be an opportunity for community participation, state when the toolkit will be used.
The approaches by which people can expect to be informed, consulted or involved	Toolkit provides a clear framework for how people will be involved, state who could be involved in the toolkit
How you will feed the outputs from engagement activities into the development of documents	Toolkit will demonstrate a clear community driven approach to policy development, explain how toolkit is to be used
How and when your community can receive information about progress or feedback on outcomes	State that results of toolkit will be fed back to community
A strategy that is neither too prescriptive nor too general, which will ensure it is effective but retains an appropriate level of flexibility to be responsive to evolving local needs	Toolkit can be used as part of a strategy and can be adapted to meet local need
A combination of engagement methods (involving different levels of interaction) to ensure that activities will meet a broad range of individuals' needs and expectations (refer to section three)	Toolkit can be used to demonstrate one of the methods
A robust approach to managing information, such as how you will manage stakeholder databases, share information with other departments and organisations and manage data protection commitments	Toolkit is a robust method of information gathering that will provide a consistent approach
Details of how your LPA intends to build the community's capacity to contribute (including raising awareness, building understanding, connecting people to the key issues and empowering certain communities who may not traditionally be involved).	Toolkit is an ideal mechanism to achieve these aspirations
Details of how your LPA intends to build trust and confidence in engagement processes; facilitating more meaningful, ongoing relationships with your stakeholders.	Toolkit can be used at different stages, each building on the previous stages of work, demonstrating how involvement is valued, explain how toolkit is to be used

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December 2008

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LPAs should be looking to review their SCI now, so this is the perfect opportunity to include the toolkit within the commitments towards community participation. Inclusion of the Toolkit in an SCI will meet the requirements of guidance for the preparation of SCI, and provide certainty to the community but also show to an Inspector at Examination, that community engagement is at the heart of the strategy and that by using the toolkit the LPA is already complying with its SCI.

Using the toolkit in the preparation of a Development Plan Document

The following section sets out how the toolkit can be used in the preparation of a DPD, using the Core Strategy as an example. It shows how the toolkit could be used as both a mechanism for evidence gathering at the beginning of the Plan preparation and then as a means for testing options and alternatives to demonstrate a sound understanding of the implications of the preferred spatial strategy. The diagram below sets out the main stages in producing a DPD such as the Core Strategy. As stated in paragraph 4.4 there is now greater flexibility for LPAs in how they undertake their consultation as the formal stages of consultation prior to the draft Submission have now been removed.

Diagram 2 - Key stages in plan making

Evidence gathering and consultation – evidence gathering and consultation is a continuous process up until Publication and is used to highlight issues, develop options and consider alternatives.

Publication of the DPD - the Council should only publish the DPD if it considers it to be 'sound'

Submission of the DPD

Examination of the DPD

Adoption of the DPD

However there is still a requirement to fully consult and engage with stakeholders and the community prior to the publication of the draft Submission DPD. The toolkit is to be used in the first stage in plan preparation i.e. evidence gathering and consultation.

In preparing a Core Strategy an LPA will have to address four key components in the evidence gathering and consultation stage. These are:

- Vision – sets out how the area and the places within it should develop

- Strategic objectives – focuses on the key issues to be addressed

- Delivery strategy – sets out how much development is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered.

- Manage and monitor – clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy

For each of these components the LPA will need to demonstrate that they have fully 'justified' their decision through participation, research/factfinding and consideration of alternatives.

The toolkit will provide the evidence base for the justification of all these main components. It will be used at two main stages in plan preparation:

- Early evidence gathering and analysis. Toolkit will be used to provide evidence at the beginning of the plan preparation process to help identify issues and provide an early indication of a possible vision and strategic objectives

- Policy development and options testing. Toolkit will be used to help develop policy, especially the delivery strategy to help ensure that communities are meeting government objectives towards sustainability especially in relation to the considerations of alternative options

Stage 1 – Early evidence gathering for the preparation of the Core Strategy

PPS 12 advocates a robust and credible evidence base (para 4.36). It states that the evidence base should contain two elements
- participation – evidence of the views of the local community and others who have a stake in the future of the area
- research/fact-finding – evidence that the choices made by the plan are backed up by the background facts.

In terms of community engagement Paragraph 4.20 states:

"The production of core strategies should follow the government's principles for community engagement in planning. Involvement should be:

- appropriate to the level of planning from the outset – leading to a sense of ownership of local policy decisions
- continuous – part of ongoing programme, not a one-off event, with clearly articulated opportunities for continuing involvement
- transparent and accessible – using methods appropriate to the communities concerned planned – as an integral part of the process for making plans."

The Government advocates 'front loading' the plan preparation process. The term 'front loading' refers to the idea that if strong emphasis is placed upon work at the early stages of the plan making process, later stages will run more smoothly. This involves a LPA ensuring a robust evidence base is collected. It also requires the early and effective involvement of key delivery stakeholders and the community. This should ensure that there are fewer objections to the plan, or issues arising at a late stage.

Front loading also offers people and organisations an opportunity to influence plan content by sharing their knowledge and views with planners. Where consensus is difficult to achieve, front loading allows the maximum opportunity for participants to understand each others' positions and to negotiate.

This means that any issues are clearly understood by the time documents are subject to examination. While this increases the workload in the early stages of plan making, overall it should increase the efficiency of the process and the quality of plans a LPA produces.

The toolkit is an ideal mechanism to allow LPA to achieve the objectives set out in PPS12. The toolkit is a transparent process which can be undertaken with communities to help define the level of sustainability in their settlements and what actions need to be taken forward to help them move towards a more sustainable future. Its use of background data, obtained from reliable and widely accepted sources and the potential for community participation provides a robust and credible evidence base which can be used to help inform policy.

The key to meeting the objectives of PPS12 is to prepare the toolkit in partnership with the local community and at the earliest opportunity. The LPA should already have prepared their SCI which will provide general guidance regarding how to involve the local community in the LDF process and importantly will help to identify and ensure all groups within the community are involved. If the LPA is revising their SCI, then the toolkit should have been included as one of its commitments to community engagement, with clear guidance as to when, which and how people can be involved in its use. The resulting evidence from the application of

the toolkit will need to be accompanied with a statement setting out how the local community was involved and how any differences of opinion between different groups were resolved.

At this stage the toolkit is only intended to be used as an initial part of the evidence gathering process and should be considered in much the same way as for example data regarding population. It will provide the base line necessary to help build the spatial context to allow an LPA to understand its area and how the villages and towns function and interrelate with each other. It will also help the LPA in their early visioning work whether for the district as a whole or for individual areas and settlements. PPS 12 (para 4.2) states that visions should be informed by an analysis of the characteristics of the area and the key issues and challenges they face. The toolkit will enable the LPA to identify these issues and challenges at an early stage in the process and gain an understanding on how the community view these issues, which is an important part of the front loading process.

It is important to note that although it may seem an onerous task to analyse all the settlements within a LPA area, the LPA should be collecting most of this data already as part of their plan preparation. The toolkit should not result in any additional work. It is a means to help make sense of the data and to provide an opportunity for local community input and ownership of the plan making process. It is envisaged that the LPA would collate the facts and figures element of the toolkit and the local community would provide the more local information with joint discussion (possibly aided by a facilitator) with the LPA.

LPAs will be required to make judgments regarding which settlement to include within other areas of work, such as the SHLAA or a retail study, that contribute to the evidence base for the LDF. The toolkit can help to provide a basis for this judgement by identifying local and strategic issues and the potential level of impact on sustainability which may result from further or no development.

Stage 2 – Policy Development and Options Testing

The Government requires LPAs to base policy on an understanding of the needs of their area. The needs of the area arise primarily from the people who live and work in them, but also from the built and natural environment that contributes to the individual character of any place. However the Government also requires LPAs to deliver housing growth to meet national targets set out in Regional Spatial Strategies.

The national planning policy approach to creating sustainable settlements and development in villages and rural areas is set out in Planning Policy Statements, particularly Planning Policy Statement 1: Sustainable Development (PPS1), Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) and Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (PPS7).

Guidance within Planning Guidance 13: Transport (PPG13) and Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (PPS25) will also be an important consideration as issues relating to travel and flood risk should be taken into account when creating sustainable communities and identifying locations for development.

Key guidance within the above documents includes:

- In preparing spatial plans LPA should set a clear vision for the future pattern of development, considering the needs and problems of the communities in their areas and how they interact, and relate them to the use and development of land. (e.g. PPS1 para 32)
- Most new development should be directed to existing towns and cities to help maximise accessibility to employment and services by walking, cycling and public transport (e.g. PPS1 para 27(vi), PPS3 para 31, PPG13 para 6, and PPS7 para 1(ii))
- Within rural areas, most new development should be focused in or near to local service centres. (e.g. PPS3 para 31, PPS7 para 3, and PPG13 para 6)
- There is a need to provide housing in villages in order to enhance or maintain their sustainability, while assisting people to live near their work and benefit from key services (e.g. PPS 3 para 31).
- Any new building development in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated for development, should be strictly controlled - as the government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its landscape character, heritage, wildlife and recreational opportunities.

To address these requirements LPAs have traditionally established settlement hierarchies as a fundamental pre-requisite to identifying the level and distribution of housing growth. They have determined the level and density of new development considered acceptable for each level within the hierarchy, and from this, the possible development combinations, that could realistically meet the housing and employment requirements for the district, as set out in their Regional guidance.

The South West Regional Spatial Strategy (Proposed Changes) sets out settlement types through three Development policies to guide the scale and location of development. Whilst Development Policy A (Development at SSCTs) identifies specific cities and towns, which are the primary focus for development in the South West, Development Policy B (Development at Market and Coastal Towns) and Development Policy C (Development at Small Towns and Villages) rely on a criteria based approach where the LPA will identify settlements that meet the criteria within their LDFs. The RSS requires LPA to base their proposals on sound

evidence regarding the role and characteristics of settlements as well as their functional relationships with surrounding areas and other settlements.

The toolkit has the potential to provide a more sophisticated approach to developing the spatial strategy used in conjunction with other evidence.

If the toolkit is to be used to help inform the spatial strategy and distribution of development, it should be clearly explained at the beginning of the process that the toolkit is just one part of the evidence that will inform the debate regarding distribution. Other factors such as land suitability and availability (identified for example within Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Employment Land Assessments) and housing need assessments will also need to be considered.

Having completed a baseline assessment of all the settlements in Stage 1, the toolkit can be reapplied to any settlements which are initially considered suitable for development. To assess the impact of development on settlements a judgement will need to be made regarding realistic distribution options, including the mix and type of housing, taking account of national and regional policy. The toolkit can be used to test these options, assess their likely impact on the future sustainability of the subject settlements (and others) and so help to find the most appropriate strategy to create sustainable communities.

The settlement will need to be reassessed assuming that the new development has been built, including any new or improved facilities or infrastructure. This may have the effect of making some settlements more or less sustainable. Where there is positive change to a settlement's sustainability then it may be appropriate to take this forward through the planning process. If the effect is negative i.e. the settlement is less sustainable with development then development might be resisted. Again the process should be open and transparent with full community participation.

The toolkit process will not only help identify the preferred option but also demonstrate how alternatives have been considered and the reasons for their rejection. The decision making process within the toolkit will have involved stakeholders and the wider community and therefore will have met the requirements for participation.

The LPA is required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). One of the features of the AMR is to track the effectiveness of planning policies. LPAs should include within their DPD, indicators by which the effectiveness of policies can be tested. The effectiveness is tested by including information that shows whether there are significant changes within the local area or the policy is not delivering sustainable communities. The toolkit can help to provide some of the baseline information on a settlement basis from which to test whether there has been change.