

devising an effective local development scheme

assessing resource requirements and the critical path of programme



Your revised local development scheme (LDS) must be submitted to your Government Office by 31st March 2007. Once submitted it will be binding and is likely to be linked to the allocation of planning delivery grant (PDG). It is therefore important that the revisions are robust and will be deliverable as and when stated. Your LDS should:

- develop an understanding of ongoing resource requirements
- ensure effective and timely input from all key partners
- create certainty for the authority and key partners
- balance the need for speed with the requirement for soundness and a quality plan

The LDS is a key document that will take time and skill to assemble effectively. It also needs to be actively managed and monitored and should be used to drive the LDF process. It also has the potential to produce greater understanding of the process amongst key players and result in increased confidence and satisfaction with the outcomes. The sections below outline the key factors to consider and where relevant, ways of approaching them.

obtain key information

It is essential to determine **for each DPD**:

- the key strategic partners in terms of evidence, policy production and implementation.
- evidence required and already available, how it will be acquired, how long it will take to produce, the resources required in terms of money or working days per full time equivalent (see appendix). How critical it is to the individual DPD or other DPDs in terms of its content and timing.
- the stages of the process, the minimum length of time for each stage, how they relate to other stages, other DPD's and other strategies and partners programmes and the likely workload and time requirement for each stage.
- who will do each task and when, and what skills and knowledge will be needed
- the critical dates or timetable requirements of external and internal events (e.g. revision of the community strategy)
- tasks that can be shared with others and any consequent implications
- the PINS view of the likely timetable and costs.

gain ownership

The LDS should be a corporate tool and project plan as well as a key programme for the LSP and other partners. The following stakeholders should be involved in its preparation:

- other relevant authorities (e.g. county council, Highways Agency, Environment Agency, development corporation)
- the corporate management team
- members and cabinet
- the local strategic partnership
- utility providers
- others identified as relevant

Workshops may be held with key players to help the preparation, ownership and subsequent implementation of the LDS.



determine the critical path

Each DPD should have a set of comprehensive project plans contributing to the LDS programme. You should identify the critical path for individual plans and the LDS as a whole including the resources required to deliver it. This process of devising the project plans will need to be iterative and take into account the key information detailed above.

Identifying the critical path of the individual components to the LDS should provide clarity about what factors, inputs or processes are critical to their delivery. Mapping the links between policies, activities, reviews, evidence, etc. across DPDs will help the analysis. Consideration should also be given to the alignment of the whole LDS with LDS's or programmes of neighbouring local authorities and other agencies both inside and outside the authority.

Some aspects of the programme may be subject to variation (e.g. length of examination, order and number of DPDs), some will be outside the control of the planning authority (e.g. RSS outcomes, changing programmes of other agencies) and others could have an uncertain impact (e.g. elections). You will need to make an informed judgement about the likely outcomes and consider other possibilities as part of your contingency planning.

assess resource requirements

When assessing resource requirements for each task and looking at the total resource availability, full account should be taken of:

- engagement with other work e.g. sub-regional, regional, corporate, etc. and other ongoing work e.g. monitoring.
- other workload commitments, e.g. appeal work, advice on planning applications
- staff development and training time
- the nature of the decision-making process
- the need to have time to engage in project management, discussions and negotiation
- the need to operate a pro-active project management approach to all tasks to ensure maximum efficiency and use of available resources.

The LDS should be devised to meet the needs of the community in terms of spatial planning. It should not be wholly driven by the availability of resources. However, clearly identifying the level of resources required to deliver it should usefully inform discussions of the budget and staffing requirements of the proposed LDF over the next 3 to 5 years. The LDS should be used to negotiate deliverability:

- corporately
- with partners
- with the government offices
- with other authorities to ensure that the slowest doesn't determine the delivery of the programme.

develop a risk strategy

Given the nature of the LDS it is essential that there is a clear risk assessment of the project plans. This should be accompanied by a contingency plan which addresses the risks and suggests mitigating action. The key risks are likely to be:

- poor project management
 - inadequate resources identified for the task
 - inadequate skill base
 - staff turnover
 - recruitment difficulties
 - poor management of supply of evidence base from internal or external parties
 - failure by key partners to deliver according to programme
 - unanticipated delays in external events e.g. public enquiry
 - political changes
 - scale and nature of consultation responses
 - unexpected new evidence
- failure to make robust arrangements to meet the timetable of the examination

appendix

The calculations in your project plans should be based on 220 working days per person per year and assessed by looking at each individual task, the number of days by whom it will be undertaken and the timetable so that a total days per person per year and per task can be determined.

The tables below illustrate how you might represent the assignment of tasks against staff resources.

Task/person days	Person A	Person B	Person C etc.	Total days																
DPD 1																				
1																				
2 etc																				
SUB Total																				
DPD 2																				
1 etc.																				
TOTAL																				
LDS – DPD1																				
Person Days																				
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Stage 1																				
Task 1	20	14	8	8	2															
Task 2			2	2																
Task 3				3	10	3		4		4		10	10	10	10					
Task 4							3	1	2	1	2	1	9			4	4	4	25	
Total days	20	14	10	13	12	3	3	5	2	5	2	11	9	10	10	4	4	4	25	
Stage 2																				
Task 1																				

This note has been produced with **Addison & Associates** for the **Planning Advisory Service (PAS)**.

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PAS is funded by the [Department for Communities and Local Government](#) and is part of the [Improvement and Development Agency \(IDeA\)](#). Building on the IDeA's work in the local government sector, PAS supports local planning authorities throughout England to develop both their capacity and capability to deliver services and the best possible outcomes for their communities.