

The role of Local Planning Authorities in bringing forward Brownfield Land



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Session outline

- Context
- The brief and our approach
- Overarching findings
- Planner's / Planning roles
- Some case study snapshots
- Your experience





Context

- Numerous initiatives, policy approaches, research reports
- Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill (May 2022) - *‘empowering councils to make better use of brownfield land’*
- Little research focussed on the specific contribution of planning and planners



The PAS Brief

Using case study research, 'seek to establish and record good practice in how LPAs have collaborated with developers and other stakeholders using the planning process to facilitate development on brownfield land.'



Our approach

- Ten case study locations
- Interviews with key people (April – June 2022)
- Case study write-ups (June 2022)
- Research team roundtable (June 2022)
- Wider dissemination (July -September 2022)



Initial findings

In brief, we found:

- Shared experiences
- Overwhelming positivity
- And a lot of commonality on the importance/
potential of planning, but variations on its
degree of power/influence



The access road into Northwick Park Hospital, Brent
Image source: Google maps [accessed 14/6/22]

The overarching story



Key planning tools

Local plans

Supplementary
guidance

Development
frameworks

Masterplans

Application
process (outline,
layered, and full)

Legal
agreements
(s111, s106)

Conditions

Enforcement

Planners make a real difference through ...

Negotiation &
persuasion

Knowledge /
brokerage -
*"smoothing
the way"*

Comms

Openness /
honesty / trust
/ transparency

Continuity

Resources (LRF
funding,
people, land)

Compromise

Mediation

Focusing on
shared goals

*"Going the
extra mile to
deliver a great
outcome"*

The context of planner's work

ENABLERS

- Planning policy
- LA takes some form of **leadership**
- Compatibility of objectives and **ethos**
- Single tier authority
- In house capacity
- Political unity and stability
- Landownership
- Funding to 'unlock' sites
- Positive relationships
- Skills of those involved

INHIBITORS

- Partners' differing timescales for delivery
- Absence of common goals
- Land contamination
- Access
- Two-tiered authorities
- Difficult local market conditions impacting 'Viability' (mix of uses, public transport contributions, affordable housing)

The context of planner's work

Aspects that can be both

- Local market circumstances
- Heritage (listed Buildings and archaeology)
- Land ownership
- Motivations (of partners/LAs/LPAs)

Falcons and Chip Shops

Some case study snap shots on the role of planning....



Questions...

What is your experience?

How could we make this work more useful?

How might PAS support your place?

Have you got a story for us?



What's next?

- Case studies published on the PAS website
- Publication in the TCPA Journal
- Conference presentations
- Possibility of further case studies



North East Lincolnshire Council: Land at Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby

This case study highlights that, despite having an out-of-date plan, an unallocated site and several potential viability showstoppers, brownfield sites can be brought forward and successfully delivered with strong leadership, an ethos of problem-solving and partnership working.

"It's about the people not the process. If we hadn't worked together for such a long time and built up those relationships, I feel like it would have been a much more challenging process" (Local Planning Authority)

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Nobles Road and North Parade, Mendip

This case study highlights the benefits of Local Authorities undertaking partnership working to build affordable and social housing on council-owned brownfield land.

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City of Wolverhampton Council: Stratton Urban Village, Stratton

"In this planning team, we talk about the art of the possible. That's what we achieve working collaboratively with the developer, with internal and external consultants as we can say, 'that is what is possible.'" (Local Planning Officer)

... the fact that there was an SPD... demonstrates the ambition of the Council... a real positive... recognition given to all certainty that it all fits together... the Council have invested not insignificant resource... they were anxious about making sure this was delivered..." (Developer)

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