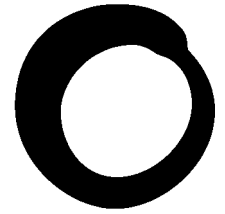


May 2008



**Friends of
the Earth**

Local Development Schemes

Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems, which make life better for people.

Friends of the Earth is:

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation**
- the most extensive environmental network in the world, with almost one million supporters across five continents and over 60 national organisations worldwide**
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland**
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of its income.**

To join or make a donation call us on 0800 581 051

Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ

Tel: 020 7490 1555 Fax: 020 7490 0881 Email: info@foe.co.uk Website: www.foe.co.uk

Friends of the Earth Limited company number 1012357

♻️ Printed on paper made from 100 per cent post-consumer waste

Local Development Schemes

The local development scheme (LDS) is a critical part of the local development framework. It is a public statement setting out details of which local development documents will be produced, in what order and when. Producing the local development scheme is a priority for all authorities, as it will set out the timetable for document preparation over the coming years.

The LDS is the starting point for local communities to find out what local planning policies relate to your area. It will set out the current policies which relate to the planning of your area and also outline the programme for the preparation of local development documents over a 3-year rolling period.

Local development schemes should now be available from all local planning authorities. This also applies to county councils in respect of minerals and waste development schemes. Schemes will need to have shown by 31 March 2007 how sustainable development will be met through efficient and high quality planning and development management processes.

Whilst initial local development schemes should focus on the first 3 years from commencement of the Act (2004), they should also indicate any work that has been undertaken prior to commencement. In addition, schemes should indicate in general terms what future work is proposed beyond 2007, particularly in terms of reviewing or supplementing the documents proposed in the local development scheme. They should set out complete timelines for production, from evidence base development to adoption, for all documents whose preparation commences within the first three years.

Comprehensive survey and monitoring information will be needed to develop evidence bases which help authorities to identify opportunities, constraints and issues for their areas. A lot of basic information is likely to be collected already. Authorities will need to assess and build on this to ensure they have sufficient social, environmental, economic and physical information to identify the spatial characteristics of their locality. Local communities, stakeholders and commercial interests should be involved in the development of the evidence base.

Transitional Arrangements

On commencement of the Act, all existing adopted local plans, unitary plans and relevant structure plan policies will automatically be saved for three years. Transition to local development frameworks should take place as quickly as possible whilst maintaining sufficient continuity to guide development decisions. Local development schemes will therefore be required to show for each 'saved' policy:

- if it is to be replaced, deleted or merged;
- the timing of the above; and
- within which development plan document any replacement policy is located.

There are lots of ways Local Authorities are preparing their LDF, and it depends upon how recently their last sets of plans were published. For further information please see Planning Policy Statement 12: Local development frameworks and the companion guide.

Approach to the Local Development Scheme

The following approach is recommended in terms of preparation:

Step 1: scope main issues to be addressed by the local development framework. Based on their initial evidence base preparation and appreciation of their locality, authorities should identify key issues to be addressed by the local development framework and sustainability appraisal. Identifying local issues and main areas of change will help to inform decisions on any area action plans or area-based supplementary plan documents to be produced. Consideration of the key issues for main policy themes (e.g. housing, environment and economy) will inform the approach to the core strategy and whether there is a need to produce separate development plan documents on subjects such as housing.

Step 2: review the existing plan. Authorities are not starting from scratch. They should assess existing development plans, in particular considering:

- how up-to-date they are;
- consistency with national planning policy and regional planning policy;
- relationship with local strategies and initiatives including
- the community strategy, local transport plan, and areas identified for regeneration; and how well they promote and deliver sustainable development.

Step 3: develop working assumptions on the core strategy and local development framework contents. Each authority will need to consider:

- the likely content of the core strategy;
- whether any local development documents need to be prepared in parallel. (For example, an authority may choose to prepare an area action plan for a key site in parallel with the preparation of their core strategy);
- whether any documents are to be prepared jointly with one or more authorities;
- locations and roles (in general terms) of potential action area plans;
- the need for supplementary planning documents;
- the main technical studies required to develop a robust evidence base;
- anticipated committee cycles which local development document production will need to be synchronised with; and
- a logical sequence for the production of documents, taking into account the links between them and their impacts upon other strategies.

Format and content of the Local Development Scheme

The published scheme should be a concise, accessible and user-friendly document. It should not be longer than 20-25 pages, and in many instances could be shorter depending on the scope of the local development framework. Authors should bear in mind that it will be their community's main source of information on the local development document programme, so a positive and promotional tone explaining the authority's proposals will be crucial. The scheme should clearly set out the timetables and milestones for document

preparation and their proposed content.

They should be written in plain English and must contain:

- An introduction – setting out contents, together with a brief overview of its role and explanation of the terminology used.
- Brief description of proposed local development documents – possibly in table form, showing each local development document to be produced, its status, role and content, geographical coverage and position in the chain of conformity.
- Explanation as to how the local development framework will be structured, particularly how different local development documents interrelate. This will include the relationship with the relevant regional spatial strategy (or spatial development strategy in London) and between local development documents i.e. the chain of conformity, especially between the core strategy and other documents. This should include a brief description of how sustainability appraisal will relate to various stages of document preparation.
- Details of any documents that are to be prepared on a joint basis with other local planning authorities.
- In the transitional period, which ‘saved’ policies are to be replaced, deleted or merged over the period of the scheme. This should also identify if the authority intends to save policies beyond the 3 year period and its approach to supplementary planning guidance.

Further information and guidance:

Friends of the Earth – Tel 020 7490 1555
26 – 28 Underwood Street, London, N1 7JQ
Website: www.foe.co.uk

Planning

Email: planning@foe.co.uk
Website: www.YourPlanningRights.co.uk

Right to Know

Email: right2know@foe.co.uk
Website: www.RightToKnowOnline.org

Rights and Justice Centre

Email: legal@foe.co.uk

Useful web sites

Government

Audit Commission
www.audit-commission.gov.uk

Department for Communities and Local Government
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/>

The Planning Inspectorate
<http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/>

Environment Agency
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/

Environment Agency Public Registers
<http://www2.environment-agency.gov.uk/epr/>

Information Commissioners Office
www.ico.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Statistics
www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
www.legislation.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm

Planning Portal
www.planningportal.gov.uk

Non Governmental Organisations (NGO)

Air Quality – UK National Air Quality site
www.airquality.co.uk

Campaign to Protect Rural England planning site
www.planninghelp.org.uk

Environmental Law Foundation

www.elflaw.org/

Liberty

www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/

Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation

www.nif.co.uk/

Planning Aid

www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Wildlife and Countryside Link.

www.wcl.org.uk

Further Reading:

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

Planning Policy Statement 12: companion guide

Both available from Department for Communities and Local Government planning website

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143846>