

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

DEVELOPMENT TEAM PROTOCOL FOR PLANNING AND RELATED APPLICATIONS

Aims

The aim of the Development Team is to encourage positive and pro-active liaison with developers at an early stage in the development process. By encouraging this pre-application dialogue the City Council will be able to determine a planning applications faster and be able to allocate its resources more effectively. Developers will benefit by having an indication of key issues at an early stage and will be able to make planning applications with greater certainty of the outcome and the timescales involved.

The Team

The Development Team will be led by the Planning Control and Conservation section. Officers from the following sections will contribute to the team;

- Planning Control
- Environmental Health
- Building Control
- Housing
- Legal Services
- Planning Policy

In addition, representatives from the following external bodies will also be invited, as appropriate, to contribute;

- Oxfordshire County Council (highways, education)
- Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Oxfordshire County Fire and Rescue
- Thames Water
- English Nature
- Thames Valley Police Architectural Liaison

Procedure

To initiate the process, the developer should contact an officer of the Planning Control section and discuss whether it is an appropriate scheme for the Development Team.

Five sets of proposals should then be submitted, which should include the following;

- Clearly marked 1:1250 or 1:2500 scale plan
- Existing site plan showing any buildings and trees
- Scaled supporting plans showing the nature of the proposals
- Supporting documents, which may include design statements, transport justification, affordable housing provision, tree reports.

Developers should endeavour to make proposals as self-explanatory as possible and to provide too much information rather than too little.

Provided the plans are of suitable quality, they will be circulated amongst the members of the team for consideration. Where, at the submission stage, additional information is felt to be necessary, this will be requested before the process is instigated.

The team will meet, usually within 14 days of receipt of the plans. Officers of the relevant section will attend or submit written comments. If a section has no comments on a project, those officers will not be expected to attend the meeting.

At the meeting, the developer will have about five minutes in which to briefly introduce the scheme and answer any questions about it. Officers will then briefly assess the scheme from their professional viewpoint in turn, addressing the following points;

- What are any problem areas which need to be addressed before an application is made.
- Which areas require further information, such as environmental assessments, transport statements, access statements, design statements, ecological surveys, etc.
- What section 106 requirements such as transportation measures, provision of affordable housing, open space, education contributions etc will need to be addressed.
- Why, if necessary, the proposal might be unacceptable in relation to local and national policies.

There will be an opportunity to debate the issues raised, but the meeting is not an appropriate forum for negotiation or discussion of detailed issues.

All comments made will be confirmed in writing after the meeting, in the form of a list of suggested actions to prepare the proposal for submission. The developer may then wish to enter into detailed discussions with relevant officers.

Once an application is made, it will be determined in accordance with the Planning Control Protocol, which highlights that where an application is submitted to officers for pre-application advice, and has not been amended to reflect that advice, it will be determined as submitted without any further negotiation. The protocol is displayed on the City Council's website.

Contacts

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