

8 The Planning Process in Practice

8.1 The following tables set out the agreed best practice for both operators and planning authorities for the different stages of the planning process in England:

Stage 1a New Sites Site Selection, Local Planning Authority Consultation and Identification of Consultation Strategy	
<p>Meaningful pre-application consultation is highly valuable. It should be seen as a two-way partnership process between the operator and the local planning authority and, if conducted in this way, it can lead to a more efficient process and better outcomes for all involved. Note that Stage 1a relates to the selection of new sites. It would not normally apply to upgrades/alterations to existing sites (including redevelopment or replacement of an existing site to facilitate an upgrade or sharing with another operator).</p>	
Best practice	
Operator	Planning authority
<p>Information gathering and site identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check local planning authority mast register if available. • Examine existing databases. • Identify sites in search area. • Identify site options (site availability, viability, suitability). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure any mast register, where available, is up to date. • Consult the Historic Environment Record
<p>Local planning authority consultation and opinion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify local planning authority case officer. • Request their opinion on sites identified and explain why any alternative sites have been discounted • Identify areas of concern • Discuss and agree if community engagement is required and, if so, seek to agree appropriate community engagement with local planning authority, where possible • Record views in Consultation Plan • If required, carry out Traffic Light Rating for option(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide details of relevant officer. • Provide opinion within a reasonable timeframe. • Agree appropriate community consultation, if required, in timely manner where possible
<p>Site selection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select preferred option based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technical requirements and viability; ○ Local planning authority opinion; ○ Community information. • Review Traffic Light Rating for preferred option. 	
<p>Identify consultation strategy, where required.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who to consult; 	