

Economy, Housing & Planning

Executive Head: Chris Elliott

Open letter to site promoters

My Ref:
Your Ref:

Date: 12 October 2016

Local Plan Strategic Site Proposals: Meetings with site promoters

1. This open letter sets out how the Council will manage and accommodate any requests for meetings in relation to potential or proposed Local Plan strategic housing development sites. It sets out our expectations about the appropriate scope of any such meetings in the period up to the publication of a submission draft Local Plan by mid-2017.
2. Any meetings requests agreed would be on a 'without prejudice' basis to decisions the elected Council will make about what sites or policies to include in the Local Plan.

Officer availability for meetings

3. To fit our work programme and the Local Plan [timetable](#) requests for site meetings will be accommodated at specific times as set out below. For the remainder of 2016 our priority is to complete our analysis of consultation feedback and undertake preparatory work to inform site policy and master planning. We will also continue to undertake our own Local Plan testing and evidence development including identification of key infrastructure requirements and community benefits necessary to deliver sustainable development.
4. For promoters of Local Plan sites our standard Development Control pre-application process will not be available as an alternative to the arrangements set out below.

Local Plan work and site objectives

5. We intend that the submission stage Local Plan will include a concept masterplan for each strategic housing site proposal as part of a site specific policy to guide future development of the site. The concept master plan would identify key factors such as the landscape and green infrastructure framework (including habitat recreational mitigation), the main arrangements for site access and circulation, and thereby the main development parcels. The site policy would set out in broad terms what the site should accommodate and identify development issues and infrastructure requirements.
6. Arrangements may vary from site to site but site promoters usually prefer to prepare their own site master plans. Promoters are also responsible for preparing any site specific technical studies necessary to demonstrate that their site is suitable for development, to complement higher level technical studies the Council undertakes.

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Scope and purpose of meetings

7. The primary aim of agreeing to requests for meetings will be to provide an opportunity to bring together work produced by the Council and by site promoters to inform preparation of both the Local Plan and future development proposals if the sites are allocated. Discussion will be limited to matters relevant to the preparation of the concept masterplans and site policies at a level of detail sufficient for a submission Local Plan. We make no offer or commitment to discuss other matters that might be of interest to site promoters unless we think it useful to do so for our own Local Plan preparation purposes.

Inception meetings for Initial Proposals sites

8. On request and where the Council has not already met with the owners or promoters, one free inception meeting will be offered for each site identified in the Local Plan Initial Proposals consultation document. The meeting will last about 60 minutes.
9. The Council will explain the Local Plan process and timetable, outline work that officers will be doing, identify issues and constraints that affect the site, and outline work that site promoters should be doing if they want to make the case for allocating their site to the Council and (if the Council decides to allocate the site) at the Local Plan examination.
10. The promoters would explain the land ownership position, any contractual arrangements in place or in progress to bring the site forward for development if allocated, and any arrangements in place or in progress to undertake any technical work necessary to promote the site effectively through the Local Plan process. Discussion of any site proposal details would be held over to subsequent progress meetings.
 - **Inception meeting dates: 31 October - 4 November and 14-18 November 2016**

Site progress meetings for Initial Proposals sites

11. On request the Council will accommodate further progress meetings about Initial Proposals sites in the first quarter of 2017. These meetings would provide a structured opportunity for constructive guidance, feedback and to work through technical issues that may arise with the aim of achieving a robust site policy and broad agreement on the site master planning approach. Meetings will be attended by a senior policy and development control planner, and appropriate design or technical specialists.
12. In designated Neighbourhood Areas where the Town or Parish Council is supportive of the principle of site development, site progress meetings will be arranged in consultation with and including Town or Parish Council representatives, if they wish to participate.
13. Council fees for pre-application advice will apply to site progress meetings. These are available on request.
14. Site promoter meetings: offered dates
 - **Progress meetings round one: 30 January - 3 February, 9-17 February 2017**
 - **Progress meetings round two: 13-31 March 2017**

Meeting requests to promote 'omission' sites not included in the Initial Proposals consultation

15. If promoters of new or alternative strategic scale sites not included in the Initial Proposal consultation wish to meet with the Council, requests will be accommodated on the dates and basis set out below.
16. Meeting requests would be accepted on the proviso that their purpose is to provide the promoter with an opportunity to make a positive case for allocation of their site and to explain how any technical, environmental or policy constraints could be overcome or adequately mitigated. The Council makes no commitment to discuss other matters.
17. A site plan or map clearly showing the area of proposed allocation and of promoter land control or ownership must be supplied at the time a meeting is requested.
18. Meetings will be limited to 90 minutes at a fixed fee of £500 payable in advance.
 - **Other promoted site meeting dates: 30 January 2017 – 3 February 2017.**
19. Additional dates for omission site meetings may be available in the period reserved for round one site progress meetings, in any time remaining after meetings for Initial Proposals sites have been accommodated. Requests for any subsequent meetings to the initial session would be at entirely at the Council's discretion.
20. We will decline meeting requests for sites that lack sufficient supporting information, are below the strategic size threshold or that are in a location we consider fundamentally inappropriate for any form of built development. Strategic sites need be able to accommodate 100 or more homes at densities typical of the local context plus land for recreational habitat mitigation and open space.

Working principles and terms

21. To re-iterate, meetings are offered on a 'without prejudice' basis and no guarantee is made or implied that Initial Proposals or other proposed sites will be taken forward as allocations in the submission version of the Local Plan, whether or not the site promoter participates in meetings.
22. Meetings will be open, collaborative and problem-solving and respectful of the different roles, views and interests of those participating.
23. Material for review or discussion at scheduled meetings must be provided two weeks before the meeting unless otherwise agreed.
24. A succinct log of agreed actions to be completed by or discussed at any subsequent meeting will be maintained by the Council but there will be no formal meeting note.
25. Matters shared and discussed shall be treated as confidential by both parties to the agreement and their representatives or consultants, until the submission version of the Local Plan is published unless otherwise agreed.
26. In the interests of transparency a public list of meetings that have taken place will be reported monthly to Planning Committee.

Arranging meetings

27. Meetings are offered by site, not by promoter or owner. As the dates offered are of necessity limited and sites numerous you may need to be flexible. Where there are multiple owners or promoters these parties should make appropriate arrangements so all can be represented, before contacting the Council with preferred dates and a list of attendees. We have provided ample notice and a range of dates to facilitate this. Contact us if you need assistance to identify other site promoters.
28. To arrange a meeting please contact us by email FAO **Anja Jennings** at: dev.control@newforest.gov.uk with your preferred and two acceptable alternative dates in the periods we have identified, specifying morning or afternoon, and an initial list of the parties who will be attending. In the email title please include the phrase 'Local Plan site meeting request' and if applicable the site identifier from Appendix A of the Initial Proposals consultation document eg proposed site A-X.
29. You can also send us at any time technical or promotional material in support of any site to: policyandplans@newforest.gov.uk.
30. If you have any queries not relating to available meeting dates, please contact the Policy and Plans team.

Yours faithfully

Policy and Plans team

New Forest District Council

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