

Preparing housing led LDOs:

Advice note based on learning from the PAS LDO pilots

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1. Introduction

The function of a Local Development Order (LDO) is to accelerate delivery. They are about adopting a local solution to simplifying planning in order to address local issues.

This advice note is intended to help councils by providing guidance on the potential of local development orders (LDOs) to encourage housing development to come forward on brownfield land. We have drawn on the experience of councils who have worked as pilots with PAS and DCLG to develop LDOs for sites in their area to understand more about:

- Why LDOs are a very useful tool for proactive planning in a range of circumstances and
- How to go about developing an appropriate LDO to match your ambitions, the site circumstances and resources available.

LDOs are a positive planning tool. They create a more certain planning environment and thereby make investment more attractive. They embody a fundamental shift on the part of local authorities from waiting for the market to come to them with a proposal, to initiating development activity by granting permission for the kind of development that they want to come forward on a site.

With an LDO in place for specified development on an identified site, planning consent should be easier, less expensive, less risky and faster for developers as there is no need to prepare a planning application, pay fees (see 5.6) and wait for a decision.

The benefits for councils who take this pro-active approach are varied, from the enhanced reputation as an attractive place to do business, to encouraging landowners and developers to seize the opportunity to develop on stalled sites, creating good places and to enable faster more flexible delivery enabling them to meet their own development priorities and achieve a competitive return.

Government has signalled the intention to make Councils more responsible for delivering the housing targets in their local plans to meet local need through various measures in the Housing and Planning Bill. The first step is to ensure that planning permissions are in place on sites suitable for housing. LDOs are a key mechanism, alongside the conventional consent on planning applications and (potentially) permissions in principle.

One of the chief advantages of the LDO is that the order can be shaped to local circumstances and to embody local aspirations – they can be as simple as to grant permission for a certain type of housing on a site in a flexible layout that protects the amenity of neighbouring properties (as in the Swindon pilots scheme) or for the development parameters to be set for a mixed use, multi stage town centre site (as in Teignmouth).

This advice note sets out the procedural steps to make an LDO as well as advising on the resources necessary, how to take people with you and options for shaping the LDO to meet individual needs.