

Knowledge: 'Six key 'bottom-up' techniques

Listed below are six of the most interesting, unusual, or effective types of bottom-up community development. These types of approaches give citizens more power, through a variety of methods. They represent some of the subtler and more resident-led types of engagement, where the role of the council is primarily as enabler. Take a look through and explore whether any of them might help with building capacity through engagement in your council:

- **Asset-based community development (ABCD):** This is about identifying what a community has to offer rather than just what it needs. The 'assets' in question include people, associations and institutions. Once they have been identified, the idea is to get them working together for the benefit of the community. See the [ABCD institute website](#) for more on this.
- **Neighbourhood planning legislation:** Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to shape their neighbourhood. It came into force following the Localism Act of 2011. It's not a legal requirement, but a right which communities can choose to use. In the case of [Queen's Park Community Council](#), the development of neighbourhood planning led to the establishment of a new micro-council. See Neighbourhood Planning legislation online [here](#).
- **Appreciative inquiry:** A method for studying and changing communities by asking people what is working well, analysing why it is, and then finding ways to do more of it. The idea is that when people are properly involved in planned change, they won't require incentives to go along with it. Council staff can use this positive approach to start from the point of what's going right in communities. See [Appreciative Inquiry Commons](#) for more on this.
- **Crowdsourcing:** Crowdsourcing is getting many people involved in solving a problem. In the business world that might mean sourcing enough money on Kickstarter to develop a product. In community development, it often takes the form of sharing petitions, such as [38 Degrees](#), [Spacehive](#) and [Change.org](#).
- **Citizens UK:** Citizens UK organises communities to act together so that they are included in the decisions that affect them. It does this through capacity building. Its focus is on developing leadership capacity, so that its members can better engage with decisions and hold decision-makers to account. See [Citizens UK website](#) for more on this.

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- **Parishing:** This is the process in which councils and local communities decide to establish a parish council, which is the lowest tier of local government in England. It used only to be possible for the Secretary of State for Local Government to enable this. Since 2007, district councils, unitary councils and London borough councils have had the power, following community governance reviews, to establish a parish or town council for themselves. This usually reflects a decision by the community to take the initiative.

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