

Agents newsletter

Issue 1

February 2009

Dear Local Agent

Welcome to the first issue of this newsletter.

Things are changing fast in the world of Planning. In the last twelve months we have seen the introduction of the national application form with its new validation requirements, online submissions and changes to permitted development rights. And, with the recent publication of the Killian Pretty Review on "*Planning Applications: A faster and more responsive system*", more changes are likely.

On top of that, here in Bradford we have been reorganising the Planning Service to better tackle the challenges ahead and meet the Council's regeneration agenda.

The aim of this newsletter is to improve communications with our local agents, to explain any changes that are coming, and generally to develop better working relationships for the benefit of us all, including your clients.

We intend to produce further newsletters on a quarterly basis but, of course, if there is anything urgent we will send out 'single issue' newsletters as appropriate.

Communications should work both ways, so if there is any feedback you wish to give us, please feel free to contact us.

e-mail: planningenquiries@bradford.gov.uk

Keith Stones
Performance and Support Manager

Peter Bridgman
Development Manager

Online Submissions

Why should you submit your planning applications online?

1. To save yourself money. Research has shown that agents can save around £120 on each application. There is no need to submit four copies of everything, so you save on copying and printing and help protect the environment too. (It's free to register with the Portal, and you get free technical advice and guidance).

2. To save yourself time and effort. Standard information such as your address and contact details are stored and automatically entered on to all your applications. One form suits most applications and you can save half-finished applications for completing later.

3. For better processing of your application. We receive your submission without delay and, when loaded on to the Council's website, your documents and drawings are of better quality than scanned images.

4. For more convenience for you. You can submit your applications out of office hours, with no postage costs, no lost post, and receive a quick e-mail notification of receipt. You can make secure payments online so no messing around with cheques or cash.

Did you know..?

... We now receive 20% of all applications online through the Planning Portal,

... And that a typical planning application submitted on paper uses the equivalent of 140 sheets of A4 (and some a lot more).

... One in three paper applications are invalid compared with only one in twenty submitted online.

But it's not all or nothing. You can submit the forms online and choose to send or deliver the drawings and payment separately. It's entirely up to you.

You can access the planning portal at www.planningportal.gov.uk or via the Council's website at www.bradford.gov.uk/planningportal.

For advice on submitting electronic files, including file formats and sizes, paper sizes, use of colour, scales and document naming, please refer to "A Guide to Submitting Electronic Files with Planning Applications" which can be found at www.bradford.gov.uk/planningforms.

Even if you do not submit your applications electronically we would encourage you to submit drawings on A3 paper size or smaller as this reduces the time we need to scan and index planning applications and also makes on screen viewing of plans easier. Also please can you ensure that any text is at least 12pt on your drawings to enable them to be easy to read once the image has been scanned.

Inside →

p2 Biodiversity Survey and Report

p3 Killian & Pretty Review

www.bradford.gov.uk/planning

City of Bradford MDC

www.bradford.gov.uk

Validation

It is almost a year since the national standard planning application form (1APP) and national and local validation requirements came into force. Overall, we feel that the transition from 'old' to 'new' has been successful with just a few teething problems.

Notwithstanding this, we would like to clarify the requirements for Design and Access Statements and also the information required to be submitted with Biodiversity Surveys.

Biodiversity Survey and Report

The Bradford Adopted List of Local Requirements requires the submission of a Biodiversity Survey and Report for relevant application types where the proposal is likely to affect protected species or proposals likely to affect designated sites, priority habitats or geological features.

Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation states that *it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is determined.* Developers are required to undertake surveys where there is a "reasonable likelihood" of a protected species being present.

The Council can generally provide guidance on whether or not a protected species survey will be expected as part of pre-application advice.

From 1 March 2009, if you do not provide a protected species survey where there is a reasonable likelihood of them being present or any justification as to why a survey is not required then your application may be declared invalid.

Bats are a group of protected species where the Council working with West Yorkshire Ecology has developed a two-stage process, based on national guidelines, to establish when a bat survey is needed:-

Stage 1 - is there a reasonable likelihood of a bat roost being present, based on:-

- A known bat roost?
- The proposal lies within 200m of a significant woodland or water body?
- The proposal affects brick or stone agricultural buildings, mines, quarries or similar underground structures and bridge structures over water or wet ground?

Stage 2 – will features used by bats be affected by the development, including:-

- Roofs?
- Soffits or gable ends?
- Hanging tiles or barge boards?
- Trees with cracks, crevices, hollow trunks or broken limbs?
- Walls with cracks or holes, at least finger-sized?

Bat surveys may also be required in other situations following the receipt of more specialist advice.

Bat surveys should be undertaken by qualified persons and comply with West

Yorkshire Ecology's 'Minimum Standards for Bat Surveys in West Yorkshire' which can be downloaded at www.ecology.wyjs.org.uk. These guidelines will normally require emergence and re-entry surveys to be undertaken between May and September.

If it is clear that no protected species are present, evidence should be submitted to demonstrate that such species are absent. This may be in the form of a letter or brief report from a professional bat surveyor or suitably qualified and experienced person, in accordance with the above Minimum Standards, including photographs.

Remember, early identification of protected species issues can help with project planning and reduce costly delays if they are found during the construction phase.

Please remember to submit the relevant validation checklist with your submission.



Pipistrelle Bat. Photo: Robert Mashedor



Pipistrelle Bat. Photo: Dave Fincham

Design and Access Statements

Whilst most applications are now accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, many of these submissions fail to include adequate reference to crime prevention measures.

... "create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion..."

"Circular 01/06: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System" sets out what should be included within the design

component of a Design and Access Statement. Paragraph 87 specifically refers to the requirement to demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been incorporated in the layout of a scheme. It says:

"PPS 1 makes it clear that a key objective of new developments should be that they create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder or fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion. Design and Access statements for outline and detailed applications should therefore demonstrate how crime prevention measures have been considered in the design principal of the proposal and how the design reflects attributes of safe sustainable places, set out in 'Safer Places – the planning system and crime prevention' (ODPM/Home Office 2003).

'Safer Places' can be downloaded from the Communities website at www.communities.gov.uk/planning and further information can also be found at www.securedbydesign.co.uk.

From 1 March 2009 design and access statements which do not adequately consider crime prevention measures will not be accepted.



Plan-it Bradford

The fifth edition of our quarterly newsletter - Plan-it Bradford is now available to view at: www.bradford.gov.uk/LDFnewsletter.

The newsletter is designed to keep you updated on the progress of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and to make you aware of any current or forthcoming consultations.

This edition features:

- Information on the current RSS consultation
- Holmewood Public Consultation - November 2008
- Consultation on the Waste Management DPD
- LDF Update
- Evidence base update

Planning Calls

Between April and December 2008 the Planning Contact Centre answered 46154 calls, taking on average 40 secs to answer each call.

Customer Satisfaction with the Planning Service in the Contact Centre increased from 60% in Jan 2007 (3 months after the service transferred) to 80% in January 2008.

We now have 20 advisors trained to answer telephone and e-contact Planning enquiries and support planning case officers with customer contact.

Killian & Pretty Review

The recently published Killian & Pretty Review is urging for a cull of bureaucracy in the planning application process to make it work better for everyone and help economic recovery.

The review, led by Joanna Killian, chief executive of Essex County Council and Brentwood Borough Council, and David Pretty, former group chief executive of Barratt Developments, has proposed a comprehensive set of reforms designed to make the process more customer-focused, more efficient, less information-heavy and more responsive to users.

Under these proposals planning authority performance would be assessed in the round: the emphasis would no longer be on the speed of decision-making.

These changes are likely to reduce the need for planning applications, reduce the number of conditions and initiate clearer and faster planning obligation agreements.

Ministers have agreed in principle that the system for dealing with the majority of small-scale, minor planning applications needs to be significantly simpler. This would free up planning service resources to deal with larger and more complex cases, the Government believes.

The full report can be downloaded from the Planning Portal at www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/government/en/1115315772911.html

There will be more news on the Killian & Pretty Review in future issues of this newsletter.

Our Performance

Between April and December 2008 we have dealt with:

- 64.8% of major applications within 13 weeks
- 68.8% of minor applications within 8 weeks, and
- 84.6% of other applications, including householder applications, within 8 weeks.