

The Planning process explained

After your application has been submitted, the council will check your application to make sure that everything has been filled in correctly and all documents are present and in order as well as the correct application fee has been paid. This is known as the validation process.

Once validated you will receive a letter confirming as such. Within will be a determination date for your application. This is the standard period for which the council takes to decide on your proposals. This is usually 8 weeks but can be up to 16 weeks and beyond for larger, more complex proposals. The letter will contain all contact information of the case officer that has been assigned to deal with your application. In some cases, the council may write to you requesting an extension of time should your application not be dealt with within the determination period quoted on the validation letter. You can disagree to the extension, however in our experience this can eventually lead to further delays or a refusal.

Publicity notices and Consultation Requirements

Once validated, your application must be publicised. This forms the start of a public consultation period lasting 21 days. Within this period, anyone can submit in writing and make a comment on the application which the planners will review when making their final decision. You application could receive comments from neighbours feeling that they may be affected by your proposals, community groups as well as statutory consultees such as highways, ecology and even Conservation officers, if applicable.

The nature of your application will dictate the specific publicity requirements. The council can take a number of the following actions in order to put your application within the public domain:

- Online via the council's own website.
- Newspaper Adverts - if within a conservation area, relating to a listed building or if the works affect a public right of way, then it will be publicised in the local press notifying people of the window in which they can make a comment.

- Letters to neighbours and parish councils - Letters will be sent to neighbours who the council feel will be affected by the application
- Site Notices - Councils must display site notices relating to the application in the same respect as the newspaper adverts. Have you ever wondered what all the string was tied around lamp posts? These are from previous posted site notices.

Assessment

The case officer assigned to your application will typically visit the site and will assess the impact on the neighbouring properties. The officer will then compile any comments received and will assess the application against the council's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which cover all manner of things from the size and scale of the proposals to any trees that may be affected.

Once the assessment has completed, the officer may request some amendments. Depending on the nature of the amendments, the council will likely request to extend the determination period. The council may also have to re-consult all parties again once the amendments have been made and re-submitted.

Final Decision

Most decisions are made by the case officer and planning dept. themselves. Those decisions that can't be made are referred to the council's planning committee. This committee sit roughly every 3 months, the exact dates are available on the council's website. Most authorities allow the applicants and the public to speak at the meetings before applications are decided. Should your application be sent to a planning committee then the council will write to you and notify you of their decision to send to committee. They should also confirm within the letter the date and time of the meeting in which your application will be decided.