

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL?

The planning system provides society with a way of controlling how we use land, what we build and where we build it. In summary Planning is concerned with the principle of development. Local Authority Building Control (LABC) is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards in building design and construction. In summary Building Control is concerned with how a building is constructed.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A BUILDING CONTROL INSPECTOR?

- They take control of building work through the administration of the Building Regulations 2000 and the Building (Approved Inspectors Etc) Regulations 1985 (Building Act 1984, Parts I and II).
- Seek to ensure that inspected building work complies with the Building Regulations 2000 including the vetting of plans and site inspection of the construction process.

The control of matters of public health and safety specified in Part III of the Building Act 1984, including means of escape, demolition and dangerous structures.

Information on Building Control can be gained via our website, www.staffordbc.gov.uk following the links for Planning and Environment, then Building Control or e mail : buildingcontrol@staffordbc.gov.uk

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER SUBMITTING A PLANNING APPLICATION?

The application will be given to a case officer who will investigate the issue.

WHAT IS A CASE OFFICER?

The person who deals with the planning application from start to finish.

IF I NEED TO SEE A CASE OFFICER DO I NEED TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT?

Your application is allocated to a case officer and details of how to contact them (telephone and address). We offer a “call back” service where the officer will call you back at a designated date and time to suit you. If you still require an appointment after speaking with the officer, the officer will agree a time and place to suit you both.

CAN I SPEAK TO SOMEONE ABOUT MY IDEAS BEFORE I PAY FOR ANY PLANS TO SEE IF I COULD SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

Yes, you can either call to speak to a planning officer or email: planning@staffordbc.gov.uk.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO DETERMINE AN APPLICATION?

The Council attempts to deal with most applications within 8 weeks.

WHO IS NOTIFIED OF MY PLANNING APPLICATION?

Your neighbours and statutory consultees.

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY NEIGHBOURS OBJECT?

The case officer will consider any objections submitted within the agreed time scale to make an informed decision taking into account all planning legislation and adopted policy.

WILL I BE ABLE TO VIEW MY NEIGHBOURS OBJECTIONS?

Yes you can and they can be viewed at the 3rd floor planning reception, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford.

CAN PEOPLE VIEW AN APPLICATION AND RAISE OBJECTIONS?

Yes, people can view other people's applications and they can raise objections if they want to. Representations can be made via Public Access or in writing to the Planning Section or by e-mail: planning@staffordbc.gov.uk.

HOW WILL YOU INFORM ME OF THE DECISION?

We will write to you or your agent with details of either approval or refusal. You may have to satisfy conditions before starting work.

WHAT IF I DO NOT HEAR ANYTHING, SHOULD I CONTACT YOU?

For householder applications the whole process can take up to 8 weeks, however you will be notified who your case officer is and given a unique planning reference number which relates solely to your application.

WHY DID THE CASE OFFICER COME TO VIEW MY PROPERTY WITHOUT ME BEING INFORMED, SHOULD I HAVE BEEN THERE?

No you don't have to be there. This visit is purely to allow the Planner to make their decision taking into consideration any environmental issues or impacts the application would make within the area.

WHAT DO I DO IF THE APPLICATION IS REFUSED AND I WANT TO APPEAL?

If planning permission is refused there is a right of appeal to The Planning Inspectorate up to 6 months after the decision made by the Borough Council. Details of how to do this are attached to your decision notice.

IF I RE-SUBMIT AN APPLICATION TO MEET THE COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS DO I HAVE TO PAY A FEE AGAIN?

If the submission is made within 12 months there will be no additional charge.

CAN I BUILD RIGHT UP TO THE BOUNDARY LINE?

Whilst you may obtain planning permission for a scheme up to the boundary there are also legal restrictions on what you can build. You need to check your deeds and establish who is responsible for the maintenance of the boundary. You may need your neighbour's permission if they maintain the boundary. In addition you may need to serve notice on your neighbour under the Party Wall Act if you are undertaking work close to the boundary. Further information can be obtained from the Planning Section.

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM "AIR SPACE"?

This is when you build right up to the boundary line but the roof of the building is slightly on the other side of the boundary line because the eaves overhang and are wider than the building.

WHAT DOES THE LOCAL PLAN PROVIDE?

The Borough Local Development Plan includes policy and proposals for the development of land in the Borough. This will show potential sites for housing and employment development including roads to be built through private investment near to your house. Refer to our website: www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning.

WHAT IS DELEGATED AUTHORITY?

The Borough Planning Officer has delegated powers to determine most planning applications. All other applications are determined by the Development Control Committee.

WHEN DOES THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE MEET?

There are 15 Councillors on the Development Control Committee, which meets every 3 weeks to consider Planning Applications. All meetings are open to the public. Agendas are available on the Council's website, www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning.