



Community Visioning

What is ... Community Visioning

Community visioning involves a series of exercises conducted with groups who are from a specific community or have another common interest or bond. The aim is to build a shared vision of the future. From this shared vision it is then possible to work backwards to establish what steps need to be taken to achieve this vision. It can also be used as the benchmark against which policy-makers, planners, architects, etc. can test their work.

These can be one-off events or part of a series.

Why use this technique?

It brings interested parties or a community together to explore the past, the present and to focus on the future. It acts as a way of setting out a clear shared vision around a set of ground rules that can inform future decision making.

It applies particularly well to activities centred on rebuilding and regenerating communities.

When should you use it?

This technique should be used when you are:

- Seeking to involve a specific community in decision-making about their future
- Setting goals
- Establishing shared experiences and a common understanding in order to create a set of rules that will define future decision-making
- Helping people to view the future realistically and positively
- As a tool in community development work



What type of information does it produce?

It produces qualitative information. (for an explanation of this term please refer back to the Consultation Jargon buster)


What are the advantages?

- You can use different formats for communication, e.g. art and drawing exercises
- It is accessible to most
- It gets people involved at a very personal level
- It does not require specialist equipment or venues
- It is adaptable to many different scenarios
- It can prove very energising
- It can unite groups
- It can foster certainty
- It is a good way of involving a range of different groups and ages
- It can be highly participative
- Any theme can be focused on
- It can be individual or group based.

What are the disadvantages?

- There is a danger of it upsetting people who have a bleak view of the future
- It may jolt people out of a comfortable view of their present and future
- It may prove difficult to control
- Conferences require large venue and more than one facilitator
- It may prove difficult to get those parts of the community not involved in the process to agree with the vision

What are the costs?

- You can use internal resources to set them up
 - Users are normally easily accessible and easy to recruit
 - Costs will rise with the complexity and size of the task
 - You need skilled facilitators
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What are the practicalities?

- You will need to have clearly identified objectives
- You will need to ensure that service is willing to accept outcomes and incorporate them in future thinking
- It needs to be carefully managed to keep it realistic
- You need to link the visioning to the present

