

NPN Quarterly notes.

23rd April 2015

Pre application process: community involvement (CI) at the pre application stage is supported by policy but cannot be 'required', only 'expected'

NATIONAL POLICY: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 66

"Pre-application engagement with the community is encouraged where it will add value to the process and the outcome."

LOCAL POLICY: Bristol's Statement of Community Involvement 2008 sets out the policy for pre application CI. Bristol's local validation list (the list of what is required as documentation for a planning application) includes **requirement** to submit CIS (community Involvement Statement) for Major Applications which sets out what CI was undertaken.

MAJOR development = 10 residential units / 1,000 sq m commercial or a combination of the two.

Bristol also has published **Guidelines** for the developer (Updated January 2015), and the **Bristol Planning Protocol** available on NPN website and at the bottom of the BCC website page <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/planning-and-building-regulations/planning-pre-application-enquiries>

In the case of smaller developments that may be 'LOCALLY SIGNIFICANT', this is included in SCI as a Type 2 (page 22): we have recently agreed that we will flag up this sort of case at consultee response stage with the planning case officer so that the case officer can tell the applicant that a CIS will be expected on this case.

Pre Application Enquiry: *new process*

Notification of pre app enquiry and consultee access is now sent to NPN administrators/ CAP / Neighbourhood Development Forums/ consultees eg English Heritage /

Consultees can access the planning online pre app database and submit comments before the Case officers write their response.

There are time limits for the case officer to respond to a pre app enquiry: this means that we have only 14 days' notice to post a consultee response, so a full reply is not expected: however this is a **good time for residents' planning groups to identify the main issues** with the type of development or site or building style desires or concerns which the case officer can pick up in his response.

Notification of pre app enquiry Majors only are sent to all except ward councillors- they can request to have further information sent to them by the planning department.

Neighbourhood Coordinators are not currently informed about planning pre applications or applications but this may be changed in future. Where there is no residents' planning group, NPN may advise the developer to contact the NC in order to agree what form of community involvement is appropriate:

NOTE: Using NPs for initial pre app discussions is not a good option because of the way in which Neighbourhood Partnership meetings and forums are set up to run at usually 3 monthly intervals with a varying audience. The forums may however be useful occasions for exhibitions at the later stages of the development of building design.

The full list of pre application enquiries is also sent to NPN each week. This includes major and minor developments.

Confidential – some applications are confidential and will not be shared with groups.

The Case officer's response is put onto the Consultee database and is not confidential so can be shared with NPN groups

The NPPG advises that there is Design Review at pre app stage- in Bristol this will be done by the BUDF Bristol Urban Design Forum. Their advice notes are published on the Architecture Centre website. NPN are notified of BUDF agenda and groups can

NPN Advice on getting the most out of pre application community involvement:

The sooner the applicant and the residents planning group meet, the earlier it will be in the design process, so more options will be open for discussion. Inviting a developer to a meeting in a month's time may mean that options have been already discounted. Be prepared to meet at short notice to start the process off.

Respond in writing after the meeting if you want to ensure that all your points are noted and to allow your planning group to have a frank discussion without the developers being present. This also allows people who were not at the meeting to be brought up to date and to raise any other issues before you send your response.

Groups need to be aware of local issues eg through being familiar with the Neighbourhood Partnership priorities and identified local issues and will be able to respond on behalf of whole community, not just on behalf of site neighbours, who will have a particular interest in how a development will affect them personally.

Alison Bromilow 21 May 2015