Forestry Commission

ATA DECISION-MAKING DEMOCRACY DESIGN DISPLAYS EVENTS FOCUS FORU
RMAL INTERACTIVE INTERNET INTERVIEWS LEAFLETS MEDIA MEETINGS NEWSL
APERS TO-ONE OPEN PARTICIPATORY PARTNERSHIPS P
TATIONS PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRES RESPONSE SHARED SITE STAFF SURGERI
RCE TELEPHONE SURVEYS TELEVISION AND RADIO VISITS WEBSITES WORKING GROUPS

Visioning

Visioning covers a wide range of approaches and techniques, which can be classified together in that they are all concerned with identifying different options for the future. People can use Visioning to create images that can help to plan and guide change in their neighbourhood or local environment. In a simple visioning exercise a facilitator asks participants to close their eyes and imagine they are walking through their neighbourhood, local forest or woodland as it should be some years into the future. People can record their visions in the form of pictures, photos, written stories, dramas, dances, poems, maps, videos, models, computer modelling, 3D GIS projections or any combination of these and other media. The users' capacities, preferences and resources determine the form of vision. The only real limiting factor is the imagination of the people using them and the interests of people to participate in creating them. Once the vision is agreed the next step is to ask the question 'How do we get there, how do we achieve the vision?' leading to the start of an 'action planning' process.

A 3D model of a forest valley made from sheets of polystyrene (Ae Forest District).
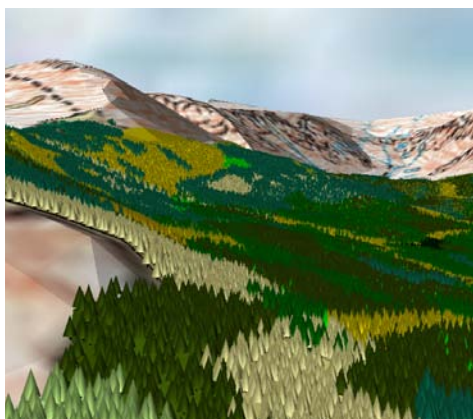
A 3D computer generated visualisation of a forest landscape generated with the 'forester' extension to Arcview (Forest Planning, Forestry Commission).

Resources and requirements

Skills
- Meeting facilitation skills.
- A set of selected questions to guide the visioning.
- Ability to lead discussion towards formulation of a shared/common vision.

Time
- Visioning session may take anything between a few hours to a day, depending on the mix of the group.

Level of engagement

INFORMING:

CONSULTING: ★

INVOLVING: ★ ★

PARTNERSHIP: ★ ★ ★

Strengths

- Useful where complexity and uncertainty are high.
- Useful for scoping what a community wants, and generating a range of options.
- Process can be empowering.
- Useful for developing a sense of ownership.
- Can stimulate creative ways of thinking.

Weaknesses

- Some people can find imagining the future overwhelming.
- Depending on the approach Visioning can be complex to organise and require considerable input from professional consultants.
- Coming up with a shared vision of a group can be difficult.

Equipment

- Flip charts.
- Cards.

Costs

- These will include cost of venue, facilitators and participants time and of equipment (dependent on context).

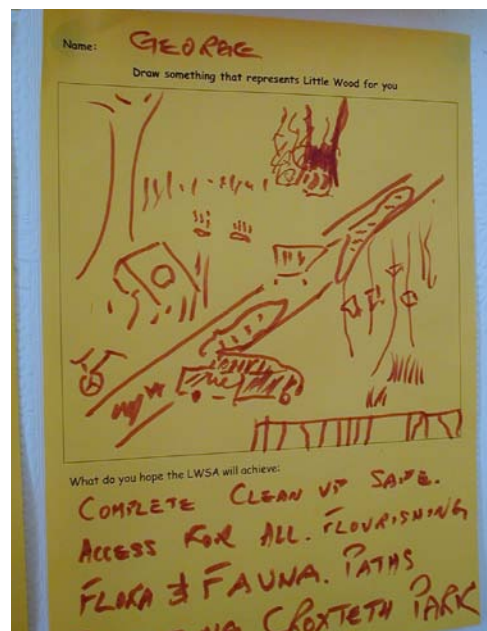## Useful sources of information

Books

- Community Visions Resource Pack. New Economics Foundation. Available from: www.neweconomics.org

Web

- What is Visioning?: www.communityvisioning.com

Case study

- Community visioning in Bristol by the University of Sussex: www.ids.ac.uk

One person's vision of a local wood (The Mersey Forest).

This toolbox is designed to assist Forestry Commission staff when they are considering which tools they could use to involve the public in the forest and woodland planning process. For more information please visit the website at: www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox