



Working Relationship Protocol

Planning Agents & Bristol City Council Development Management
April 2018

Introduction

Planning agents & Bristol City Council Development Management (BCC DM) officers work together on a significant number of development projects, including major place-shaping schemes. Whilst development management can be a very pressured and contentious area of work, both parties shall seek to work together positively and proactively to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the City.

This Protocol has been drawn up in consultation with the Planning User Group and Accredited Agents. All parties have agreed to the Shared Commitments and Key Principles underpinning this Protocol set out below to ensure that the working relationship between agents & BCC DM officers is as positive and constructive as possible in this context; and also to ensure that whatever the professional differences may be, that the principles of mutual respect, courteous behaviour and professional service are maintained.

Shared Commitments

Commitment 1: Communication

- Both parties shall communicate in an effective and timely manner.
- As a guide, both parties shall endeavour to respond to emails and voicemail messages within 2-3 working days.
- Both parties acknowledge that in some instances a holding response may be necessary and that a substantive response may need to follow within a timescale to be advised.
- Both parties must not avoid contact with the other party.
- In the interests of establishing clear lines of communication, once a planning application has been allocated to a case officer, that case officer will be the primary contact for all matters relating to the application. In the event that there is a need for a matter to be escalated, this shall be via the Team Leader in the first instance, then Team Manager and Service Manager. The agent shall be the one point of

contact for the case officer.

Commitment 2: Engagement

- Both parties acknowledge that early engagement often has the potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning process. The Council offers a pre-application advice service for certain types of development. The more issues that can be resolved at the pre-application stage, the greater the benefits.
- BCC DM will approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development and both parties shall seek to work together positively and proactively to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the City.

Commitment 3: Co-operation

- Agents will submit coherent, comprehensive and up-to-date packages of information that addresses the national validation and Local List requirements and provides the Council with all information necessary to determine the planning application.
- Officers shall provide agents with feedback on their application. In some instances, further information may be requested or amendments may be sought to overcome a possible objection. Such approaches will be considered by officers on a case by case basis and both parties acknowledge that it is at the discretion of the local planning authority as to whether to accept changes after the validation of an application.

Key Principles

- Both parties will deal with the other party with professional courtesy and respect.
- No party shall openly criticise the other party to clients, Councillors, or Directors of either organisation.
- Both parties will communicate professionally with the other party in a way that they would like to be communicated with.