

Planning for Localism

A 5 Point Plan for Business

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Take Stock

1. Pause for thought
2. Understand the new drivers of decision making
3. Consider each asset/opportunity separately
4. Define and assess the options
5. Shape your action plan



Engage Effectively to Build New Business

1. Audit current relationships
2. Establish who you need to know
3. Define your key messages
4. Establish the engagement strategy
5. Capture feedback, respond and build effective dialogue



Re-focus your Planning Case

1. Diagnose the positive and negative policy forces and likely changes
2. Localise the planning benefits and impacts
3. Evidence the full sustainability portfolio
4. Define the planning strategy
5. Focus on hearts and minds



Deliver in an Age of Austerity

1. Respond to planning system pressures alongside your own
2. Re-assess what development can provide
3. Maximise the potential of assets
4. Measure and promote the fiscal and wealth creation benefits of your development
5. Gear up for new financing models



Harness the Opportunities

1. Keep up to speed
2. Be pro-active now
3. Seize opportunities
4. Lead at a time of uncertainty
5. Get ahead of the game for competitive advantage



Take Stock

The new coalition will be implementing radical reform of the planning system to deliver its localism agenda. Our 5 Point Plan suggests what you can do now to prepare for the forthcoming changes and be better prepared.

In every locality there will be new drivers of decision making, none more so than where strategic direction came from the Regional Strategy. And because localism will give weight to the unique circumstances of each locality, each asset, site or opportunity should be considered separately: a barrier to development in one district may be an opportunity in another.

Think carefully about the way forward and define and assess the potential options, before beginning to shape your action plan.



Engage Effectively to Build New Business

Central to our 5 Point Plan is giving real focus to engagement and relationship building - moving it from being a part of the planning process to having the central role.

A first step is to audit who you know and who you need to know based on a clear understanding of how different people and organisations will influence and control over decision making in the future. This will be crucial to defining the key messages that need to be adopted for different audiences and approaches to engagement.

Resources should be targeted on those that matter and ensure that the heightened importance of local residents and politicians is recognised. Think about how to engage with those who have previously formed part of the silent majority; those who are pro-active in this regard will be much better placed to influence local decision makers.

The engagement strategy must be one with a reinforcing cycle that captures feedback, responds positively and builds effective dialogue.



Re-focus your Planning Case

As the planning reforms bite, a new locally based policy framework will take shape. If current policy is supportive it is important to understand all the other influences that impact upon the success of your planning strategies. If local policy is not supportive, now is the time to reflect on why this is the case and what opportunities and constraints might lie ahead; for example, from the abolition of the Regional Strategies.

Ask yourself how the benefits of your scheme or asset can be targeted to win greater support at the local level. Emphasis on sustainability and the specific policies and requirements of each area will be essential. Sustainability should be looked at holistically, with economic and environmental issues considered hand in hand.

New planning strategies will need to be defined. The good ones will focus on what local communities want and aspire to as well as technical arguments and the changing policy landscape.



Deliver in an Age of Austerity

Policy makers face major challenges and those in the public sector will be re-appraising their strategies in this age of austerity. There is likely to be a heightened recognition that development, even in a weaker market, can be an enabler for delivering some of the casualties of spending cuts.

Our view is think creatively about what development can deliver in terms of social gain in the local community interest. Are there opportunities for development to combine with other funding streams or with the public sector assets that many local authorities will be examining as a way of overcoming future spending restraints?

Fiscal and wealth creation benefits of development need to be harnessed – how much will your development mean for a cash-strapped authority? In the US and Europe they are familiar with using planning to increase tax revenue locally – those in the UK may increasingly look to do so and this may see local planning authorities viewing growth from a different perspective.



Harness the Opportunities

With a new Government comes uncertainty about the extent and timing of change. We believe that with uncertainty comes opportunity.

Many local authorities will not yet know how they will respond to the new planning reforms and the significant budget cuts. They will be looking to developers to fill gaps in the evidence base and to provide them with opportunities to realise development in their areas. There are real opportunities for local authorities, developers and key stakeholders to work in partnership to chart a positive way forward; those who can deliver will be sought after by many local communities.

Be pro-active and don't be afraid to lead from the front and offer solutions and approaches whether you are in the public or the private sector. If you don't do it somebody else will and you may lose out.

We hope our 5 Point Plan provides you with a framework for positive action to protect and enhance your wider business strategies.

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