

# The Planning Process

The planning application process can be separated into 6 key stages. The process is largely governed by legislation and is designed to allow the input of expert and interested parties into the decision making process. The six steps can be described as follows:

## **Step 1 - Validation**

Applications are checked to ensure all documents and fees required have been submitted. Any missing information will be requested before processing can start. Detailed guidance can be found on the planning application forms and fees page, where you can download all relevant forms etc. We aim to acknowledge your application within 3 days of receipt.

## **Step 2 - Consultation and publicity**

Consultations are sent to various bodies to obtain their expert view. Advertisements, where required, are placed in the appropriate local paper and on site and indicate how to view plans and how to comment on them, usually 21 days from the date of publishing.

## **Step 3 - Consideration**

The site is inspected and the application assessed by the planning case officer, taking into account planning policies, consultation responses and public representations. Where relevant, the planning officer will also gather any site specific information (photographs etc.).

## **Step 4 - Negotiation**

If problems are identified with the application which there is scope to address through alterations to the proposal, the officer will contact the applicant to seek suitable amendments. Steps 2 and 3 may require to be repeated if amendments which significantly change the application are made.

## **Step 5 - Recommendation**

The planning officer will make a recommendation, via the 'officers' report' on the application to the person or body authorised to make a decision. This will be the relevant Committee of the Council or individual who has delegated powers to make the decision. There may be occasions when an application is referred to an Area Planning Committee for a decision. This will be when a Division Member has carefully assessed the merits of the application and has decided that there are sufficient planning reasons for it to be determined by the committee. If the application is decided by delegated decision, this will be via the Principal Planning Officer who will sign the planning permission. 90% of all planning applications are decided by the delegated route. If the application is to be decided at a Committee meeting, the objectors and the applicant will be contacted to be advised of the time and venue of the meeting. All meetings are held in public and all interested parties are free to attend and observe how a decision is reached.

## **Step 6 - Decision**

A decision is taken on the application by the appropriate body.

With most householder applications the Director of Planning normally makes the decision under what's known as 'delegated powers'. This means that they can make the decision without going to

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the relevant committee which speeds the process up. Around 90% of householder applications are decided this way.

Where the decision lies with a committee, there may be a site inspection by the Committee. In reaching a decision, the Committee is required by law to limit the matters it takes into account to the "Development Plan," i.e. the Structure Plan and Local Plan policies relating to the application and to other planning matters, often referred to as "material considerations." What does and does not qualify as a "planning matter" varies between applications, but can generally be summarised as the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding environment and infrastructure. Matters which should not be taken into account include who is applying, their past history and the effect on the value of neighbouring properties.

Of importance is that the application must, under the legislation, be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless other matters indicate that this is inappropriate. It is therefore useful to be aware of the content of the Development Plan prior to submitting an application.

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Further information on planning can be found under;

**<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planninganddevelopment.htm>**