

1. The 10 commitments checklist

Early in 2014 a cross sector group from councils, the development industry and statutory consultees agreed **10 Commitments** that they believed would improve the contribution of pre-application discussions to good planning.

For this initiative to work each group needs to modify the way they currently work. To help Local authorities to work out whether their pre-application service meets the 10 commitments, the following is a cut down version of the larger document. Use this as a checklist for your service.

1. Enable sustainable development to proceed efficiently from proposal to completion

How? Via open and integrated working with all parties. Adopt a spirit of finding solutions to enable a clearer path through the planning system.

2. Offer a range of pre-application services to developers, making sure that each choice can be delivered in a timely, effective manner; proportionate to the size of the proposal

How? Make choices available; from self-serve guidance to detailed problem solving working on complex proposals. Clearly set out the process, costs, timetable and output for each level and put this on the planning page of your council's website.

3. Help potential applicants to select the level of engagement necessary to deal with the issues raised by the proposal

How? Recognise that potential applicants will only choose services that offer good value for their business. Set out what they will receive and be sure you deliver on service promises.

4. Demonstrate that your pre-application services are good value for money, whether or not you make a charge to the prospective applicant

How? Pre-application engagement costs both the council and the developer. So, make sure the process is efficiently run and effective. If you do charge, make sure that the cost is justified and relates to the services offered.

5. Co-operate to bring together the right people to address all of the development issues

How? Have processes in place to ensure that the right people are involved so advice given and commitments made are carried through to application and permitting stages.

6. Have an open exchange of information.

How? By ensuring all information pertinent to the decision making is freely available to all interested parties prior to the submission of an application.

7. Be collaborative; the requirements of all parties should be given consideration

How? The planning considerations might be the starting point, but to encourage delivery, the needs of other parties have also to be taken into consideration. Planning Performance Agreements provide a shared project management schedule.

8. Provide an opportunity for councillors to be actively involved in pre-application discussions

How? Bring councillors and developers together to help develop a scheme to meet the area's needs.

9. Engage with local communities about development proposals as early as possible

How? Facilitate conversations between communities, councillors and developers to help inform and influence the proposals.

10. Maintain an agreed record of information submitted, advice given and any agreements reached

How? Share agreed notes to provide transparency, help build trust, and ensure that pre-application discussions have traction when the application is considered.

