

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN – TECHNICAL OFFICER GROUP

Introduction

The establishment of a Technical Officer Group (TOG) provides an opportunity for the Authority to institute a means of overseeing and informing the development of the LDP and its Sustainability Appraisal /Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). The establishment of such a group (particularly from a HRA and SA/SEA) is actively encouraged within the LDP Manual. The TOG will provide expert advice and information in order to support the continued formulation of a deliverable and sustainable land use plan for the County. The TOG will not compromise the key strategic role of the Key Stakeholder Forum and is not a decision making body within the plan making process. An indicative TOG membership list, consisting of Local Authority officers along with representatives from external agencies, is provided within the Terms of Reference. It should be noted that this membership list is not exhaustive and there is potential for contributions from other persons/agencies where their specialist input would be beneficial to the TOG.

Terms of Reference

Primary Purpose

The LDP manual states that formulating a Technical Officer Group (TOG) can provide the LPA with a means of overseeing and informing the development of the SA /SEA and the LDP. The TOG will provide advice and information in order to inform the development of a deliverable and sustainable land use plan for the County.

Objectives

The TOG will:-

- Review and confirm site assessment methodology (SAM)
- Assess candidate sites in accordance with the SAM for potential consideration in terms of the LDP
- Provide feedback on emerging/key policy (eg climate change) and investment programmes (eg A.M.P.)
- Refine and confirm LDP issues by evolving strategic themes and enhancing their local distinctiveness.
- Refine and confirm SA Objectives and evidence baseline
- Refine and confirm LDP objectives, strategy and policies
- Contribute to the ongoing gathering of evidence and where necessary to the preparation of background papers.

An agenda will be circulated prior to the meeting being convened.

Mandate

The role of the TOG will be advisory in nature without decision making powers and as such it will only operate successfully if the aim of producing a coherent and balanced Plan is maintained, and compromise and consensus building are achieved. Therefore representatives will need to:

- Be able and willing to contribute to discussions and make recommendations on behalf of their department/organisation at the meetings
- Be committed to working, assisting and informing the plan making process.
- Accommodate differing views, seeking consensus and accepting compromise to reach agreement on the matters placed before them
- Be open minded and consider the whole picture, not seeking to promote sectional interests.
- Support and encourage the implementation of the Plan.

Substitutes

It is accepted that some Officers may not be able to make every meeting. A representative may be sent in place of the nominated member subject to the following:

- The substitute is fully aware of the outcomes of previous meetings and is in a position to actively participate.
- The substitute complies with the requirements of the Membership mandate.

Where no suitable substitute is possible, any input the member wishes to make on the information before the TOG should be submitted no later than 3 days before the date of any meeting, in order for the information to be reviewed and presented to the TOG as appropriate.

Endorsement

The establishment of the Group and its terms of reference will be formally endorsed by the LDP Advisory Panel. The Group will not compromise the key strategic role of the Key Stakeholder Forum.

Quorum

Due to the fact that the Group is not a formal decision making body, it is not necessary to have a quorum limit.

Frequency

The Group will meet as and when required. This may result in periods where meetings are not necessary, and periods where a number of meetings are required. In order for members to have the necessary time to include meetings into their schedules, dates will be set well in advance of each meeting where possible. It may be necessary, due to unforeseen circumstances, to call a meeting at relatively short notice. Special Meetings

will only be called where the need for the meeting is urgent and where the outcomes from the meeting are required to ensure compliance with LDP Delivery Agreement. Where a special meeting is called, members will be afforded the maximum amount of notice that is possible within the timeframe allowed. Ongoing liaison will take place between meetings via e mail and telephone calls and planners will meet with individual officers/agencies away from the TOG at their discretion.

Information

Information for each meeting will be sent in advance of the date of the meeting. In order to ensure that the meetings are focussed, and to achieve the outcomes necessary and within the timescale laid out by the Delivery Agreement, a schedule of outcomes for each meeting will be included in the meeting documentation.

Reporting Mechanism

Any recommendations for consultation/changes to the LDP document, or for consultations/changes on the SA/SEA or HRA, will be reported to the Advisory Panel for decision-making.