

Future Scenario Planning Toolkit for Local Policymakers

#placematters



I-Connect

Impact Acceleration
Account Programme | Lancaster
University 

Introduction to the Future Scenario Planning Toolkit

The Future Scenario Planning Toolkit is a practical guide designed to support local policymakers in navigating the complexities of regional development.

This toolkit helps tackle interconnected challenges like achieving net-zero targets, fostering economic resilience, and addressing socio-environmental issues through a structured, evidence-driven, and creative framework.

Why Future Scenario Planning?

Innovative Approach: FSP encourages exploring multiple futures through scenarios reflecting critical uncertainties.

Beyond Trends and Data: This method integrates data-driven evidence with creative foresight, providing safe spaces for testing ideas and challenging assumptions.

The Value of FSP in Regional Policymaking

By integrating participatory and place-based approaches, FSP enables local governments to co-create strategies that are sensitive to the unique socio-economic and environmental characteristics of their regions. The method emphasises:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Bringing together diverse voices from public, private, and third sectors fosters collaborative sense-making and builds consensus.
- **Critical Thinking:** Identifying high-impact uncertainties equips policymakers to develop resilient strategies for unpredictable futures.
- **Human-Centred Design:** Prioritising well-being, sustainability, and inclusivity ensures that policies address the lived realities of communities.

What This Toolkit Offers

This toolkit provides step-by-step guidance for implementing FSP, from defining policy challenges and gathering evidence to constructing scenarios and exploring their implications. Accompanied by card templates and interactive exercises, it empowers policymakers to design future-ready strategies that are innovative, adaptive, and impactful.

Whether addressing transport infrastructure, climate action, or community resilience, the FSP toolkit is an essential resource for shaping a sustainable and prosperous future.

The toolkit is based on the [I-Connect project](#) that applied this FSP to active transport challenges in the regional preparation for the Eden Morecambe project. More details about the method application in the Lancashire context can be found in this article [Future in Place: Participatory Future Scenario Planning for Place-based Local Policymaking](#). More general policy briefing outlining this method can be found in the collection of policy briefings by the [Heseltine Institute for Public Policy, Practice and Place](#).

Toolkit Objectives

This **Future Scenario Planning Toolkit** is designed to help policymakers develop **resilient, adaptable, and place-based strategies** for regional development. The toolkit follows a structured, participatory approach that blends data-driven evidence with creative foresight to ensure policies are forward-looking and robust across multiple futures.

At the heart of this process are five **key objectives** that guide scenario development, strategy creation, and implementation. These objectives serve as checkpoints throughout the toolkit, ensuring that the process remains **inclusive, actionable, and aligned with real-world needs**.

1. Identifying the right policy challenge

- ✓ **Clearly define the challenge** and align it with regional priorities.
- ✓ Engage **diverse stakeholders** in shaping the problem statement.

2. Capturing diverse perspectives and evidence

- ✓ Include a mix of **public, private, and community voices** in the process.
- ✓ Combine **data-driven insights** with **creative foresight** to develop well-rounded scenarios.

3. Developing plausible and distinct scenarios

- ✓ Ensure **critical uncertainties** create clear, differentiated futures.
- ✓ Build **engaging, evidence-based narratives** rooted in real-world trends.

4. Creating actionable strategies

- ✓ Develop **Adapt, Mitigate, and Advance** strategies to address key risks and opportunities.
- ✓ Ensure strategies are **flexible and resilient** across multiple future scenarios.

5. Communicating and implementing findings

- ✓ Package insights into **clear, accessible materials** (e.g., reports, visuals, presentations).
- ✓ Establish a process for **monitoring progress** and updating strategies as new trends emerge.

CONTENT

Steps to Implementation

Step 1: Identify the Policy Challenge

Objective: Achieve clarity and alignment on the policy challenge.

Who is Involved: Core policymaking team and internal collaborators like council members.

Duration: This will depend on the complexity of the matter. Typically, it may range from half a day to one day for straightforward challenges, while more complex issue.

Activities

Collaborative Discussions: Use Policy Challenge Cards to define the challenge, its outcomes, and stakeholder commitments.

Step 2: Assemble a Diverse Team

Objective: Gather a multidisciplinary group for diverse perspectives.

Participants: Policymakers, public/private sector leaders, academics, etc.

Duration: Typically, two weeks to one month, including time for stakeholder identification and engagement. The timeline may expand depending on the complexity and reach of the stakeholder network required for effective scenario planning.

Activities

Stakeholder Mapping: Utilise templates to identify, evaluate, and invite relevant stakeholders.

Step 3: Gather Evidence

Objective: Collect and analyse trends, drivers, and existing data.

Participants: Core team and experts in data.

Duration: Typically, two to four weeks.

Activities

Portfolio Development: Use PESTEL analysis and trend mapping to compile evidence, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of future possibilities.

Step 4: Identify Critical Uncertainties

Objective: Discover impactful trends to construct scenario frameworks.

Participants: Core team and stakeholders.

Duration: Typically, half-day workshop.

Activities

Facilitate Discussions: Identify two critical uncertainties to shape the 2x2 matrix for scenarios.

CONTENT

Steps to Implementation

Step 5: Construct the 2x2 Matrix and Develop Scenarios

Objective: Create detailed future scenarios through storytelling.

Participants: Divided stakeholder groups with facilitators.

Duration: Typically, half-day workshop.

Activities

Scenario Development: Assign teams to create narratives using Scenario Narrative Cards.

Step 6: Explore Policy Implications

Objective: Analyse how each scenario affects policies and strategies, identifying opportunities and risks.

Who is Involved: All stakeholders and policymakers.

Duration: Typically, a half-day workshop.

Activities

Assess the implications of each scenario on current and future policies and align them with long-term goals like sustainability and resilience.

Step 7: Co-Create Actionable Strategies

Objective: Develop concrete actions for adapting, mitigating risks, and thriving in each scenario.

Who is Involved: Stakeholders and the policymaking team.

Duration: One-day workshop format.

Activities

Use the Adapt-Mitigate-Advance Template to propose policies and actions that address challenges and leverage opportunities.

Step 8: Communicate and Implement

Objective: Share the outcomes with wider stakeholders and integrate the findings into actionable policy frameworks.

Who is Involved: Core team, communications specialists, and broader stakeholders.

Duration: Typically, One to two weeks.

Activities

Package the scenarios and strategies into accessible formats (e.g., reports, visuals) and begin implementation with an emphasis on cross-sector collaboration and regular reviews.

Note: Since the complexity of the policy challenge can significantly impact the timeline, it is essential to remain adaptive. Teams should allow additional time for steps as needed, particularly when confronting multifaceted issues or when deeper engagement with diverse stakeholders is required. Incorporating flexibility in the planning process ensures comprehensive and effective scenario development.

STEP ONE

Establishing a Shared Vision

Objective: Identify the policy challenge and its context to ensure clarity and alignment among participants. This step establishes the foundation for all subsequent activities.

Who is involved: Core policymaking team and key internal collaborators (e.g. council members, strategic planners).

Duration: Half a day to one day.

Narrative: This step brings together the policymaking team to articulate the policy challenge and its importance for the region. Through guided discussions and the use of Policy Challenge Cards, participants align on the scope of the issue, its desired outcomes, and the initial commitment from stakeholders. This creates a shared vision and a focused starting point for the process.

- Identify the policy challenge (e.g., net-zero targets, transport planning, or health and wellbeing).
- Establish the context of the policy challenge



Policy Challenge Cards

Why is this important for your region?

What has been done about this so far?

What ideal outcome do we want to achieve?

Who are our key internal collaborators?

Define the Objective – Personal Statements

The personal statement of commitment is designed to connect participants with the policy challenge and articulate their motivation for contributing.

Identify Your Role

1. Begin by specifying your professional role or perspective.

Example: *“As an Environmental Health Officer...”*

2. Reflect on the benefits of tackling the challenge

3. Think about how addressing the policy challenge will positively impact your region.

Consider benefits such as:

- Improvements to the environment, community well-being, infrastructure, or economy.
- Opportunities for innovation or meeting long-term goals (e.g., net-zero targets).

4. Write a brief, specific statement about these benefits.

Example: *“...I am committed to contributing to the policy challenge because I see significant improvements in public health and air quality through sustainable transport initiatives.”*

Consider the Consequences of Inaction

1. Reflect on what could happen if the policy challenge is not addressed.

Consider potential risks such as:

- Environmental degradation, economic decline, health impacts, or community disparities.

2. Write a concise statement about the possible negative outcomes.

Example: *“...and I believe that if we do nothing, air pollution and health issues will worsen, and the region’s economic potential will be severely limited.”*

3. Combine your responses into a complete statement

Share your statement with the other participants and draw out a common Statement of Commitment for the project.

Example

Personal statement of commitment

As a Environmental Health Officer

I am committed to contribute to the policy challenge because I see
significant improvements in public health
and air quality through sustainable
transport initiatives

and I believe that if we do nothing

air pollution and health issues will worsen,
and the region’s economic potential will be
severely limited.

Personal statement of commitment

As a

I am committed to contribute to the policy challenge because I see

and I believe that if we do nothing

Personal statement of commitment

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STEP TWO

Assemble a Diverse Team

Objective: Build a multidisciplinary group of stakeholders to ensure a wide range of perspectives and expertise in the planning process.

Who is involved: Policymaking team, public sector leaders, private sector representatives, community groups, academics, and third-sector organisations.

Duration: One to two weeks (includes stakeholder identification and engagement).

Narrative: A robust team is key to the success of scenario planning. Using Stakeholder Mapping Templates, the core team identifies relevant stakeholders, evaluates their influence and interest in the challenge, and invites them to participate. Engaged stakeholders contribute diverse viewpoints, enhancing the depth and relevance of the scenarios.



2.1

Stakeholder Cards

The Stakeholder Cards are designed to help policymakers systematically assess and engage with stakeholders for the policy challenge.

Share the completed cards with stakeholders to validate your understanding of their position and interests.

Use the insights from the cards to develop an engagement plan that ensures meaningful collaboration with stakeholders.

Use the completed Stakeholder Cards to map stakeholders in a stakeholder bulls-eye diagram.

Include stakeholders from public, private, and third sectors:

Local council representatives, community groups, businesses, artists, and academics.

Ensure diversity to capture a wide range of perspectives and expertise.

Map the stakeholders in relation to the policy challenge and identify their relationships, their power to influence the policy and their level of interest in the constructive outcome or policy implementation.



Stakeholder organisation

Write the name of the organisation or individual.

Have we collaborated with them before?

Indicate whether there has been any previous interaction or partnership.

If yes, note the nature of the collaboration.

Why do we need them around the table?

State the specific value they bring (e.g. expertise, resources, influence, or representation of a key group).

Relationship to the policy challenge

Define their connection to the policy challenge (e.g. direct involvement, advocacy, or implementation role).

Power to influence the policy challenge

Assess their ability to shape or impact the outcome of the policy (e.g. high, medium, or low influence).

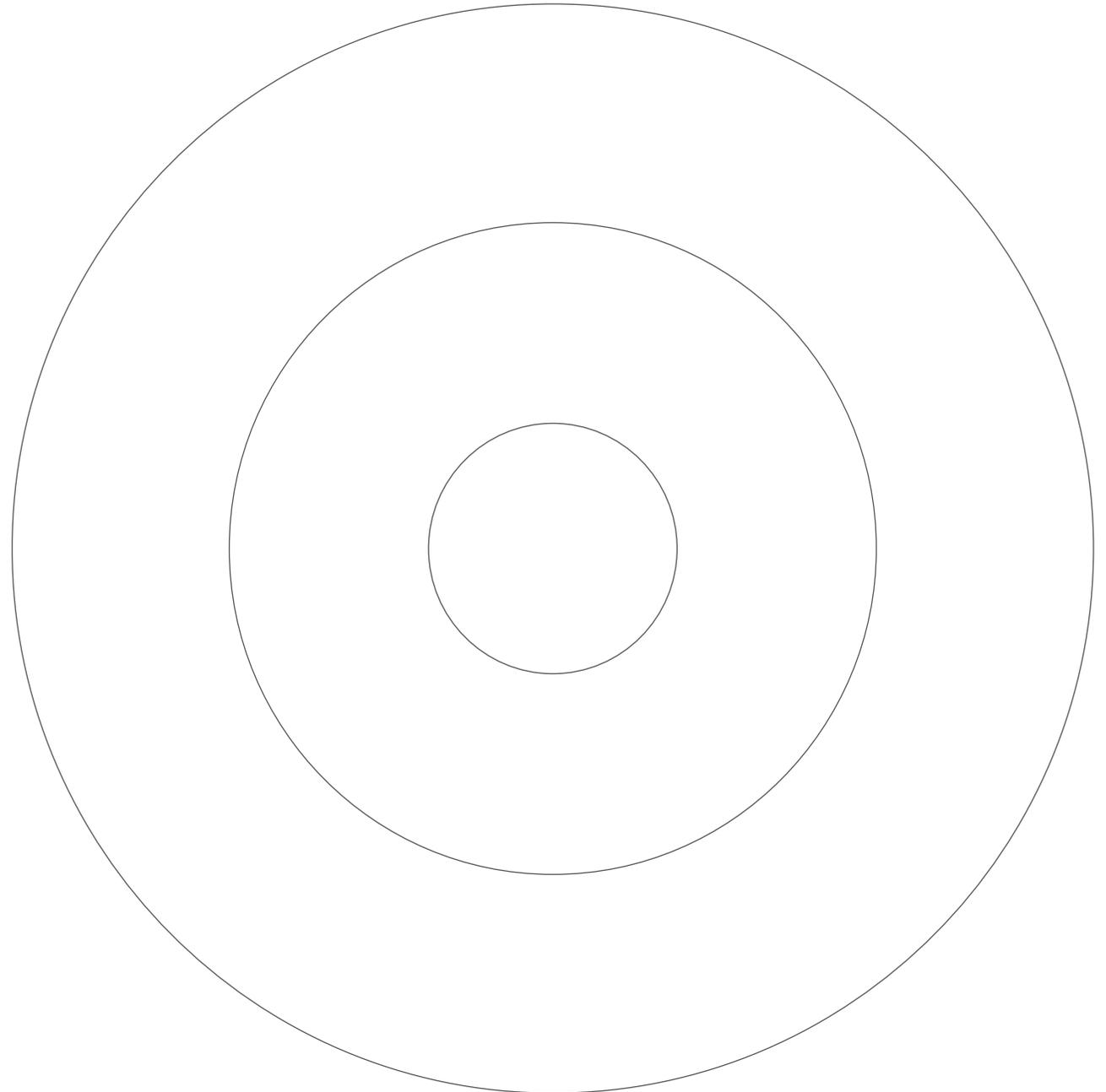
Level of interest in the policy challenge

Evaluate how much the stakeholder is likely to care about the policy (e.g. highly engaged, moderately interested, or peripheral).

Example



Identify and analyse key stakeholders relevant to your policy challenge, considering their interdependencies and potential influence on discussions, strategic planning, and future policy implementation.



2.2

Personal Statement

The Stakeholder Cards are designed to help policymakers systematically assess and engage with stakeholders for the policy challenge.

Share the completed cards with stakeholders to validate your understanding of their position and interests.

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Map the stakeholders in relation to the policy challenge and identify their relationships, their power to influence the policy and their level of interest in the constructive outcome or policy implementation.

The stakeholder personal statement helps articulate each stakeholder's potential motivation and contribution to the policy challenge. It can be:

- **Drafted by the policy team** based on existing knowledge and assumptions, then verified with stakeholders for accuracy.
- **Co-developed during a stakeholder engagement workshop**, allowing stakeholders to express their perspectives directly.

Example

As a stakeholder [describe the role, e.g., 'representing Lancashire Civic Society'], I am committed to contributing to the policy challenge because I see [describe the benefits, e.g., 'greater economic resilience and improved community well-being'] in tackling this challenge.

I believe that if we do nothing, there will be [describe negative consequences, e.g., 'increased social inequality and declining regional investment'], impacting our region.

Personal statement of commitment

As a stakeholder

I am committed to contribute to the policy challenge because I see

and I believe that if we do nothing

Personal statement of commitment

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STEP THREE



Gather Evidence

Objective: Collect and analyse evidence to understand trends, drivers, and existing data relevant to the policy challenge.

Who is involved: Core team and stakeholders with data expertise (e.g., researchers, analysts); University teams (potential project for students and research associates).

Duration: Two to four weeks.

Narrative: Participants collaborate to compile a portfolio of evidence using PESTEL analysis and trend mapping. This stage involves gathering both qualitative and quantitative data, identifying strengths and gaps, and framing the evidence to inform scenario development.

In addition to trends that fit neatly within PESTEL categories, participants also develop trend cards for factors that cut across multiple categories or do not align directly,

such as citizen well-being, talent retention in the region, and other emerging societal dynamics. This approach ensures a more comprehensive and flexible exploration of future possibilities.

Develop a portfolio of evidence on key aspects of regional development using:

- Regional strategic reports or PESTEL analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal).
- Examples: net-zero investments, urbanisation trends, transport data, and health indicators.

Ensure evidence is comprehensive, up-to-date, and contextually relevant.

Trend:

Data related to trend (include source and date of data)

How does the trend affect our region?

How does the trend show itself in society?

What policies are impacted by this trend?

What strengths do we have in relation to this trend?

Significance of the trend to our challenge

Insignificant _____ Significant
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

STEP FOUR

4

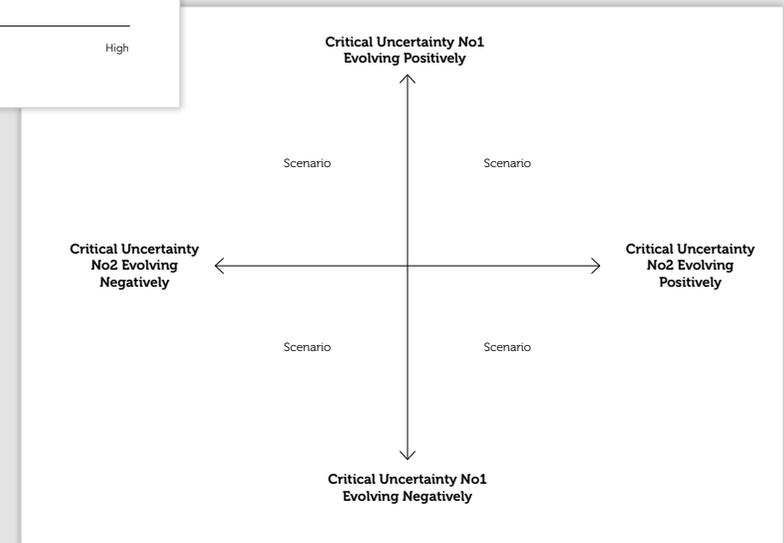
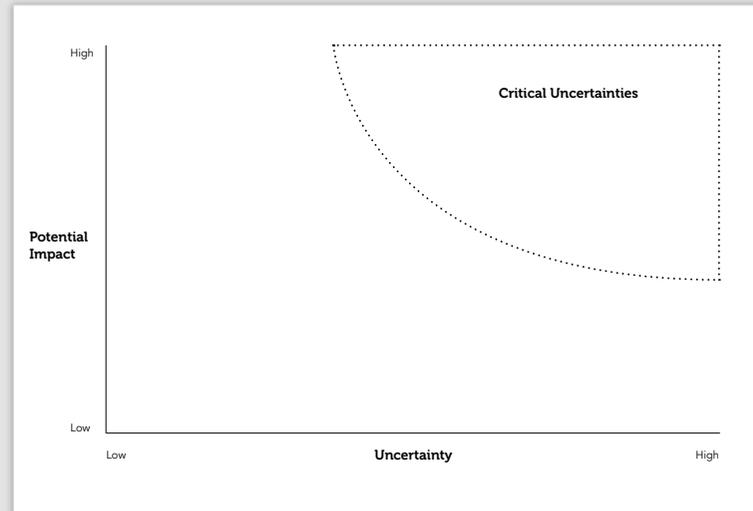
Identify Critical Uncertainties

Objective: Pinpoint the most impactful and uncertain trends to create a framework for scenario development.

Who is involved: Core team and stakeholders.

Duration: Half-day (workshop format).

Narrative: Participants work individually and in groups to map trends onto an Impact/Uncertainty Grid, using prompt cards to guide discussions. Together, the group identifies two critical uncertainties that will serve as the axes of the 2x2 matrix. This step ensures the scenarios focus on the most significant and unpredictable factors shaping the region's future.



4.1

Mapping Key Trends

Map key trends based on their impact and uncertainty levels.

Discuss with the group why you consider certain trends to have high uncertainty and what factors might clarify or further complicate these uncertainties.

Using the Prompts

1. Facilitate Open Discussion:

- Use the provided Impact and Uncertainty questions as conversation starters to guide participants in assessing trends and drivers.
- Encourage participants to explain their reasoning when assigning a trend's position on the grid.

2. Capture Challenges and Disagreements:

- Use a flipchart or dedicated space to record:
 - Disagreements or conflicting perspectives.
 - Unresolved questions or uncertainties raised during discussions.
- Example: *"There's debate about how impactful autonomous vehicles will be for rural communities compared to urban areas."*

3. Acknowledge Diverse Points of View:

- Emphasise that disagreements are valuable for surfacing different assumptions and viewpoints.
- Let participants know that differing perspectives will not be immediately resolved but will be revisited later in the process.

4. Encourage Constructive Dialogue:

- If disagreements arise, ask participants to elaborate on their reasoning:
 - *"Can you explain why you see this trend as highly impactful?"*
 - *"What factors make this trend more predictable or uncertain in your view?"*
- This promotes understanding and minimises unproductive debates.

Impact questions

1. Understanding the Nature of Impact	How significant could this trend's effects be on our region or community?	Does this trend have a direct or indirect impact on our key policy areas (e.g., transport, housing, health)?	Would this trend's development create incremental changes, or could it result in radical shifts?	Which systems or sectors are most likely to feel the impact of this trend?
2. Assessing Scale and Scope	Is the impact of this trend limited to a specific group or area, or is it widespread?	Could this trend influence multiple aspects of regional development (e.g., economy, environment, society)?	What is the geographic scope of the trend's impact (e.g., local, regional, national, or global)?	How might the impact vary across different demographics, industries, or locations?
3. Measuring Positive and Negative Outcomes	Could this trend create opportunities or benefits for the region? If so, how?	What risks or challenges could this trend pose to our policies or stakeholders?	Are there specific communities or sectors that would disproportionately benefit or suffer from this trend?	Can this trend help us achieve long-term goals, like net-zero targets or improved quality of life?
4. Interdependencies and Ripple Effects	How interconnected is this trend with other key factors (e.g., environmental, social, or economic drivers)?	Could this trend create a chain reaction of changes across multiple sectors or policies?	Are there secondary or tertiary impacts of this trend that we might overlook?	How might this trend amplify or mitigate the impact of other critical uncertainties?
5. Stakeholder Perspectives	Which stakeholders are likely to be most affected by this trend?	Could this trend strengthen or weaken relationships between stakeholders (e.g., public-private partnerships)?	How does this trend align with or challenge the priorities of local stakeholders?	Are there stakeholder groups whose needs might be overlooked when considering this trend's impact?

Uncertainty questions

<p>1. Understanding the Nature of the Trend</p>	<p>What external forces could significantly influence the future of this trend (e.g., policy, technology, societal behaviour)?</p>	<p>How predictable or unpredictable is the trajectory of this trend over the next 10-20 years?</p>	<p>Is this trend relatively stable, or does it have the potential to change dramatically due to external shocks?</p>	<p>Are there any emerging technologies, political shifts, or global events that might disrupt this trend?</p>
<p>2. Exploring Uncertainty</p>	<p>What specific factors make this trend uncertain (e.g., lack of data, conflicting expert opinions, dependence on external variables)?</p>	<p>How confident are you in predicting how this trend will develop over the next decade?</p>	<p>What are the key unknowns that make it difficult to anticipate the future trajectory of this trend?</p>	<p>Could this trend evolve in unexpected or divergent ways? If so, how?</p>
<p>3. Identifying Evidence Gaps</p>	<p>What evidence do we currently have about this trend, and where are the gaps?</p>	<p>Are there reliable data sources that can help us better understand this trend, or is the data incomplete or conflicting?</p>	<p>How might a lack of reliable evidence contribute to the uncertainty of this trend?</p>	<p>What additional research or stakeholder insights are needed to fill these gaps and strengthen our understanding of this trend?</p>
<p>4. Contextualising Trends</p>	<p>Is this trend specific to our region, or is it influenced by broader global developments?</p>	<p>How might local or regional factors increase or decrease the uncertainty surrounding this trend?</p>	<p>Are there historical patterns or analogies that can help us understand the potential future of this trend?</p>	<p>How do different stakeholder perspectives shape the interpretation and impact of this trend?</p>
<p>5. Examples of Uncertainty Questions by Domain</p>	<p>Technology: How rapidly might emerging technologies disrupt this sector? Are adoption rates predictable or uncertain?</p>	<p>Environment: How might climate change or new environmental policies shift the trajectory of this trend?</p>	<p>Social: How might changing demographics or societal values influence this trend in unexpected ways?</p>	<p>Economic: Are there potential economic shocks or market shifts that could drastically alter this trend?</p>

4.2

Agree on Critical Uncertainties

Identify Key Factors:

- Focus on trends and uncertainties that could significantly influence the policy challenge.
- Prioritise those with both high impact (major consequences for the region or sector) and high uncertainty (unpredictable or rapidly evolving).

Engage Stakeholders in Group Discussions:

- Facilitate structured discussions with diverse stakeholders to gather insights on which factors matter most.
- Encourage participants to share perspectives based on their expertise, lived experiences, and available evidence.

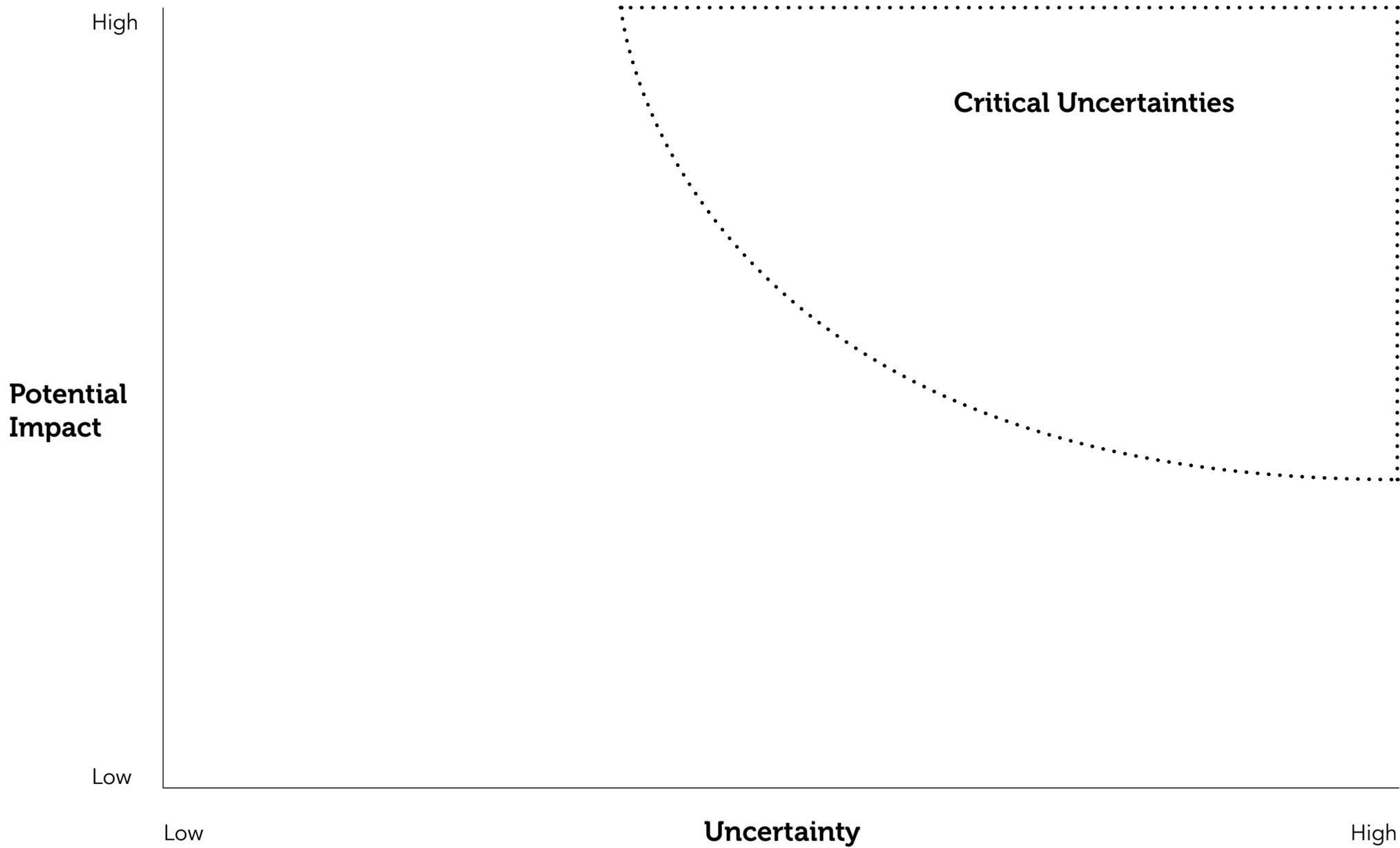
Refine the Impact-Uncertainty Grid:

- Plot identified trends on a two-axis grid, assessing their potential impact on the policy challenge and their level of uncertainty.
- Discuss and challenge assumptions, ensuring a well-rounded evaluation.

Select the Two Most Impactful and Uncertain Trends:

- Through consensus-building or voting, narrow the list to two critical trends that will shape the scenario development process.
- Ensure these trends create meaningful contrasts in potential future scenarios, allowing for diverse policy responses.

This step sets the foundation for scenario development by ensuring that discussions are focused on the most influential and uncertain aspects of the future.



STEP FIVE

Construct the 2x2 Matrix and Develop Scenario Narratives

Objective: Create four distinct future scenarios and bring them to life through collaborative storytelling.

Who is involved: Stakeholder groups divided by scenario, with support from facilitators.

Duration: Half-day (workshop format).

Narrative: Participants work in teams to develop narratives for each quadrant of the 2x2 matrix. Using Scenario Narrative Cards, they explore societal, environmental, and economic impacts, incorporating creative tools such as mind mapping, collaging, poster creation. This step engages stakeholders in imagining plausible futures, ensuring each scenario is detailed, relatable, and thought-provoking.

- **Define the Axes:** Use the two most critical uncertainties as the horizontal and vertical axes of the matrix. Each axis represents two opposing outcomes (e.g., “High Government Investment in Transport” vs. “Low Government Investment”).
- **Create Four Scenarios:** The intersection of these uncertainties forms four distinct future worlds, each occupying one quadrant. These scenarios explore how different combinations of uncertainties shape the future.
- **Develop Scenario Narratives:** Assign stakeholder groups to each quadrant. Use storytelling, visuals, and creative tools (e.g., posters, collages, storyboards) to bring each scenario to life.
- **Consider Key Impacts:** Encourage participants to explore how each scenario affects society, the environment, and the economy, ensuring rich, plausible, and thought-provoking narratives.



**Critical Uncertainty No1
Evolving Positively**



Scenario

Scenario

**Critical Uncertainty
No2 Evolving
Negatively**



**Critical Uncertainty
No2 Evolving
Positively**

Scenario

Scenario

**Critical Uncertainty No1
Evolving Negatively**

Cards to help construct the scenario narratives

1. Setting the Scene: Life in this Future	<p>What does the world look like in this scenario (e.g., the physical environment, economy, society)?</p>	<p>How do people live, work, travel, and interact in this future?</p>	<p>What values, priorities, or behaviours dominate this society?</p>	<p>What are the key technologies, infrastructures, or systems shaping this world?</p>
2. Developing a Narrative: Storytelling	<p>What is the defining feature or “headline” of this future?</p>	<p>What key events, decisions, or trends led to this scenario becoming a reality?</p>	<p>How do people adapt to or resist the conditions in this world?</p>	<p>What is the mood or tone of this future (e.g., optimistic, pessimistic, pragmatic)?</p>
3. Exploring the Two Critical Uncertainties	<p>How does the combination of the two critical uncertainties (e.g., transport innovation and quality of life) shape this scenario?</p>	<p>What happens if one uncertainty evolves positively but the other negatively?</p>	<p>How do these uncertainties interact with one another to create opportunities or challenges?</p>	<p>What are the extreme consequences of these uncertainties converging in this way?</p>
4. Stakeholders and Community Dynamics	<p>Who are the key players in this scenario (e.g., governments, businesses, communities)?</p>	<p>How are different groups (e.g., marginalized communities, entrepreneurs, policymakers) impacted in this future?</p>	<p>What relationships, collaborations, or conflicts exist between stakeholders?</p>	<p>How do citizens respond to the conditions of this world?</p>
5. Policy and Governance	<p>What policies are in place in this scenario?</p>	<p>How do local governments and organisations adapt to or shape the conditions in this future?</p>	<p>What governance structures exist, and how effective are they?</p>	<p>Are current policies sufficient, or do new frameworks emerge to address unique challenges?</p>
5. Technology and Innovation	<p>What role does technology play in this scenario?</p>	<p>Are innovations advancing or stagnating in this world?</p>	<p>How accessible and inclusive are the technologies in this future?</p>	<p>Does technology help solve critical issues, or does it create new ones?</p>

STEP SIX

Explore Policy Implications

Objective: Analyse how each scenario affects policies and strategies, identifying opportunities and risks.

Who is involved: All stakeholders and policymakers.

Duration: Half-day (workshop format).

Narrative: Participants assess the implications of each scenario on current and future policies, using templates to map opportunities and threats. This stage focuses on aligning policies with long-term goals, such as sustainability and resilience, while ensuring flexibility to adapt to uncertain futures.

Assess how each scenario impacts policies and strategies.

Identifying Opportunities and Threats

- What are the biggest opportunities in this scenario?
- What risks or challenges would emerge in this future?
- How does this scenario affect different sectors (e.g., health, economy, environment)?
- Are there any unintended consequences of decisions or trends in this world?
 - Evaluate alignment with long-term goals like net-zero targets or community resilience.
- Use scenarios as “sense-checking” tools to guide current decision-making and develop strategies for each opportunity and threat.



	Strategies for opportunities	Strategies for threats
Scenario 1		
Scenario 1		
Scenario 2		
Scenario 4		

STEP SEVEN

Co-Create Actionable Strategies

Objective: Develop concrete actions for adapting, mitigating risks, and thriving in each scenario.

Who is involved: Stakeholders and the policymaking team.

Duration: One day (workshop format).

Narrative: Building on the insights from previous steps, participants collaboratively design strategies tailored to each scenario. Using the Adapt-Mitigate-Advance Template, they propose policies and actions that address challenges, leverage opportunities, and promote long-term regional well-being.

- Engage all participants in developing actions that include three dimensions:
 - Identify how regional policies can be adapted in each scenario – what changes may be needed
 - Identify how the policies can be able to mitigate negative effects of each scenario
 - Identify what policies would be required in order for the region to advance its development in each scenario context
- Ensure actions address identified challenges and align with the region's socio-economic and environmental priorities.

Imagining Actions and Consequences

- What actions taken today could lead to this future scenario?
- What are the long-term consequences of these actions or trends?
- Are there any tipping points that could drastically alter the trajectory of this scenario?
- What lessons can we learn from this future for policymaking today?

Scenario	Opportunity/Threat	Adapt	Mitigate	Advance
Scenario 1				
Scenario 1				
Scenario 2				
Scenario 4				

STEP EIGHT

Bringing It All Together

Communicate and Implement

Objective: Share the outcomes with wider stakeholders and integrate the findings into actionable policy frameworks.

Who is involved: Core team, communications specialists, and broader stakeholders.

Duration: One to two weeks.

Narrative: The final step focuses on packaging the scenarios and strategies into accessible formats (e.g., reports, visuals, presentations) and disseminating them to decision-makers and the public. Implementation begins with an emphasis on cross-sector collaboration and regular scenario reviews to adapt to emerging trends.



Template 1: Scenario Summary and Strategy Framework

This template organises the key outcomes of the process for clarity and accessibility.

Scenario	Key Insights	Opportunities	Threats	Actions (Adapt, Mitigate, Advance)
Scenario 1				
Scenario 1				
Scenario 2				
Scenario 4				

Template 2: Action Plan for Implementation

This template ensures that strategies are actionable and aligned with timelines and responsibilities.

Action	Priority (High/Medium/Low)	Responsible Party	Resources Needed	Timeline	Evaluation Metric

Final Checklist

1. **Package the Outcomes:** Ensure all scenarios, insights, and strategies are compiled into accessible formats (e.g., reports, visuals, presentations).
2. **Tailor Communication:** Adapt messaging and formats for different stakeholder groups.
3. **Engage Stakeholders:** Present findings through workshops or briefings to ensure alignment and buy-in.
4. **Plan for Implementation:** Develop a detailed action plan with timelines, responsibilities, and evaluation metrics.
5. **Monitor Progress:** Set up regular check-ins to review implementation and adapt strategies as needed.

Reflections

1. **Did we identify the right policy challenge?**
Is the challenge clearly defined and relevant to regional priorities?
Have we engaged the right stakeholders in shaping the problem statement?
2. **Did we capture diverse perspectives and evidence?**
Have we **included a mix of public, private, and community voices**?
Have we used **both data-driven evidence and creative foresight** in scenario building?
3. **Are the scenarios plausible and distinct?**
Do the **critical uncertainties** form clear, differentiated futures?
Are the narratives rich, engaging, and grounded in **real-world drivers**?
4. **Have we developed actionable strategies?**
Do our **Adapt, Mitigate, and Advance** strategies address key opportunities and threats?
Do the strategies allow for **flexibility and resilience** across multiple futures?
5. **Are our findings effectively communicated and ready for implementation?**
Have we created **clear, accessible materials** (e.g., reports, visuals, presentations)?
Have we set up a process for **monitoring progress and revisiting scenarios** as new trends emerge?

Glossary of key terms

Terminology

Active Transport

Modes of transportation that require physical activity, such as walking or cycling, often emphasised in urban planning and design for health and environmental benefits.

Adapt-Mitigate-Advance Strategy

A framework used in scenario planning to develop policies that adapt to, mitigate risks from, and advance opportunities within different future scenarios.

Core Team

The research team and/or group of key individuals responsible for leading and coordinating the scenario planning process, often consisting of project leaders, data analysts, and strategic planners.

Critical Uncertainties

Key variables or trends whose future outcomes are unpredictable but have a significant impact on scenario development, used to shape these scenarios.

Foresight

A process of thinking about, anticipating, and planning for the future using evidence and creativity to create strategies that are robust against a variety of possible futures.

Future Scenario Planning (FSP)

A strategic planning method used to create and explore multiple future scenarios based on varying critical uncertainties and their impacts.

I-Connect Project

A research project led by Lancaster University that applies Future Scenario Planning to tackle specific regional challenges, such as transport planning, to improve policy and decision-making in the region.

Impact/Uncertainty Grid

A tool used to assess and prioritize trends based on their potential impact and level of uncertainty, helping to identify critical uncertainties.

Net-Zero Targets

Goals set to balance the amount of greenhouse gases emitted with the amount removed from the atmosphere, crucial for climate change mitigation strategies.

Participants

Individuals involved in the scenario planning process, including stakeholders, sector representatives, and community members contributing diverse perspectives and expertise.

Participatory Design Approach

An inclusive design methodology involving diverse stakeholders in decision-making processes and in designing, ensuring multiple perspectives are reflected in planning and policy formulation.

PESTEL Analysis

A framework for examining external factors affecting decision-making, including Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, and Legal influences.

Place-Based Approach

An approach that enables to develop strategies based on local intelligence and tacit knowledge, which are tailored to the specific conditions, characteristics, and needs of a particular geographic area or community.

Policymakers

Individuals who are involved in the development and implementation of policies, often working within government or organisational contexts to shape regional or sector-specific strategies.

Scenario Narratives

Descriptive stories developed within scenario planning that explore how critical uncertainties might unfold and impact the future, providing a basis for developing strategies.

Stakeholder Mapping

A technique used to identify and analyse stakeholders' interests, influences, and roles in a given project, ensuring effective engagement and collaboration. This process also ensures that all key representatives are involved, contributing to comprehensive and inclusive decision-making.

Scenario Planning Matrix (2x2 Matrix)

A framework that organizes four distinct future scenarios based on two critical uncertainties, helping policymakers explore different possible futures.

Stakeholders

Individuals or groups with an interest or stake in the policy challenge or scenario planning process, including public agencies, private businesses, community organisations, and academic institutions.

Trend Mapping

A process of identifying and analysing prevailing trends, providing insights into the current and future influences affecting a sector or region.



I-Connect