

QUICK GUIDE: Masterplans and Development Briefs

This quick guide provides stakeholders and developers with an outline of the Authority's expectations in respect of the process of preparing and approving Masterplans and Development Briefs for sites within Dartmoor National Park.

What is a Masterplan or Development Brief?

A Masterplan or Development Brief is a "blueprint" for the development of a site. A Masterplan is a comprehensive exercise exploring the site and local issues in detail whereas a Development Brief is less detailed and sets out some general guidance, for example around what needs to be included on the site and how the site can be accessed. Both exercises should result in a scheme prepared jointly by stakeholders which will form a template for subsequent planning applications at the site.

When do I need to prepare a Masterplan or Development Brief?

The Authority has identified in its Local Plan a number of site allocation proposals within the larger settlements in the National Park. These sites are strategic allocations aimed at meeting community needs for affordable housing or other infrastructure, or as specific redevelopment opportunities. Some larger allocations, e.g. Policy 7.13 (Land at Dartmoor Prison, Princetown) and Proposal 7.23 (Land in Mary Tavy), refer specifically to the need for any planning application to accord with a Masterplan or Development Brief prepared in association with the local community, relevant stakeholders and the Authority. In addition to these specific requirements, Policy 7.1 in the Local Plan states that:

"Proposals of 6 dwellings or more on sites not allocated in this Plan, or which clearly deviate from the published Site Brief, should be informed by the preparation of a development brief or masterplan..."

For some sites the Authority has already created a Site Development Brief for the Local Plan. This is to guide and encourage development to come forward.

What are the aims of a Masterplan or Development Brief?

The processes for creating a Masterplan or Development Brief should explore the opportunities and potential difficulties of the site and use these to inform what the development will look like. The final scheme should be deliverable and respond to the identified needs of the community. Consequently, it is expected that a Masterplan or Development Brief will address matters of phasing (including linkage with investment in local infrastructure) and viability. Affordable housing requirements should be evidence based and appropriately structured and phased to meet local needs.



A Masterplan or Development Brief should also consider how the development fits with the surrounding environment, and where necessary be informed by detailed consideration of, for example, landscape and visual impact assessment, ecological appraisal, historic environment appraisal and design or character appraisal. It should assess in detail and respond to specific site issues such as flood risk, contaminated or unstable land, heritage assets and protected species.

The final scheme should be consistent with the Dartmoor Local Plan, and where applicable address the specific requirements of the allocation proposal.

Who should be involved in preparing a Masterplan or Development Brief?

A wide range of people and organisations (or 'stakeholders') with an interest in the site should be involved, including:

- The local community (individuals and community groups)
- The National Park Authority
- The District and County Councils
- Other specialist organisations (e.g. the Environment Agency)
- The landowners and developers
- The Parish Council
- Other interest groups



Every effort should be made to engage a wide range of interested parties in the exercise, including hard to reach groups. Publicity and material should be appropriate for the broad range of stakeholders, with 'plain English' summaries of technical document where appropriate. The process undertaken should be appropriate for the scale of the scheme but would normally involve surveys, workshops, public meetings and reasonable publicity in the local area. The Masterplan or Development Brief should be published for public consultation for a period of not less than 4 weeks.

How should I go about preparing a Masterplan or Development Brief?

The Authority will not prescribe how a Masterplan or Development Brief should be prepared however they may typically follow the process set out below:

Stage 1 Study area appraisal including information gathering, site assessment, liaison with stakeholders, leading to a short scoping document and potentially the formation of a steering group

Stage 2 Definition of key issues and options. Planning and preparing for stakeholder workshops

Stage 3 Stakeholder engagement workshops followed by preparation of draft Masterplan or Development Brief

Stage 4 Stakeholder consultation on draft proposals

Stage 5 Preparation of final Masterplan or Development Brief proposals and submission to the National Park Authority for approval

How does the Authority assess a Masterplan or Development Brief?

The Masterplan or Development Brief will be considered by the Authority prior to any planning permission being granted. Where a Masterplan or Development Brief is required but has not been undertaken, a planning application may be considered not to be consistent with Local Plan policy. In assessing a Masterplan or Development Brief the Authority will consider the process undertaken in its preparation (including the range of stakeholders engaged in the process and whether that engagement and consultation can be seen to have influenced the final scheme) and the content of the masterplan or development brief, assessing its consistency with the Local plan (in particular the requirements of any specific site allocation; how the proposal will help sustain the vibrancy of the community and contribute towards meeting the settlement vision over the plan period; and the deliverability of the scheme). On this basis the Authority will determine either to approve or not to approve the submitted scheme. If the Authority determines not to approve it will state clearly the reasons for this decision and the expectations of any further evidence, stakeholder engagement or consultation which may be required.

What is the status of a Masterplan or Development Brief?

Approved Masterplans and Development Briefs will be a material consideration in determining any planning application for the site. Any planning application which is subsequently submitted for the site should be consistent with the approved Masterplan or Development brief. It is important to understand that a Masterplan or Development Brief is not itself a grant of planning permission and its approval does not constitute the National Park Authority granting planning permission for development at the site.

Where a Masterplan or Development Brief previously approved by the Authority is considered to be out of date the Authority may require that it is updated, or a new scheme prepared prior to the determination of any application at the site.



Contacting the National Park Authority:

Masterplans and Development Briefs may well be undertaken by developers or organisations acting on their or the Authority's behalf which have particular expertise in this type of work. They will normally involve a number of specialist officers at the National Park Authority. Principal contact regarding Masterplans and Development Briefs will be with Dan Janota, Head of the Forward Planning and Economy service:

- **Email** - forwardplanning@dartmoor.gov.uk
- **Telephone** - 01626 832093
- **Write to** - Dartmoor National Park Authority, Parke, Bovey Tracey, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 9JQ

Further information:

Further information on the Local Plan is available on the Authority's web site at www.dartmoor.gov.uk/planning. Other useful information can be found through the following organisations:

Design Council CABE - www.designcouncil.org.uk/

The Planning Portal - www.planningportal.gov.uk/

