



## Getting the Most from a PPN Community Wellbeing Vision

For it to be most effective the PPN's Vision for Community Wellbeing for This and Future Generations (Vision) several criteria need to be met:

- It needs to be generated through faithful application of a proven open and participatory process (*as presented in this toolkit*) which is supported by a Secretariat and Plenary that have a good understanding of the concept.
- Preparatory work needs to be done with external agencies, groups and Committees so that they are aware the Vision is being developed and are open to taking on board the relevant parts of it.
- Once developed, it needs to be carefully integrated into the operation of the PPN; linked clearly to the Strategic Plan and Work Programme, through training for reps as to how it informs their roles, used in assessment of performance and as a measure of progress.
- It needs to be kept front and centre as the focus for PPN work; revisited and reviewed regularly and linked to core PPN work

## What purpose does a Vision for Community Wellbeing serve for PPNs?

The guidelines for PPNs require that each develop a vision for community wellbeing at both Municipal District and County / city level. Having a robust Vision and the process of developing this is of immense value to PPNs who are tasked with:

- Facilitat[ing] the participation and representation of communities in a fair, equitable and transparent manner through the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sectors on decision making bodies;
- Strengthen[ing] the capacity of communities and of the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary groups to contribute positively to the community in which they reside/participate;
- Provid[ing] information relevant to the environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary sector and acts as a hub around which information is distributed and received.

As the Vision is developed, its potential uses will become increasingly apparent to those involved. An indication of the range of ways in which the Vision can be useful is presented below.

**Internally** (within the PPN), the Vision can:

- inform decision-making;
- form the foundation and focus of PPN work, informing Strategic and Annual Plans;
- guide and support PPN representatives;
- form the foundation from which Linkage or Thematic Groups can develop policies and positions in their areas of expertise;
- facilitate PPNs' ability to carry out required monitoring and evaluation of their activities and performance;
- provide an opportunity for member groups to engage with their PPN in a positive way.

**For the PPN and Member Groups**, the Vision can:

- Establish and strengthen relationships;
- Improve internal capacity for collaborative decision-making, in skills such as facilitation, harvesting and drafting, in development and execution of consultation and other processes;
- Encourage greater and more informed participation.

**Externally**, the Vision can

- form the basis of submissions and responses to consultations;
- facilitate the PPNs' ability to carry out required monitoring and evaluation of LA programmes;
- be a vehicle to communicate agreed community aspirations to regulators and administrative agencies.

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Given the potential value of the Vision in enabling the PPN to optimise its effectiveness, it is important to ensure that there is confidence in the process used to develop the Vision.

## Building real participation and engagement in the vision

The vision will be co-created by the member groups of the PPN, and to promote their participation, it is important to disseminate information about the process and how to access it as widely as possible, for as long as possible before the actual consultation process starts. This can happen via the PPN newsletter, all PPN events, social media, local press and radio. It also happens through conversations between the Vision team and others. It is particularly important to try and engage early with groups who are harder to reach. The quality of the final vision is dependent on the preparation work to ensure that it is indeed reflective of the full diversity of the membership;

## Disseminate and Raise Awareness of the Vision

Before the Vision is developed, the PPN should notify relevant structures and committees (such as municipal district meetings of elected members), SPCs and LCDCs that the PPN will wish to present its Vision to them once it is completed, and use any appropriate opportunity to present the agreed position of the member groups to those responsible for policies and plans that influence community wellbeing in any way.

The PPN should draw up a list of those it will circulate copies of the Vision to; all relevant agencies and key individuals. This can be by email or in hardcopy as appropriate, cost effective and to achieve most impact. The PPN should also ensure that the Vision can be clearly displayed on their website.

Once the Vision is adopted, the PPN should seek to publicise it and promote its content to all relevant audiences. This can be done for the Vision in its own right and by highlighting its use in submissions or presentations made on specific issues.

## Build on the Positive Experience and Engagement of Member Groups

Experience suggests that, if run well, the process of developing a PPN Vision for Community Wellbeing is extremely positive for those that engage. This allows the PPN to strengthen ties with and between member groups and encourage individuals that may be interested in playing a greater part, for example as a PPN rep or on the Secretariat.

Specific needs may be identified that the PPN may be able to meet for the benefit of both member groups and its own operation. For example, the wellbeing process highlights the importance of good facilitation. Skills training in this for representatives of member groups would build their internal capacity, but also allow establishment of a panel of facilitators that could be called on by the PPN and or member groups.

The process of developing the Vision also provides an excellent opportunity for discussion and development of strategic thinking.

## Start to Gather Data

As set out in the toolkit, once the Vision is adopted, the PPN should work on building data that it can use to inform and support its position, particularly any that is available at the relevant administrative unit (city/ county/ municipal district, etc.). All member groups, representatives and secretariat members should be encouraged to participate in contributing to the list of data sources and/ or data base. As data is acquired members can be alerted (in newsletters, emails and social media posts), so that they are aware of the resources available. Various initiatives can be used to introduce people to the data that's available and to how to use it effectively. This all increases the capacity of both the PPN and its member groups.

Guidance on data sources and data gathering can be found in the "Available Data Resource" document.

## Integrate the Vision into PPN operation



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Arguably the Vision gives the PPN its identity; setting out the shared position of all the PPN member organisations. As a result it should be made a big part of the PPN, who you are and what you do, closely linked to the Strategic Plan and Work Programme.

## Relationship between the PPN Vision and its Strategic Plan:

“Vision without action is merely a dream , Action without vision just passes the time.  
Vision with action can change the world.” *(Joel A. Barker)*

This quotation highlights the importance of having a guiding vision and points to the essential relationship between the PPN’s Vision and its Strategic Plan.

Linking the Vision to the Strategic Plan is important as the Strategic Plan is what helps to generate outcomes and ultimately supports delivery of the community’s aspirations. The Vision should inform Strategic Plan. While the Vision may not require any significant revision when it is revisited (*see below*), this provides a regular opportunity to also develop the new Strategic Plan so that it is informed by the Vision. Linking the two activities is done in light of current developments and issues, particularly on the political agenda. Scheduling reviews of the Vision with consultations for the Strategic Plan should not only avoid duplication of effort and save time, but also demonstrate to PPN members the connections between the Vision, Strategic Plan and Work Programme.

## Review the Vision

The Vision is a living document and it must be open to change depending on the needs in an area or community. This change can be incremental and does not need to involve a complete overhaul as many of the fundamental elements of the Vision are unlikely to change. However, if something has been missed or a need arises to rethink that part of it, this needs to be accommodated. It is not essential to fix a time for review, although it is useful to have a clear, regular cycle for review as it keeps the Vision central to the PPN’s activities. An outside limit of 6 years should certainly be set.

Since the Vision belongs to the Plenary (rather than the Secretariat), so the Plenary is the body that reviews and revises it. As the Vision is a new concept, over time member groups will develop a greater understanding of it (particularly if it is well integrated into the work of the PPN) and may perceive omissions or inadequacies. For this reason particularly, revisiting the Vision is important.

When scheduling reviews of the Vision, it is advisable to avoid the 5-year local authority cycle, so that the PPN’s Vision and position is clear and established ahead of local elections. Ideally, it should also be scheduled ahead of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 6-year cycle so that the outcomes of the Vision can feed into that.

In addition, revisiting the Vision should ideally be planned to coincide with the 3-year turnaround of PPN representatives on different committees and secretariat membership can be given some training in the re-confirmed/revised Vision. Revisiting the Vision, according to this proposed timing, in turn ensures that the Vision stays fresh in member groups minds and linked closely to the PPNs work. It is suggested that a limited review be undertaken after 3 years and a more complete revision after 6 years. (*see above for relationship with PPN Strategic Plan*).

While the Vision is unlikely to change drastically, there may be clear shifts in emphasis that need to be accommodated, etc. and these reviews are opportunities to explore these. It is likely that these reviews will take a similar amount of time as the original development of the Vision, but will generate increasingly sophisticated outputs from participating member groups as they become more skilled in the process.

In developing the Vision, member groups were asked to identify a long-term vision and it is important not to alienate people by implying that this needs to be re-worked unnecessarily. For this reason, reviews may be limited, particularly at the shorter intervals (say 3-yearly) to reduce the risk of losing integrity.

## Explain How the Vision Relates to the Work of PPN Reps / Linkage Groups



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The Vision is a high level aspirational document. It is important for PPN representatives, Linkage Groups and secretariat members to understand how it can provide guidance to them in their specific roles. Without additional support to interpret the content of the Vision and see its relevance to them, it is unlikely that it will be incorporated into the operation of the PPN as it ought to be. Consequently, PPNs are advised to run workshop or training events to familiarise reps with the Vision and to develop an appreciation of the different ways in which they need to use it to fulfil their responsibilities. Linkage groups can use the Vision as the starting place to develop policies and positions and to guide their representatives on specific themes. Any such positions should be “proofed” against the Vision to ensure coherence.

*NB It is not for the PPN to deliver all the aspirations, but representatives inputting on behalf of the PPN can contribute to steps to make the vision a reality.*

## Specific Actions

The following are examples of ways in which the PPNs where the pilot Visions were developed have already been putting them to use in just a few weeks since they were adopted.

- Got prior agreement to present to LCDC and MD LA meetings.
- Directly referenced in initiative and consultations, such as Healthy County/City initiative, walking and cycling strategies, Learning City initiative, cultural integration strategies, etc. (Explore all opportunities for synergies.)
- Met with partnership companies to discuss needs apparent from the Vision (existing deficits) and to link Leader funding to these.

In addition, the PPNs have also been able to track specific and detailed issues (& some more significant hopes) that were raised during the consultation and contacted the member groups concerned to link them into funding available in their specific areas of interest.

## Succession Planning

It is important to plan for turnover in PPN reps, secretariat and resource workers, to ensure that successors in all these positions are familiar with, and stay committed to, the Vision. The following actions will all help to make the Vision a living document for the PPN membership, maintain awareness and familiarity of it within and outside the PPN.

- Hold regular scheduled reviews/ opportunities to revisit the Vision.
- Ensure Strategic and Work Plans are clearly informed by the Vision.
- Establish links between the Vision and as many strategies and plans as possible.
- Link “successes” (developments that help deliver the Vision) back to the Vision document at plenaries, etc.
- Performance updates/reviews, where developments are considered against the measure of the Vision, identifying “wins” to illustrate its effectiveness.

In addition, the Vision should be seen as a foundation document in induction training for new resource workers, secretariat members and representatives, to ensure an understanding and familiarity with the Vision and how it is developed.

## Maintaining Integrity

The process of developing the Vision is seen as important for engaging groups and modelling positive consultation. However, it is important that the quality of execution across all PPNs can be assured. It is hoped that PPNs using this Toolkit will appreciate the need to follow the process faithfully in order to gain the potential benefits that stem from developing the resulting robust Vision for Community Wellbeing. In addition, it is the



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responsibility of every PPN using this Toolkit to maintain standards through consistent use of the methods set out here. The Toolkit has been tested and is known to generate good quality outputs, maintaining the integrity of the process is necessary for this to continue, and this is vital for the credibility and standing of the Visions of all PPNs.

## A Final Word

Don't have preconceived ideas, assumptions or compare your PPN's vision to those of other counties or cities. Your member groups have developed their Vision(s) for their communities. It is likely that it will be revised and omissions that were identified be remedied, or emphases altered, particularly as circumstances change. This is entirely appropriate and should be seen as an opportunity to continue to pursue aspirations of the communities concerned. There will be many different ways in which your PPN can utilise its Vision and the experience of developing it. The PPN should be open to all of these and creatively maximising the impact of the Vision.

