

policy research and appraisal

Amongst the tools needed for successful town and country planning is the ability to understand and interpret the policy framework that is relevant to any proposed development. Whether you are making a planning application, need to appeal the decision of your local authority or want your land to be allocated for development, DLP Planning can appraise the relevant planning policy framework by which decisions will be made.

Development in accordance with the development plan

Planning decisions are required to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In general terms planning policy is a hierarchical structure, with overarching national planning policies in England and Wales providing a framework for development plans. Although this creates an expectation of uniformity, planning decisions are normally made in the context of local policies, therefore the minutiae of each policy and the variations from one authority to another can be extremely important.

With national coverage, but detailed local knowledge, DLP Planning can swiftly identify the full extent of the existing policy framework that will apply to your development or to a given location. This is likely to include national policy guidance, regional and local policies which form part of the development plan and overlapping policies such as those which arise from EU legislation or from other professional fields.

Balancing the material considerations

Material considerations which may be balanced against the policy framework are many and varied. Whilst some sites are subject to overriding national policies such as those intended to protect the historic environment, open countryside and green belt or occasionally are constrained by technical considerations which will strongly inhibit development, most proposals need a degree of evaluation against often subjective criteria (for example the judgement of impact on 'amenity' or 'local character'). In most cases a balance of considerations is necessary.

DLP Planning can place your proposal or site in the local policy or political context and provide an interpretation of how a proposal is likely to be assessed. We can advise on the weight likely to be applied to the material considerations which support a proposal as well as to the individual policies and the potential consequences these may have - whether advantageous or not to the proposal.

Policy review

Planning policy is dynamic. Regional spatial strategies are subject to regular review and local development frameworks are designed to be flexible and capable of being updated and altered as circumstances dictate. Planning strategies often need to interpret the appropriate weight to be attached to emerging policies. DLP Planning constantly monitor the changes to planning policy, and are well-versed in assessing the balance to be applied to extant and emerging policies.

DLP Planning recognise the importance of appraising and evaluating policy as the means to secure our clients' objectives. It is the key to unlocking the prospects for a successful development in the right location at the right time and to defeating unfounded and unsustainable objections which may be encountered during the planning process.

