



Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit Guidance Note 5

Neighbourhood Planning: Developing a Vision and Objectives

South Cambridgeshire District Council

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This document includes hyperlinks to a range of websites, and the hyperlinks can be accessed using the published version of this document, which is available to view via: www.scams.gov.uk/npguidance. Every effort has been made to ensure that these hyperlinks are up-to-date, however as websites change these hyperlinks can become invalid.

Herefordshire Council has kindly given permission for us to provide links to their guidance on neighbourhood planning.

Huntingdonshire District Council has kindly allowed us to take inspiration and wording from their Neighbourhood Planning Guidance.

If you have any queries relating to this document, please contact us via neighbourhood.planning@scams.gov.uk or 01954 713183.

Vision

A community wishing to develop a neighbourhood plan will first need a clear idea of what it is that they want to achieve, and how they are going to achieve their goals.

Before proceeding down the road of policy writing and evidence gathering there will be a need for community consultation to ensure that you develop a **shared vision** for the neighbourhood area. This is vital – a neighbourhood plan needs to go through a referendum and a ‘yes’ vote is unlikely if local people disagree about what, how and why a vision is being proposed.

Top Tips

Look at ‘made’ neighbourhood plans for examples of what a vision should look like.

What is a ‘vision’?

A vision is your optimal mid to long-term goal describing what you want your neighbourhood to look like at the end of the plan period. It is often written in the future tense as a statement of what ‘will be’.

For example:

- *In 2031, Sutton St. Nicholas will be a sustainable and thriving local community, with the distinctive local environment of the village and surrounding countryside robustly and successfully safeguarded with new development in place to meet requirements for housing, jobs and local services.* [Sutton St Nicholas Neighbourhood Plan, submission document].
- *To preserve and enhance the quality of life, environmental attributes and economic growth of the neighbourhood and to ensure the infrastructure is in place to create a sustainable community for future generations through the empowerment of local people.* [Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan] The vision is then broken down into themes, such as Community, District Centre, Education, and Retail, and the neighbourhood plan states how the village will be in 2027 for each of these themes.

In setting the vision for the plan, consideration should be given to the likely social, environmental and physical trends affecting the area over the period of the plan (10-15 years, for example). The **vision** should be **aspirational as well as grounded** in evidence and data – quantitative (facts and figures about the area) as well as qualitative (community views about what’s important).

A vision might focus on the village or area’s ‘unique selling point’ – why is the area a distinctive, desirable place to live – and what untapped potential is there for buildings and land that could be revitalised.

Other Resources

Sample Plans:

- [Sutton St Nicholas Neighbourhood Plan](#) (Herefordshire)
- [Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan](#) (Suffolk)

Sample Consultation Statement:

- [Sutton St Nicholas, Herefordshire](#)

Locality:

- [Locality Roadmap](#) pages 28 & 40
- [How to Development a Vision and Objectives](#)

Top Tip

A vision statement should be distinct and relevant to the neighbourhood area. Being distinctive will help you work out what policies you need in the neighbourhood plan to deliver your vision. Try not to have a vision that could apply anywhere.

How to develop the vision?

You may already have a vision in an existing community led plan or parish plan, that you could use as a starting point for the vision for your neighbourhood plan.

Alternatively, you could carry out a community exercise or series of consultations with your community to develop your vision, for example:

1. Undertake an exercise involving members of the community to create a list of existing local characteristics, amenities etc. that people like and also what they want to see more of. e.g. a love it / hate it exercise.
2. Draft a set of statements based on these characteristics, e.g. "our parish will be a sustainable local community", and undertake a second public consultation exercise to prioritise them so that you can see what people value most and what's most important. Since these statements will be based on the love it/hate it exercise, they will form the basis of the vision. Each statement can be re-worded if need be, but the basic idea is for people in the community to develop an idea of what the area will look like/be like in 10-20 years' time and to decide for themselves what is important.
3. Draft a refined vision based on the result and consult local people on it again. Take (and act on) feedback so that the result accurately reflects people's views and aspirations. These three stages could form one exercise or event.

Your objectives and policies will emerge from the vision and should link back to it. The policies are the 'how' to achieve the 'what' of the vision. If they do not all point back to the vision, either the vision needs refining (which is fine if the resultant vision is shared by everyone), or the policy is not quite right.

Other Resources

Locality:

- [Locality Roadmap](#) pages 28 & 40
- [How to Development a Vision and Objectives](#)

Herefordshire Council Guidance note 6
[Developing a vision and objectives](#)

Objectives

Objectives set out what you want to achieve in order to help make the vision a reality.

There is usually more than one objective to address each element of your vision; these are the broad statements of intent that link back to the elements of your vision and outline the steps you will take to realise it.

Overarching objectives will be worded to address the area's strengths (what you want to continue or see more of) and weaknesses (what you want the neighbourhood plan to address).

Every policy you go on to write should relate back to at least an objective, which in turn helps realise your vision. This link from vision to objectives and policies has been described as a 'golden thread' running through a plan, which especially for more complex plans, can be a great help to readers to understand its justification. But don't forget, **a neighbourhood plan is about land-use policies only**.

Keep objectives clear and concise so it's easy to see how the resultant policy was reached.

For example, in the Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan:

It sets out objectives for the village green:

Objective 2 – *“to protect and realise the potential of the Village Green as part of the District Centre”*

Objective 2a – *“to protect and retain the open space at the heart of the village as a key community asset”*

Objective 2b – *“to maintain and enhance the open space at the heart of the village in a way that is commensurate with its designation as a public open space”*

And a detailed policy then follows on from these objectives:

Policy RNPP2: *The Rendlesham District Centre Local Green Space will not be built on other than in very special circumstances because of its close proximity and its special and local character to the community it serves. This protected area will be maintained and enhanced and, where appropriate, funds derived from development elsewhere in Rendlesham should support this. The Local Green Space will be retained as a community open space.*

Other Resources

Sample Plans: [Rendlesham Neighbourhood Plan \(Suffolk\)](#)

Community Involvement

Community involvement from the outset is of paramount importance in forming the plan's vision and objectives. Use as many methods as possible of contacting local stakeholders whose input will be vital:

- Written surveys / questionnaires
- Social media, maps, pictures and visual aids
- Door knocking
- Public meetings
- Piggy-back on local events
- Stalls
- Incentivise people to take part

Consult local people on your draft to ensure you have accurately captured their views, heard their voice and reflected their aspirations as far as possible.

Other Resources

[SCDC Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit:](#)

Community Engagement and Neighbourhood Plans