

# Campaign Playbook: How to Oppose Local Development Effectively

## 1. Get Organised Early

- Form a core group with a clear purpose.
  - Decide on structure (informal group, incorporate or (exceptionally) registered charity if your group has a charitable purpose).
  - Open a bank account (it takes ages)
  - Appoint a Chair to guide decisions and keep focus.
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## 2. Define Your Direction

- **Vision (1 sentence):** The future you want (realistic, motivating).  
*Example: "Protect the character of our community for future generations." "Secure a refusal of planning permission for the data centre at..."*
  - **Mission (2–3 sentences):** Why you exist and how you'll achieve the vision.  
*Example: "We oppose industrial style developments that damage our landscape and residential amenity. We will work constructively with all parties to find better solutions."*
  - **Values:** Decide how you want to be seen (e.g. respectful, transparent, positive, professional, country-loving etc).
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## 3. Set Strategic Goals

Choose a few focused goals. For example:

1. **Cohesion:** Represent local voices (e.g. Community Councils).
  2. **Awareness:** Inform residents and media about the issue and alternatives.
  3. **Lobbying:** Gain support from Councillors, MSPs/MPs, and government bodies e.g. NatureScot, HES, SEPA, SBC, etc).
  4. **Alliances:** Partner with NGOs, experts, and sympathetic organisations.
  5. **Public Campaigning:** Petitions, house-to-house, flyers, meetings, events, and social media.
  6. **Resources:** Build finance, skills (media + comms, planning law, landscape architect's expertise).
  7. Assess need for the development - is it needed/
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## 4. Build Credibility

- Be constructive – propose alternatives, or better solutions not just objections.

- Use evidence (planning rules, environmental impact, economic concerns).
  - Maintain a professional, respectful tone with all stakeholders.
  - Share updates openly with local population to build trust.
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## 5. Manage the Campaign

- **Communications:** Keep communities, politicians, and supporters informed. One person to do comms.
  - **Publicity:** Use social media, local press, and public meetings to build visibility.
  - **Finance:** Membership fees, donations, grants – plan early for costs (legal, expert advice, publicity). It's a long haul, and you don't need all the money on day 1
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## 6. Stay Flexible

- Review strategy regularly. Circumstances change – update your approach.
  - Use **SWOT analysis**:
    - *Strengths* – What you do well (e.g. motivated group, expert knowledge).
    - *Weaknesses* – Gaps in skills/resources.
    - *Opportunities* – Political support, public opinion, media interest.
    - *Threats* – Policy shifts, developer lobbying, resource fatigue.
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## 7. Remember the Essentials

- Strategy is about *thinking before acting*.
  - Keep it simple, clear, and realistic.
  - Campaign success comes from persistence, alliances, and credibility – not just protests.
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## Checklist for New Groups

- Small, committed team formed
  - Vision written (1 line)
  - Mission agreed (2–3 lines)
  - Values agreed
  - 3–6 strategic goals set
  - Plan for publicity, lobbying, and finance
  - Regular reviews built in
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