



THE HANDY GUIDE TO PLANNING



Urban Forum's Handy Guide to England's Planning System, produced with assistance from Planning Aid.

By Caroline Gaunt, Elin Gudnadottir and Louise Waring



Endorsed by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)

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First edition 2006

By Caroline Gaunt, Elin Gudnadottir and Louise Waring

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Glossary of Abbreviations

AAP: Area Action Plan

CEN: Community Empowerment Network

DCLG: Department for Communities & Local Government

DPD: Development Plan Document

EIP: Examination in Public

LAA: Local Area Agreement

LDF: Local Development Framework

LDS: Local Development Scheme

LSP: Local Strategic Partnership

MPS: Mineral Policy Statement

ODPM: Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

PPS: Planning Policy Statement

RPB: Regional Planning Body

RSS: Regional Spatial Strategy

RVSN: Regional Voluntary Sector Network

SCI: Statement of Community Involvement

SCS: Sustainable Community Strategy

SDS: Spatial Development Strategy is the Regional Spatial Strategy for London (frequently referred to as the 'London Plan')

SP: Structure Plan

SPD: Supplementary Planning Document

UDP: Unitary Development Plan



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INTRODUCTION

Every day, decisions about our surroundings are being made: houses and roads are being built, shopping centres are enlarged and areas are being regenerated.

Past and present decisions determine how the areas we live in look today and therefore affect how we feel about an area and how we go about our daily routine. For example, the route we take to work, where we do our shopping, where children can play, where young people can meet, how we spend our leisure time and whether we can find space to park the car. These decisions are all made through the planning system, so whether you are aware of it or not you are constantly participating in planning. The important question is whether you want to play an active role in planning, helping to shape the decisions that are made.

The aim of the Handy Guide is to give you the opportunity to be actively involved in the planning process, and to have some control over the future of your environment. It is written for community and voluntary organisations and members of the public who have limited experience of planning but would like to get involved. The Guide is written by Urban Forum with assistance from Planning Aid. If you



want more comprehensive information on the items discussed in this Guide then please see the Planning Information Pack (page 19) produced by Planning Aid with assistance from Urban Forum. Both Guides are endorsed by the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

This Guide starts by explaining what planning means, why it is important, how planning links with other strategies that shape our surroundings (for example, the Sustainable Community Strategy), and who does what in planning. It then provides an overview of the planning system at the national, regional and local level and explains how you can get involved. At the back of the Guide you will find a list of useful contacts.



WHAT IS PLANNING?

Planning is the system by which the use and development of land is managed for the benefit of all the community (for uses such as housing, schools, shops, offices, factories, airports and community facilities). The overall aim of the system is to ensure a balance between enabling development to take place and conserving and protecting the environment and local amenities. The idea is to create better places for people to live, work and play in.

The Government has recently started to talk about 'spatial planning'. It brings planning together with the policies and programmes which have an impact on people and their environment and therefore goes beyond just looking at the use of land. Links with other strategies, such as the Sustainable Community Strategy are explored further on page 6.

People often have negative feelings about the planning process. The system can seem complicated and full of jargon. However, there have recently been important changes to the system to enable communities to engage fully in all aspects of planning, including the preparation of plans and decisions on planning applications.

Why is planning important?

Planning directly affects our physical environment and in doing so influences our quality of life and general well-being. Development of land makes a big difference to how we feel about our neighbourhoods, from the uses allowed in a particular area (like housing, retail or industrial) to the design of a building, to the amenities that may be provided as part of a development, such as open space and children's play space.

It is important to get involved early on in the planning process, so that you know how to influence it and make your voice heard. Being involved will allow you to hear about and influence proposed changes to your neighbourhood before decisions are made.

The value of early and continued involvement of local communities in the planning system has been recognised for some time. Working with local people has become more important with the passing of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). This seeks to increase community involvement. For example, local authorities are now required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out how the local authority intends to involve the communi-



ty in preparing plans and making decisions on planning applications. More information on SCIs can be found on page 14 (see sheet 7 of the Planning Information Pack for full details).

Who decides?

Local authorities are given legal powers to manage development. The process is overseen by central Government (Dept. for Communities & Local Government (DCLG), formerly Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) which prepares Planning Policy Statements (PPS) setting out the planning policy local authorities should follow on a number of issues including housing, retail, transport and renewable energy. Each PPS is numbered. For example, PPS1 sets out the aims and objectives of the planning system (please see sheet 1 of the Planning Information Pack for a full list).

At the regional level, planning is carried out by the Regional Planning Bodies (usually the Regional Assemblies, or for London, the Mayor). Local authorities must take PPSs and regional plans into account when preparing their local plans.

Decisions on applications are made by the local authority in accordance with the content of its plan.

National policy and action is also influenced by other Government departments such as the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA),

Department for Transport and Home Office (See sheet 1 of the Planning Information Pack for full details).

What links are there with the Sustainable Community Strategy?

One of the objectives of the new Planning Act is to link planning with different strategies that already exist in your local area. The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is of particular importance, although you may need to be aware of other strategies and plans including: Parish Plans, Housing Need Statements and Education Strategies.

The SCS gathers together good ideas to improve local areas and services. By law all local authorities in England must prepare one to 'promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being in each area'. The SCS sets out an overall framework for your local area. The planning system should deliver those parts of it that relate to the development and use of land.

The SCS is normally prepared through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which exists in most areas. The LSP brings together local agencies (such as the police, social services, health services and the local authority) in order to produce the SCS. LSPs should also include voluntary groups, community groups and residents, and you may already be



involved with your LSP, often through a Community Empowerment Network. Further information on LSPs can be found in the LSP Guide, published by Urban Forum and the Community Development Foundation (contact details on page 21).

How do I get involved?

Your involvement in the planning system, at a local or regional level, is essential for successful development because you have knowledge of your area and its needs that planners and developers may not.

Whether you are a resident, resident group or part of a voluntary or a community organisation, make sure that your views are being taken into account. The decisions that are being made through the planning system will affect your environment so do say what you think!

There are two main ways to have your say in the planning system. These are:

a) Plan preparation: at both the regional level and the local level it is possible for

you to influence the preparation of plans. These plans set out a vision for how an area will develop and change over time, as well as guide future development.

b) Development control: Prior to most development taking place, a planning application must be submitted and approved at a local level by the local authority.

Decisions on planning applications are based on the content of regional and local level plans (see 'Plan preparation' above). This process is commonly known as development control, but sometimes referred to as development management. You should be aware that certain types of development do not require planning permission. To find out if a development requires planning permission you need to speak to the planning department of your local authority.

Most people get involved in the planning system by making or commenting on planning applications. Given that the decisions on planning applications are made in line with the plans (local and regional), it is important to influence the content of these plans.

In order to promote fairness, the planning system is governed by regulations and strict deadlines. The sooner you get involved the more likely you are to be able to influence decisions. The remainder of this Guide gives you a brief overview of planning and aims to help you participate in the system.

THE PLANNING SYSTEM AND HOW TO GET INVOLVED

In this section, plan preparation at national, regional and local level is explained. We then explain how you can get involved at regional and local levels.

PLAN PREPARATION

Plan Preparation – National Level

At the national level, Parliament is responsible for making laws and setting out the legal framework for planning. The Dept. for Communities & Local Government (DCLG), is responsible for producing national guidance through Planning Policy Statements (PPS), Mineral Policy Statements (MPS), and Planning Circulars. In England, there is planning legislation, policy and guidance but no national spatial plan.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) has recently come into effect. It has a number of aims, including making it easier for people to participate in the planning process, making the system faster, simplifying the ways decisions are made and prioritising sustainable development. This normally means development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the quality of life of future generations.



All plans and decisions made at the local and regional level must be in line with national legislation and policy (see sheet 1 of the Planning Information Pack for full details).

Plan Preparation – Regional Level

The Regional Planning Body (RPB), usually the Regional Assembly, is responsible for the preparation and review of the region's plan known as the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), except in London where the Mayor prepares the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). The RSS replaces Regional Planning Guidance and County Structure Plans.

The strategies, which must be prepared, cover a 10–15 year period and deal with broad or strategic issues such as the number and general location of new houses. The RSS is important because it will guide what happens locally on issues such as environment, infrastructure, transport, housing, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste and will influence the content of your Local Development Framework (LDF). Also included in the RSS are sub-regional strategies and policies that only cover part of the region.

In developing the RSS, the RPB must produce a Statement of Public Participation or Regional Participation Statement setting out who will be consulted and how. (see sheet 2 of the Planning Information Pack for full details).

Getting Involved – Regional Planning

When the RSS is prepared there will be formal opportunities to get involved. These are known as consultation periods. Any group or individual can submit comments. Following consultations, there will normally be a round-table discussion known as an Examination in Public (EIP). This is an opportunity for debate and testing of issues that arise. However, unlike the system at the local level, there is no right to be heard at the EIP even if you have submitted comments (known as ‘representations’). Instead people are invited to appear. To be included, the RPB



- > Look out for sub-regional plans that affect your area.
- > Find out who is being consulted and make sure that your group is included in the Regional Participation Statement.
- > Remember that there is no right to be heard, so make sure that your written representations are focused on planning issues such as housing developments, urban extensions and transport infrastructure.
- > Keep your comments as simple and focused as possible.
- > Contact your Regional Voluntary Sector Network (RVSN) to find out if they are involved in planning – see page 24 for contact details.

must be convinced that you have an important planning point to make. The reason given for this is that the RSS is dealing with the broad, rather than site-specific issues (See sheet 3 of the Planning Information Pack).



Plan Preparation – Local Level

Many local authorities have a department or section that deals specifically with planning issues and in some, plan-making is combined with work on Sustainable Community Strategies. The development control function or development management is often carried out by separate teams.

Planning officers within the plan preparation department are responsible for preparing the Authority's Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF replaces the old style of Local Plans or Unitary Development Plans (UDPs), and is intended to make the planning system less formal and more flexible.

The LDF should be seen as a folder which contains various planning documents. The most important of these are subject to strict procedures, including examination by an independent person (known as an Inspector). These documents are called Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and planning decisions are made in accordance with them, unless there are good reasons not to.

Other documents contained in the LDF include Supplementary Planning Documents or SPDs which fill in the details of policy which have already been decided in the DPDs, the Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement.

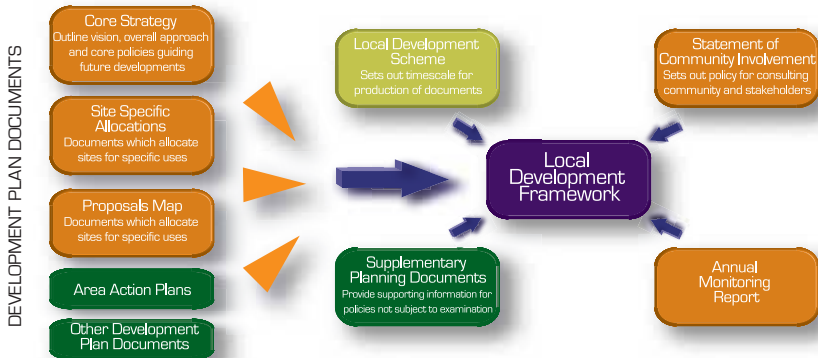
Below is a list of the main documents in the Local Development Framework:

Development Plan Documents

- > **Core Strategy:** this sets out the general vision or overview for your local area and the most important policies.
- > **Site-Specific Allocations and Policies:** these are documents which allocate sites for specific uses. They may include details relating to design, access, density and affordable housing.
- > **Area Action Plan:** these are prepared for areas where there is pressure for change, for example through regeneration or conservation.
- > **Proposals Map:** this is a map covering your local authority area, showing the location (or 'allocation') of the policies and proposals set out within the LDF. This map will show things like the green belt, housing allocations and transport proposals.
- > **Other Development Plan Documents:** for example, Development Control Policies – some authorities prepare a separate document listing the main policies for controlling development.

Local Development Framework (LDF) Documents

KEY – Required ■ Optional ■ Project Plan ■



Other Documents

You need to be familiar with these documents. They explain how and when other documents will be prepared.

- > **Local Development Scheme (LDS):** this sets out the range of plans and timeframes for producing all the documents. This is a useful starting point for you to find out when the local authority will be preparing the various documents.

- > **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** this explains how your local authority will consult you on plan preparation and development control (see page 14 for more information).
- > Your LDF may also contain **Supplementary Planning Documents:** These fill out details of policies contained elsewhere in the LDF.

Overall, the LDF looks ahead and sets out a vision for your area of at least 10 years, or longer if the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) sets out a longer-term vision. The LDF will be reviewed regularly over this period, by amending the various documents within it in order to reflect changing needs and circumstances.

Each document in the LDF is likely to be prepared separately but all documents should be consistent with each other and with other strategies (such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Transport Plan). The LDF must reflect the RSS.

Getting Involved – Local Planning

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is key to your participation in planning decisions that are made at the local level. Remember, the SCI will set out guidelines for how the community will be consulted, including timescales and methods of consultation. SCIs are looked at in more detail on page 14.

The preparation of each DPD (see page 10) will follow set (strict) procedures, with a number of formal consultation periods. It is very important to get involved as early as possible, at the 'issues and options' and/or 'preferred options' stages. Don't wait until the Examination to make your comments.

The local authority will start the process with an information gathering phase when they will seek suggestions and views on the issues to be covered by the documents. This is often called the 'issues and options' stage. You should be aware that there is no fixed period for involvement in this phase. Get involved and make your ideas known at this early stage, as you are more likely to influence thinking.

Having gathered information, the local authority will then produce a 'preferred options' document. This document, containing policies and proposals, will be made available for a (fixed) six week consultation period. The documents and sup-



porting evidence will be advertised locally and be made available on your authority's website.

Your local authority must consider all the comments made at the preferred options stage in preparing its 'final' document. They must be able to show how community involvement has influenced the preparation of the 'final' document.

This 'final' document is then submitted to central Government (the Secretary of State). This is the point when the Examination process starts and a further six week period of consultation is allowed. Following the consultation, the local authority will need to show central Government how they have taken on board the comments made.

The next stage of the Examination process involves an Independent

Examination (or Hearing), where the 'final' document is examined by an independent Inspector. Anyone making comments (known as 'written representations') on the document during the consultation period has the right to be heard at the Examination. However, it is important to understand that the documents will be adopted unless the Inspector thinks that they are not 'sound'.

Therefore, any comments submitted at this late stage must relate to the "tests of soundness" which the Inspector will use to examine the documents. For more information on 'tests of soundness' and making written representations see page 20 of this Guide.

Unlike the old system where plans were reviewed infrequently, each document in the LDF will be reviewed on a regular basis. This gives you more opportunity to influence what goes into the LDF.

Note: procedures for Supplementary Planning Documents are simpler, but remember you will not be able to change policies already set out in Development Plan Documents.



- > Find out when your local authority is preparing its LDF documents.
- > Familiarise yourself with the LDF, particularly the LDS and SCI and find out when the documents will be written and/or reviewed.
- > Get involved as early as possible - ideally at the 'issues and options' or 'preferred options' stage .
- > Your views may not be taken into account if they are made late in the process. Don't wait until the Examination to make your comments.
- > If you do provide comments at the Examination, be sure to relate them to the 'tests of soundness' which the Inspector will use to examine the document.
- > It is important to be proactive. If you have ideas for how you want your neighbourhood to be developed, let your local authority know.
- > Keep your comments as simple and focused as possible.
- > Seek advice from Planning Aid – see page 21.



Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

To successfully participate in the planning system it is important to be familiar with your Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This sets out the way your local authority will consult you on plan preparation and development control. If you get involved in the SCI it should make it easier for you to participate in the preparation of other LDF documents.

Local authorities must consult the community in preparing and reviewing their SCI. There are formal opportunities to get involved. You need to speak to your local authority to find out when these are. You should be aware that there is no requirement to have an SCI before developing the LDF. But remember strict rules requiring proper consultation and involvement apply whether the SCI has been written or not.

Whilst the SCI must meet certain requirements set out by central Government, it will be tailored to local circumstances. The requirements for the SCI are a minimum and local authorities are expected to do much more to properly meet the needs of the community.

SCIs should:

- > Explain why the local authority needs to engage with the community, and what resources will be provided to do so.
- > Set out the types of organisations and communities that the local authority will involve.
- > Set out the range of techniques that will be used to inform, consult and involve communities.

SCIs must also link to other community involvement strategies, including the Sustainable Community Strategy. In the future there may be one SCI prepared by your local authority for the LDF, Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement (see sheet 7 of the Planning Information Pack for full details).

Local authorities must consult the community in developing their SCI, and you should contact them to find out where they are in the preparation of this document. If possible get involved with the SCI, and make sure that the local authority is aware of your interest in planning.



SCI
TIPS

- > Check where your local authority is in preparing the SCI and if possible, participate in its production.
- > If you are a member of a community or voluntary group, make sure you are included in the SCI.
- > If the SCI has already been produced find out when it will be reviewed.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The development control section within your local authority generally deals with planning applications, appeals and enforcement matters (enforcement includes where development has taken place without planning permission).

Once a planning application has been submitted, your local authority will assess it. The decision to grant or refuse permission is made in line with the policies set out in the main documents of the LDF – the Development Plan Documents (DPDs). These are the core strategy, site specific allocations and proposals, area action plans and the proposals map, and the development control DPD if the authority has one. The decision will also take into account other issues (known as ‘material considerations’) which will include things like noise, design, loss of light and supplementary planning documents.

Normally, decisions on large or contentious planning applications are made at a Planning Committee made up of elected Councillors. Your local authority will have a set of criteria for applications going to committee. Councillors consider reports prepared by their planning officers and have the final say on whether a planning application should be granted or refused. Councillors do not have to accept the advice given to them by their officers but in most cases they do.

For minor applications, planning officers normally make decisions on behalf of Councillors. These are known as ‘delegated powers’. It is a good idea to phone and check how your local authority operates, so you know how decisions will be made. No two areas are the same (see sheet 8 of the Planning Information Pack for full details). There are two ways of getting involved in development control; either by submitting an application, or commenting on an application.



Getting Involved – Submitting an application

If you are thinking about starting a development project, for example extending a house, creating a play area or changing the use of a building, then you should contact your local authority. Check if you need planning permission and any other consent (for example, you may also require building regulations or listed building consent).

There are two types of application; full and outline. Full applications require full details of the proposed development including access, layout and design. Outline applications require less detail and can be used to find out whether a development is acceptable in principle. All applications must be submitted to the local authority on a form supplied by them, with drawings showing the location of the site and what you are proposing. Ask your local authority exactly what kind of drawings are required.

Submitted planning applications will be registered and those affected by the development will be notified.

In making a decision your application will be assessed against the policies set out in documents contained in the Local Development Framework (LDF). For most applications decisions should be made within 8 weeks (for large applications it



- > Contact your local authority to find out if you need planning permission or any other consent.
- > Keep in touch with the local authority to see how your application is progressing.
- > Seek advice from Planning Aid – sheet 8 of the Planning Information Pack provides detailed information on applying for planning permission.

is 13 weeks). If the decision is being made by a Planning Committee you may be allowed to attend and may be given the opportunity to present your application. Remember different local authorities take different approaches to committee meetings. It's worth checking with your local authority if there is the opportunity to attend and to speak about your application. After the Councillors have looked at the application, they will make a formal decision which will be sent to you in the post. If the decision making has been delegated to a planning officer, you will also be notified of the decision in writing. The decision will either be for approval, refusal or approval subject to conditions.



If your application is refused, or granted with conditions you think are unreasonable, you have the right to appeal. However, only the person or organisation who submitted the planning application can appeal.

Getting Involved – Commenting on an application

Your local authority keeps a list of all applications. This is known as the ‘register’. Your authority will also produce a weekly list of new applications which can be seen either on the internet, at your local authority offices or on request. These lists contain important information on planning applications and provide contact details for more information.

In addition to keeping a register, your local authority is required to notify immediate neighbours of any application that

will affect them. You will be notified either by letter or a site notice (often seen on lamp posts). For certain applications the local authority is required to place a public notice in the local press. It is important to read these documents as they will contain deadlines for receiving comments as well as details about where to get more information.

If you need more detailed information on a specific development, contact your local authority’s planning department and ask to speak to the planning officer dealing with the application. Get as much information as possible and ask to be notified of any changes or amendments to the proposal.

You can also contact your local Ward Councillor and explain any issues you may have with a specific application. However if your local Ward Councillor sits on the Planning Committee, they may be unable to advise you as all Planning Committee Councillors have to remain neutral.

Everyone has a right to comment on other people’s applications. Comments must be made in writing and received before the deadlines.

Comments must be planning related, for example, is the application in line with policies identified in the LDF documents? Does the proposal create traffic

problems? Are there design issues to consider? Are there access issues which need to be addressed? The decision cannot take into account the effect the proposed development could have on property values. It is also worth remembering all comments on applications are made publicly available.

If the decision is to be made at a Planning Committee you may be given the opportunity to attend and present your comments. Again, you will need to find out whether your local authority provides this opportunity. Everyone who comments on an application will be informed of the decision in writing.

If you have commented on someone else's planning application and are not satisfied with the decision there are only limited opportunities to challenge the decision (see sheet 15 of the Planning Information Pack).

If you are concerned development has taken place in your area without the appropriate planning permission, speak with your local authority and they may decide to take enforcement action (see sheet 12 of the Planning Information Pack).



- > Be aware that there are strict deadlines for making your comments.
- > View the register or the list of existing planning applications.
- > Check the local press and site notices for any information on new development in your area.
- > For detailed information on a specific development, contact your local authority. Meet with planners dealing with the application to discuss your concerns or support.
- > When commenting on an application, give clear and concise planning reasons, and where possible, use the documents within the LDF to support your case.
- > Find out if there are other groups that are interested in the same issues and join forces with them if possible. That way you are more likely to be heard.
- > Seek advice from Planning Aid – see contact details on page 21.



FIND OUT MORE

More comprehensive information on the issues outlined in this guide is available in The Planning Information Pack written by Planning Aid with assistance from Urban Forum. The pack comprises a series of information sheets and is available from your regional Planning Aid office – see contacts on pages 21/22. References to these sheets have been made throughout this Guide.

Sheet number	Content
1	Introduction Spatial Planning in England
2	Plan Preparation Regional Spatial Strategies - what are they?
3	Regional Spatial Strategies - how to get involved
4	Local Development Frameworks - what are they?
5	Local Development Frameworks - how to get involved
6	Independent Examinations and Examinations In Public
7	Statements of Community Involvement
8	Development Control Applying For Planning Permission
9	Commenting on Planning Applications
10	Appeals
11	Special Planning Consents: Listed buildings, Conservation Areas
12	Enforcement
13	Planning and Small Businesses
14	Planning Obligations
15	Further Information Redress
16	Useful Contacts and Publications
17	Glossary



Test of Soundness

Extract from Planning Policy Statement (PPS)12: setting out the test of soundness relating to development plan documents (see page 13).

“The presumption will be that the development plan document is sound unless it is shown to be otherwise as a result of evidence considered at the examination. The criteria for assessing whether a development plan document is sound will apply individually and collectively to policies in the development plan document. A development plan document will be sound if it meets the following tests:

Procedural

- i it has been prepared in accordance with the local development scheme;*
- ii it has been prepared in compliance with the statement of community involvement, or with the minimum requirements set out in the Regulations where no statement of community involvement exists;*
- iii the plan and its policies have been subjected to sustainability appraisal;*

Conformity

- iv it is a spatial plan which is consistent with national planning policy and in general conformity with the regional spatial strategy for the region or, in London, the spatial development strategy and it has properly had regard to any other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or to adjoining areas;*
- v it has had regard to the authority’s community strategy;*

Coherence, consistency and effectiveness

- vi the strategies/policies/allocations in the plan are coherent and consistent within and between development plan documents prepared by the authority and by neighbouring authorities, where cross boundary issues are relevant;*
- vii the strategies/policies/allocations represent the most appropriate in all the circumstances, having considered the relevant alternatives, and they are founded on a robust and credible evidence base;*
- viii there are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring; and*
- ix the plan is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances.*

Where the development plan document relates to housing, local planning authorities should produce housing trajectories which will demonstrate how the plan will deliver the policies relating to housing provision. This will be important in clarifying the delivery mechanisms of the development plan document which will be part of the test of whether it is sound.”

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2004

USEFUL CONTACTS

A list of useful contacts, including Planning Aid's regional offices, National Bodies, Regional Assemblies and Regional Voluntary Sector Networks.

Urban Forum

70 Cowcross Street
London EC1M 6EJ
Tel: 020 7253 4816
Fax: 020 7253 4817
Email: info@urbanforum.org.uk
Web: www.urbanforum.org.uk

Royal Town Planning Institute

41 Botolph Lane,
London EC3R 8DL
Tel: 020 7929 9494,
Fax: 020 7929 9490
E-mail: online@rtpi.org.uk
Web: www.rtpi.org.uk
Web: www.communityplanning.net

National Planning Aid Unit

Unit 419, The Custard Factory
Gibb Street
Birmingham B9 4AA
Tel: 0121 693 1201
Email: info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Web: www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Please note the above web address is for all of the following Planning Aid regional offices

Planning Aid Regional Offices

East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Hertfordshire (excluding London Boroughs))

Po Box 982
Great Shelford
Cambridgeshire CB2 5WY
Tel: 0870 8509801
Email: eeco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

East Midlands (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire)

15 Wheeler Gate
Nottingham NG1 2NA
Tel: 0870 850 9802
Email: wmco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

London (Greater London including all outer London Boroughs)

Unit 2
11-29 Fashion Street
London E1 6PX
Tel: 020 7247 4900
Email:
info@planningaidforlondon.org.uk



North (County Durham, Cumbria & Tees Valley and Tyne and Wear)
Department of Town And Country Planning

Newcastle University,
Claremont Tower
Newcastle NE1 7RU

Tel: 0870 850 9803

Email: ntco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

North West (Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside)
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Sale,

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South (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Oxfordshire)
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Hampshire SO53 2YJ

Tel: 0870 240 7552

Email: soco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

South East (East and West Sussex, Surrey and Kent (Excluding London Boroughs))

Kent Architecture Centre

1st Floor, Admirals Offices,

The Historic Dockyard

Chatham

Kent ME4 4TS

Tel: 0870 850 9806

Email: seco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

South West (Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Isles of Scilly, Channel Islands)

Bristol Architecture Centre,
Narrow Quay

Bristol BS1 4QA

Tel: 0870 850 9807

Email: swco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

West Midlands (Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands Conurbation)

Unit 319

The Custard Factory

Gibb Street

Birmingham B9 4AA

Tel: 0121 766 8044

Email: wmco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Yorkshire (North Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, the East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull and North and

North East Lincolnshire)

The Green Sand Foundry,

99 Water Lane,

Leeds LS11 5QN

Tel: 0870 850 9808

Email: ykco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Regional Assemblies

East of England Regional Assembly

Flempton House
Flempton
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP28 6EG
Tel: 01284 728151
Fax: 01284 729429
Web: www.eera.gov.uk

East Midlands Regional Assembly

First Floor Suite
Council Offices
Nottingham Road
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire
East Midlands LE13 0UL
Tel: 01664 502555
Fax: 01664 568201
Email: info@emra.gov.uk
Web: www.emra.gov.uk

Greater London Assembly

Greater London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4100
Fax: 020 7983 4057
Email: mayor@london.gov.uk
Web: www.london.gov.uk

North West Regional Assembly

Wigan Investment Centre
Waterside Drive
Wigan WN3 5BA
Tel: 01942 737916
Email: enquiries@nwra.gov.uk
Web: www.nwra.gov.uk

North East Assembly

The Guildhall
Quayside
Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3AF
Tel: 0845 673 3343
Fax: 0191 232 4558
Email: enquire@northeastassembly.gov.uk
Web: www.northeastassembly.gov.uk

South East Regional Assembly

Berkeley House
Cross Lanes
Guildford
Surrey GU1 1UN
Tel: 01483 555200
Fax: 01483 555250
Email: secretariat@southeast-ra.gov.uk
Web: www.southeast-ra.gov.uk

South West Regional Assembly

Dennett House
11 Middle Street
Taunton
Somerset TA1 1SH
Tel: 01823 270101
Fax: 01823 425200
Email: swra@southwest-ra.gov.uk
Web: www.southwest-ra.gov.uk

West Midlands Regional Assembly

Regional Partnership Centre
Albert House
Quay Place
92 - 93 Edward Street
Birmingham B1 2RA
Tel: 0121 245 0200
Fax: 0121 245 0201
Email: info@wmra.gov.uk
Web: www.wmra.gov.uk

Yorkshire and Humber Regional Assembly

18 King Street
Wakefield
West Yorkshire WF1 2SQ
Tel: 01924 331555
Fax: 01924 331559
Email: mail@yhassembly.gov.uk
Web: www.yhassembly.gov.uk/index

Regional Voluntary Sector Networks

North East
Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE)
9th Floor
Cale Cross
156 Pilgrim Street
Newcastle Upon Tyne NE1 6SU
Tel: 0191 233 2000
Fax: 0191 222 1998
Email: vonne@vonne.co.uk
Web: www.vonne.co.uk

**North West
Voluntary Sector North West (VSNW)**

St Thomas Centre
Ardwick Green North
Manchester M12 6FZ
Tel: 0161 276 9300
Fax: 0161 276 9301
Email: vsnw@vsnw.org.uk
Web: www.vsnw.org.uk

**Yorkshire and the Humber
Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum**

Suite D10 Josephs Well
Hanover Walk
Leeds LS3 1AB
Tel: 0113 394 2300
Fax: 0113 394 2301
Email: office@regionalforum.org.uk
Web: www.yhregforum.org.uk

East Midlands

Engage East Midlands

Nottingham Voluntary Action Centre

7 Mansfield Road

Nottingham NG1 3FB

Tel: 0115 934 8471

Fax: 0115 934 8498

Email: engage@engage-em.org.uk

Web: www.engage-em.org.uk

West Midlands

Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM)

2nd Floor, Waterlinks House

Richard Street

Birmingham B7 4AA

Tel: 0121 359 9100

Fax: 0121 359 9101

Email: rawm@rawm.co.uk

Web: www.rawm.org.uk

East of England

COVER

Eagle Stile, Rectory Farm Barns

Walden Road

Little Chesterford

Cambridge CB10 1UD

Tel: 01799 532 880

Fax: 01799 532 899

Email: office@cover-east.org

Web: www.cover-east.org

South East

RAISE

Berkeley House

London Square

Cross Lane

Guildford

Surrey GU1 1UN

Tel: 01483 500770

Fax: 01483 574439

Email: mail@raise-networks.org.uk

Web: www.raise-networks.org.uk

South West

South West Forum

Unit 6, Cranmere Court

Lustleigh Close

Matford Business Park

Exeter EX2 8PW

Tel: 01392 823758

Fax: 01392 823033

Email: office@southwestforum.org.uk

Web: www.southwestforum.org.uk

London

Third Sector Alliance

C/o London Voluntary Service Council

356 Holloway Road

London N7 6PA

Tel: 0207 700 8124

Fax: 0207 700 8108

Email : jane@lvsc.org.uk

Web: www.actionlink.org.uk/3sa



Other information

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)

Somerford Court, Somerford Road
Circencester
Gloucestershire GL7 1TW
Tel: 01285 653477
Fax: 01285 654537
Email: acre@acre.org.uk
Web: www.acre.org.uk

National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)

177 Arundel Street
Sheffield S1 2NU
Tel: 0114 278 6636
Fax: 0114 278 7004
Email: nacvs@nacvs.org.uk
Web: www.nacvs.org.uk

Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)

17 Carlton House Terrace,
London SW1Y 5AS
Tel: 020 7930 8903
Fax: 020 7930 3280
Email: tcpa@tcpa.org.uk
Web: www.tcpa.org.uk

Planning Portal

Web: www.planningportal.gov.uk

Information on your local Council

Web: www.direct.gov.uk

BBC iCAN!

Web:
www.bbc.co.uk/dna/ican/A1939944

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) - formerly ODPM

Web: www.communities.gov.uk

Friends of the Earth

26-28 Underwood Street
London
N1 7JQ
Tel: 020 7490 1555
Freephone: 0800 800111
Web: www.foe.org.uk

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THE HANDY GUIDE TO PLANNING



Urban Forum is a national membership charity for community and voluntary groups involved in regeneration. Working from the ground up, Urban Forum takes messages from communities to Government, where it seeks to influence policy-making.



Planning Aid is a charitable organisation that provides free independent and professional advice on town and country planning issues to community groups and individuals who cannot afford to pay for professional help. We also work with communities to help them understand, and play a role in, the planning process. Planning Aid is an independent source of advice and information.



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