

**PAS**

**Duty to Cooperate Statement**

**Template**

**August 2015**

**PAS Duty to Cooperate Statement Template**

Under the Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (‘the Framework’) local authorities have to address strategic planning matters in their local plans. Theduty to cooperateis the mechanism for ensuring that this happens.

As part of the examination process local authorities should demonstrate how they have **managed strategic planning matters in the local plan in a concise and focused statement.**

The likelihood is that effective cooperation will be critical in relation to:

* defining the appropriate strategic planning area (SPA)
* agreeing the appropriate plan period
* quantifying development needs within the SPA
* agreeing on the distribution of development within the SPA
* establishing what strategic infrastructure is essential to deliver the required development
* agreeing how and when the essential infrastructure will be provided

The most important aspect of demonstrating the Duty to Co-operate is the outcomes: what was the result of the strategic cooperation and how has this influenced the plan?

We hope that this note and template will help local authorities to prepare their statements. It should be adapted to individual needs and used as a prompt to ensure that the relevant information is available for the Inspector.

**Your Duty to Cooperate statement**

**1: Strategic context**

Briefly describe your

* strategic geography in a pen portrait. This may be different for different issues;
* strategic development strategy and priorities
* key relationships and bodies you have worked with on strategic issues, particularly links with other local authorities and strategic bodies such as Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Nature Partnerships;

**2: Strategic planning priorities**

The list of strategic objectives in the Framework (Paragraph 156) is a useful starting point, but your strategic planning priorities must be linked to your local plan’s overall objectives.

Within these overall objectives there may be implications for specific policy areas, such as housing provision, strategic infrastructure needs and employment growth. Your strategic planning priorities may also be narrower in nature, such as provision for traveller sites or delivery of a strategic site which impacts on neighbours.

What are the key policy issues that have been addressed/managed on a strategic basis? For each identified issue set out the following in a short and focussed summary (see appendix 1):

* Define the issue

This must be done in the most specific way possible e.g. the strategic site of XXXX lies on the borders of this authority and two other authorities (X and X). It will provide a significant number of jobs and homes for all three authorities and is therefore considered to be a key strategic issue within the local plan.

Vague general statements such as “delivering sustainable long term growth” are not helpful.

Evidence base

What is the evidence used to develop the plan’s strategic priorities?

* Actions

What actions did you take to address and manage the strategic issue?

e.g. cooperated with X and X to produce an agreed Master Plan for strategic site XXXXX

Was there any joint evidence developed? Who was involved?

eg a joint SHMA or employment land study. Include timescales for the evidence in an annex to demonstrate how and when key decisions were made (see appendix 2).

* Governance and working arrangements:

Who has been involved/ is affected by these issues and how has the LPA cooperated with them?

What are the governance arrangements for strategic working?

How have the LEP and other strategic partners been involved (there may be different stakeholders involved in different issues)?

Are there any agreements/MoUs to underpin joint working?

The strategic response/arrangements may be different for different issues. The arrangements must provide confidence that the strategic cooperation will be effective.

* Outcomes from strategic working

What was the result of the strategic cooperation and how has this influenced the plan?

The outcome of the strategic cooperation is the most important element of Duty to Cooperate statement. Specific references to relevant policies should be included where possible. It should be clear where any issues remain unresolved and how the authority plans to manage these.

e.g. agreed approach to providing 15,000 dwellings in the SHMA over 15 years, agreed that District A would accommodate X dwellings etc, Agreed strategic infrastructure priorities which are …… LP strategy reflects LEP strategic economic plan priorities

* Managing strategic issue on an ongoing basis

How will the strategic issue be managed on an ongoing basis? What are the mechanisms/structures being used to do this? How will this be monitored?

All strategic planning priorities should have a clear delivery plan (including any relevant links to other plans and strategies e.g. LEP’s Strategic Economic Plan) and monitoring framework.

**Appendix 1 Strategic Planning Issues** (suggested template)

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| 1. **Strategic Planning issue**   *Define the issue* |
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| 1. **Evidence base**   *What is the evidence used to develop the LP’s strategic policies?* |
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| 1. **Strategic Partners**   *List of bodies engaged with (details of each, make up and constitution etc, to be listed in appendix 3)* |
|  |
| 1. **Actions**   *How have you worked collaboratively with your partners?*  *What actions did you take to manage the strategic issue?*  *Was there any joint evidence developed e.g. SHMA? Who was involved? Include timescales for the evidence in an annex to demonstrate how and when key decisions were made (appendix 2).* |
| Action :  Partners  Outcome:  Date : |
| Action :  Partners :  Outcome:  Date : |
| 1. **Outcomes from strategic working**   *What was the result of the strategic cooperation and how has this influenced the plan (include specific references to relevant policies where possible)? Include any issues that remain unresolved and how the authority plans to manage these. Outline what the implications are of these unresolved matters* |
|  |
| 1. **Ongoing cooperation**   *How will the strategic issues be managed on an ongoing basis? What are the mechanisms/structures being used to do this? How will this be monitored?* |
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APPENDIX 2

1. Audit trail of key decisions and processes

Set out the audit trail for local plan preparation, highlighting where key decisions were made on strategic issues and include link to relevant documents/reports. Use flow charts or other pictorial representation as an aid to the Inspector and others. Where the LPA is relying on regular working groups or similar as part of their governance and working arrangements, ensure that minutes reflect the outcome or action arising from any relevant discussions and include web links to the relevant minutes**.** **Do not include minutes/notes of meetings where there is no specific outcome.**

Include summary of timelines for evidence used to support joint work eg SHMA, strategic framework.

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| *Sample*  *1. Officers agree joint project (objectives and project management arrangements)*  *2. Establishment of project governance/technical support*  *3. Project Inception*  *4. Stakeholders workshops (dates and purpose of workshops)*  *5. Officer meeting to consider draft report (outcome of meeting)*  *6. Officer meeting to finalise draft report*  *7. Joint member meeting to sign-off final report (and agree next steps/outcome)* |

APPENDIX 3

**Organisations engaged**

List of key groups which played a role in developing the strategic policies of the local plan and details of how their commitments to actions/outcomes are embedded. Demonstrate how agreements reached between organisations are if not binding, then real commitments and that authorities have member level commitment.

APPENDIX 4

**Map of strategic planning area**

APPENDIX 5

**References to key documents**

Include references and web links to key evidence, including minutes of relevant meetings. You do not need to include copies of everything in your statement eg legislation, national planning policy and guidance