

Principle 1: Define a locally relevant spatial vision and objectives for the area

Guide Questions

- What is the broad philosophy of the plan? For example where is it pro-growth and if relevant where is it conservation-led?
- Does the vision reflect the broader context of the council and form a reasonable basis for plan objectives?
- Have there been early discussions with neighbouring authorities on the strategic context of the plan and fulfilling the demands of the duty to co-operate?

- 1.1 The local plan must contain a vision which should be aspirational but realistic. It should set out the intended character of the plan area, based on current trends and trajectory of key data such as that related to population and economy. Objectives should flow from the vision, establishing the way in which the plan area will deal with the identified critical issues. Together, these should be clear, realistic, locally distinctive and spatial in planning terms.
- 1.2 The vision and objectives should be based on a sound understanding of the form and function of the plan area. Community involvement should be central to developing the vision and also draw upon various other sources including past plans, sustainability work being undertaken alongside the plan and stakeholder involvement. In addition, under the duty to co-operate, the NPPF (paragraph 181) requires a continuous process of engagement with other relevant authorities from initial plan development through to implementation. Early engagement on issues of mutual importance and the objectives that relate to these should help to shape the plan.
- 1.3 Developing a vision for the local plan involves looking ahead to what your area will be like in 15-20 years' time, and may include some or all of the following elements:
 - A direction of travel as to how the plan area will evolve.
 - The general location of where development will take place and where it will not.
 - What the nature of development activity should be in key parts of the plan-area.
 - How levels and types of development will be accommodated, both within the short and long term, in specific areas, such as town centres, and in the most sustainable way.

- Reference to the wider context of the plan area, introducing the importance of links to and co- operation with neighbouring authorities.
- 1.4 Generalised aspirations, such as 'we want to be a first class place where people choose to live, work and visit' are not locally specific and don't communicate how a difference can be made through the plan. Using the evidence, including settlement studies and area profiles, and findings from engagement activities to develop a spatial vision will help avoid this. These questions may help to guide the evolution of the vision and test its validity:
- Does the vision reflect council and community priorities?
 - Does the vision describe your area as opposed to anywhere?
 - Do you get a clear sense of what the place will be like in 20 years time?
 - Can you translate this into planning policy and outcomes that can be delivered?
 - Is it clear where change will happen in economic, physical and social terms?
 - Is it concise and easy to understand?
 - How will you measure success of achieving the vision?
- 1.5 You may need to refine the spatial vision as the options for the local plan are developed and refined.
- 1.6 The objectives should flow from the critical issues you have identified and support the delivery of the spatial vision. A useful starting point is to specifically define the problems you are trying to solve. This will stem from quantitative data for example, pollution levels, housing need, and qualitative data for example, other council priorities, things that are important to communities. The objectives for what the plan should deliver should address these critical issues; these will be your strategic priorities for the area. Focus on these priorities; you don't need an objective for everything. For example, there is little need for an objective on tourism if the area is not one where tourism is important.
- 1.7 The number of objectives should be manageable in order to guide key areas of the plan development. About 10 to 20 strategic objectives is typical of most plans and you should be able to express your strategic objectives in fewer than 20 points. Your objectives should be locally specific and try to:
- identify how national policy influences your priorities and objectives.
 - reflect documents setting out wider corporate priorities and planning objectives of neighbouring areas where relevant.
 - explore the compatibility of plan objectives with wider sustainability objectives from your sustainability appraisal work.
- 1.8 When asking 'what is the plan going to achieve?' centred on high level objectives ('healthier, more prosperous, greener, safer') or more tangible objectives ('regeneration of the town centre capitalising on the tourism trade'), use your evidence to help establish a baseline for change. This

baseline evidence can then be used to help develop and test objectives and the options that flow from them.

Further Information

[PAS Guide to Strategic Planning and the Duty to Co-operate](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

No questions have been received on this topic yet. Do you have a question about defining your spatial vision or developing objectives?



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