

# A A guide to guidance

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## A guide to advice – finding your way through the local labyrinth

**A.1** For community groups local structures can look opaque. They may be highly motivated to work in their neighbourhoods and communities, but still feel frustrated in finding their way to where the decisions are made and the resources allocated which might enable them to translate their intentions into practical outcomes that really benefit the people they want to work with.

**A.2** This note sets out a list of publications which are designed to help local groups. In some cases the organisations publishing the guides are themselves a source of information more generally. If knowledge is power, these guides are about empowerment – building the capacity of local groups to get involved in an informed and intelligent way and to make the system ‘work for them’ in terms of access to resources.

**A.3** The **Urban Forum** (see [www.urbanforum.org.uk](http://www.urbanforum.org.uk)) is a national umbrella organisation for the community sector (not only urban) in England. Its publications are almost always free to download and are specifically designed to offer simple, accessible information. Key publications are:

- How Your Council Works: A Handy Guide for Community Groups
- The LSP Guide (third edition)
- The Handy Guide to Planning

**A.4** The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) is the national voice of local third sector infrastructure in England. It has been closely involved in supporting voluntary and community sector organisations in getting involved in Local Area Agreements (LAAs). These are a main source of funding at the local level. They have published:

- What are local area agreements?
- LAAs – what’s it got to do with me?
- Getting involved in LAAs

**A.5** These can be found at [www.navca.org.uk/publications/laas/](http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/laas/) . CLG provides an online database of local priorities relating to LAAs at [www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk](http://www.localpriorities.communities.gov.uk)

**A.6** The main faith-based organisation involved in this kind of support is the Faith-based Regeneration Network (FbRN). Key FbRN publications which can be found at [www.fbrn.org.uk/publications](http://www.fbrn.org.uk/publications) are:

- Tools for Regeneration: Practical Advice for Faith Communities
- Keeping It Together: a toolkit for faith-based community development practitioners

**A.7** The Church Urban Fund has published a number of relevant guides over the years. The most recent is “Believing in local action” [www.cuf.org.uk/Believing\\_in\\_Local\\_Action.aspx](http://www.cuf.org.uk/Believing_in_Local_Action.aspx) . “Building on faith” [www.cuf.org.uk/page23752912.aspx](http://www.cuf.org.uk/page23752912.aspx) deals specifically with faith buildings, though it is now a little old.

**A.8** On developing buildings as community assets, the Development Trusts Association (DTA), offers advice and consultancy. It has also published a number of very useful guides, in particular:

- To have and to hold – provides a broad range of information, resources and contacts that you can use to develop a land or building project that is an asset for your organisation and local community.
- It is worth looking at their webpages on community assets too. Importantly DTA has a regionalised structure, as well as a central office in London. See: [www.dta.org.uk](http://www.dta.org.uk)

**A.9** Although it is a little dated and is currently being revised, the Local Government Association’s ‘Faith and Community’ is still an important general source of information and advice on local government/faith community relations. It can no longer be downloaded from the LGA website, but copies can be obtained from the Faith Engagement team at CLG, and a short summary is available from:

- [www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/assets/\\_files/documents/dec\\_07/faith\\_\\_1196948925\\_4\\_The\\_changing\\_role\\_of\\_the\\_chu.pdf](http://www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/assets/_files/documents/dec_07/faith__1196948925_4_The_changing_role_of_the_chu.pdf)

**A.10** Other general guidance which gives important information about the local context is available on the CLG website. The most relevant are probably:

- Preparing community strategies See: [www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localGovernment/preparingcommunitystrategies](http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localGovernment/preparingcommunitystrategies)
- The Well Being Power See: [www.communities.gov.uk/localGovernment/localregional/localcommunity/wellbeingpower/](http://www.communities.gov.uk/localGovernment/localregional/localcommunity/wellbeingpower/)

**A.11** It could be argued that much of the above relates predominantly to an urban or suburban context. The organisation which perhaps offers the best resources in ‘translating’ all of these policies and programmes directly to a rural setting is Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). This has a section on community assets, with pages dedicated specifically to churches. The CofE has already worked with ACRE in this field and there is a link to the Churchcare website from ACRE’s website. There may be scope for further development of this linkage. See: [www.acre.org.uk/communityassets\\_index.html](http://www.acre.org.uk/communityassets_index.html)