

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Applying for planning permission

If you intend to apply for planning permission, talk to the local Council's planners before going to great expense with plans and certainly before buying a property! You can get free advice by writing in, or phoning and if necessary, arrange a meeting with a planner. Most architects will also give free advice prior to the initial stage of a project and may well be able to add their local knowledge too.

You should have your plans prepared by a suitably qualified agent (architect) who will deal with all the paperwork, unless you are able to do it yourself. Do think carefully about whether you can prepare the technical drawings and supporting statements required, because many poorly prepared applications are declared invalid and delayed or refused planning permission.

The Planning Service is also concerned that some refusals, particularly from ethnic minority applicants, might have been avoided if a suitably experienced agent had been involved in helping with the preparation of the proposals. If you do decide to use an agent (architect), check that they either have a proven track record with this type of application as well as the required skills.

Finding an agent

You will need a professional agent to submit your application and represent you, unless your application proposal is very simple and you have access to the required technical drawings and documents.

You might find it helpful to look at applications submitted by the agent you are considering on the local Council's website, or contact the RIBA (Tel: 0207 307 3700) to obtain a list of suitable architects in your area or with the relevant expertise.

When a planning permission *is* required, your agent will represent you and the Planning case officer dealing with your application will help you through the application process.

Seeking a pre-application meeting

Before submitting a planning application, you or your agent are strongly advised to contact the Planning Service to identify the case officer who will help you through the process. The case officer will advise whether or not a pre-application meeting is required. In the modern planning system the pre-application phase is where key issues are expected to be resolved, as far as possible.

Some of the benefits of pre-application meetings include:

- § Giving you an opportunity to explain your needs
- § Establishing planning policy requirements
- § Commencing a dialogue towards resolving any planning issues that your proposal raises
- § Identifying what information is required for a valid application to be submitted
- § For more controversial schemes, identifying where early community or Planning Board consultation could be of benefit

It is important to note that if a scheme is submitted which fails to meet the Council's published planning policy requirements and there have been no meaningful pre-application discussions, this will be regarded as an unreasonable approach. Such an application runs the risk of being refused without further negotiation.





This fact sheet explains how applicants can check whether or not extra documents will be required with their planning applications. Issues do vary from area to area, so it is important to understand the requirements in your local area. Following this guidance should ensure that the application submitted is valid and processed as soon as possible.

'Local Planning Application Requirements' were introduced by the government in December 2007 and are designed to support the standard application form. National requirements are incorporated in the application forms and each planning authority can set its own 'local' requirements. The objective being to ensure that applications contain all the information needed to: inform and properly engage the local community; enable consultees and the Planning Service to assess the application and make an early decision.

The list of possible 'Local Requirements' is provided below, although this may be amended in the future. The Planner's normal approach is only to require information necessary for a decision on validation of the application. The level of detail required should be reasonable and proportionate to the scale of the application. The Planning Service should be mindful of the fact that some details are not necessary to determine whether or not to grant planning permission and can be 'conditioned' for later submission, but this needs to be agreed with the case officer. Application material is often published on the Local Council website.

List of possible additional Local Requirements

- Affordable Housing Statement
- Air Quality Assessment
- Biodiversity Survey and Report
- Consultation Statement
- Contaminated Land Assessment
- Design and Access Statement
- Environmental Impact Statement
- Equalities Monitoring Return
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Foul sewage and utilities assessment
- Heritage Statement (Listed Building/Conservation Area/Archaeological)
- Landscaping details
- Lighting Assessment
- Microclimate Assessment (daylight/sunlight/wind)
- Noise Impact Assessment
- Open Space Statement
- Photographs & Photomontages
- Planning Obligations (draft)
- Planning Statement
- Regeneration Statement
- Sustainability Statement
- Telecoms Information
- Town Centre Use Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Travel Plan (draft)
- Tree Survey/ Arboricultural Implications
- 3D Model insert

Local requirements can usually be identified in advance, by working through the guidance on the Council's web site; for more complex applications, pre-application meetings with a case officer will identify any additional requirements.

Content of Submissions

Submissions will vary from simple written statements and drawings to technical reports. Applicants are requested to keep the content directly relevant to the issues of planning concern. There is no merit in reproducing policy extracts at length or in producing over-elaborate reports. In some cases, a non-technical summary may be required to help non-experts in that field understand more complex, technical issues.

Applicants submitting a paper, rather than an online planning application, are requested to submit an electronic copy of the submissions on a CD as well. This will speed up the processing of the application and may help reduce the number of extra copies required for consultation purposes. Hard copies will be required of long and technical documents that cannot be read so easily on screen.