

Lambeth Council

Planning Performance Agreement Charter

The Council's Community Plan sets out its vision for the future of the Borough. This vision requires that all development is of the highest quality and is founded on the principles of economic, social, environmental and physical sustainability. As set out in its Local Plan new development must contribute to the well-being of existing and future communities.

This Charter sets out how the 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. Such an approach is the best way of developing proposals that will meet the vision and objectives of the Council. Where major development proposals are deemed to be in accordance with the Development Plan for the area or have the potential to meet the Council's objectives, the Council will instigate a Project Team approach and seek to manage the project through a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA).

The Council Structure

An approach to the Council about a large scale development project will initially be through the Planning and Development Team. 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.

The make up of the Project Team will be determined, according to the needs of the project, by the Development Management Team. For large strategic projects an officers' Steering Group will be established which will be chaired by the Assistant Director for Planning and Development. The Chair of the Steering Group will be responsible for corporate delivery, progressing the project and communication to Council Members and the public. In addition, a Project Manager will be identified. The Project Manager will be responsible for the co-ordination of the project team and the primary interface with the developer's Project Team; ensuring tasks are delivered to agreed timescales, regular reporting and liaison with other stakeholders.

All members of the project teams will work on behalf of the Council in the wider public interest and to secure the best quality scheme delivering the objectives of the Development Plan and other 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. It is important that other stakeholders including the GLA, TfL, Historic England and the Environment Agency are involved in the pre-application process. Where major development sites straddle local authority boundaries the Council will ensure that the joint working approach is fully embraced. The local planning authority and partner organisations are committed to sharing existing information with the development interests.

Community Engagement

As set out in the Statement of Community Involvement, the Council is committed to open and constructive community engagement. In all projects falling within the scope of this Charter, community engagement will be established in liaison with the Lambeth Strategic Partnership. For large strategic projects the Council is likely to seek the developer's commitment to an independently facilitated design process.

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. Our normal procedure would be to present information on large strategic projects to members of the Planning Applications Committee at least once prior to the application being formally reported for decision. This will allow Members to develop an understanding of issues and raise their own issues and concerns that they wish to be addressed. Members will not express views about the overall planning merits of any case and will not engage privately with the developer interest. Projects of a strategic nature will also usually be presented to the Strategic Planning Panel of senior officers and Members at the pre-application stage.

Expectations of the Developer

The Council will expect the developer to approach any proposal in an open, collaborative and creative manner. The developer will be expected to employ high quality staff and consultants with sound expertise in delivering sustainable communities. All projects will be delivered through a robust project management process and as with the Council the applicants will be expected to use best endeavours to meet agreed timetables.

Funding

The applicant will be expected to fund the Council's input into pre-application activity in accordance with their individual PPA.

In addition the Council will have an expectation that the preparation of the application material, production of technical reports, and 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 Planning Performance Agreement. 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 Steering Group with key decision makers and the Project Manager (Council lead). Technical working groups may be required when technical tasks are identified (which will be co-ordinated by the Project Manager). The Steering Group should deal with any issues or conflicts arising, not the mechanics of the project
- 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 requires 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.