

Local Development Framework

Local Development Frameworks in the new planning system

The **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act** received Royal Assent on 13 May and is due to come into force in July. It introduces fundamental changes to the nature and role of planning and how local planning documents are prepared.

The new legislation introduces the concept of **spatial planning**. This extends the role of planning from physical land use matters to cover a number of key policy areas such as the economy, housing, health, tourism, culture, climate change and transport. The **Local Development Framework (LDF)** will help to coordinate and deliver the spatial elements of these strategies and has a key role to play in delivering the **community strategy's** objectives.

Under the current planning system the majority of the local plan policies are criteria based and reactive, relying on the development industry for implementation. The new system of positive planning will replace this with a plan focused on a strategy and vision for the area and positive delivery through **Area Action Plans**, partnership working and identified funding sources.

There will be greater emphasis on monitoring and review through the introduction of an **annual monitoring report**. This will include monitoring of the effectiveness of policies and performance on the delivery of housing units. Good monitoring will help in prioritizing policies and documents for review.

What's in a Local Development Framework?

- a) The **Local Development Framework (LDF)**, will comprise a number of local development documents including:
- a Statement of Community Involvement,
 - a Core Strategy,
 - site allocations plans,
 - a set of generic development control policies,
 - Area Action Plans, and
 - Supplementary Planning Documents
- b) Genuine community involvement lies at the heart of the new system. A **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** becomes a statutory requirement. The **SCI** will set out the City Council's approach to involving communities in the different documents that make up the **LDF**. The emphasis is on participation early on in the policy-making process.
- c) The **Core Strategy** will be the strategy and vision for Brighton and Hove and will include city-wide policies. The timetable for the LDF will need to align with the review of the **Community Strategy** (as recommended in best practice guidance).
- d) A **Housing, Employment and Mixed Use Site Allocations Plan** will help the City Council to respond to national and regional policy on housing and the economy.
- e) A set of **development control policies**.
- f) The process of identifying opportunities for **Areas Action Plans (AAPs)** – areas of significant change, regeneration or conservation) should involve early community participation.
- g) **Supplementary planning documents (SPDs)** will replace supplementary planning guidance notes and their preparation will require greater community involvement.

Briefing Note

Local Development Framework

- h) The new legislation also raises the threshold on requirements for sustainability appraisal and **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** introduced in an EU Directive. This takes sustainability to the centre of the plan preparation process and introduces the requirement for a **Baseline Conditions Study** (a Study setting out the current environmental, social and economic conditions in Brighton and Hove).
- i) The **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** will be the first reference point for stakeholders and the community with the Local Development Framework. Its role is to outline how the new system of local development documents work, set out the timetable for preparation of new documents and how they will replace the saved development plans. The LDS will also set out the key stages and will be updated annually.

The Process of preparing a Local development Framework

Local Plans will be replaced by **Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)**, comprising a series of local development documents that will collectively make up the development plan and planning guidance for an area.

It is important to note that the **Local Plan** will be 'saved' (i.e. remain the guiding framework for development control) for a period of three years from the date of its adoption. The Government is however, encouraging local planning authorities to commence work on a three year programme for LDF preparation and has framed the 2004/05 Best Value Performance Indicators accordingly.

To inform development of the LDF, the City Council is required to prepare a **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** which is effectively a work programme and timetable for LDF preparation. A draft LDS for Brighton and Hove is already being prepared in consultation with GOSE.

For each of the documents which comprise the LDF, the LDS will set out a series of 'critical steps', including;

- early community and stakeholder involvement;
- development of an evidence base (research studies and information gathering);
- report to council on options and issues;
- consultation on options;
- evaluation of consultation and report to council on preferred options;
- consultation on preferred options;
- submission to Secretary of State;
- Examination in Public; and,
- adoption

The critical steps highlight the need for a robust mechanism for securing the involvement of members of the council throughout the process of preparing the LDF. The involvement of councillors is afforded particular significance by:

- the emphasis placed on community involvement from the outset;
- the need to pursue a genuinely spatial approach which looks beyond the traditional boundaries of planning; and,
- the importance attached to delivering the LDF's objectives in partnership with others.