

How can local authorities improve housing delivery?

National Planning Forum

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Introduction

- What is PAS?
 - 3 key areas of the planning system for delivery
 - Summing up
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What is PAS?

- Funded to support English planning authorities
“[PAS] exists to support local planning authorities in providing effective and efficient planning services, to drive improvement in those services and to support the implementation of changes in the planning system”
 - We also work directly with councils
 - Part of the Local Government family
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If it wasn't for those pesky planners....

Or the system they operate, we'd be developing loads of houses – right?

- We are blamed for blocking, stopping and frustrating development
- The system is seen as long and arduous
- Councils are generally seen to be backing the objecting communities rather than supporting the delivery of homes

Planners and planning should be able to influence delivery positively – but how?

3 areas of planning that affect delivery

- Local plan production and adoption
 - Decision making and issuing
 - Monitoring and management
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Local plan production and adoption

- An allocation in an adopted plan is key to delivery
 - Requires early and ongoing relationship with site owners/developers
 - Likely delivery rate should be a core criteria in site selection
 - Site selection helps to set the tone of the plan
 - Will the local plan policies help or hinder the delivery of homes?
 - Independent review will help to assess this
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What might affect delivery?

- Lack of political support
 - Cross party working group
 - Timely Infrastructure provision
 - Statement of Common Ground (SoCG)
 - Overreliance on a single or limited range of sites
 - Letwin review conclusions concerning small and medium sized sites
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Setting a timetable & sticking to it

- Agreeing roles, responsibilities and time commitments upfront
 - Setting them out visually
 - Sharing the timetable
 - Sticking to it – avoiding ‘local plan drift’
 - Having the timetable monitored at top tier - officer and councillor
 - Plans create certainty, delay erodes this.
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Decision taking

- Making timely decisions should be standard practice for councils.
 - Making decisions in line with a local plan or previous commitment should also be a given.
 - But do Councils design in a delay to delivery?
 - When is a decision not a decision?
 - S106 agreements
 - Conditions
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Why the pre-application stage is critical?

- Up front intelligence helps to speed up the process.
 - Establishes an understanding between Council and developer/site owner
 - Can be used to agree a delivery plan for the site.
 - Helps to determine the wording of the permission to ensure timely delivery.
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Monitoring and managing

- Remember monitoring?
 - Many Councils do not have this resource.
 - Monitoring needs to inform 5YHLS, Housing Delivery Test (HDT), plan production....
 - It needs to be accurate, up to date and in one place.
 - It needs to inform action.
 - We are back to plan, monitor and manage
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It's all about relationships

- It's not all about spreadsheets and graphs though
 - Relationships will be critical to getting the best out of this
 - The discussions are as important as the data
 - Revised NPPF requires Councils to work with partners to improve delivery
 - A good monitoring system helps with this
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Summing up

- Delivery is the responsibility of the many not the few
 - It is not the same picture across the country
 - Councils have the power to 'free up' or 'slow down' delivery
 - Needs strong leadership and consistency
 - Critically, for Councils, it's about doing what you have said you will do – plan, monitor and manage.
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We are at local.gov.uk/pas

PAS

We provide high quality help, advice, support and training on planning and service delivery to councils. We help local government officers and councillors stay effective and up to date. We have a 'sector led' improvement approach, where local authorities help each other to continuously improve.



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Questions?

Email anna.rose@local.gov.uk

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