

Agent Forum



Context

The Agent Forum is held annually and provides a structured opportunity for agents and developers to engage with the Planning Service. The aim is to provide a forum that is a useful information exchange and addresses key topics that agents and developers want to discuss with the Planning Service, consultees or key partners.

The 2023 Agent Forum was held virtually on 24 November and was jointly delivered by the Development Management and Building Standards services. Around 40 agents and developers attended, with the session recorded to allow access for those unable to participate on the day.

What Happened

Ahead of the 2023 forum, agents were invited to suggest topics, agenda items, and questions for discussion. This information was used to shape the final agenda, helping to ensure that the session focused on issues of relevance to participants. A follow-up communication was issued to confirm the agenda in advance of the event.



The forum was delivered as a virtual session, with presentations from Development Management and Building Standards officers, followed by discussion and question-and-answer sessions. The event was recorded to allow wider access.

Following the forum, a post-meeting email was issued to participants thanking them for their attendance and sharing presentation materials, a recording of the session, and a consolidated Questions and Answers document addressing issues raised during the forum. Feedback was requested after the event to inform the content and format of future Agent Forums.

Areas of Collaboration

The Agent Forum provides a structured opportunity for engagement and feedback between the planning service and developers and agents. The agenda is developed collaboratively, with participants invited to submit questions or items for discussion in advance. The forum is designed to support useful information exchange and to address key topics that agents and developers wish to discuss with the planning service, consultees, and key partners.

Overall Result

The Agent Forum is a collaborative event which also includes useful post meeting information. The feedback is positive and ensures that we compile and have an agenda that customers want to discuss.

Lessons Learned

Moving to a virtual format has increased attendance and improved accessibility. Circulating a recording of the forum ensures that all customers can access the information presented and discussed, regardless of their ability to attend on the day. Feedback indicates that a hybrid format would be welcomed in future.

While the virtual format has delivered clear benefits, it has been more difficult to replicate the informal discussions that typically take place in an in-person setting. Introducing a hybrid approach is expected to help re-establish these informal interactions.

Holding the Agent Forum on an annual basis provides a valuable mechanism for sharing information, updating on progress, and maintaining engagement with agents, developers, consultees, and key partners.



This case study has been prepared in collaboration by Aberdeenshire Council and the National Planning Improvement Team at the Improvement Service. We publish good practice case studies identified through our work on the National Planning Improvement Framework and the National Planning Hub. They aim to support the sharing of good practice and build collaboration across the sector in addressing common challenges. Please email us at mpi@improvementservice.org.uk if your authority has a good practice case study to share.

