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Planning Performance Agreements



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What are Planning Performance Agreements?

[A Planning Performance Agreement \(PPA\) \(PDF 4mb\)](#)



is a project management tool which the local planning authority and applicants can use to agree timescales, actions and resources for handling particular applications. A PPA should improve the speed and quality of the decision-making process, deliver better outcomes, and facilitate better engagement between local authorities, developers and – where possible – other key players. A PPA should achieve more than merely setting a timetable for a decision. Some key potential benefits include:

- establishing a better understanding of a project's needs, including management of resources, and the scope of collaborative working;
- setting a realistic timetable relevant for the size and complexity of the application and defining key milestones
- minimising the risks and costs of appeal
- enabling identification of problems and a method of reviewing these
- providing a formal mechanism for parties, including key stakeholders, to collaborate

The Local Planning Authority is fully committed to the aims of PPAs to assist in providing a positive and pro-active Development Management Service and help deliver the aim of achieving high quality development within Hertsmeire.

Providing a planning performance agreement helps ensure that proposals progress through the application process in a timely fashion and result in high quality development but the service is costly in respect to time and resource. It is therefore necessary to charge for all planning performance agreements to ensure that adequate

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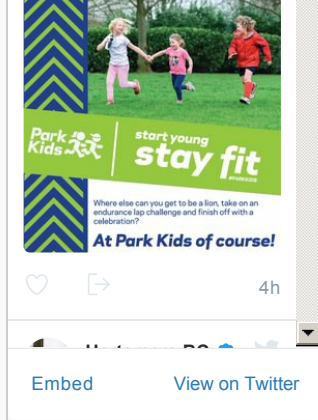
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resources and expertise can be provided to help advise on development proposals. A copy of the baseline (we will frequently need to put together a bespoke package and associated charge subject to the scale of the proposals and the time required towards them) charging schedule is provided via the links to the PPA document at the start and end of this page.

When should a PPA be initiated?

Engagement at an early stage about the process of handling an application means that issues and concerns are also identified at that stage. Front-loading and early engagement are being increasingly recognised as good practice. To make the best use of time and to reap the most benefits, a PPA is best commenced at the [pre-application stage](#).

There needs to be an understanding between the local authority and the developer and a desire on both sides to work together towards a shared vision and objectives. PPAs need to be flexible to take account of changes but clear enough to set out a framework for dealing with such eventualities.

A PPA should form part of the pre-application process. While the start of a PPA will differ from case to case, generally we believe the best time to discuss the suitability of a PPA is following the receipt by a customer of the council's initial pre-application response to a development enquiry.

It is at this stage that officers will be able to advise whether a proposal would benefit from a PPA, or whether or not a proposal is capable of merely proceeding straight to formal planning submission.

What is the best approach to agreeing the scope of a PPA?

The process for agreeing a PPA must be proportionate to the proposals. Developers (applicants) and local authorities can achieve a proportionate PPA by having clear aims and objectives for the proposed development, the application process and the PPA itself before starting discussions.

We fully recognise that agreeing a PPA should not take up valuable time and resources, so that it becomes a work stream in itself and delays discussion and determination of a proposed

planning application. The real task is not negotiating an agreement, but setting out a framework early on. This will allow the objectives to be delivered; the necessary steps taken for the planning application to be formulated, submitted and validated; and for consultation to be done in an appropriate co-ordinated and informed way.

As part of the Local Planning Authority's key facilitator role to major development enquiries, officers will normally prepare a draft of a PPA to help expedite discussion with a developer leading to sign off. However, if a developer prefers to submit their own draft, officers will be equally happy to follow this approach.

What happens if things go wrong?


A PPA does not bind the developer or the local authority into the agreed process. If the authority fails to determine the application in accordance with the agreed date then the normal statutory provisions apply and the developer may appeal. Likewise, if a developer does not abide by the PPA, the local authority will not be obliged to follow the agreed process. To avoid any doubt, the PPA should specify the date from which the right to appeal for non-determination runs.


In cases where dispute arises, in particular where a developer feels the council is not meeting the timescales provided in a PPA, arrangements will be made for the matter to be urgently reviewed by the planning development manager or if required the head of planning.

Review of PPA Process

As part of the Development Management Service's standard business, those developers entering into PPAs with the authority will be invited to share their experience with the service, once a PPA is completed. This will ensure that any lessons learned and general feedback can be captured and incorporated into future reviews of the service's PPA procedures

Related documents

 [Pre-application advice and planning performance agreement service \(PDF 4mb\)](#)

 [Pre-application advice and planning performance agreement service application form \(DOC 731kb\)](#)



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