Neighbourhood Planning Framework

Vision

All Neighbourhood Plan's need vision. A neighbourhood plan should set out a vision for the future of the neighbourhood in question. That vision can be detailed, or it can be general, depending on what the community in question wants. Many have chosen to encapsulate their vision in a vision statement – some have not. A single vision statement is not necessary. A vision statement is a very local thing. If it is thought to be useful, it should reflect the culture and character as will as the aspirations of the community as a whole.

Examples of vision statements from recent draft neighbourhood plans are provided in appendix 3.

The practice of deriving a vision is often called 'visioning'. As a neighbourhood planning group you have been visioning almost from the outset of the neighbourhood plan process. Understanding more about the area and its people and what is needed and wanted is a major contributor to the visioning process.

A vision should reflect a desired end state that is consistent with the values and overall priorities of the community.

For the idealists and futurists amongst you there is a case for developing an overall vision as a starting point for the planning process. Appendix 2 sets out a method that you may wish to consider applying if you take the 'vision first' route – but there are several others, which can be found on the internet.

For the more pragmatic, this paper also offers the option to arrive at a vision statement by using the evidence gathered and the views and aspirations of the community as expressed through recent surveys.

Aims and Objectives

To help realise your vision and to give the neighbourhood plan a framework it is important to have a set of aims. Quite often the route to an agreed vision statement is through a set of draft aims.

The aims are the plan's goals and present a summary of what you want to realise via the neighbourhood plan. The objectives are what you will do to achieve them. The aims should be strategic in nature and not too specific. The objectives can tend towards the specific and if possible be measurable.

In setting the aims for the plan, it is vital to consider both aspiration and reality for how the area should be in 15 years time and the likely social, environmental and physical tends on the area over that period. They should be based on the evidence, consultation feedback and your own knowledge of the area. Aims can be designed to address the area's weaknesses, build on its strengths and deal with any other issues identified.

The objectives are derived from the aims. The objectives set out what the plan and its policies intend to achieve. Being more specific the objectives are often the aspect of the neighbourhood planning framework that attracts most attention and comment from the community.

You are not obliged to set out a vision, aims and objectives for your Plan. They do help however in a several ways:
- Demonstrating how the evidence and community consultation has been interpreted
- Offering something focussed and pertinent for the community to react to and endorse before plan-making and policy-writing commences
- Provide a checklist against which draft policies can be tested

An Approach to the Task

What follows is a method of arriving at a set of draft aims and objectives that can be done largely by the NP Steering Group itself in a workshop session. We would encourage you to set aside two to three hours to reflect on everything you've learned and to apply this method, or something similar, to the task of drafting the vision, aims and objectives of the your neighbourhood plan.

The method we propose has the following basic steps:

Workshop (members of the Steering Group and invited others)

1. Your consultant provides a set of key findings and messages from the various surveys, consultations and the evidence base – these will be topic-based and provided in advance
2. With the help of your consultant the workshop develops a set of draft aims for each topic that reflect and respond to the key findings and messages
3. The workshop develops a series of draft objectives for each topic it believes will help achieve the aims
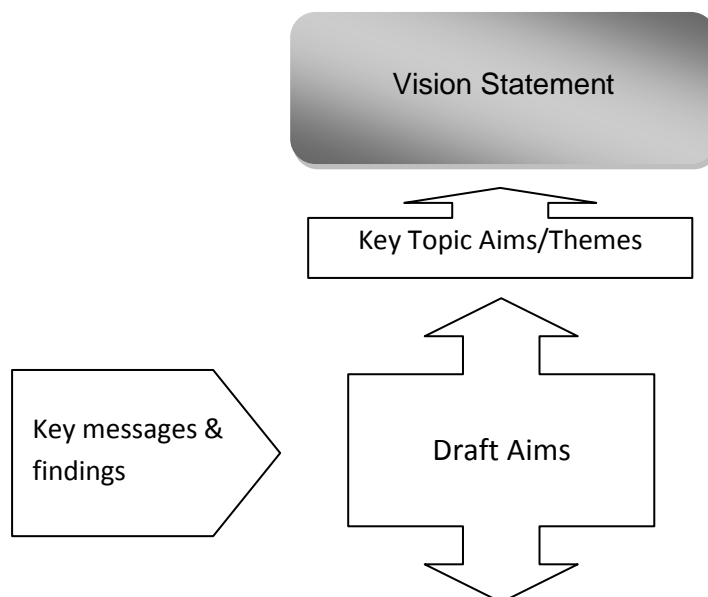   (Appendix 1 sets out the workshop method in two sessions)

Post Workshop

4. Your consultant refines the draft aims and objectives
5. Your consultant prepares and recommends a key aim for each topic
6. Members of the Steering Group considers the outputs and any additions they would wish to make

At your next Steering Group meeting:

7. The Steering Group constructs or reviews its vision statement for the Neighbourhood Plan based on the key aims
8. A draft vision, and a set of draft aims and objectives are agreed and referred to the Parish Council prior to consultation with the community at large

As consultants we can help with preparing the final version of the draft aims and objectives. We are happy to review the outputs from your endeavours, and if required, amend them to make them planning-ready. However, it has to be your vision statement.

Vision Statement

Key Topic Aims/Themes

Key messages & findings

Draft Aims

Topic Draft Objectives					
Topic A	Topic B	Topic C	Topic D	Topic E	Topic F

Appendix A - *Creating a Common Agenda*

What key aims do you think ought to be encapsulated in a vision statement for our area?

Aims are the changes we are trying to achieve….

- think strategically
- see the big picture
- seek agreement
- be prepared to compromise

Topics	What we found – Key messages from the Evidence	What we have been told Key responses from the 2014 consultation	*Our Aims?*
Natural Environment			
Energy & Low Carbon			
Built & Historic Environment			
Population & Housing			
Economy & Employment			
Transport & Accessibility			
Community Facilities & Services			
Waste & Minerals			

What objectives ought to be set in the Neighbourhood Plan in order to help achieve these aims between now and 2031?

Objectives are the methods by which we plan to achieve our aims and realise our Vision……

Topics	Key issues from Work Session 1	*draft Objectives*
Natural Environment		
Energy & Low Carbon		
Built & Historic Environment		
Population & Housing		
Economy & Employment		
Transport & Accessibility		
Community Facilities & Services		
Waste & Minerals		

Exploring Sustainable Communities
How to Conduct a "Visioning" Exercise

Ask group members what kind of community they would like to live in. Explain that the object is to collect as many ideas as possible - nothing is too small, too big, or too crazy for consideration. This technique has been used in real-life cities with great success, as they will learn later.

"Why bother with visions of the future when today's problems seem overwhelming?" *Both problem solving and visioning are important; they are quite different approaches that should be used in combination.*

Visioning generates a common goal, hope, and encouragement; offers a possibility for fundamental change; gives people a sense of control; gives a group something to move toward; and generates creative thinking and passion.

With *problem solving,* a group can become mired in technical details and political problems and may even disagree on how to define the problem. Problem solving, although useful, rarely results in any really fundamental change.

A *problem* is something *negative* to move *away from,* whereas a *vision* is something *positive* to move *toward.*

In moving toward a vision, you will be likely to encounter a number of problems to solve.

- Ask, "What would your community be like if you had the power to make it any way you wanted? Where would people live? Where would they work? How would they get to their schools and workplaces? On their days off, where would they go and what would they do? What kind of a house would you live in? Where would you shop? How would you get there? What kind of energy would be used for heating? For transportation? For travel? Where would it come from? How would the air, water, and environment be kept clean?"

- Break into small groups to brainstorm what an ideal community would be like in 10 to 20 years. Encourage group members to be specific. As a guide, the group leaders might use the categories used to describe change in your community. The categories are people, housing, schools, job/businesses, health care, crime, transportation, amenities, environment, and public involvement.

- Return to the large group. Ask one member from each group to make one positive, declarative one-sentence statement about how the community will be in the future. Make the statement in the present tense. Examples: There are lots of bike trails. You can walk at night in safety. Transportation is fast and cheap.

- Write these statements on a piece of newsprint that all can see and that can be saved for revision later. Continue around the room, and then repeat the sequence with another member of each group. Continue until time is short or ideas are being repeated. Then ask if there are any other hot ideas. (Note: you may have to rephrase ideas into simple declartive present-tense sentences. Ask the speaker if you have retained the gist.)

Note that in multicultural groups, you may get different visions based on different cultural backgrounds. Be alert to statements that may have cultural, ethnic, or even gender roots. *The goal is not to find the majority opinion, but to arrive at a vision that reflects the thinking of the diverse groups in any classroom or community.*

- Ask group members to highlight some of the major differences between now and the future they have created. Most will initially focus on population size and technology change, but also try to elicit changes in attitudes and values regarding the community or surrounding environment, in concepts of what constitutes "progress," and in standard of living and quality of life. (Standard of living refers to economic success and comfort; quality of life refers to more intangible satisfaction with life in general.)

- Ask group members to put themselves in the place of a resident 50 years ago and to try to imagine the likelihood of some of these changes. Were some changes predictable? Were others outside the realm of prediction? Remind group members that the changes of the next 50 years will probably be just as astounding. Things that seem impossible now, may become commonplace to their grandchildren.

- Spend about 20 minutes trying to group elements of the vision into some common themes. Find the areas of consensus, and identify any areas of disagreement. Focus on the areas of some consensus. Create a new sheet listing items that have strong support from either the entire class or a subgroup. Be careful to nurture ideas that may come from an ethnic or gender perspective even though they may not initially gain the support of the entire class. Vision statements can include ideas that pertain to only one segment of the community, such as, women can walk around at night without being afraid; the community has developed a cultural centre open to all with an exhibit of local art; and students can walk to school without interference by drug dealers. The common vision statement can be presented in a graphic form. It can include photos, maps, and other images. Or it can be a list of ideas. Simply articulating a vision can be a powerful learning tool.

In the real world, of course, having a vision is only a first step. An old proverb says:

A vision without a plan is just a dream.
A plan without a vision is just drudgery.
But a vision with a plan can change the world.

Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statements

Rolleston NP

The vision of Rolleston in the future is a vibrant community, physically separate from Burton on Trent. It will continue to be an attractive village with its heart based around Burnside. The vision is of a distinct, vibrant community and not a mere dormitory settlement for surrounding towns and cities.

Ripley NP

Vision

The overwhelming view from local people is that they value the individual character of the town and surrounding area which is considered to set it apart from the other towns in Amber Valley and neighbouring parts of Derbyshire.

Local people and businesses have indicated a desire to increase and improve the range of facilities and services available in the area and for the township to be more self-sufficient.

There is a strong preference for the use of previously developed sites for new development, with a corresponding minimal reliance on Green-field sites, with a particular emphasis on the avoidance of the use of land within the Green Belt if possible.

The community has indicated that the character of the area is founded upon the important open spaces within and around Ripley town itself, and the countryside in the wider township. This includes several heritage features of great significance which should be afforded appropriate protection.

Sandwell

A growing family neighbourhood

Confident and secure in its Workplaces, playspaces, and homes

… Rooted in the heritage of its founding industries and diverse people;

… Realising the opportunities of its strategic location;

… Developing its unique assets – the hospital, park and people; and

… Looking forward to a shared sustainable future

Thame

To maintain its market town character.

…… maintaining Thame's character as a market town provides a set of principles for delivering the vision. These are that Thame must:

- continue to feel 'compact'
- continue to have a close relationship with the open countryside around it
- retain its markets
- continue to act as a centre for the surrounding area, not just residents
- remain attractive to residents and visitors.

Freshwater

Vision Statement

To ensure Freshwater Parish's spatial planning policies create an environment where:

- existing and new businesses have the opportunity to grow and prosper in the future
- Freshwater remains the commercial hub within the West Wight
- the local economy is able to grow, offering residents better paid full time employment opportunities
- the future growth of Freshwater's economy is centred on a diverse range of business activities, but with an emphasis on the following key sectors: Retail - Tourism - Professional Services - Construction and Manufacturing

Community Vision Statement

To retain, sustain and enhance our community provision by ensuring that it meets the needs of residents and visitors both now and in the future. Any plan needs to balance the village feel of Freshwater with new developments to meet future requirements

Felpham

Value, protect and promote the unique parish of Felpham, by respecting its heritage, appreciating its current community and being aspirational when planning its future and therefore ensuring "Felpham in particular is the sweetest spot on earth"(William Blake 1801)

Bembridge Parish

To maintain and enhance the unique self contained character of Bembridge Village whilst permitting small scale sustainable growth that is in line with the needs and wishes of the community

Earls Barton

Earls Barton continues to be a thriving community delivering better facilities and services for growing population whilst retaining the key features of Earl Barton Life

Swale

The vision for Faversham Creek is for the area to play an important part in the regeneration of the town particularly by sustaining and building on maritime activities and enhancing its attractiveness as a destination.

Slaugham

In 2031, the Parish of Slaugham will remain a beautiful part of the High Weald AONB. Its population will have grown to around 3,000, almost all of who will live in one of its four distinct villages.
This growth will have reinforced the role of Handcross as the main service centre of the parish, in terms of local shops and community facilities. Pease Pottage will have become a more self-sustaining community with a new village centre. Warninglid and Slaugham will have retained their distinctive identities as small rural villages.
The range of housing types and tenures built since 2011 will have significantly reduced the local housing need for affordable homes and met the local demand for the types of homes suited to older people and young families. The demand of local people to build their own homes and stay in the parish will also have been met.
A greater supply of housing, access to superfast broadband services and the use of local enterprise support facilities will together have meant that the local working population is less dependent on commuting than in 2011.
Development and change in the parish will have avoided its most sensitive landscapes, habitats and cherished open spaces, which will have stronger protection for the enjoyment of the local community. The design of new buildings will have met the challenge of low carbon regulations but in keeping with the High Weald vernacular.

Bardsley

Our vision is to maintain the essential character of the Parish as an attractive rural community, within easy reach of the city environs, yet quite separate and distinct. Whilst maintaining this character we wish to ensure that our community remains sustainable and that our residents are given every opportunity to contribute to the vitality of the community, have the opportunity to work, learn and live in the community and continue to live healthy, safe and satisfying lives.

Barwick and Scholes

To welcome new development that meets local needs, reflecting and conserving the existing rural character of the local communities as well as preserving its historic heritage, views and access to the countryside.

Kirdford

To ensure that the special characteristics of the village and Parish area, including their rural feel, historic buildings and relationship with the surrounding countryside, are enhanced and protected. Whilst at the same time recognising that change is inevitable and can be desirable when there is positive planning to support sustainable development.