

Securing the right development finance is critical for property developers aiming to bring their projects to life smoothly and profitably. The initial call with a development finance broker is your chance to get clear answers, understand your options, and gauge whether the broker can deliver on your project's specific needs. But what questions should you ask to separate the wheat from the chaff?

In this comprehensive guide, we'll explore the essential questions to ask a development finance broker on your first call. Along the way, we'll mention reputable UK brokers like **KIS Finance**, **The Loans Engine**, and **Scottish Bridging Loans**, and underline why lender access, fee transparency, and deal size are paramount considerations.

Why Your Choice of Broker Matters

Before diving into the exact questions, it's important to understand why the broker you choose can make or break your development finance experience.

- **Speed:** Development projects often have tight timelines. A speedy broker who can cut through bureaucracy adds real value.
- **Lender Access:** Brokers with multi-lender panels can compare offers efficiently across bridging lenders, specialist development financiers, and high-street banks.
- **Transparency:** Upfront clarity about fees and loan terms avoids nasty surprises down the line.

The likes of **KIS Finance** are known for their rapid responses and direct lender relationships, whereas **The Loans Engine** and **Scottish Bridging Loans** blend solid lender panels with flexibility around project sizes. Do remember to check trustworthy review platforms like Reviews.io to see independent feedback on brokers' consistency and client satisfaction.

Core Development Finance Mechanics to Understand

Before you engage deeply, get your head around a few key development finance concepts. Being familiar with these will elevate the quality of your questions and decisions.

1. **GDV (Gross Development Value):** The total anticipated market value of the finished development. Lenders often use this to gauge your project's viability.
2. **LTV (Loan-to-Value):** The loan amount as a percentage of the property's value (usually GDV in development finance). Typical max LTVs range between 60-75% depending on lender and project risk.
3. **Loan-to-Cost:** The loan amount relative to the total development cost (land purchase plus build costs). Sometimes lenders cap LTV but apply different thresholds on loan-to-cost.
4. **Drawdowns and Staged Financing:** Instead of releasing all funds upfront, development loans are usually paid out in stages linked to build progress. This reduces lender risk and ensures funds are used appropriately.

Understanding these basics will help you ask targeted questions to assess a broker's expertise and the suitability of their offered finance packages.

Key Questions to Ask a Development Finance Broker on Your First Call

1. **What lenders do you work with, and how broad is your lender panel?**

Lender access is crucial. Some brokers represent only one or two lenders, while others have multi-lender access and can shop your deal around to find the best fit. Ask:

- “Can you share which lenders you have access to for development finance?”
- “Do you work with high-street banks, specialist bridging lenders, or just a narrow panel?”
- “Are you able to provide examples of deals you’ve placed recently with different lenders?”

For instance, **The Loans Engine** offers access to a wide panel covering bridging and development finance, which means more competition and potentially better rates for you. Compare that with some single-lender brokers who may not be able to flex for your project size or type.



2. What loan sizes do you handle, and what are your published loan bands?

Development finance has very different products depending on deal size. Some lenders specialise in smaller projects (£100k - £500k), while others serve large-scale developments (£1m+).

- “What is the minimum and maximum loan size you typically arrange?”
- “Are there published loan bands or tiers that lenders use?”

- “Does your panel include lenders specialised in my project size?”

Scottish Bridging Loans is a good example of a broker operating no-nonsense loan bands with clear published ranges suitable for local and national developers, ensuring you don’t waste time chasing unattainable loans.

3. Could you explain how staged drawdowns work and what the usual milestones are?

This propertyinvestortoday.co question tests the broker’s knowledge of development finance mechanics and will flag any potential risks or constraints. You want to know:

- “How many drawdown stages are typical for my project type?”
- “What are the build progress criteria for each drawdown?”
- “Can lenders be flexible if, for example, inspections or invoicing are delayed?”

The broker should also outline how staged financing impacts interest accrual and payment timings. For example, a reputable broker like **KIS Finance** will provide clear guidance on inspection processes and approval times to avoid costly build hold-ups.

4. How do you assess GDV and how conservative are lenders on this?

GDV directly affects how much finance a lender will offer. Brokers should be able to discuss valuation approaches in simple terms:

- “Do lenders rely on RICS valuations or other independent valuations?”
- “How do lenders handle speculative sales values or fluctuating market conditions?”
- “What buffer or discount on GDV do lenders typically apply?”

Understanding this helps avoid over-optimistic financing assumptions that later stall your project or force equity injections.

5. What are your fee structures, and when do fees become payable?

Fee clarity is a non-negotiable. Brokers must be upfront with:

- “What fees do you charge (brokerage, arrangement, valuation, legal)?”
- “Are your fees included in the loan amount or payable upfront?”
- “Do lenders have separate fees outside the broker’s remit I should budget for?”

Beware of any vague or “tailored” fee language without figures. Good brokers like **Scottish Bridging Loans** publish clear fee schedules, helping you budget accurately.

6. How quickly can you source and secure finance based on my project specifics?

Speed can be essential for developers juggling site costs. Check:

- “What is your typical timeframe from enquiry to offer?”
- “Do you handle valuation and legal processes in-house or outsource?”
- “How do you expedite deals where timing is tight?”

Some brokers have exclusive fast-track agreements with lenders, shaving weeks off turnarounds—a key selling point to ask about.

7. Can you give me examples or case studies relevant to my project type and location?

Real-world experience matters most. Ask for case studies particularly relevant to your project scale, sector (residential, commercial, mixed-use), and geography:

- “Can you share examples of similar developments you’ve financed recently?”
- “Do you have lender relationships specialising in my region?”
- “How did you overcome any challenges with those deals?”

This establishes trust and assures you that your broker understands your market.

Bonus: Sanity-Check Your Broker with Independent Reviews

Once you gather answers, cross-check the broker’s claims on independent platforms like Reviews.io. Verified client reviews will reveal how transparent, fast, and professional your shortlisted brokers really are.

Look specifically for feedback on:

- Honesty about fee structures and lender access.
- Effectiveness in securing competitively sized loans.
- Responsiveness and communication clarity throughout the process.

Summary: Your First-Call Question Checklist

Question What to Listen for Which lenders do you work with? Diverse multi-lender panel vs narrow single lender access What loan sizes do you handle? Clear published loan bands matching your project size How do staged drawdowns work? Well-explained process linked to build milestones How is GDV assessed and discounted? Reasonable, lender-backed valuations with buffer What fees will I pay and when? Transparent fee structure with no hidden costs How fast can you deliver an offer? Quick turnaround times with clear process Examples of similar deals? Relevant experience and local market knowledge

Who This Is For

This guide is ideal for developers seeking development finance in the UK — whether you are new to leveraging specialist finance or looking to switch brokers for better lender access, fee transparency, or speed. If you want to avoid hidden fees and match your project precisely to lenders with appropriate loan bands, these questions will help you shine a spotlight on the right broker for your needs.

Remember, brokers like **KIS Finance**, **The Loans Engine**, and **Scottish Bridging Loans** each have different strengths, so your first-call questions should help you decide which fits your project and personality best.

Approach your first call well-prepared, and you’ll have a much higher chance of securing development finance smoothly, with no surprises and with full clarity up front.