

# Transforming Planning in Practice

## Development Planning Regulations and Guidance Subgroups

### LDP Procedures

### Meeting 1, 1 October 2020 - notes

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#### Output 1 questions

1. What are the key stages, milestones and outputs in the process?
2. Where are the links to engagement and consultation?
3. Is it appropriate to include an open call for ideas and/or for sites early in the process?
4. How does the plan process align with SEA requirements?
  - Is the process able to accommodate the place principle more as it is further develops?  
Framework is set within legislation, but guidance can provide ways on how this is being incorporated
  - Hopes more time can be spent on the creative/spatial parts of the plan – how can we increase time spent on this instead of too much focus on procedure?
  - Does the scope of the group cover what will go into the ER?  
Will have some input but there is a separate group for ER.

Minimising policy competition between different levels of plans is important – so work hand in glove.

Lots of procedures are set out in the Act – not want to add too many more.

Process can be seen as a funnel – everything goes in the top and after consideration the strategy falls out the end

#### *Call for Sites/Call for Ideas*

- Maybe best to have a call for sites once an authority has determined its spatial strategy.
- Raises concerns that the sites promoted might not align with the strategy.
- Call for sites could be problematic in terms of explain how to communities how it works. How can RSS's help provide the strategic direction of development. Supports the idea of call for ideas rather than call for sites.
- Thinks it is important to have the call for sites at the starts of the process. Acknowledges that this is process is tough to explain to communities.
- Important to establish between all stakeholders as to what do we want to establish? Aspirations for place.

- Place based process: i) strategic – agree purpose and outcomes, 2) local – understand community needs and aspirations, 3) gather data / evidence – so more targeted

### *Linking different assessment procedures together*

- There is scope to bring in a lot of the goals/outcomes from different assessments that need to be undertaken.
- Agrees that it would be helpful to link assessments as they are all linked through place.

### *Engagement*

- Potential to link Community Planning engagement with LDP engagement.
- Thinks that community councils etc. will still likely engage at the 'proposed plan' stage, rather than early, as this stage makes the most sense to them.
- Thinks it is key that engagement should happen at the start, has biggest impact.
- thinks that engagement and consultation should take place early in the process BUT to make sure it is tailored for that stage as to avoid 'consultation fatigue'. Open call for ideas could be useful to 'flush out' issues/opportunities
- How does this process align with the community planning process?
- Agrees with ED that CP process will provide rich evidence needs that can feed into spatial planning.
- LPP could be part of engagement in the plan. Hopes LPPs can help encourage communities to think about the development of their place.
- Spatial planning/community planning has been going on for years with no obvious resolutions or outcomes but maybe this could be improved through LPPs which may inform LDPs At the end of the day, both CP and SP are very different processes.
- Thinks LPPs should start asap to ensure that the community producing them does not miss out on it informing the LDP, otherwise they will become disenfranchised. At the same time, some areas have too many LPPs and the LDP document is no longer a 'simple' document.

### **Output 2 questions**

5. How can the process for preparing a plan be more corporate across the local authority and create more buy in from the outset?
6. Who is responsible for and who else needs to input at each stage?
7. What is an appropriate indicative / average timescale for each stage?
8. Where are the links to delivery?

### *Corporate Buy In*

- What do we mean by more corporate?
- More buy in within the council on all levels. Can Place Principle help with this and identification of priority areas?
- Important that clear on what happens when for meaningful buy-in

- LDPs could ideally be a spatial strategy of the whole council, not just planning and housing etc. Thinks the place principle is a good way to get this corporate buy in better.
- Assets approach (estate, property, edu) – do these take a place based approach? How can planning break into processes that are already underway in authorities / agencies / services / utilities/ and explain how planning is useful for them to deliver on their objectives?
- Thinks some authorities have done some good work on place based approaches already and we could learn from this going forward.
- Thinks corporate buy in is really important from a public health point of view. Also highlights how difficult it is to get involved in the planning system from the outside. Suggests if we can simplify the process and use plain English language to help improve this.
- Full council sign off needed and regulations will help instil more corporate buy in in general.
- Definitely thinks private sector is behind the place principle as well. Dev industry wants a plan led process. Thinks evidence report should have corporate buy in too. How we can get more corporate buy in into delivery mechanisms such as action programmes etc.
- Regulations will have a great focus on delivery
- Wants to find out more from other HOPS on how they feel the corporate buy in is in other authorities.
- Important distinction between corporate awareness and corporate buy in. Difference between corporate awareness of planning and planning having influence corporately – how create influence? To be more meaningful should demonstrate how the plan will affect strategies and capital programmes.
- 20 min neighbourhood relevant as that has significant implications for service delivery in new and existing neighbourhoods.
- Can Chief Planning Officers help with corporate buy in?

### *Timescales*

- HoPS has mapped out all the procedures in the act and has rough time scales. Would find it useful to have timescales for Gatecheck and Examination as they can take up a lot of time. All parts of the process will need to look at how they can be more efficient with time.
- Evidence Report (ER) going to be super critical and should have a lot of time and effort put it, whilst of course being proportionate. ER could be the foundation of the whole plan.
- Believes the Gatecheck and successful front loading could help reduce timescales at examination. Aim is to invest time early on to save time later.
- Believes process could be around 3 years to create a plan. However, everything doesn't need to be done in a linear fashion.
- Amount of change in a plan can add to time.
- Council approval of plans can add significantly to timing.
- Planners would like more 'creative' time to be innovative in their approach to plan making.
- From gatecheck clearance to PP – suggested 6 months
- Will there be a review mechanism in place throughout the 10 year cycle?

- Want to provide mechanisms for amendments but need to determine how these interact with each other.
- We need to determine exactly what the asks of a CPO will be.
- Advises group we are happy to take further questions / comments in writing after the meeting.

## Contextual questions

9. What might a 'how to' guide to preparing plans look like to promote a new style of plan?
10. Are there key elements that should be prescribed (fixed) in regulations, where there is the power to do so, rather than covered more flexibly in guidance?
  - Do we need to produce regulations and guidance that isn't just for planners.
  - Ideal world would mean we wouldn't need two separate documents, but maybe if required we could produce a technical document.
  - Important for documents to be clear for different audiences. Those that understand planning and those that don't understand it as well. How is the digital transformation of the planning system going to help?
  - Digital colleagues will be heavily involved in the process with us.
  - Guidance could be encouraged so that aren't 'overwritten' with too much text. Guidance could maybe cover the look, feel and maybe even the length of the plan.
  - Could guidance help with how plans should look online? Link with other digital platforms etc. Guidance could provide insight how it could be tailored for different audiences.
  - NPF could help make plans shorter but having it as national policy. Authorities set out HLAs and housebuilding industry is worried about lack of 5 year land supply and wonders if there will be a mechanism to review this?
  - Likes the E Dunbartonshire HLA format. Likes creative approaches.
  - Wants to champion creative approaches within authorities when creating plans. Key to remember that plans are the 'bible' for dev manager planners for determining planning applications. Important to involve them in the process. Maybe the Dev Plan Scheme could be used to monitor need for update?
  - Guidance could cover how LDP information is explained and laid out on council websites. Things like dev plan schemes are difficult to find – acknowledges difficulty for councils to have huge control over the websites but would be good if more could be done to improve website access?