

**North Norfolk District Council
Planning Advice Note**

Pre-planning application publicity and consultation for major developments

Introduction

The District Council considers that in the case of major development proposals potential developers should engage with the wider community before submitting a planning application. This approach is endorsed by the Government in its requirement of Local Planning Authorities to produce Statements of Community Involvement in the planning process.

Pre-application publicity and consultation provides the following benefits:-

- Schemes will be better understood by the community
- Local people can help to shape the outcome of proposals that will affect them
- Developers stand to benefit by being able to identify local issues of concern which may help them to revise their proposals
- Planning applications should be dealt with quicker and potentially without so much controversy

What constitutes a major development?

The Government defines major developments as follows:-

- Ten or more dwellings
- Housing sites of 0.5 hectares and over
- Other proposals with over 1,000sq.m floorspace or a site area of 1.0 hectare or more

In addition this procedure will apply to other proposed developments which in the opinion of the planning officers are considered likely to give rise to issues of significant planning impacts.

What is expected of developers?

Before submitting a planning application for any of the above categories developers are expected to engage with the local community on their development proposals. As a guide developers will be expected to carry out the following:-

- Consult with the local Town or Parish Council
- Inform the local District Councillor(s) and Chair of the relevant planning committee of the proposals and the other arrangements being made. (Note that the Councillor's Code of Conduct prevents them from expressing any views on proposals at this stage.)
- Place an advertisement in a local newspaper
- Position notices in and around the site
- Inform immediate neighbours (residents and businesses) and occupiers of the site
- Arrange for notification of the proposal on the Council's web-site

In addition some proposals will merit a public meeting and/or an exhibition as well as notifying local community interest groups.

Does the procedure apply to proposals for outline planning permission?

Yes, and developers should provide as much detail as possible about the proposals to allow meaningful public comment. Further pre-application publicity and consultation may be necessary for subsequent detailed proposals as well.

What help will the Council provide?

It is important that developers contact the Council about their proposals before undertaking public consultation. Planning officers can provide their own pre-application advice on development proposals and undertake technical consultation with relevant bodies in tandem with the public consultation process.

The Council is able to provide model proformas for newspaper advertisements, site notices and neighbour notification letters (www.northnorfolk.org/planning/5448_6015.asp).

The Council will also be able to arrange for details of the proposals and public consultation procedures to be included on the District Council's web-site.

It should be made clear that any comments on the proposal at this stage should be sent to the developer and not to the Council.

Do developers have to undertake this pre-application procedure?

The procedure is not mandatory and the Council cannot decline to accept a planning application for a major development which has not undergone this procedure. However, the Council expects the procedure to be followed. Inadequate pre-application consultation may lead to delays or refusal if significant material planning objections are raised which could have been resolved through pre-application engagement.

What about confidentiality?

The Council accepts that at an early stage in preparing proposals developers may wish to keep matters such as land acquisition confidential. However, whilst this may affect the timing of pre-application consultation it should not prevent it being undertaken.

It should be remembered that once a planning application is submitted it is open to public scrutiny.

What happens after the developer has undergone the pre-application procedure?

In most cases the developer will then be close to submitting a planning application to the Council. The planning application should be accompanied by a statement setting out the community engagement which has been undertaken and covering the following points:-

- The nature of the publicity and consultation carried out
- Who was notified
- The location and duration of any event held
- A summary of all comments received and issues raised. (The applicant should retain all responses.)
- A clear indication of how, if at all, the proposals have been amended as a result of comments received
- Any criticism by groups or individuals regarding the public engagement process

Will the planning application also be subject to publicity and consultation?

Planning applications irrespective of whether they have been through the pre-application procedure will be subject to statutory and the Council's own consultation and publicity arrangements.

Finally, who should be contacted at the Council to discuss the need and arrangements for this pre-application procedure?

These can be found on the Council's web-site www.northnorfolk.org/planning/5448_6015.asp.

Enquiries can be made by e-mailing planning-consultation@north-norfolk.gov.uk or by telephoning 01263 516150.