

Starting a Community Group

6. Feasibility Studies

The main purpose of a feasibility study is to consider all the factors associated with a group and determine if the investment of time, resources and money will help the group achieve what it set out to do.

A Feasibility study considers all the costs, investment and resources required to set up a group, it can also:

- Set out clear direction and aims for the future
- Look at the best organisational structure for your group
- Consider internal and external factors that could affect the group
- Identify possible risks and develop plans for dealing with them
- Gain further evidence for need of group
- Offer comment on the impact the group may have on the community, local economy and environment
- Suggest ideas for long-term development

Although feasibility studies are preliminary investigations they can be very detailed, forming the foundation of funding applications and strategic/operational plans. They can be undertaken by consultants or by the Steering Group. However, if your group is small it may be a relatively simple document that is only a couple of pages long.

Your feasibility study should start with an overview detailing your community profile, the background of the group and how need for it has been identified. This should be supported by desk based research and the outcomes of community consultations you have undertaken to show you have engaged with your community and have support for the new group.

If there are specific activities the group want to undertake the feasibility study should outline objectives, how they will be run, how they provide community benefit and how success will be measured.

The Feasibility Study should also detail how the group will be set-up and run including:

- Potential development costs i.e. buildings, equipment, insurance, solicitor fees, registration fees and consultant fees, etc.
- Projections for income and expenditure including potential running costs related to the scale of expected demand, including staff, rates, rent and insurance, equipment and materials, etc.
- How the group/activities will be financed and any potential funding sources that have been identified.

- how the group will be managed and who will be responsible for what including the groups legal structure, day-to-day management, reporting procedures, policies,
- If there are any specific applications to submit e.g. for planning.
- What legal requirements there are?
- How you intend to market your project to potential users

The completed feasibility study will enable the Steering group to determine if the investment of time, resources and money will enable group do what it has set out to do in a sustainable manner. It will also highlight any potential problems such as unrealistic expectations, high costs, and lack of funding options.

If the feasibility study concludes that the group or project is viable, you can use it as the basis to write a business plan, and/or funding applications.

[See Community Toolkit section Developing and Writing Plans for more information](#)

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