

Assessment

Gemeente Leeuwarden



Client Horizon Europe (European Commission)

Location Leeuwarden, Netherlands

Year 2025

The project aims to revise Leeuwarden's existing Urban Vision to adapt it to current realities and future challenges looking towards 2050. We facilitated a week full of workshops to accelerate the production of this vision, with over 80 colleagues with 8 intensive sessions across 7 different locations. Elements were: (1) Moonshots formulation (2) Extensive market study on trends and developments to predict how the municipality would take shape in the upcoming years, (3) Analysis and synthesis of all current policy documents, (4) Projection of all spatial claims on the map - to find conflicts, opportunities and trade-offs. Finally, we synthesised all insights from every day to identify blind spots and reveal overlaps.

Healthy Cities Strategy

The strategy behind the Acceleration Week was to create a flywheel effect to transform an abstract plan into an integrated, directive vision. By bringing together a large intersectoral group, the municipality aimed to live through complex choices and dilemmas collectively rather than treating them as isolated sectoral problems.

1 Overview

Collecting all existing policy documents and challenges to create a complete picture of the current state of affairs.

2 Insight

Interpreting the policy synthesis to identify synergies, conflicts, and blind spots in current and future policies.

3 Imagination

Formulating a long-term vision through ambitious moonshots - visionary future images for 2050 - to challenge existing frameworks.

4 Concrete Building Blocks

Directly translating the week's outcomes into building blocks and research questions for the Basisnotitie and the full vision review.



Results

The Acceleration Week resulted in a shift in focus from mere spatial claims and current policy ambitions, to pre-conditions for the new vision. A small selection of the results are displayed below.

Health & Social

- Transition from "Person Central" to "Mienskip (Community) Central" prioritising collective society over the individual.
- Setting an ambitious goal for Positive Health: adding 5 healthy life years to Leeuwarden residents and reducing health disparities by 20%.
- Identified blind spots in (social) safety and the need for reference standards (e.g., benches or shade every X meters).

Spatial & Economic

- Water Management: ambition to 65,000 m² of extra water storage to combat flooding.
- Energy Constraint: recognition that energy capacity is a critical bottleneck for both housing and economic growth.
- Policy Strategy: introduction of Focus Areas to prioritise limited municipal capacity and resources where they can have a catalytic effect.
- Recommendation of a "Top 10 No" list to explicitly justify why certain developments will not be pursued.

