



**Friends of  
the Earth**

# How to: campaign strategise

**Having a campaign strategy makes campaigning easier. It takes a little time to devise but once done it will increase your chances of success. Local Groups Development Co-ordinator Tom Kenward explains what to do**



This pull-out is aimed at doing something that, it has to be said, is often not done. Even more rarely is it done consistently and thoroughly. But the way to develop an effective and realistic campaign strategy is to keep it focused and planned. The plan should increase your chances of success and identify the most effective course of action to take. In real life nothing is straightforward – situations change rapidly and campaign plans need to reflect this.



**Follow these  
three steps for  
a brilliant  
campaign plan**



## **Scope (what is going on?)**

It is amazing how easy it is to start a campaign before being clear about what you want to achieve. You also need to consider if the goalposts are likely to move. It is so easy to get sucked in and before you know it you are in a complicated campaign maze. Scoping makes campaigning simpler. It is the first stage in getting a map of the maze in order to lay down that crucial piece of string before you set off down the path...

This is likely to include:

- understanding the basics
- finding out what decision-making processes you need to connect with (eg the local planning system)
- who else is already working on the issue and in what way
- the sort of campaign approach you anticipate using.

# 2 ▶

## Aims (what do you want to achieve?)

Having a well thought-out aim is crucial for getting to where you want to be; get your aim clear and make sure that everyone in your group agrees that it is right. An aim does not need to be a long, complicated statement; in fact it is better if it is a short and simple sentence, eg "We want to stop the road being built".

“ Last year we planned a local campaign on energy. The plan helped us to identify what was achievable in our locality, what we wanted from the campaign, how we would get it and who would do what specifically to get there. I'd never done this sort of thing before but it was surprisingly easy to get into and very useful. We'll be doing another campaign plan this year.

Mary Finch, Oxford Friends of the Earth

# 3 ▶

## Objectives (what needs to happen on the way?)

Objectives help groups get down to the tangible detail of action. Using a SMART approach (which stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-specific) can make what might feel like a truly mammoth journey into a series of small, manageable steps.

<b>Specific</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> More recycling in area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lobby council to set up a recycling scheme
<b>Measurable</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mmm...less waste produced?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Provide 500 households with doorstep recycling
<b>Achievable</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hard to say without being specific	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This has been successful before
<b>Realistic</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I think we could do this	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I know we can do this
<b>Time-specific</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This will takes ages	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> We can do this in one year.



“ A campaign plan was crucial for a local group I helped near Newbury. Through identifying the aims, targets, media and events strategy and communication mechanisms to make a strong campaign, the plan helped to make sure that we got real leverage and were effective with only five or six active people. We won, and the site is a greenfield site to this day, not a great big Sainsbury's depot.

Adrian Foster-Fletcher, Newbury Friends of the Earth

## Detail helps you win

Once aims and objectives are agreed, move on to the detail of how your campaign will work. Having assembled the basics through the three steps above, the following are key pieces of the jigsaw which will enable you to plan a complete strategy for your campaign. Time spent getting this right will enable you to achieve the change you want.

### Target practice

Your campaign will be aiming to change something. For this to happen someone will need to do something different. So you will need to put pressure on the people who need to be doing that different thing. Your target might be manufacturers, industry, producers, companies/multinationals, retailers or politicians at local, regional, national or European level. You will also need to identify your campaign audience – these will be the people who you want to get on-side in order to bring more pressure to bear upon the decision-makers. Your audience could range from an aggrieved local community to a broad cross-section of shoppers, local businesses, voters and shareholders.

### What are you going to say and how?

Once you have targets and an audience what do you want to tell them? Your messages need to be short, sharp and simple and must connect fully with your aims and objectives; they should fit into one sentence. In order to maintain a cohesive campaign, limit the number of campaign messages to two or three. Make sure that there is a positive angle to your message, eg “An incinerator is the wrong approach, recycling and waste reduction is the future and it is achievable.” Secondly how are you going to say it or show it in a powerful way? There are many ways that you can communicate your messages, some of the obvious ones being on a webpage, via a newsletter, email, posters, postcards, leaflets, public meetings, stalls, stunts and events and the media.

### What do you know and what do you need to find out?

Fact-finding will be an ongoing area of work throughout the campaign as you go through different phases. The main problem is knowing what is going to be useful; if your aims and objectives are clear this will be easier. You could look at this exercise as your detailed surveying of the territory, including an analysis of where difficulties might lie and how you will respond to these. This is one area where we can help you in particular – Friends of the

Earth has a huge range of briefings and fact sheets on many different topics, and staff may be able to point you towards the most relevant. Other approaches may include talking to other local groups or a trawl through a web search engine like Google.

### Get networked – locally and further afield

Who else is doing something similar to you – either on your specific campaign or on a similar one elsewhere? Maybe there are other groups working in your locality who you can work with? You could also think about what your Friends of the Earth group can bring to the campaign in particular.



**Networking with your allies to share knowledge and ideas is crucial, but do not be afraid to maintain your own distinct position from them if appropriate** – as long as you are co-ordinated (and preferable not completely contradictory!) in your approaches. Coming at the campaign from different angles is likely to add power to your collective punch.

### Tactics – what are you actually going to do?

Which tactics you choose will be influenced by the issue, the timing, who your target is, what stage of the campaign you are at, how much pressure you want to apply and the channels open to you. Some examples include: consumer pressure, stunts, demonstrations, street theatre, shareholder actions, public meetings/debates, engaging with processes such as public inquiries and consultations, MP lobbying street stalls, petitions, letter writing, email actions, web actions, using celebrities for media work, exposés, exhibitions, publishing research/reports and peaceful protest.

## Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

Do a SWOT analysis – to analyse the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats to your campaign.

Perhaps there is a **weakness** in your argument at present – do you have an alternative proposal? Maybe there is the **threat** of being labelled as alarmist if you choose a shocking message. Perhaps one of your **strengths** is the truly excellent technical sub-group which knows so much more than the supposed experts you are opposing. Maybe there are local elections only months away, providing the perfect **opportunity** to get councillors on-side or voted out.

## Getting on the front page

Part of your campaign plan should be forging good relations with your local papers and radio stations so that they will take your stories and use them accurately. Note possible stages in the campaign which could get media coverage. Friends of the Earth offers regular media training.



**Make use of pictures** – it is harder for the media to manipulate a well composed photo of a campaign stunt.

## Keeping an eye on the time

It is always worth sitting down and mapping out the timeline of your campaign. What is likely to happen when, what are the immovable deadlines, when are the times that are likely to be busiest or quietest in the campaign. When will you need not yet acquired resources? What are the things which absolutely must get done for the campaign to stay on track, and by when?

## Finding the cash and the people

Start from a strong positive assessment, “What do we need for the campaign to work?” It’s not just money – you will need resources including people with time and skills, equipment, sympathetic individuals who run businesses such as printers and sign-makers plus prop designers, artists, etc.



**Ask around** – it may help you get items cheaply or free.

## Checking back to your strategy timetable and objectives

When and how will you judge whether the campaign has been successful? Or if you are on the right path to success? Do you need to rethink? For example: if your council has taken some of your concerns on board but instead of scrapping the road scheme, is just changing the route, re-assess your campaign plan.



**Set aside times when you will review, evaluate and monitor your campaign plan** – do not leave it until the campaign is over.

## “We won!”

Make time to celebrate a campaign success – they’re significant milestones, and marking them can re-energise your campaign. Winning campaigns can become infectious, and it has got to be one of the best ways of attracting new members to your group. Do not forget to tell us so that we can feature you in *Change your world*.



**Be prepared to win, even when you think it is very unlikely** – be ready with a pre-prepared victory press release in case a decision goes your way.

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## Get more fantastic campaign information

Available from [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk) materials like template press releases or posters can be downloaded from [www.foe.co.uk/reource/local/guidelines](http://www.foe.co.uk/reource/local/guidelines). Also have a look at *How to win – a guide to successful community campaigning*. All groups should have a copy. If you can not find your group’s copy, contact Claudia Sartori for a replacement on 020 7566 1677.

Copies of the two books below can be ordered from 020 7490 1555.

- *How to win: campaign against incinerators*, £2.50
- *How to win: saving wildlife sites*, £2.50

Back issues of pullouts can be ordered from Claudia on 020 7566 1677. Choose from:

- How to: use the media
  - How to: fundraise
  - How to: get networking
  - How to: hold a public meeting
  - How to: take your campaign to the streets
  - How to: put on great events.
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