



DRAFT Planning Protocol

Delivering Growth Working Together





Introduction

It has been a time of significant change for Leeds in recent years: Leeds has the largest centre outside London for financial and business services, digital, creative, publishing and broadcasting; the second highest concentration of knowledge intensive jobs. The Council's ambitious Core Strategy sees a commitment to delivering thousands of new houses whilst retaining the focus on building strong and vibrant communities with the emphasis on good place making and high quality homes.

This sustainable growth can only happen if the right development comes forward in the right place at the right time and works successfully if there is collaboration between the Council, local communities and developers to secure that growth.

This planning protocol therefore is the result of a joint venture between Leeds City Council and the Leeds Chamber of Commerce and sets a commitment to working together. It builds on the existing good practices of engaging with communities and front loading the planning process and aims to provide a more proactive approach in delivering the good growth needed in Leeds.

Our Pledge

Together we aim to work successfully together to deliver growth within the Leeds City Council area through the planning process.

#1

Commitment to Service Improvement

- ✓ The Council will continuously try to improve planning services by engaging with the development industry through workshops, meetings, forums and reviews to meet this aspiration.
- ✓ The Council will deliver training to elected members and in particular members of the Plans panel to support quality, and timely decision making. The Council will look for innovation and seek out best practice from other authorities to improve the development management process in the interests of expeditious decision making.
- ✓ The Council will invest in its staff, providing them with support and training to ensure competency and ensure their skills and knowledge is current.

#2

Effective Communication and Engagement

- ✓ The Council will strongly encourage pre-application engagement at the initial stages in the formulation of a project to identify issues early on. This will include the promotion of Planning Performance Agreements where appropriate to ensure greater clarity of the level of service and timeliness from pre-application through to delivery on site.
- ✓ Developers should take into account pre-application advice given by officers; if an application is subsequently submitted which significantly fails to meet the pre application advice, the council retains the right to refuse without further discussion.
- ✓ Developers will submit clear, evidenced, good quality pre-application enquiries and applications. This will ensure that development proposals are made with sufficient and accurate supporting information and are well-presented, enabling Council Officers to efficiently manage the application through the planning system for determination within the statutory or agreed period.
- ✓ The Council will provide direct dial phone numbers for planning case officers so developers can speak directly to the right person.
- ✓ The Council will ensure that planning case officers keep applicants updated with information about their pre-application and applications in a timely manner to facilitate greater common understanding and consensus on planning matters.
- ✓ The Developers and Agents, where appropriate, will be provided with an opportunity to engage with elected members, through briefings at the pre-application stage and to address the Plans Panels at pre application presentations, at the position statement stage and at final determination.
- ✓ Developers will engage early and openly with the community, amenity groups, neighbourhood planning forums/groups and where relevant, Town and Parish Councils in line with the advice from the planner and the Statement of Community Involvement, both at pre-application stage and when planning applications are made. Developers will demonstrate in supporting documentation of any subsequent planning application, how the responses to this local engagement have been taken into account and have shaped the scheme.
- ✓ Developers will continue to engage with the community through the implementation stage to ensure residents and relevant groups are kept informed of demolition and/or construction stages where appropriate.

- ✓ The Council will provide a mechanism to escalate issues to senior officers when agreed timescales and actions are not being met in the interests of expeditious decision making.
- ✓ For larger and more complex proposals, the use of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) will be encouraged, to achieve a more project managed approach from pre-application, through to the application process and discharge of conditions.
- ✓ All parties will engage positively and proactively with consultees to ensure that all considerations are addressed at an early stage.
- ✓ The Council's internal consultees will provide clear consistent advice on applications and at pre-application in a timely fashion.
- ✓ Developers will provide policy compliant proposals and where this is not achieved, this shall be evidenced and justified clearly at submission. The information will be in a clear and accessible format, provided within agreed timescales.
- ✓ Developers will provide and pay for a viability assessment where relevant, which will be independently assessed.
- ✓ Wherever possible developers will provide Draft Heads of Terms for the Section 106 agreement at the pre-application stage using the Council's Draft S106 Template, or if not at submission of the application.
- ✓ All parties will seek to negotiate and conclude Section 106 agreements using the Council's Section 106 template so that planning permissions can be granted without unreasonable delay through agreed timescales.
- ✓ The Council will seek to minimise the number of pre-commencement conditions requiring the submission of further details and agree conditions prior to issuing a decision.
- ✓ Developers will provide comprehensive, high quality supporting information, reducing the need for conditions on those aspects.
- ✓ Developers shall submit the relevant, high quality information with discharge of conditions applications so they can be discharged expeditiously.
- ✓ All parties will seek to develop a better shared understanding of design quality standards, and, where appropriate, to engage in a design review process with the Council, at the earliest stage.

Monitoring

This protocol sets out a shared approach to development by the Chamber of Commerce and Leeds City Council and will review annually the implementation and effectiveness of the Protocol and share best practice that emerges from such reviews.

