



# RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE

December 2009



# 5 Proactive Planning



## 5.1 The Application Process





## 5.2 Consultation

### Pre-application Discussions

The Government encourages positive engagement between developers and the council. The Statement of Community Involvement stresses that the council will welcome and provide opportunities for applicants or their agents to discuss development proposals with planning officers before they submit a planning application. Pre-application discussions provide an excellent opportunity for issues to be highlighted and addressed at an early stage in the development process, thereby reducing the likelihood of delays later in the process. Pre-application discussions also provide an opportunity to discuss the information and level of detail required to accompany a particular planning application.

The Vale of White Horse offers a number of ways to carry out pre-application discussions:

- Write to the council at Vale of White Horse District Council, Abbey House, Abbey Close, Abingdon, OX14 3JE enclosing details of the proposed development including a location plan.
- Email the council at [planning.dc@whitehorsedc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.dc@whitehorsedc.gov.uk) attaching details of the proposed development including a location plan.
- Telephone the council on 01235 540347 or 540348 to arrange a meeting with a Planning Officer.

The council now charges a fee for providing this service. Please contact us to find out if a fee is payable and the charge.

### Community Consultation and Engagement

Planning is a potentially contentious process as individual proposals can affect a wide range of people. The Government promotes a proactive approach to planning where community engagement and effective consultation are carried out prior to the submission of a planning application.



563 Public Exhibition

There are a number of options available for involving interested parties and the choice of method will depend on the nature and scale of the proposed development.

#### Public Exhibitions

Public exhibitions are an ideal forum for large and/or potentially contentious developments. They provide a valuable opportunity for the community to help shape developments and to raise particular issues. The key aims of public exhibitions should be to:

- Inform: provide people with the most up to date information on the development, its impacts and its benefits.
- Engage: use the exhibition as an opportunity to address real concerns - it should not be used just to sell the development.
- Record: facilities should be provided for individuals to record individual issues and concerns. This could include a questionnaire, a note taker and/or a message board.
- Contact: after the exhibition contact interested parties to advise them of progress on the planning application and any changes that may be made. Contact can be maintained in writing or through a central source such as a website.

Ideally an exhibition should be held locally to the proposed development and over a number of days and at varying times of day to give people plenty of opportunities to attend.

## 5.2 Consultation

### Workshops

Workshops need to be undertaken at a very early stage in the development process and need to include key stakeholders and community groups in developing the design and layout of a proposal. Workshops can form part of a continuing process of community involvement and can help to provide a strong endorsement of the overall principles of the development.

### Media

Local newspapers and radio stations can be an effective tool for providing information about a proposed development, and can be used to advertise workshops and provide a signpost for additional information.

### Leaflets

Not all of the public will attend exhibitions or workshops, so a further method for engaging the community is a “leaflet drop”, where information on the proposed development, its impacts and benefits can be distributed door to door. Information provided could include plans, drawings, photographs and text explaining the proposal. It is also a useful mechanism through which individuals can provide feedback, via a postal questionnaire, telephone number or website.

### Websites

The internet is an excellent opportunity to provide information on individual development proposals. The Vale of White Horse website provides information on applications that have been submitted to the council, including all plans, application forms and supporting documents. Websites can also be used by developers to publicise their latest plans, details of work that is being undertaken and feedback from public exhibitions and events.

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564 Planning Exhibition



565 Online Planning

## 5.3 Preparing Supporting Documents

### Design and Access Statement

Design and access statements help the council decide if a development will deliver good design by respecting and enhancing the character of an area, creating accessible and safe environments, and providing sustainable development.

Advice on the content and the level of detail required for design and access statements is provided in Government Circular 01/2006 and is included on the council's website. The level of detail required will vary depending on the nature and scale of a proposal. In general, however, design and access statements should:

- Set out the location, scale and nature of the proposed development.
- Set out the context for development, including the local physical, economic, environmental and social factors affecting the site and its surroundings.
- Set out how the design principles, including how the proposal has been influenced by its context, the need to deliver sustainable development and the need to create a safe, attractive environment.

- Set out how the proposed development responds to current planning policy, including Government policy, the Regional Plan, the adopted Local Plan, and the emerging Local Development Framework.
- Set out how any site or local issues such as access, traffic, protected species, flooding etc, have been taken into account by referring to technical reports that have been prepared to accompany the planning application.
- For listed building applications, the design and access statement should clarify how the proposed works take account of the special architectural or historic importance of the building, any important physical features of the building, and the building's setting.

A design and access statement is not required for:

- Engineering or mining operations.
- Material changes of use of land or buildings.
- Householder planning applications, unless any part of the site lies within a Conservation Area, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

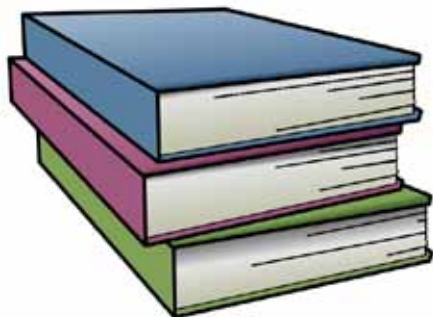
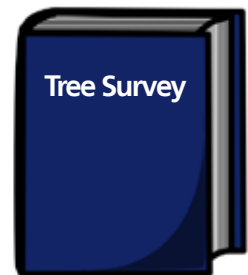
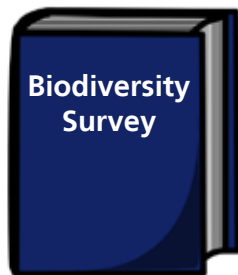


## 5.3

# Preparing Supporting Documents

## Other Supporting Documents

In addition to a design and access statement, some proposals will require other supporting documents. Reference should be made to the Validation Checklists on the council's website to see what additional documents will need to be submitted.



**567** Examples of Supporting Documents - A full list of the required supporting documents is available from the council's website