

Memorandum of Understanding Revision Relaunch

November 2012 Version 1.6

Vision

Our Vision is of a Worcestershire that is Open for Business¹, where sustainable development is welcomed. We see a county where planning authorities go above and beyond to retain and attract investment, providing clear and helpful advice to developers to guide them through an efficient planning process.



Worcestershire
We're Open for Business

Standards & Performance: Us and You/Local Planning Authorities and businesses

With the ending of regional governance and targets, it is up to us to co-ordinate and prioritise a local response to challenges such as the right supply of land and sites for employment generating development, low skill levels, industrial obsolescence, inadequate infrastructure and youth unemployment.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aims to co-ordinate efficient and effective engagement through timely decision-making on local plan preparation and applications, together with the promotion of development through various strategic policy documents. Accompanying this memorandum is a Planning Charter and Action Plan which will help turn the commitments set out below into actions.

Partnership: Working together to drive forward sustainable development

We (the local authority) will:

- Engage the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) at each consultation stage of the plan-making process, taking account of their advice on economic policies and site allocations.
- Commit resources to prioritising the preparation, review, monitoring and effective implementation of Local Plans.
- Promote the benefits of operating within the spirit of this MoU to our customers.

We (the WLEP) will:

- Commit time and resources to providing technical input to ensure economic policies are found "sound" at Examinations in Public.
- Actively support preparation and delivery of Local Plans and promote them to businesses/developers.
- Promote the benefits of operating within the spirit of this MoU to affiliated businesses, representation bodies and individual developer interests.

¹ Providing an environment where local businesses can thrive and new businesses are welcomed, barriers to growth are removed, skills are improved and where the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), council and businesses work together to increase economic prosperity.

Assistance, advice and support

We (the local authority) will:

- Provide clear professional and positive advice to applicants² on the likely acceptability of proposals. Where problems are foreseen, we will help to identify how they might be overcome.
- Prioritise the processing of planning applications which will deliver economic regeneration and identify a case officer who will be the point of contact through to determination.

- Whilst we welcome sustainable development, we will use enforcement powers to remedy undesirable effects of unauthorised development and to bring unauthorised activity under control to ensure that the credibility of the planning system is not undermined.

We (the WLEP) will:

- Provide information about the planning process on our website, directing applicants to the relevant local planning authority.

Timely decision making

We (the local authority) will:

- Work with applicants to determine applications in a timely manner.
- Work with statutory consultees to ensure that their responses are submitted in a timely manner.
- Take *Heads of Terms* of any proposed legal agreement to the same planning committee meeting for ratification.

- Issue decision notices promptly.

We (the WLEP) will:

- Respond promptly to all consultation requests.
- Encourage pre-application discussions and assessments with the local authority and key stakeholders.

Helping us to help developers

We are looking to developers and promoters of schemes to provide:

- Jobs for local people, including construction and local procurement.
- Excellent design, with all schemes designed to reflect the use of the building and its wider context.

- Sustainable development, through minimising energy and natural resource requirements, saving carbon, and using innovative technologies.

To help achieve timely decisions on planning applications, the WLEP and planning authorities will expect all commercial applicants and their agents to meet the following requirements:

- Engage fully in pre-application discussions with planning authorities and undertake robust and meaningful pre-submission consultation with the public in accordance with the councils' SCIs.
- Ensure that all information needed to make a valid application is submitted, engaging directly with technical consultees as necessary.
- Respond promptly to issues raised during the processing of applications.
- Attend planning committee and be prepared to answer questions on the proposal.
- Ensure that any legal agreements are promptly drafted and signed.
- Inform the council of the timetable for discharge of conditions and implementation of the approved scheme at the earliest opportunity.

Performance/Monitoring and Implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding

An annually-produced Action Plan for this MoU will be monitored by an MoU project board. Progress on the Action Plan and any emerging issues/challenges will be reported to the Worcestershire Place Shaping Group and the LEP Board.

² Subject to any subsequent formal decision by a planning committee