

STOCKTON-ON-TEES

BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING ADVICE NOTE

**VALIDATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS:
Guidance on submitting a 'valid' planning application**

MARCH 2006

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Guidance on submitting a 'valid' planning application****Contents**

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Validation of Planning Applications

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is an interim document to assist developers and Stockton Planning department in the validation of planning applications. It is the Council's intention to build upon this document and work towards a future Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will be formally adopted as part of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2. This is aimed at lessening the ambiguity of what is classed as a 'valid' planning application and enabling the Local Planning Authority to have sufficient information to confidently determine planning applications while offering a clear and detailed requirement as to what is required as part of an application from the outset, in order to provide a fast and efficient service..
- 1.3. This document outlines the current validation procedures for planning applications received by Stockton Borough Council and providing guidance on the information required to be submitted as part of a planning application.
- 1.4. This document is intended to offer assistance and guidance to developers submitting planning applications, detailing the expected requirements for a variety of planning applications in order to achieve a quicker, more transparent and efficient planning service

2. Common reasons why applications are considered to be invalid

- 2.1. There are many simple and avoidable reasons why the Planning Department consider applications to be invalid, below are some of the most common.
 - i. The drawings submitted do not show sufficient details or key elevations are missing.
 - ii. The application forms/certificates are not correctly signed or dated
 - iii. Incorrect fees enclosed or fee cheque not signed
 - iv. Information submitted is inadequate or incorrect
 - v. Scales of drawings are not accurate

However, these are not the only reasons.

3. Use of Agents

- 3.1. The use of planning agents can assist with the preparation and submission of planning applications and scaled drawings. The Local Planning Authority is also concerned that some refusals might have been avoided if a suitably experienced agent had been involved in helping with the preparation of the proposals. The Council advise that if you decide to use an agent to check that they have either a proven track record with this type of application or the required skills to submit all the required information. However, the Local Planning Authority cannot recommend anyone to you.

4. Pre-application discussions

- 4.1. An essential element of the planning process that is often neglected in both householder developments and commercial developments, is the benefit of pre-application discussions. The Local Planning Authority offers a free and confidential service to pre-application enquiries and strongly encourage developers to either write in, phone or arrange a meeting with a planning officer to discuss their proposals prior to submission.

Some of the benefits of pre-application discussion are highlighted below;

1. Outline whether the proposed development would, in principle be acceptable
2. Highlight areas which need to be addressed, prior to submission
3. Advise on what types of supporting information may need to be submitted
4. Save time and money
5. Often results in a smoother and quicker application process

5. Registration and validation

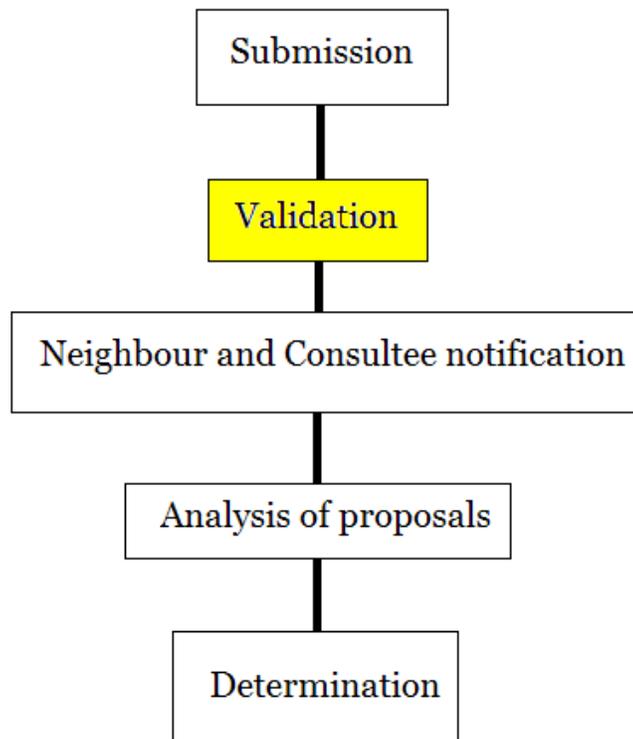


Figure 1. Where validation fits in the planning process.

- 5.1. Once an application has been submitted it is registered and given a unique reference number (e.g.05/1234/FUL). If there are problems with the contents of the application then it will be made 'invalid' and the Local Planning Authority will write to you asking for additional information to be sent as soon as possible.
- 5.2. When the application is made valid a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to the applicant/agent detailing the application reference number, the name of the Case Officer and their contact details can be found at the top of the letter. At any stage in the application the applicant may contact the Case Officer for an update on the application, the reference number of the application should be quoted on all correspondence/telephone conversations with the Planning Department. Alternatively you can check on the progress of your application via the Planning Departments website at www.stockton.gov.uk.

6. Processing of Planning Applications

- 6.1. In order to set out the processes employed by the Borough Council in the validation of the planning application(s) the following stages will be applied within the first few days of receiving an application.
 1. All applications will be marked with the date of receipt
 2. The application will be given a unique reference number, logged and plotted.
 3. An application will be assessed within 5 working days from the date of receipt to determine whether the application is valid or not.
 4. A letter will be sent to the agent/applicant confirming whether the application is considered to be valid or invalid. If an application is invalid then the required information will be outlined in the letter. In the case of a valid application a target date and case officer will be assigned.
 5. The time period for determining an application will begin ONLY when a valid application and the correct planning fee (where applicable) have been received by the Local Planning Authority.
 6. The first day a valid application is received counts as day zero and is the date referred to above.
 7. The processing period will not be suspended while awaiting amended plans or pending the agreement of section 106 agreements
 8. If during the determination period an application is found to be invalid, the original start date for processing the application will be disregarded. The determination period will only restart once an application is made valid. This is the only circumstance in which the start date will be amended. This only applies if the original application is invalid and does not apply if the authority requires additional information to determine the application.
 9. The processing period of the application will end only when a decision notice is dispatched and not once a decision has either been made or once a decision has been entered onto file.

7. Validation Checklist

- 7.1. In order to try and address the problem of 'incomplete' and 'invalid' and improve the overall level of service and create a quicker, more transparent and efficient planning service, the Council have produced a checklist in accordance with the ODPM's 'Best Practice Guidance on the Validation of Planning Applications'
- 7.2. The 'validation checklist' and 'additional information' are aimed at setting out the scope of information required prior to submitting applications for planning permission, where this information is not provided an application will be considered to be invalid. The 'validation checklist' and 'additional information' can be found in the appendices of this document and are also included within the application packs available from the Council's Planning Offices and the Development Control website.
- 7.3. For larger application if the case officer feels it necessary, you may be asked to submit further copies of the information submitted as part of your development before your application is made valid.

8. Compulsory Requirements

In order to fully assess a planning application and potential impacts on the proposed development and to achieve a level of consistency in the planning applications received, all applications submitted to the Local Planning Authority **MUST** contain the following information, otherwise the application will be treated as being invalid.

- ❑ **The completed application** form with the ownership certificates and declarations signed and dated.
- ❑ **The correct fee** (cheques should be made payable to Stockton Borough Council).
- ❑ **Agricultural Holdings Certificate** Typically this certificate is required whether or not the site includes an agricultural holding. All agricultural tenants must be notified prior to the submission of the application. **Note**; this certificate is **not** required if the applicant is making an application for *reserved matters, renewal of temporary planning permission, discharge or variation of conditions, tree preservation orders, or express consent to display an advertisement*.
- ❑ **A site location plan** (this must be up to date and a scale of 1:1250 or 1:2500. The application site must be edged clearly with a red line on the boundary and should include all land necessary to carry out the proposed development¹. Any other land in the applicants ownership should be marked in blue and show at least one road name.
- ❑ **An existing and proposed site plan** at a scale 1:500 or 1:200 showing; the direction of north, all site boundaries, other existing buildings, all roads and footpaths, the species and canopy of all trees within 6 metres of any proposed works, boundary treatment and the extent of any type of hard surfacing.
- ❑ **Existing and proposed floor plans** for every floor of the existing property and any proposed new buildings. These should be drawn to a scale of 1:50 or 1:100 and should explain the proposal in detail

¹ There may be circumstances where alternative scales are considered to be appropriate, this should be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority prior to submission of the application.

- ❑ **Existing and proposed elevations.** These should be at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100 all sides of the proposal must be shown and these should indicate; proposed building materials and the style, materials and finish of windows and doors. Blank elevations must also be included. Where a proposed elevation adjoins another building or is in close proximity the drawings should show the relationship between the buildings and the detail and position of the openings on each property.
- ❑ **Section drawings** at a scale 1:50 or 1:100 showing a cross section(s) through the proposed buildings(s) where a proposal involves a change in ground levels, drawings should be submitted to show both existing and finished levels.

In addition to this compulsory information the Council may require further information as part of any planning application in order for a submission to be made valid. The typical requirements for various applications are laid out in the checklists provided in Annex A of this document and within the various application packs. These are by no means comprehensive and are aimed at covering the majority information required for most types of planning application submitted. In certain instances and particularly with sensitive, complex and major applications additional information may be required, examples of the types of additional information which may need to be provided can be found in Annex B at the rear of this document. In these instances the Local Planning Authority will contact you in writing outlining the additional information required and the application WILL remain invalid until ALL the required information is submitted, this may however be avoided through pre-application discussions.

9. Failure to submit information

If applicants fail to submit the required information within an appropriate timescale then the submitted information will be sent back.

10 . Further information

Relevant legislation

Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Planning and Compensation Act (1991).
General Permitted Development Order (1995).
Control of Advertisements Regulations (1992).
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Guidance

PPG1 General Policy and Principles (1997)
Stockton on Tees adopted Local Plan (1997)
Stockton on Tees Local Plan Alteration No.1 (2004)

Useful websites

www.odpm.gov.uk
www.stockton.gov.uk

10. Contacts

Should you wish to discuss the requirements for the submission of your planning application. Require advice or assistance with the completion of the application form or advice contained within this document, you can speak with a planning officer in person at the address overleaf or via the telephone number provided.

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