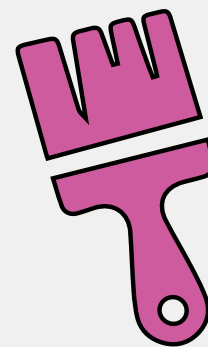




02

Developing your themes, vision and objectives

Developing your themes, vision and objectives



By now, you should have:

- ✓ Applied for sources of funding and support.
- ✓ Gathered general information about your Neighbourhood Area.
- ✓ Asked your community what they want to achieve in their area.

You are now ready to identify priority themes for your area and start developing a vision and objectives.

What are your plan themes?

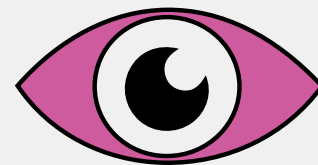
Themes are not limited but might include:

- housing
- business and employment
- rural economy and agriculture
- retail and leisure
- tourism
- community facilities
- green and blue infrastructure
- transportation
- infrastructure
- design
- climate change, flooding and renewable energy
- natural environment
- historic environment

Your plan might cover a range of themes, or it might just focus on one or two. The scope of your plan will vary depending on your geographical area, local circumstances, evidence gathering and the outcomes of community engagement.

Our emerging guidance note **What themes can a Neighbourhood Plan cover and how can you plan add local value?** may serve as a useful tool when progressing your plan in the early stages.

What is the vision?



The vision will be an overarching statement (figure 1) or series of statements (figure 2) describing your area over the next 10, 15, 20 years. It may cover, what your area will look like, what facilities will be provided and what it will be like to live and work in. Imagine your vision as a postcard from the future.

Walking around your neighbourhood area, looking at photographs (e.g. undertaking a photographic survey) and visiting other places are some activities that can help prompt this debate.

You should consider:

- What is currently good about your area?
- What is bad about your area?
- What it could be like in the future?

Each vision will be unique because each place and community is unique. Ultimately, your vision will be a product of the input and feedback received from the community engagement undertaken along the way.

Additional information on what a vision is and some suggestions on how to develop one is available in the **Council's Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide¹**.

Figure 1: Example of single vision statement

VISION

In [year], [place name] will be a sustainable, thriving and attractive community, where the distinctive characteristics of the village(s) and surrounding countryside are safeguarded through appropriate new development and by ensuring the existing and proposed infrastructure reflects the needs and wishes of the community.

Figure 2: Example of multiple themed vision statement

Housing



In [insert year], [insert place] will have well designed new housing with adequate car parking and landscaping.

Green infrastructure



By [insert year], there will be accessible, high quality areas of green space that allow for recreation and social interaction amongst all age groups.

¹This toolkit is in the process of being produced. It will be on the Wiltshire Council (neighbourhood planning) website as soon as it is available.



Community facilities

By [insert year], there will be a larger community building with enough space to accommodate a wide range of services and activities for all ages.



Retail and leisure

By [insert year], there will be a range of shops that will provide for people's daily needs. Those without cars will be able to easily access shops by foot, bike or mobility scooter.

etc...

What are the objectives?

For each element of the vision, there may be one or more objectives, depending on the different priorities your community has highlighted. Your plan objectives will be more specific and will set out what you want to achieve to make the vision a reality (see figure 3).

Remember, your Neighbourhood Plan should not duplicate and must be in general conformity with existing planning policies, guidance and legislation. The purpose of your plan is to add local value and provide a local steer on future development in your area.

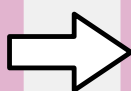
Figure 3: Example of a vision and objectives (and how they will help develop your policies)

VISION

In [year], [place name] will be a sustainable, thriving and attractive community, where the distinctive characteristics of the village(s) and surrounding countryside are safeguarded through appropriate new development and by ensuring the existing and proposed infrastructure reflects the needs and wishes of the community.

Objective: Housing growth

Provide good quality housing that respects the distinct character areas and meets the needs and wishes of the community



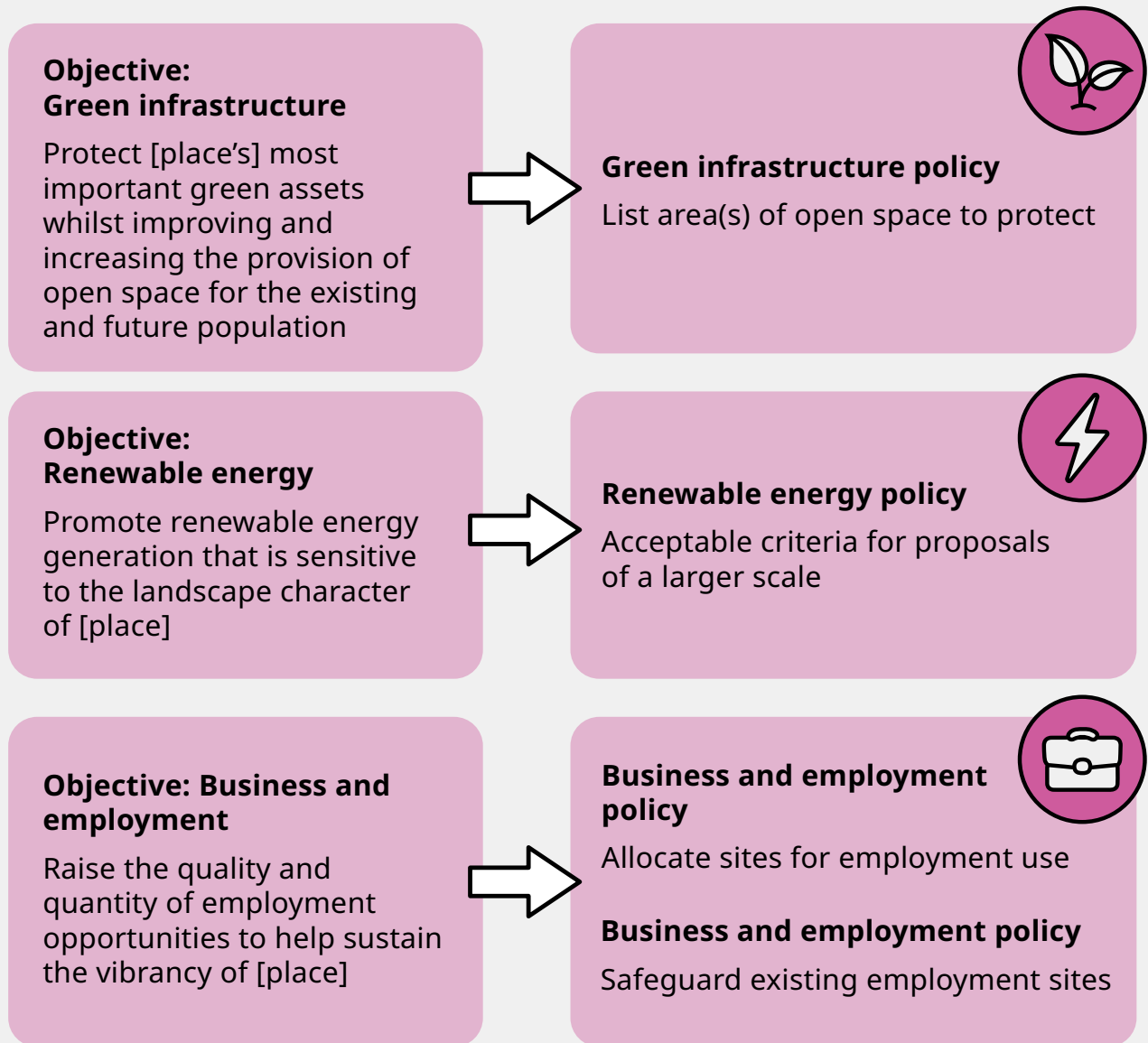
Housing policy

Development criteria/design principles/design code



Housing policy

Identify settlement boundaries and areas of growth/site allocations



How can you develop -your vision and objectives?

One way to develop your vision and objectives is to set up theme groups which will consider different issues in your area.

Ask each theme group to come up with a few recommendations based on the information that has already been gathered. For example, the housing group might identify misgivings in the current supply of new homes and come up with an objective to remedy these (e.g. by stipulating that new housing is high quality and respects the distinctive local character and/or heritage).

The green infrastructure group might come up with an objective to ensure everyone in the community has access to open space (e.g. by protecting, improving and/or increasing the provision of existing green space).

Once you have established your objectives you can start thinking about your potential policies (i.e. how you are going to deliver the objectives). However, you will need to be mindful of conflicts. For example, one group may wish to protect the landscape setting of the village, whilst another group may want to promote a site for housing or a large scale renewable energy scheme.

It is a good idea to form a sub-committee who can consider all the recommendations from each theme group and decide how to bring them all together into the Neighbourhood Plan. This should ensure that there are no conflicts or contradictions. For example, finding a development site that does not impact on the landscape setting of the village.

More information on developing your policies is available in our guidance note **Preparing the detailed content of your plan**.

Testing the draft vision and objectives with your community

To achieve its full potential your Neighbourhood Plan must be a genuine community document which the whole community has had the opportunity to develop. The overall aims of the plan, together with the evidence will provide a foundation for policies to emerge (see figure 3).

You might make copies of the vision and objectives available for public distribution and ask for comments, meet with community groups to gain feedback, hold public meetings or drop in events, or publish the information in a local newsletter/magazine.

The feedback received should inform subsequent versions of the vision and objectives before you develop the detailed content of the plan (the policies).

Make sure you keep a clear record of any consultations including when it took place, what type of consultation it was, who was consulted and what they said. You will need to record this in a Consultation Statement before you submit your plan to us. Our guidance note **Writing a Consultation Statement** offers more information on this.

Building your evidence base

You should have already built up a picture of your neighbourhood area by compiling general evidence at the beginning of the process. As your key themes, vision and objectives emerge, it should become clear what you need to collect more specific subject-based evidence on. Perhaps evidence is unavailable or maybe it exists but there needs to be a clearer focus on your neighbourhood area.



If you are planning to allocate sites for new development, including housing, employment, business use and leisure, you will need to evidence the need for such development and carry out a site assessment to show that the allocated sites are the most appropriate. Wiltshire's existing data, such as the Employment Land Review and Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) will help you build up the wider picture.

The SHELAA will give you an indication of sites being put forward by landowners/developers in their parish. You can also do a 'call for sites' through your community engagement work or carry out additional local housing needs assessments or business needs surveys to help you understand the demand for and type of development which is needed locally. In some instances Wiltshire Council may be able to assist you in undertaking a Rural Housing Needs Survey.

Support with understanding housing development need can be provided as Technical Support through Locality. This is available to groups facing more complex issues in developing their Neighbourhood Plan and is delivered free of charge to groups who qualify by meeting the eligibility criteria. See our guidance note on **Getting Funding and Support**.

If the design of buildings, places and/or spaces within your area is a key concern you may wish to set out design principles or develop a design code to influence the quality of new development in your area. Design codes can be prepared as standalone documents, but to have any weight in planning decisions, they need to be specifically referred to in the design policies in your Neighbourhood Plan. Our emerging Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide² will help you produce your own additional local or site specific design guidance as part of your Neighbourhood Plan.

²This toolkit is in the process of being produced. It will be on the Wiltshire Council (neighbourhood planning) website as soon as it is available.

Other new or more localised evidence may include things like:

- Survey of vacant shop units
- Audit of local community facilities/services/green spaces
- Vehicle/pedestrian counts
- Landscape/village character assessments
- Heritage assessments (e.g. identification of non-designated heritage assets)
- Habitat surveys

What you choose to collect evidence on will depend on what your plan is trying to achieve. Try to avoid an over-zealous approach as too much information could over burden your time and resources. Your evidence base needs to be proportionate to the size of your neighbourhood area and scope and detail of your Neighbourhood Plan. For instance, there is no point requesting a Rural Housing Needs Survey unless you are looking to establish whether there is a proven need for affordable housing in your area.

Locality's **Neighbourhood Plan's Roadmap** provides useful information on building an evidence base and the common sources of local evidence. Our emerging guidance note **What new evidence might we need to collect?** may also be a helpful resource.

