



Planning Advice Note 3

The Planning Control Charter

Introduction

The Council decides planning and listed building applications, advertisement consent and other related applications. It also contests planning appeals and has an enforcement team who investigate breaches of planning law and monitor development sites for compliance with planning permissions.

All decisions must be made in the light of the Councils Unitary Development Plan (UDP) as well as all other relevant planning considerations.

The UDP is prepared by the Council and contains policies for the future development in the County Borough. The Council also prepares supplementary planning guidance documents to assist applicants, neighbours and other interested parties. For a list of guidance notes, please see the Councils web site.

Opening Hours

Our office is open from 8.30 to 17:00 and we try to ensure that there is a planning officer available

to give advice during this time. Outside these hours, you will be seen if an officer is available.

We will accept correspondence via letter or email. Any representations received in this manner will be afforded the same status.

The Role of Officers

Officers are employed to assist all service users including applicants, consultees, supporters or objectors and elected councillors. They will carry out their duties in a responsive, fair and consistent manner.

The Role of Councillors

Members play a key role in advising their constituents how to become engaged in the planning process. However, members of the Planning Committee must not come to a view on any planning proposal until they have all necessary information before them. If they pre-determine any application by stating their view prior to a Planning Committee meeting, they may be barred from the debate or the vote.

Informal Advice

We offer a free, informal advice service before you submit your application. We aim to reply within 15 working days. Any informal advice which you have been given will be taken into account when your application is considered.

Written enquiries will usually be responded to within 15 working days. On more complex enquiries, the enquirer will be informed of the delay and the likely timescale for a reply.

Officers will agree to reasonable requests for a site meeting. An appointment will usually be made within 10 working days of the date of a request.

Receiving Planning Applications

If your planning application has been incorrectly made you (or your agent) will receive written notification with 5 working days giving you clear guidance what changes you need to make.

Valid applications will be registered and acknowledged within 5 working days.

Your acknowledgment letter will confirm the target 8 week decision period and tell you who the case officer is.

Making A Decision

The case officer will make a site visit, usually with 3 weeks of registration.

If the need for further information arises the applicant will be notified as soon as possible and the reasons why it is required. A deadline will be given for submission of more details or plans.

If the proposal is unacceptable but amendments could be made to overcome any objections, the applicant will be notified as soon as possible with a time limit for matters to be addressed.

In such instances more time may be required to consider the revised application. The Council will seek to agree an extension of time with all applications.

The Council is mindful of its responsibility to determine applications within 8 weeks. Where there are significant objections in terms of planning policy that cannot be overcome, applications will be refused without further reference to the applicant.

Applicants will be informed upon request about the progress of their application.

The decision notice will be issued within three working days of the decision having been made.

Becoming involved in the process

Publicity for applications will exceed that required by law and be in accordance with this Council's publicity policy. A separate PAN is available on this subject. We make all planning application files available for public inspection.

Where an application is reported to Planning

Committee, members of the public and applicants may address the Committee. A separate PAN is available on this subject.

Objectors/supporters to applications will be informed of the decision within 5 working days of the decision being made.

Applications are determined in line with the Council's scheme of delegation. A separate PAN is available on this subject.

Appeals

Officers will defend appeals. However, on occasion Councillors will present the case if the original decision was contrary to officer advice and the Head of Service directs that an officer could not present evidence without prejudicing their own professional code of conduct.

Compliance with Planning Decisions

Building sites are checked to ensure that planning permissions and conditions attached to permissions are complied with.

Monitoring officers will regularly visit a site whilst work is ongoing to ensure that the development is being carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

Monitoring Performance

The planning service will publish periodic reports to Planning Committee. It will

also publish performance tables to Planning Committee when the Welsh Assembly Govt releases them.

Making a complaint

We will try to address any complaint made. Please address any complaint to the officer who dealt with your case. If you are dissatisfied with the response, you should contact the Head of Service via the general enquiries number below. If you are still dissatisfied you may contact the Local Govt Ombudsman.

Welsh Language

The Welsh and English languages are treated equally. If you wish your enquiry or planning application to be dealt with through the medium of Welsh please inform your case officer.

Contacts

General Enquiries

01495 - 355555

Enforcement Enquiries

01495 - 355517 / 18

planning@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk

Ombudsman

01656 - 661325

The Planning Inspectorate

02920 823889

Other titles in this series are...

- PAN 1 Public Speaking at Planning Committee
- PAN 2 Enforcement Policy
- PAN 3 Planning Charter
- PAN 4 Delegation
- PAN 5 Publicity for Planning Applications

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