

# Development Frameworks

## A Guide for Landowners, Developers and their Agents



Development &  
Planning Authority

## PLANNING ADVICE NOTE 9: DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS - A GUIDE FOR LANDOWNERS, DEVELOPERS AND THEIR AGENTS

### Introduction

The Development & Planning Authority (DPA) recognises that development is needed to meet the varying needs of Islanders and our economy. It encourages and welcomes private and public investment in Guernsey, but recognises this needs to be delivered in locations, and in a manner, that retains Guernsey's unique identity and environment and contributes to making Guernsey one of the healthiest and happiest places in the world.

For relatively large scale and complex developments, Development Frameworks provide a stepping stone between the Island Development Plan (IDP) policies and detailed planning applications and provide guiding principles for developers/landowners and their agents, as well as local residents, about how a site could be developed.

The guidance in this advice note is aimed at landowners, developers and their agents who are considering developments that would require a Development Framework and provides broad guidance on how to work collaboratively with the Planning Service to draft Development Frameworks and the quality standards that are expected.

### When is a Development Framework needed?

Development Frameworks are needed for residential development over a specific size and for certain non-residential and strategic developments. The current thresholds (since May 2021) for residential developments and the other forms of development where a Development Framework is currently required are detailed below.

Unless a site is (or is likely to be) covered by a Local Planning Brief, a Development Framework will be required as follows:

- housing development within Main Centres and Main Centre Outer Areas for proposals of 20 or more dwellings,
- housing development within Local Centres for proposals of 10 or more dwellings,
- the identified Office Expansion Area at Admiral Park;
- the identified Key Industrial Expansion Areas;
- the undeveloped part of the Saltpans Key Industrial Area;
- development of Strategic Importance within identified Safeguarded Areas e.g. Chouet headland;
- the identified Regeneration Areas (Lower Pollet, South Esplanade and Mignot Plateau, Mansell Street/Le Bordage and Leale's Yard);
- for proposals considered by the Authority to be Development of Strategic Importance; and
- any other instance that may be specified by the Authority (see below).

The DPA retain discretion to waive the requirement for a Development Framework for all sites where it considers that it would not be beneficial to prepare one. The Authority may also require a Development Framework for smaller housing sites falling below the above thresholds, if there are particularly complex issues that need to be considered at an earlier stage in the development process. The Authority will continue to keep the above thresholds and requirements under review.

### **How is a Development Framework applied to a site?**

As no two sites are identical, the type and level of detail included in a Development Framework will vary from site to site. However, in all cases a Development Framework must be prepared for the entire site to ensure comprehensive development. There can also be more than one Development Framework approved for a site. Further information about the content of a Development Framework is provided in Annex III of the IDP (pages 254 – 263).

### **Can I write my own Development Framework?**

A Development Framework is a DPA document. However the Planning Service can work in collaboration with a landowner/developer and their agent(s). This is especially useful where a site or development is large or has complex issues. Where it appears that the development of a site is likely to be relatively straightforward and the landowner/developer is keen to commence there may be opportunities for them to commence, or even complete, drafting a Development Framework.

### **Working together on a Development Framework**

Working together on a Development Framework offers the opportunity for landowners/developers and their agents to share their knowledge and skills to better inform the final guidance. This can be especially useful in the initial evaluation stage such as researching authorised use(s), site analysis, commissioning specialist report(s) (e.g. Traffic Impact Assessment). It can also be of benefit when establishing constraints and opportunities, development principles and producing any necessary diagrams or drawings. However, it is important to note that the DPA is responsible and accountable for the Development Framework and therefore we will retain editorial control.

## How to start

If you are thinking about developing a site and it is of a size, type or scale that needs a Development Framework (see Appendix III of the IDP), you and/or your agent should start by contacting the Planning Service at [planning@gov.gg](mailto:planning@gov.gg) to arrange an initiation meeting.

To arrange a meeting you will need to:

- identify the site;
- indicate what use(s) you would like on the site; and
- provide any other information you think would be useful at the meeting.

We do not charge a fee for an initiation meeting. If you do not own the site or only own part of it you will normally need the permission of all of the owners to discuss the site and proposals. Depending on the scale and complexity of the site and its potential for development, we might be able to deal with your enquiry via a letter or telephone call. However, most sites will need an initiation meeting.

## Initiation Meeting

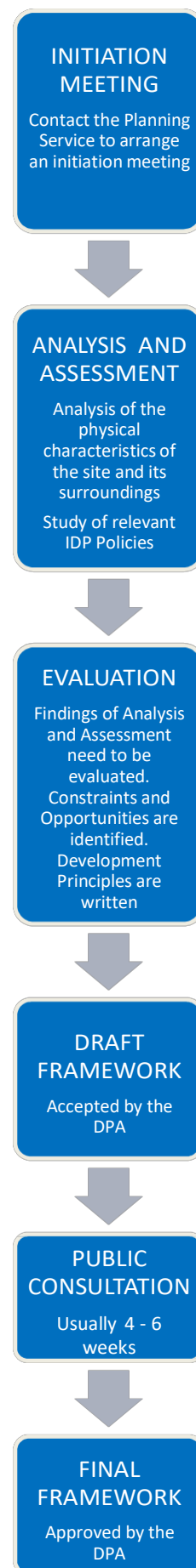
The purpose of this meeting is to discuss and ensure the principles behind the Development Framework are understood as well as to discuss some of the detail such as who will be involved in drafting the Development Framework and what parts of it, what information is available and what needs to be sourced (e.g. specialist reports). Using this information we will be able to establish the scope of the Development Framework and agree a realistic timescale for when the Development Framework can be completed.

The Planning Service has access to a lot of useful and relevant information such as planning history, historic maps and aerial photographs. The information we hold can be provided to the landowner at the initiation meeting or shortly after to help inform drafting of the Development Framework.

If it is agreed at the initiation meeting that the scale and complexity of the Development Framework appears to be relatively straightforward, it may be established that you or your agent can commence on, or even complete, the draft Development Framework. However, as previously mentioned, as the final document is the responsibility of the DPA, final editorial control will remain with the DPA and the final document will be the Authority's.

Development Frameworks for sites which are large scale or complex are likely to need a collaborative approach and a formal Project Plan which will set out, at the beginning of the project, in more detail, the responsibilities for when and how the Development Framework will be produced and who will be responsible for which parts of the project.

The scope and extent of the Development Framework and roles of the team members should be established at the initiation meeting or shortly after. An important outcome is that everyone knows who is doing what and when, even if the detail is set out in a later Project Plan. This has the benefit of, amongst others, allowing the landowner/developer to commission their agent accurately.



## **What should a Development Framework include?**

Development Frameworks should be proportionate to the size and sensitivity of the site as well as the type, scale and complexity of development proposed. A Development Framework needs to:

- Show a proportionate understanding of the characteristics of the site and its surroundings;  
Describe any consultation undertaken with Key Stakeholder(s) and how the consultation has informed the Development Framework;
- Identify the relevant IDP Policies that will apply to the site and how they will be interpreted;  
Identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and constraints of the site;
- Create a set of informed development principles that detail how the whole site should be comprehensively developed in accordance with the policies of the IDP and site analysis;
- Include in an appendix any additional information or specialist report(s) to support the Development Framework, which might be a Traffic Impact Assessment, biodiversity study, tree survey, statement of consultation or study of a protected building and its setting, etc.; and,
- Depending on the scale and complexity of the site it might be necessary to include a checklist of additional information that needs to be submitted with a planning application.

Annex III of the IDP provides a list of what a Development Framework might include. However, it must be noted that it is a checklist and is not necessarily in order of any preference, nor is it an exhaustive list or a suggested format. Few Development Frameworks will need all this information, but the circumstances of a site might mean that other information not listed in Annex III is necessary.

## **Tips for writing a Development Framework**

### **Do**

- Write it for the specific site; don't copy it from somewhere else.
- Keep it short and to the point.
- Remain objective in your analysis and when drawing conclusions.
- Write in plain English wherever possible so that it can be understood by its audience which includes anyone who might have an interest in the potential development of the site, some of whom might be lay-people. If jargon or technical information is necessary, provide a Glossary.
- Use photographs, maps, diagrams, drawings, illustrations to highlight or make a point and ensure the document is understandable by all.
- Keep a regular dialogue with the Planning Service.

### **Don't**

- Be afraid to ask questions – we are here to work with you and help you through the process.
- Produce a design and then retrofit the Development Framework to that design – in our experience this is very easy to spot and just prolongs the process.
- Waffle or pad the document with unnecessary text, diagrams, illustrations and photographs.
- Jump from site specific issues to wider context – this is confusing to the reader. The Development Framework should tell a story about the site and its surroundings and how these have influenced the development principles.

## **Quality standards**

Whether the Development Framework is produced in house by the Planning Service or in collaboration with a landowner/developer/agent, the DPA is accountable and responsible for it. Therefore, we have to ensure the Development Frameworks meet certain consistent quality standards and to this end they will be assessed against the following quality standards:

1. Is the Development Framework consistent with the policies in the IDP?
2. Does the Development Framework provide additional, site specific guidance to the IDP policies, instead of just repeating the policies?
3. Is the Development Framework understandable by all its intended users/stakeholders?
4. Is the site(s) to which the Development Framework applies clearly identified?
5. Are the photographs and diagrams clear, relevant and useful, and contribute to a better understanding of the site, its constraints and opportunities and the development principles?

The quality check will be undertaken by the Planning Service and usually by an Officer who has not been involved in production of the particular Development Framework. This allows a fresh pair of eyes to review the document. If a Development Framework or part of one is produced by an owner/agent, the Planning Service will work in collaboration but ultimately will accept or reject the document based on the above quality standards. If a Development Framework does not meet the quality standards this will result in a delay to its delivery.

## **Supplying us with your text, images and other information**

The draft and final document will be published in accordance with the DPA branding. To avoid delays it is essential that text and graphics are provided to us in the correct format and file type. Further details of these will be provided at or shortly after the initiation meeting.

## **What will happen after the Development Framework is accepted by the DPA?**

Once the quality standards have been met, we will take ownership of the document and refer it as soon as possible to the DPA with a recommendation that it is published for public consultation. If the DPA accepts the draft Development Framework the period of consultation will usually be between 4-6 weeks, but this can vary depending on the complexity of the Framework and its supporting information as well as the time of year because we usually allow longer over holiday periods.

If necessary we will amend the Development Framework to take account of any representations made during the public consultation. The final document will then be presented to the DPA for its approval as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Following the adoption of a Development Framework, it will be taken into account when considering a planning application for the site and proposals will be expected to be in accordance with it.



### **Why are Development Frameworks needed?**

A Development Framework 'front-loads' the design and development process and provides tailored advice on how IDP policies should be interpreted for a specific site or area. The process allows a deeper understanding of the site context, opportunities and constraints which leads to better design and quality of development on the ground. It allows much earlier consultation and involvement of key stakeholders so that any issues or concerns can be considered and addressed at an early stage before proposals or designs become established and are therefore more difficult and costly to change. They can give realistic advice for the development direction of a site, or an area, by setting out specific development principles and thus a degree of certainty on how the site could be developed. Most importantly they can be a catalyst for bringing positive development forward and help to deliver high quality development that is best suited to the site and its surroundings.

### **How long will it take?**

The length of time needed to prepare a Development Framework will vary depending on the size and sensitivity of the site, the complexity of the proposals and available information. Relatively straightforward sites with, for example, one owner and with few constraints, should not take more than 4-5 months. More complex sites, such as those in multiple ownerships and/or with a variety of constraints could take 12- 18 months. This is not wasted time in terms of progressing potential development proposals for the reasons set out above and it normally leads to less delay in the planning application process by reducing the changes that are needed, abortive work and even a refused planning application and subsequent appeal.

### **How are we prioritising Development Frameworks?**

The Planning Service has finite resources and therefore we have to prioritise Development Frameworks for sites allocated or reserved for specific uses shown on the Proposals Map of the IDP (e.g. Regeneration Areas, Housing Allocations, Key Industrial Expansion Areas). We will endeavour to produce all Development Frameworks in a timely manner, but depending on resources available this could mean that we will place a Development Framework in a queue and give an indication of when we will be able to produce it. However, if the initiation meeting establishes that the Development Framework is relatively straightforward it may be agreed at the meeting that owners/agents can progress, or even complete, a draft Development Framework in the meantime providing that the quality standards are met.

### **What status does a Development Framework have?**

Once approved a Development Framework forms Supplementary Planning Guidance which will be taken into account when planning applications for the site are considered. Development proposals for the site will be expected to accord with the approved Development Framework.

### **Should I appoint an agent?**

If you are thinking about writing or contributing to a Development Framework, the proposals will usually be of a scale and complexity that a professional agent will be needed. You must be satisfied that your agent is competent to undertake the work and has sufficient qualifications, experience, knowledge and resources to complete the work to the standards required.

## Further Information

Annex III of the Island Development Plan (November 2016) contains more information on Development Frameworks. The Island Development Plan can be downloaded from the States of Guernsey website at <https://gov.gg/planningpolicy>.

Site & Context Analysis Guide: Capturing the Value of a Site (Welsh Assembly Government, March 2016) provides a good basis for how to understand a site and its context, although it must be read with care because it refers to planning policy that is not relevant to Guernsey.

### Contact Us

For further information or advice at:

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### Have you visited our website?

Go to <http://www.gov.gg/> for additional guidance material and other planning information.

E-mail [planning@gov.gg](mailto:planning@gov.gg) or to request an initiation meeting for a Development Framework.

This note is issued by the Authority to assist understanding of the provisions of the current planning legislation. It represents the Authority's interpretation of certain provisions of the legislation and is not intended to be exhaustive or a substitute for the full text of the legislation copies of which are available from the Greffe. Electronic copies are also available at [www.guernseylegalresources.gg](http://www.guernseylegalresources.gg). Substantive queries concerning the legislation should be addressed to the Authority by email at [planning@gov.gg](mailto:planning@gov.gg). The Authority does not accept any liability for loss or expense arising out of the provision of, or reliance on, any advice given. You are recommended to seek advice from an independent professional advisor where appropriate.