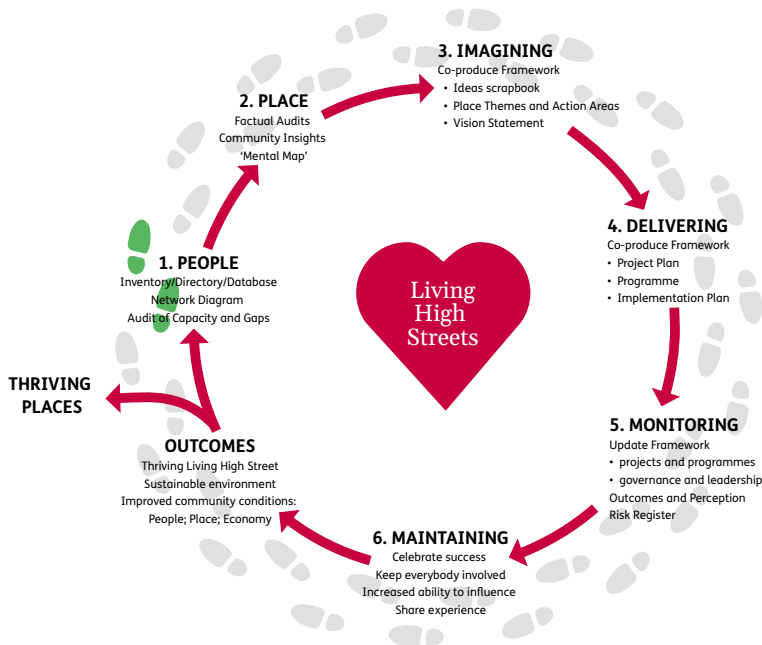


# Benefits of Using the Living High Streets Craft Kit

This participatory approach brings people together to consider their local high streets, tackle common issues and enable places and communities to thrive.

## It focuses on:

- Building an understanding of collective needs in a place
- Identifying and valuing the uniqueness of a place
- Imagining the future
- Translating ideas into actions
- Co-designing a Living High Streets Framework



## **Creating Community Placemakers: Local Action Groups**

This approach requires significant local commitment with Local Action Groups owning the process. Group Members should bring enthusiasm, local knowledge and a strong network. Each Group will reflect their local community. Members might include:

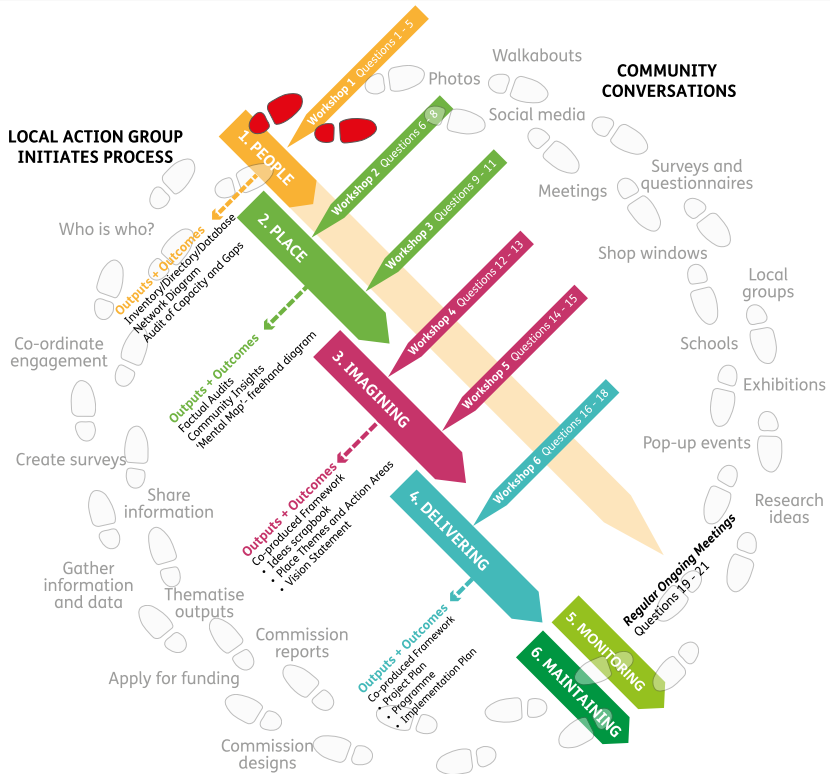
- Local community representatives
- Council, Department for Communities (DfC), Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), Department for Infrastructure (DfI)
- Chamber of Commerce, business representatives
- Local arts, culture and heritage representatives
- Community and voluntary organisations

Working together towards a common goal allows individuals to see things from others' perspectives, build trust, share skills, knowledge and experience. Growing local capacity reduces reliance on consultants, and local or central government to lead the delivery of change. Increasing confidence gives the community a voice to influence positive change. Meanwhile, local people develop a stronger connection to their high streets, foster a sense of belonging, have pride in their place and become skilled stewards.

## **Flexible but Guided Process**

The approach follows a Place Change Model with six themes and the twenty-one questions in the Craft Kit. Six workshops are recommended with two to three weeks in between and longer to prepare for the final workshop. The Group must encourage wide participation at workshops.

Facilitated working sessions are required with the Group between the workshops to collate information, identify gaps, interpret ideas and plan for the next workshop.



## Authentic and Sustainable Change: Frameworks

The co-designed Framework will reflect outputs from the process, illustrating the uniqueness of the place and its community. The timescale to deliver a Framework depends on the scale and complexity of the place and the capacity of the Group. A working estimate is between six to twelve months. When drafting a programme, carefully consider the balance between keeping momentum and managing resources.

Monitoring change and maintaining efforts allows new people to become involved and incorporate new ideas, reflecting the changing nature of places and communities.

The Framework provides clear actionable steps for the Group, community and delivery partners to take responsibility for. Because the Actions are co-designed, there is a buy-in to an agreed way forward.

## Placemaking Facilitators

Each Group should be supported by skilled facilitators to guide the process, not develop design solutions. They need to be placemaking experts, have community engagement skills and the ability to guide balanced conversations. They should have an independent voice and could come from a variety of organisations.

- A Member of the Group could have the skills required, and this should be harnessed and supported.
- Many staff in local Councils, DfC Regeneration, Community and Voluntary sector, NIHE and others have experience and skills that could be availed of to use the Craft Kit.
- There could be a role for third level education.
- Placemaking consultants could be appointed as facilitators, however it is critical the Group must have a clear sense of ownership and control over the co-design process to grow their capacity and empowers them to affect change and take action.

## Craft Kit and Starter Pack

The Craft Kit can be downloaded <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/publications/mag-living-high-streets-craft-kit>

Download the Starter Pack **MAG Living High Streets - Starter pack | Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk)** It provides additional guidance and practical tools to assist others to use the Living High Streets Craft Kit.

MAG Secretariat provides administrative support and can be contacted at: [MAGsecretariat@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:MAGsecretariat@communities-ni.gov.uk) By telephone: **028 9051 5063**



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