

Reception & planning enquiries service

Reception service

Our offices are open to the public between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

During these hours our reception and planning enquiries staff will be able to help you by providing you with:

- information held on the Register of Planning Applications which includes details of planning applications being considered by the Council and the decisions on those that have been decided,
- copies of guidance notes and booklets about planning and related matters,
- contact names and telephone numbers of planning officers,
- address and telephone number of other Council services,
- copies of and information from the Unitary Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance,
- planning application forms,
- and letting you inspect the plans and information submitted with current planning applications.

If our receptionist is unable to help you she/he will ask a member of our planning enquiries staff to speak to you.

Planning enquiries service

Many requests for planning information and frequently asked questions about planning can be easily answered by our planning enquiries staff. The information they can give you includes the following:

- how to complete a planning application form,
- information about planning applications fees,
- the planning history relating to specific sites and properties,
- copies of decision notices and other information from the Statutory Register of current and decided planning applications,
- dates of Development Control Committee meetings,
- whether a decision has been made on a recent planning application,
- whether a building is listed or situated in a conservation area,
- making arrangements for you to view our publicly accessible files
- take details of a complaint about a possible breach of planning control.

Advice the receptionist and planning enquiries staff will not be able to give you

Our reception and planning enquiries staff will not be able to explain how we apply planning policies in the Unitary Development Plan, explain plans or other information relating to current or decided planning applications or assess your proposal against the advice and guidance set out in the information and guidance notes available.

If your question cannot be answered

If our reception or planning enquiries staff cannot answer your questions they will ask the Duty Planner to see you. The Duty Planner is available to give general technical advice between 1.00pm and 4.00pm Monday to Friday. The service is provided to personal callers without an appointment and to telephone callers. For more details on the Duty Planner Service please see Information Note 7.

If the Duty Planner is not available our reception and planning enquiries staff will take a note of your enquiry and will arrange for a planning officer to contact you with the information you require. If you prefer they can make an appointment for you to see a planning officer between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday.

If you have called at our offices to view the plans of a current planning application that we have consulted you on the Duty Planner will only be able to give you limited information and advice. If you want to discuss the application in detail you are advised to make an appointment to see the planning officer dealing with the application as this officer will be better able to help and advise you.

What reliance can you put on the advice you will be given?

We will do our best to ensure that the advice and information given to you is correct but you should remember that the advice and guidance provided by our staff is given in good faith and is dependent upon the information immediately available to them and also the information given to them by you.

However, no member of staff can give you a definitive undertaking at this stage as to whether or not a proposal requires planning permission or, where permission is needed, the likelihood of it being granted. The advice given does not bind the Council in anyway as to any future decision or action that the Council might make in respect of your enquiry.

If you require a more formal confirmation of the advice you have been given you should write to us and we will try and respond in writing within 10 working days. When writing please state your question and the advice you were given together with the name of the member of staff who gave you the advice.

If you require a formal binding decision as to whether or not your proposal requires planning permission, perhaps to satisfy a solicitor, freeholder or lender in a property transaction, then you are advised to submit an application for a Certificate of Lawful Use or Development. The Duty Planner can advise you further about this process.