

Neighbourhood Planning
Guidance Note 6

Developing a Vision and Objectives

April 2013 - Revised June 2015



Preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan may seem like a daunting task at the outset. A series of guidance notes are available to assist the preparation of your Neighbourhood Development Plan.

This guidance note has been prepared to help you create a 'vision and objectives' for your area.

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Introduction

Once your 'Neighbourhood Area' has been designated, developing a vision and objectives for your area with the community will be an important first stage in drafting the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

The **vision** will be an overarching statement, or series of statements, describing your area in 15-20 years time. It may cover what the area will look like, what facilities will be provided and what it will be like to live and work in. The **objectives** will be more specific and will set out what you want to achieve in order to help make the 'vision' a reality. For each element of the vision there may be one or more objectives, depending on the different priorities the community have highlighted. Detailed policies and actions can then follow on from these objectives.

For Example:

Part of the **Vision** may state that there will *'be accessible, high quality areas of green space that allow for recreation and social interaction amongst all age groups.'*

An **Objective**, leading from this may be *'to seek the provision of an informal, outdoor recreation space, within easy walking distance from the centre of the settlement.'*

Remember, the vision, objectives and resultant policies must be in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan - Core Strategy.

The vision and objectives identified should meet the '**SMART**' criteria:

S = Specific
M = Measurable
A = Attainable (achievable)
R = Realistic/relevant
T = Time related

Gather together relevant information

In working towards the vision and objectives, the steering group should get a clear picture of the community's characteristics and understand

whether there are any current or emerging proposals that could affect the area.

Community profiling - Involves gathering statistical data on population size, household size, incomes and family composition. This helps to build up a picture of your area today.

Identifying assets - Undertake a stock take of all of the area's physical assets and their condition and location. This could include village halls, playing fields, sports facilities, footpaths and health facilities, units of affordable housing, privated rented. Identifying any possibilities with the facilities or any shortfall could help to inform your vision and objectives.

Reviewing existing plans and strategies - It will be important to gather any information from existing plans, strategies or studies that have a bearing on your area. It is important to try and understand what implications these plans have for the community. These could include:

1. Previous Community Led Plans developed in the area (e.g. Parish Plans, Village Design Statements);
2. Herefordshire Council's planning documents (Local Plan, emerging Local Development Framework documents and representations on those documents made by Parish/Town Council or other local community groups);
3. Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan;
4. Herefordshire Council Sustainable Community Strategy;
5. Housing Strategy, Housing Needs Assessments, Empty Property Strategy.

N.B. Another useful tool for identifying local issues is the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Scoping Report, a document that your support officer produces shortly after the designation of your Neighbourhood Area. Further details on SEA can be found in guidance note 9a, but they do contain lots of useful information that may not be recorded in the documents mentioned above and other primary sources.

Developing a Vision & Objectives

Discussions with stakeholders - These initial discussions can help to establish contact and identify any other aspirations for the area that have not yet been developed into a plan or strategy. The stakeholders could include: local community organisations; local businesses; local landowners; officers from public agencies and service providers as appropriate (for example. Natural England, Environment Agency, Historic England, Welsh Water).

Theme groups - It is a good idea to set up theme groups, each of which will consider a different issue in your area. To establish an initial set of objectives all you need to do is to ask each group to come up with a number of recommendations based on the information that has been gathered. For example the employment theme group might come up with two simple recommendations to make it easier to get a job in your area, whilst the housing theme group might recommend a certain level of new homes.

If all theme groups come up with some recommendations you will soon have a list of potential policies for your area. However some of these might be potentially conflicting. For example, one group may wish to protect the landscape setting of the village, whilst another may have identified the need for 20 new homes. A single set of policies should be identified that seek to achieve the aspirations of the community and which do not conflict with each other.

One way to arrive at a single list of policies is to form a sub-committee to consider all of the recommendations arising from each theme group and decide how to bring them together into the Neighbourhood Development Plan. The job of this sub-committee will be to consider each set of recommendations and find a way to ensure that there are no conflicts or contradictions, for example by finding a housing site that does not impact on the landscape setting of the village.

Identify the area's strengths and weaknesses

Another important factor in developing the vision and objectives is to find out what people consider to be the community's current strengths and weaknesses. This can be undertaken by engaging with residents and businesses using different approaches such as surveys, community

events, focus groups or discussions. Please refer to guidance note 12 regarding community engagement techniques.

Check the draft vision and objectives with the local community

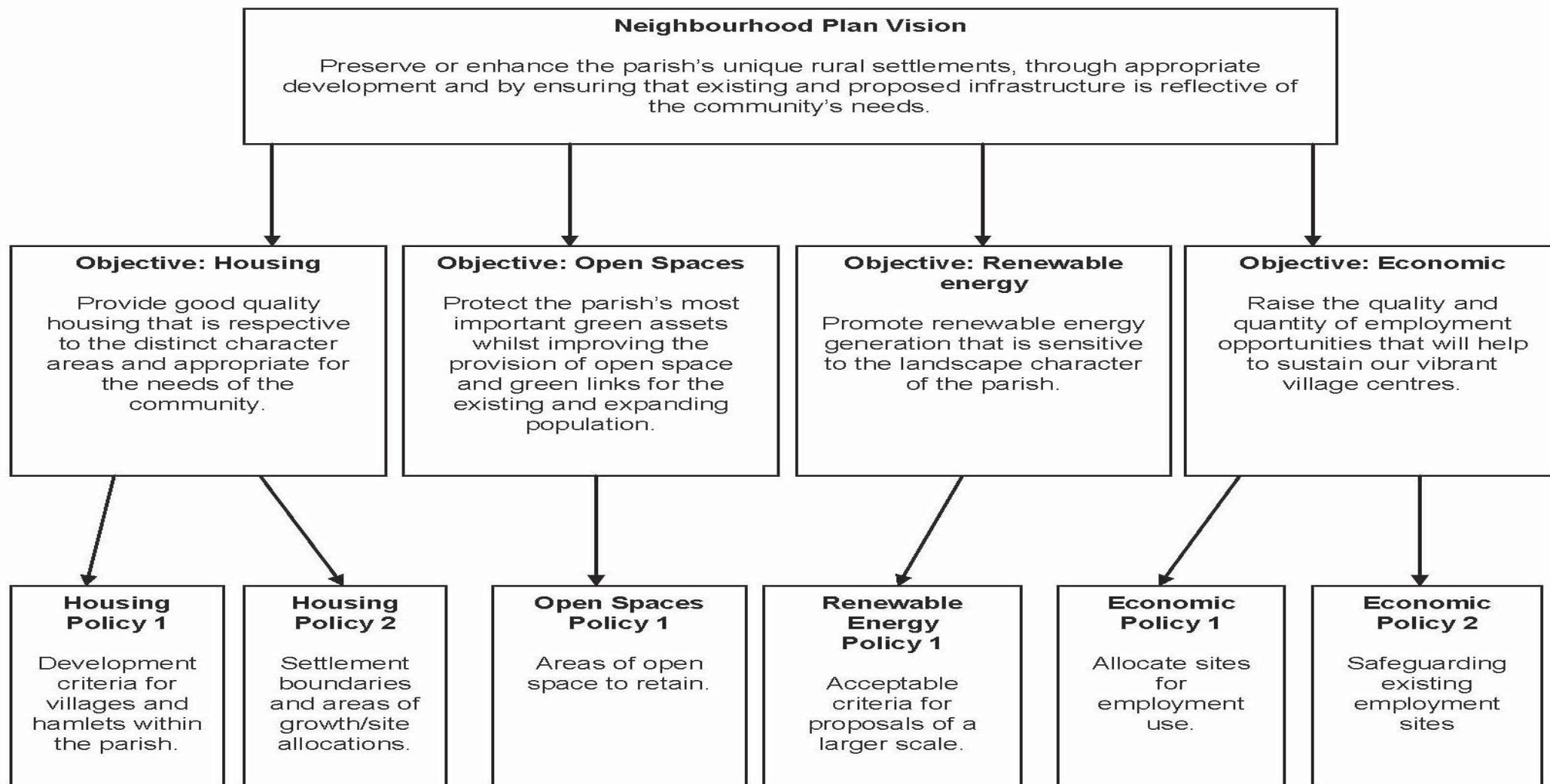
Your Neighbourhood Development Plan must be a genuine community document in which the whole community have had the opportunity in developing. If there is community support of the plan this will assist in the successful passage of the plan through the examination and local referendum.

It is important to ensure that the community supports the draft vision and objectives for the area as this will set out the overall aims of the plan and remit in which policies will emerge. There are many ways in which this endorsement can be sought, including: making copies available for public distribution and asking for comments, meeting with community groups to gain feedback, holding public meetings or drop in events or publishing the information in the local newsletter/ magazine. Following this consultation, any necessary amendments should be made to the vision and objectives prior to developing the detailed content of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Developing a Vision & Objectives

Appendix 1

An example flow chart of how your Vision and Objectives will help to develop your policies.



Neighbourhood Planning guidance notes available:

Deciding to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan

1. Which is the right tool for your parish
2. What is a Neighbourhood Development Plan
3. Getting started
4. A guide to procedures
5. Funding

Plan Production

6. Developing a Vision and Objectives
7. Generating options
8. Writing planning policies
9. Environmental Assessment
10. Evidence base and information requirements
11. Implementation and Monitoring
12. Best practice community engagement techniques
13. Statutory consultees
14. Writing a consultation statement
15. Planning and other legislation
16. Web enabling your plan
17. Using OS based mapping
18. Glossary of planning terms

Topics

19. Sustainable Water Management in Herefordshire
20. Guide to settlement boundaries
21. Guide to site assessment and choosing allocation sites
22. Meeting your housing requirements
23. Conservation issues
24. Recreational areas
25. Renewable energy
26. Transport issues
27. Community Infrastructure Levy

Additional Guidance

28. Setting up a steering group
29. Creating a questionnaire
30. Community facilities
31. Conformity with the Local Plan (Core Strategy)
32. Examinations of Neighbourhood Development Plans
33. Guide to Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendums
34. Tourism
35. Basic Conditions
36. Your plan - Contributing to sustainable development