

Eden District Council

Planning Performance Agreement Charter

Introduction

This charter sets out how the Eden District Council will work with developers, the community and other key stakeholders to ensure that all large and complex development proposals are carefully considered in a constructive, collaborative and open manner.

Eden District Council believe that such an approach is the best way of developing proposals to see if they can meet the vision and objectives of the Council as well as giving the community an appropriate opportunity to be involved in the process in a meaningful way.

Where major development proposals are deemed to be in accordance with the Development Plan for the area or, if a departure, have the potential to meet the Council's Corporate Objectives, the Council will instigate a Project Team approach and seek to manage the project through a Planning Performance Agreement.

Background Information

Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) were proposed in the Planning White Paper (2007) as a means of speeding up the delivery of large scale applications. This followed a successful pilot project, which showed that PPAs added value to the planning system, by improving the planning process through better project management. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has now concluded that PPAs can give greater certainty on managing the development planning process (such as in relation to timescales, costs and requirements for all parties involved in the process, improving communications, including engagement with other stakeholders). DCLG is now advising that PPAs have been incorporated into the planning system, and they are endorsed as good practice for suitable applications.

The Council Structure

An approach to the Council about a large scale development project will initially be through the Planning Department. However, when a project is defined it is likely that it will involve officers from other departments and the Council is committed to co-ordinated cross-departmental working.

A Project Manager will be identified, who will be responsible for the co-ordination of the project team and the primary interface with the developers Project Team. They will ensure that tasks are delivered to agreed timescales, and that regular reporting and liaison with other stakeholders occurs.

All members of the project team will work on behalf of the Council in the wider public interest and to secure the best quality scheme delivering the objectives of the Local

Development Framework and relevant policy documents. Officers will express their own professional opinions which will form guidance for the applicant.

The guidance will not bind officers to final recommendation nor override the requirement for a formal planning application to be determined without prejudice and within the statutory requirements of current planning legislation.

Partner Organisation Commitment

As set out above the Council is committed to co-ordinated inter-departmental working. However for large complex schemes other stakeholders from partner organisations are likely to be required to provide a timely, proactive response to each project. Other stakeholders including the County Council and the Statutory Agencies (Highways Agency, Environment Agency and Natural England) will, where relevant, be asked to commit to pre-application involvement. Furthermore, where major development sites straddle local authority boundaries the Council will ensure that the joint working approach is fully embraced.

The local planning authority is committed to sharing existing information with the development interests.

Community Engagement

As set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), Eden District Council is committed to engaging with the people and organisations of Eden in an open and constructive manner. Appropriate methods of pre-application consultation therefore play a significant role in understanding the views of residents and organisations at an early stage.

The applicant will be obliged to ensure that all pre-application community consultation is meaningful and not seen as a public relations exercise to win support for a pre-determined proposal. Additionally, the responsibility for carrying out pre-application consultation (and the costs of doing so) will rest with the applicant.

Notwithstanding the above, the Council will also undertake separate consultation as part of the formal planning application process as a statutory procedure, in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

Member Involvement

The Council believes that Members should be appropriately and openly engaged with the development of the project, whilst ensuring that their decision making function is not compromised.

Expectations from Applicant

The Council will expect the developer interest to approach any proposal in an open, collaborative and creative manner. The developer interest will be expected to employ high quality staff/consultants with sound expertise in delivering sustainable

communities. All projects will be delivered through a robust project management process and as with the Council, applicants will be expected to meet agreed timetables.

Where there are multiple developer interests the Council will seek a single steering group member and separate project manager empowered to represent the collective developer interest.

Funding

The Council will have an expectation that the preparation of the application material, production of technical reports, and all community engagement activity will be funded by the applicant. Prior to the commencement of individual tasks the Council and the Applicant will agree a brief to define the scope of work.

Process Requirements

The Council will expect the promoters of schemes covered by this Charter to engage in and sign a PPA. The process will involve the following key elements:

- Meet and review the project proposal at an early stage.
- Agree vision and development objectives.
- Form a Project Team with key decision makers and the Project Manager (Council lead).
- Produce a Project Plan based on identification of project issues and subsequent tasks.
- Produce a Programme directly linked to the Project Plan and agree with the applicant to deliver key milestones.

The Project Plan and Programme will be updated regularly to reflect the ongoing work of the project. The Programme can be reviewed accordingly, in agreement with both applicant and the Council.

Planning Performance Agreements

The Council require that applicants undertake a collaborative process with Council officers and other stakeholders as set out above and agree the key elements in writing:

- Decision Making Group and communication structure
- Vision and Development Objectives
- Project Plan and Programme