NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING WORKSHEET
KEY VIEWS

What are Key Views and why are they important?

The National Planning Policy Framework (2026) does not explicitly define the concept of 'key views'. In terms of design, Policy DP3 requires development proposals to respond to their context, including the history, character and features of the site and its setting, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings so to not preclude innovation or change where appropriate. Putting these together there is potential scope for neighbourhood plans to identify townscape and rural views of value so that applicants can have regard to these when assessing the impact on each area's defining characteristics.

A 'View' is defined within the Oxford English Dictionary as "*A sight or prospect that can be taken in by the eye from a particular place*".

While there is no definition of a 'Key View', it can be considered as a viewpoint that holds significant importance to the local community and is a memorable view reflecting the character and identity of the locality. They may provide an attractive setting or backdrop, being of prominent vistas, or encompassing an important feature of settlement history and the way the built and natural landscape has been shaped by those living or working within it, and by nature

As part of the contextual assessment of local character, and the value people attribute to local landscape and townscape, the understanding of which particular views local people particularly appreciate is useful to define the sense of place and deliver good design in accordance with Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework[1] (NPPF) and the National Design Guide[2] (NDG).

The NDG explains that views, vistas, and landmarks are influencing factors defining local identity and sense of place. Identified Key Views are positive elements of character of places for their users. Views may be important for several reasons and can help inform the character of a new development, through its location and design considerations.

How can a Neighbourhood Plan identify Key Views?

The identification of Key Views as part of the neighbourhood planning process can help to ensure development aligns with the community's aspirations and priorities to maintain and enhance an area's visual character. Policy in the neighbourhood plan can seek to ensure that the important values of the Key Views are enhanced or maintained.

Planning Practice Guidance confirms that proportionate, robust evidence is needed to support the choices made and approach taken within an neighbourhood plan. The evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies in the draft neighbourhood plan. To ensure a clear and thorough methodology to assess KVs within the designated neighbourhood area, the following criteria, devised using principles of TGN 02-21: Assessing landscape value outside national designations[3], should be used:

[1] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a8334c03bd75b81e2329ac4/National_Planning_Policy_Framework.pdf
[2] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/602cef1d8fa8f5038595091b/National_design_guide.pdf
[3] https://www.landscapeinstitute.org/news/new-guidance-assessing-landscape-value-outside-national-designations/

1) KVs must be accessible by the public and visible from the public highway, the rights of way network, open spaces, or proposed / designated local green space.

2) KVs should show a range of physical (natural or man-made) features and an expanse of the parish, not one particular object unless this is a building or feature of particular cultural heritage.

3) KVs should merit at least one of the following values: aesthetic, biodiversity, cultural heritage, functional, recreational, or tranquillity. These are further described in the box below.

Value	Description
Aesthetic	Views with strong aesthetic qualities that appeal to the visual senses that may include memorable / distinctive views of features, or a combination of features, of landscape or townscape (such as an attractive and distinctive group of buildings).
Biodiversity	Views containing the presence of valued natural capita assets that contribute to ecosystems, habitats, and ecological networks
Cultural Heritage	Presence of historic landmark structures and sites (designated or non-designated heritage assets), reflection of historical development of the area, or designed landscape elements / parkland.
Functional	View of the landscape that have strong physical or functional links with landscape designations, including the AONB, or are important to the appreciation of the landscape and its special qualities.
Recreational	From a place offering recreational opportunities where experience of a view(s) is important to the enjoyment of the activity.
Tranquillity	A location offering high levels of tranquillity or perceptions of tranquillity, including perceived links to nature, dark skies, presence of wildlife/ birdsong and relative peace and quiet. Places may also exhibit a general absence of intrusive or inharmonious development, land uses, transport, and lighting.

All views put forward that meet the above criteria can be considered however it is noted that the more people that experience a viewpoint, the higher the value that may be attributed, i.e. a view identified by numerous people as important might be considered more valued than one selected from an isolated point in the neighbourhood plan area that few people frequent. Views enjoyed by pedestrians using a footpath are likely to be valued over views experienced by traffic speeding past along a main road.

The following methodology can be used to identify the Key Views

Step 1: Identify potential KV's for consideration

Potential KV's may be identified by the community as part of a consultation exercise or put forward by the Steering Group. These should be listed and identified on a map, which shows the point from which the view is taken and the direction of the view.

Step 2: Initial Screening

Once the potential KV's have been identified, the next step is to conduct an initial screening process to ensure that the nominated views meet the criteria described above. This initial screening could be set out as follows:

View Reference	Publicly Accessible	Aesthetic	Biodiversity	Cultural Heritage	Functional	Recreational	Tranquillity
V01	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N	Y/N

Any view that is publicly accessible and meets at least one of the values can be taken forward to the detailed assessment. Those which do not meet the criteria should be screened out from further consideration.

Step 3: Detailed Assessment

For each view taken forward after initial screening, a detailed assessment must be undertaken. This will outline how each view meets at least one of the above values in further detail in order to support the decision-making process throughout the neighbourhood plan process. This can be set out using the following proforma:

View Ref:	V01	**What3Words reference:**	
View Direction:			
Description:			
[INSERT PHOTOHRAPH AND DATE]			
Value	**Comments**		
Aesthetic:			
Biodiversity:			
Heritage:			
Functional Landscape:			
Recreational:			
Tranquillity:			
Recommendation:	To/To not take forward the view as an identified key view in the neighbourhood plan.		
View Management Objectives:			

Key View management objectives can be defined to understand how policy or community actions could support the maintenance, enhancement and management of the view. For example, an objective may be to limit visual intrusion such as new structures or fencing to retain the openness of the view, maintain and enhance the public footpath, or to ensure appropriate hedgerow management and retention of key landscape features.

Step 4: Finalising the list of KV's for inclusion in the neighbourhood plan and writing policy

Once all views have been assessed, only those that are considered to hold significant importance to the community can be identified as a Key View. Each KV should be mapped and clearly identified. Policy can then be drafted which actively seeks to protect the values of the KV's, as well as set out requirements for proposals affecting KV's. An example policy wording could be:

Development proposals that would affect a key view should demonstrate that their design, layout, and massing respond positively to the view concerned, and that the features and values of the key view can continue to be enjoyed.

- *INSERT LIST OF VIEWS*

Development that would affect a key view must demonstrate that its design, layout and massing will respond positively to the view concerned, and that the features and values of the view can continue to be enjoyed. Development proposals which would have an unacceptable visual impact on a Key View, unless suitably mitigated, will not be supported. A proportional Landscape and Visual Assessment must be submitted to demonstrate that the features and values of the view are maintained and/or enhanced.