

# Economic development in North Somerset



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## A protocol for a successful partnership



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## Introduction

We are working closely with developers and partners to support much needed economic development proposals in North Somerset. This work has resulted in the creation of a protocol which seeks to support the timely delivery of development proposals that we consider to have significant local economic benefits.



## What is the protocol?

**The protocol confirms the council's objective to support proposals that deliver economic benefits for the residents of North Somerset. It promotes a process of focused cooperation and working between all parties by ensuring:**

-  A single point of contact is nominated within the council who will work closely with you throughout the process, ensuring coordination and consistency of advice;
-  An early and prompt indication of the council's initial views is provided;
-  Coordinated and prompt written advice is provided before a planning application is submitted;
-  Council departments work together to seek solutions and avoid unnecessary costs and set backs where possible;
-  That agreed time scales are met in determining the planning application;
-  That requests to discharge planning conditions are processed promptly with clear and consistent advice; and
-  That ongoing post-application support is provided.

The protocol is supported by all parts of the council that provide a service to the development industry including our economic development, highways, building control and planning application services.

## What the protocol requires of developers

The key to the success of the protocol lies with good communication between all parties.

The protocol requires developers and their partners to:

-  Engage early with us to seek our views;
-  Provide accurate and clear information about what you propose;
-  Follow the advice given by us as much as possible and clearly explain the reasons for any departure as early as you can in the process;
-  Engage with the named point of contact provided to you;
-  Consider entering into a formal Planning Performance Agreement with us; and
-  Work closely with us to seek solutions and avoid unnecessary costs and delays.



## Examples of the protocol in action

### **Weston Gateway Business Park**

**Natalie Bennett (Associate Director) Hartnell Taylor Cook:**

"The protocol has been a very beneficial tool for assisting our clients planning application for a 15 acre commercial site. Having a main point of contact to see things through and provide guidance through the pre-application stage, has made this journey smoother. The protocol has sped up the whole process and aided in the Knightstone Housing Association 40,000 sqft HQ building being approved quickly and efficiently."



**Gemma Hughes (Director) Dowlas:**

"Planning can cause many frustrations and time delays for a developer. However, with the help of the protocol, our development has evolved with few difficulties and I am delighted the end development is proving to be such a success for the area, attracting employment and new occupiers into Weston."

### **The Hive, Weston Park**

**Angela Hicks (Chief Executive) North Somerset Enterprise Agency:**

"Our 20,000 sqft managed workspace scheme at Weston Airfield (part of Junction 21 Enterprise Area) was added to the Council's protocol at the pre-application stage. The protocol has proven very useful in providing clear guidance at the initial design stage as well as setting out clear timescales from which we have been able to work. It has been instrumental in enabling our proposal to go through the planning process quickly, as issues were dealt with early on in the process."



"Having a single point of contact within the Economic Development Service has proven invaluable, especially as we continue to have ongoing post-application queries which we need support with. The protocol offers support at every stage of the development process, from initial contact right the way through to post-application and ongoing stages, which ensures that we continue to feel supported in bringing forward our proposal in Weston (North Somerset)."

## Parameters of the protocol

The protocol is not a guarantee that planning permission or building regulations will be granted. We are required to ensure that decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. However, by following the protocol you can reduce unnecessary time delays and costs on the development proposals.

### Further information

If you would like to discuss our protocol in more detail, please contact our Economic Development Service at **business@n-somerset.gov.uk** or call **01934 426 266**

Helpful advice and support for businesses can also be found by visiting **www.innorthsomerset.co.uk**.

