

ACQUISITION DUE DILIGENCE

20-point development acquisition checklist

Use before exchange to separate evidence, assumptions and unresolved risk

How to use it

For each question, record E (evidenced), A (assumed) or U (unresolved). Add the owner and deadline for every unresolved item. Prioritise anything capable of changing land value, scheme quantum, build cost, funding or programme.

#	AREA	QUESTION	E/A/U	OWNER / DATE
1	Title & control	Is the seller entitled to sell, and is the whole development site within the title?		
2	Title & control	Are there covenants, easements, rights, overage provisions or tenancies that restrict the proposal?		
3	Access	Does the site have legally enforceable and physically workable access for construction and occupation?		
4	Planning	Does adopted and emerging policy support the proposed use, scale, density and design approach?		
5	Planning	What does the planning history reveal about authority, neighbour and technical concerns?		
6	Planning	Have likely conditions, obligations, affordable housing and infrastructure charges been allowed for?		

#	AREA	QUESTION	E/A/U	OWNER / DATE
7	Site	Are boundaries, levels, adjoining structures and party-wall interfaces understood?		
8	Site	What is known about ground conditions, contamination, archaeology, ecology and flood risk?		
9	Services	Are power, water, drainage, telecoms and other utilities available at the required capacity and cost?		
10	Design	Has the assumed net saleable or lettable area been tested against a workable layout and core efficiency?		
11	Market	Are values supported by genuinely comparable evidence, with appropriate adjustments?		
12	Market	Are sales rate, letting period and incentives realistic for the local depth of demand?		
13	Cost	Is the construction budget elemental and based on the current design rather than a headline rate alone?		
14	Cost	Are abnormal works, inflation, contingency, professional fees, surveys and statutory costs visible?		
15	Programme	Does the programme allow for surveys, design, consultation, planning, discharge, procurement and sales?		
16	Funding	Has interest been modelled against cash flow, including lender, monitoring, valuation and legal fees?		

#	AREA	QUESTION	E/A/U	OWNER / DATE
17	Tax	Have VAT, SDLT or equivalent transaction taxes and the proposed ownership structure been reviewed by advisers?		
18	Sensitivity	What happens when values fall, costs rise and the programme extends in the same downside case?		
19	Exit	Is there a credible alternative exit if planning, funding, construction or sales do not follow the base case?		
20	Terms	Do price, deposit, conditionality, longstop dates and rights of access allocate unresolved risk appropriately?		

Decision record

The three assumptions most capable of changing the decision:

Investigations required before commitment:

Change required to price or terms:

Current decision — proceed / renegotiate / pause / reject:

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General information only. Obtain professional advice appropriate to the site and transaction.