

Mansfield District Council



Planning : A Guide for Businesses

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1. Introduction

This booklet is a guide to the planning system for businesses in Mansfield. It provides guidance on when planning permission is required, how to apply to Mansfield District Council for planning permission, what happens once a planning application is made and what happens after a decision is made.

This guide is not an authoritative interpretation of the law and all advice is given on an informal basis. If after reading this booklet you are still unclear as to how to proceed, you should contact the Mansfield District Council Planning Department for further advice by telephone (463202) or by e-mail at developmentcontrol@mansfield.gov.uk

2. Is Planning Permission Required?

Planning permission is not always required for business development. Generally speaking, planning permission is not usually required for internal alterations or for small alterations to the outside such as the installation of telephone connections and alarm boxes. This section will give general guidance on the types of development that may not require planning permission. Information is also given on how to obtain advice on whether planning permission is needed for a specific proposal and this approach is always advisable.

Working from Home

In order to claim that planning permission is not required, the use would generally have to satisfy all of the following tests: -

1. No persons other than those resident at the property, are employed as part of the business.
2. The use will not result in frequent visitors to the site.
3. The use will not result in a marked rise in traffic or people calling.
4. The use will not require the use of more than one car or small van, parked within the curtilage of the site.
5. The use will only occupy a small part of the dwelling or curtilage.
6. No advertisement, other than a small nameplate, will be required to be displayed on the premises.
7. The use will not create noise or disturbance in the locality.

Changing the Use of Premises

The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 outlines a series of Use Classes. Planning permission is not required when both the present and proposed uses fall within the same class. It is also possible to change use between some classes without making an application. A guide to the Use Class Order can be found in Appendix 1.

Extending Business Premises

Minor extensions, including the erection of additional buildings within the site, may not need a planning application because the development is already permitted under Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. The guidance below indicates when, in general, an application for permission will or will not be required.

Planning permission will not normally be required if your extension is:

- Less than 1000 square metres of floor space; and
- Less than 25 per cent of the volume of the original building; and below the height of the original building.
- The extension must be related to the current use of the building or the provision of staff facilities.

Planning permission **will be** required if the extension:

- Materially affects the external appearance of the building; or
- Comes within five metres of the boundary of the site; or
- Reduces the amount of space available for parking or turning of vehicles.

Volume is calculated from external measurements. 'Original' means as first built, or as the building stood on 1 July 1948, if built before then. The allowance is once and for all; any previous enlargement of the building counts against these freedoms.

How can you obtain advice as to whether permission is needed?

If you are unsure as to whether planning permission is required for your proposal it is advisable to submit an Enquiry Form. There are two types of enquiry forms; -

- “HE2 Working from Home – Is Planning Permission Needed?” is used to determine whether planning permission is required for your proposal to work from home.
- “BE1 Business Premises – Is Planning Permission Needed?” is used to determine whether planning permission is required for other types of business development.

These forms will ask for general information on the nature of your proposal. From this information The Planning Department will be able to provide you with a written informal opinion as to whether planning permission is required for your proposal.

To obtain a HE2 or BE1 enquiry form contact the Planning and Building Control Technical Support Team or alternatively download the form from the Council's web site.

Building Regulations

Building Regulations are separate from Planning Permission. It is recommended that the Building Control department at Mansfield District Council are contacted with regards to any Building regulation issues.

3. Before Applying for Planning Permission

Preliminary Advice

Before submitting a formal planning application, it may be useful to obtain preliminary advice from a planning officer. A letter should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority with details of your proposal. Where possible this can be accompanied with an OS plan outlining the exact location of the site and any plans that you may have had drawn.

This method is advised because it is often difficult to give preliminary advice over the phone. This is because the planning officer may need to undertake a check of the planning site history or they may need to consult with other council departments or external consultees. The officer may be able to give preliminary advice from the written information submitted or they may feel it necessary to undertake a site visit.

The planning officer will then be able to advise on the proposal. This may include whether planning permission is likely to be granted, any potential issues that may prevent planning permission being granted and where possible solutions to overcome such issues. All preliminary advice is given on an informal basis and is without prejudice to the determination of a formal planning application.

Notifying Neighbouring Properties

Although the Local Planning Authority will formally consult any neighbouring properties once a planning application has been submitted, it is always advisable for the applicant to notify any proposals with neighbouring properties.

Different Types of Applications

Outline For a new building, you can make an outline application to find out whether the development is acceptable in principle. This has the advantage that detailed drawings are not needed, but it will help to provide the council with as much information as possible.

Reserved Matters Once outline permission has been granted, you will need to ask for approval of the details (reserved matters) before work can start. These comprise of scale, layout, appearance, access and landscaping. What you propose must be consistent with the outline permission. If your proposals have changed in any way, you may need to reapply.

Full A full planning application requires the submission of all details of the proposal. The exact details of information required to be submitted with an application are detailed in the next chapter. A full application is appropriate if you wish to change the use of land or buildings, erect a new building or an extension to the existing building or if you want to start work quickly.

Possible Constraints

Advertisement Consent

Some advertisements require advertisement consent. If you are intending to erect an advertisement it is advisable to obtain advice from a planning officer as to whether advertisement consent is required for your proposal.

Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are designated areas where special restrictions are imposed on development in order to retain the character of the area. While the authority encourages high quality design for all developments, any development proposal in a conservation area will be expected to have the utmost regard from the character of the surrounding environment. There are currently ten conservation areas within the district, these are;-

- West Gate
- Market Place
- Bridge Street
- Nottingham Road
- Crow Hill Drive
- The Park
- Mansfield Woodhouse
- Market Warsop
- Church Warsop
- Pleasley Vale

Conservation Area Consent is usually required for the demolition of buildings or structures in a Conservation Area. Trees within Conservation Areas are also protected. Before works are carried out to trees in a conservation area, notice of the works must be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, who will then have 6 weeks to either accept the notice or place a Tree Preservation Order on the trees.

Listed Buildings

The quality of the built environment is reflected in the fact that there are currently 242 listed buildings of special architectural and historic interest within the district. Listed Building consent is required for most works to a listed building (including internal alterations). The procedure is similar to that for obtaining planning permission.

Tree Preservation Orders

There are a number of tree preservation orders in the District covering either groups of trees or individual trees. Works to trees covered by a tree preservation order require consent from the Local Planning Authority.

4. Making a Planning Application

It is not necessary to make the application yourself. If you wish, you can appoint an agent (for instance, an architect, a solicitor, or a builder) to make it for you.

The Application Forms

Mansfield District Council planning application forms are available from the Council Offices, on the Mansfield District Website or by contacting the Planning and Building Control Technical Support team. The forms also come with instructions on how to make a planning application. Alternatively, standard planning application forms are available from the planning portal www.planningportal.gov.uk

Information Required

Your application should be submitted to Mansfield District Council and it should include: -

Four copies of the completed application forms.

The completed Certificate of Ownership (provided in the application pack)

The completed Agricultural Certificate (provided in the application pack).

Four copies of a site location plan scale 1:1250 with the application site edged in red.

Four copies of elevation drawings at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100

Four copies of floor plans at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100

Any supporting documents you wish to submit e.g. samples of materials, trade brochures, photographs, a supporting statement etc.

The appropriate fee.

In addition, Design and Access statements will generally be required for applications for both outline or detailed planning permission (see Appendix 4)

There will, however be no requirement for a statement for:

- **Engineering or mining operations.**
- **Development within the curtilage of a single dwelling house (extensions etc), where no part of that dwelling or curtilage is within a designated area such as a conservation area.**
- **A change in the use of the land or buildings.**
- **Advertisement applications.**
- **Applications related to tree preservation orders.**
- **Applications related to the storage of hazardous substances.**

All drawings must have a date, be numbered and show their metric scale. If your plans show existing and new works, you should clearly mark the new work, using colour if necessary. If you know what materials you are going to use on the outside of walls and roofs, write this on the plan that shows these

features. You should show how people will get onto and off the site, and give details of any boundary treatment that will enclose the site.

All applications for outline planning permission should also include information based on:

USE - The use or uses proposed for the development and any distinct development zones within the site identified.

AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT - The amount of development proposed for each use.

INDICATIVE LAYOUT - Indicative layout with separate development zones proposed within the site boundary where appropriate.

SCALE PARAMETERS - Indicate the upper and lower limits for the height, width and length of each building for which outline permission is sought.

INDICATIVE ACCESS POINTS - Define an area or areas in which the access point or points to the site will be situated

5. Once the Application is Submitted

Validation

Once the application is submitted, the agent / applicant will be sent a receipt for the application. The Technical Support Team will check the validity of the application. If the application is invalid, the Technical Support team will phone or write to the agent / applicant requesting the additional information required to make the application valid. Once the application is valid, it will be registered and a written acknowledgement sent to the agent / applicant.

Publicity

The Local Planning Authority is required to publicise all planning applications. There are three different methods of publicity; - a press notice, a site notice and neighbour notification by letter. The method of publicity will depend on the type of application. The Local Planning Authority is responsible for most publicity arrangements. The publicity period for most site notices and neighbour notification letters is 21 days and the publicity period for press adverts is 14 days, except for developments affecting listed buildings or within conservation areas where the period is 21 days. There can be no decision made on a planning application until the publicity period has expired.

Consultees

The Local Planning Authority is also required to consult external and internal consultees, of which some are statutory consultees. Different consultees are consulted for different types of applications. Generally, internal consultees have 14 days to comment on applications and statutory consultees have 21 days. Below is a guide to some of the different consultees and in what cases they might be notified.

| Consultee | Applications |
|----------------------------|--|
| Internal Consultees | |
| Building Control | Most applications for commercial development. |
| Economic Development | Major new industrial / office development. Enterprise Zone developments. |
| Environmental Health | Any food business including preparation and sales, noise insulation schemes and flue ducts, industrial schemes close to residential properties, manufacturing, flats above shops, major alterations to retail outlets. |
| Solicitor to the Council | Any legal issues including all Certificate of Lawfulness applications. |
| Leisure Services | Applications affecting trees / landscaping schemes. |

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| Property Services | Applications affecting land or property in the Council's ownership. |
| Operations (Highways) | Any development involving new access to a highway, new car parks, development which might have significant traffic implications. |
| Conservation | Listed buildings and development in conservation areas. |
| Nottinghamshire County Council | |
| Archaeology | Anything within a defined area of archaeological interest and anything affecting an ancient monument. |
| Ecology | If an SSSI of Nature Conservation site is affected, or if an Environmental Statement has been submitted containing ecological / nature information. |
| Footpaths / Rights of Way | On all statutory footpaths and bridleways that go through or directly adjoin application sites. |
| Highways | Development affecting all classified roads and major developments that may affect the highway network. |
| Policy | Anything that is a departure from the Local Plan or major developments that need to be considered against structure plan policies. |
| Neighbouring Local Authorities | |
| Neighbouring Local Authorities | If development adjoins / is close to a boundary with another Authority or if the development relates to a major retail development. |
| External Consultees | |
| Police Architectural Liaison Officer | Industrial layouts. |
| Coal Authority | All applications for new pipelines or buildings, some large extensions to business or commercial premises. |
| DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs | Proposals on agricultural land. |
| East Midlands Gas | Where pipelines cross application sites. |
| East Midlands Electricity Plc | Where power lines cross application sites and sub-stations on or near sites. |
| East Midlands Tourist Board | Major tourism proposals. |
| English Nature | When affecting SSSIs or nature reserves. |
| Environment Agency | Any sites within 250 metres of a landfill site / contaminated land, large |

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| | car parks and petrol filling stations and floodplains. |
| Forestry Commission | Proposals which affect ancient semi-natural woodlands or ancient replanted woodlands. |
| Health and Safety Executive | Applications involving use of hazardous materials, planning applications for telecommunication masts or works affecting pipelines. |
| Local Amenity Societies | Most Listed Building Applications or larger developments in Conservation Areas. |
| Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust | Developments affecting SSSIs, nature conservation sites or large development sites where hedgerow / ecology may be affected. |
| Petroleum Officer | Petrol filling stations. |
| Ramblers Association | Footpaths and bridleways running through or adjoining application sites. |
| Severn Trent | They decide which application they wish to be consulted on. |
| Town Centre Partnership | Large town centre commercial developments |

Case Officer Assessment

Once the consultations have been carried out, the case officer will conduct a site visit. They will, in general, be looking to see if the proposal complies with the relevant development plans. The current development plans are;-

- The Mansfield District Local Plan
- The Nottinghamshire Structure Plan (Soon to be replaced by the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Joint Structure Plan)
- Regional Spatial Strategy 8

Some of the relevant business planning policies from Mansfield District Local Plan are listed in appendix 2. To view all of the Mansfield District Local Plan policies, a full version of the Mansfield District Local Plan is available to view on the Mansfield District website www.mansfield.gov.uk The Nottinghamshire Structure Plan is available to view at <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk> and the Regional Spatial Strategy is available to view at <http://www.goem.gov.uk>

Amendments

It may be that the case officer considers that the original proposal as submitted does not strictly meet with planning policy or that consultee responses require the submission of further information or details. However, rather than simply refuse the application, in some cases amendments can be sought to bring the proposal in line with either planning policy or consultee responses. If this is the case, the planning officer will contact the agent /

applicant suggesting amendments. It is the decision of the agent / applicant whether to act on these suggestions or whether to let the proposal be determined as originally submitted.

Decision

Mansfield District Council operate three levels of decision making; - delegated, chair and committee.

Delegated – At this level, the case officer puts forward a planning recommendation to the Building & Development Control Manager, who is able to then sign the decision notice and grant planning permission.

There are only certain applications that can be decided on at this level. They do not include applications with a recommendation of refusal or applications where letters of objection have been received.

Chair – At this level the case officer puts forward a planning recommendation and the Chairman of planning and the Vice Chairman (or other nominated member) decide whether to accept the officer recommendation or whether to refer the application to full planning committee. The Chair meeting is normally once a week, usually on a Wednesday morning. This meeting is not open to members of the public or applicants or agents although, the Chairman and Vice Chairman will read through the full planning file including any letters of objection received.

Applications that can generally be decided at this level include minor developments or applications where no more than three letters of objection have been received.

Planning Committee – The planning committee meets once a month. This meeting is open to all members of the public. The Local Planning Authority will write to the agent / applicant, and anyone who has commented in writing on the application, informing them that the application is going to planning committee. There is also the opportunity for members of the public and applicants and agents to speak at planning committee and details of how to do this will also be contained in this letter. At this level the case officer puts forward a full report on the application including a planning recommendation. The full planning committee then vote whether to approve the application or refuse it. They can also add extra conditions to any recommendation of approval.

Applications that are decided on at this level include any applications with more than three letters of objection, any major applications, except where there is already a valid Outline planning permission or a Development Brief in place, or any applications that members refer to planning committee.

Appendix 3 gives a definition of a major planning application.

Once a decision has been made a decision notice is sent to the agent or where there is no agent it is sent to the applicant.

How long will a decision take?

The Local Planning Authority endeavour to decide on all minor applications within 8 weeks of the application being validated and on all major applications within 13 weeks of the application being validated. This is in accordance with Government Best Value Performance Indicators.

6. If Permission is Granted

When can you begin work?

In most cases a condition will be attached to the grant of full planning permission stating that the development approved must begin within three years of the grant of permission. If you have not started work by then, you will probably need to reapply.

A condition is usually attached to the grant of outline planning permission requiring an application for the approval of reserved matters to be submitted and approved within three years of the grant outline of planning permission.

Some permissions may have conditions attached to them that require discharging before development can begin. For example, further details relating to the development such as proposed materials, landscaping schemes or a car parking scheme may need to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Can you alter details of your proposal?

If you wish to make alterations to your proposal, you will need to submit a plan showing the proposed amendments along with a covering letter to the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority will then consider the proposal and respond in writing as to whether the amendments can be treated as minor amendments to the application or whether a full planning application is required for the amendments.

7. If Permission is Refused

Full reasons for refusal will be given on the decision notice.

Resubmission

You will have the right to one free resubmission. This should take account of advice given in the reasons for refusal. This must be submitted within one year of the original decision, must have the same proposal description and be on the same site as the original application.

Appeal

Appeals can be made against the refusal of permission, against a condition attached to the permission or against the non-determination of an application within the relevant 8 or 13 week time period. However, if you appeal against the non-determination of an application within the time period your application will be out of the council's hands and it may take longer to decide than if you had persevered with the council. Appeals must be logged within six months of the application decision date.

Appeals are considered by an independent Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State. Further information is given in the booklets "*Guide to taking part in planning appeals*" and "*Making your planning appeal*", which you can get free from the **Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay House, 2 The Square, Temple Quay, Bristol BS1 6PN**, Telephone: **0117 372 6372** or from the Technical Support Team at Mansfield District Council.

Appendix 1 - A Guide to the Use Class Order

This is a general guide only and applicants are advised to complete a BE1 enquiry form to obtain advice as to whether their proposed change of use requires planning permission.

- A1 Shops
- A2 Financial and Professional Services
- A3 Restaurants and Cafes
- A4 Drinking Establishments
- A5 Hot Food Takeaways

- B1 Business
- B2 General Industrial
- B8 Storage and Distribution

- C1 Hotels
- C2 Residential Institutions
- C3 Dwelling Houses

- D1 Non Residential Institutions
- D2 Assembly and Leisure

Appendix 2 - Mansfield District Local Plan Policies

These are just a sample of some policies in the Mansfield District Local Plan. The full plan is available to view on the Mansfield District Council website www.mansfield.gov.uk

DPS2 DEVELOPMENT WILL BE CONCENTRATED WITHIN AND ADJOINING THE MAIN URBAN AREAS OF MANSFIELD, WOODHOUSE AND WARSOP.

E2 PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYMENT USES OUTSIDE THE URBAN BOUNDARY, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, PROVIDED THAT THEY WOULD MEET ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

1) BE WITHIN A SITE IDENTIFIED FOR SPECIAL EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP;

2) INVOLVE THE REUSE OF AN EXISTING BUILDING, WHICH IS OF PERMANENT AND SUBSTANTIAL CONSTRUCTION, AND WHOSE FORM, BULK AND GENERAL DESIGN IS IN KEEPING WITH ITS SURROUNDINGS;

3) IT CAN BE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PROPOSAL CANNOT BE ACCOMMODATED WITHIN THE DEFINED URBAN BOUNDARY AND WOULD MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE RURAL ECONOMY;

ALL PROPOSALS MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY WOULD NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT DUE TO VISUAL IMPACT, NOISE, VIBRATION, SMELL, FUMES OR TRAFFIC GENERATION.

E3 PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EMPLOYMENT USES WITHIN THE URBAN BOUNDARY, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, PROVIDED THAT THEY WOULD MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

1) INTEGRATE WITH THE EXISTING PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT AND SURROUNDING LAND USES;

2) NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE SURROUNDING AREA;

3) NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE AMENITY OF THE SURROUNDING AREA / NEARBY PROPERTIES, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO NOISE, VIBRATION, SMELL, FUMES, SMOKE, DUST, ETC.;

4) RETAIN IMPORTANT EXISTING SITE CHARACTERISTICS / FEATURES;

5) ARE LOCATED WHERE THERE IS, OR IS THE POTENTIAL FOR, EASY ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND INCORPORATE PROVISION FOR CYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS;

6) INCORPORATE RELEVANT CRIME PREVENTION MEASURES.

E4 PLANNING PERMISSION WILL NOT BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WOULD LEAD TO THE LOSS OF EMPLOYMENT LAND AND / OR PREMISES, UNLESS THEY WOULD MEET ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

1) INVOLVE THE REMOVAL OF AN ACTIVITY WHICH IS CAUSING ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE AND / OR IS CURRENTLY INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE SURROUNDING AREA / LAND USES;

2) IT CAN BE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT ITS LOSS OR RELOCATION WOULD LEAD TO WIDER BENEFITS;

3) IT CAN BE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED THAT THE EXISTING PREMISES ARE INCAPABLE OF SUSTAINING ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS OF ACCOMMODATION FOR EMPLOYMENT PURPOSES.

BE1 PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ACHIEVE A HIGH STANDARD OF DESIGN PROVIDED THEY MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

1) THE SCALE, DENSITY, MASSING, HEIGHT, LAYOUT AND ACCESS RELATE WELL TO NEIGHBOURING BUILDINGS AND THE LOCAL AREA GENERALLY;

2) THE MATERIALS USED ARE IN KEEPING WITH THE SITE'S SURROUNDINGS;

3) THE LEVEL OF HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING IS CONSISTENT WITH THE TYPE AND DESIGN OF THE DEVELOPMENT AND ITS SETTING;

4) THE PROPOSAL INTEGRATES EXISTING LANDSCAPE AND NATURE CONSERVATION FEATURES.

M16 PLANNING PERMISSION WILL BE GRANTED FOR DEVELOPMENTS PROVIDED THAT THEY WOULD MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:-

1) HAVE REGARD TO THE NEEDS AND SAFETY OF ALL MODES OF TRAVEL, INCLUDING PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE RIDING;

2) NOT HAVE A DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON THE SURROUNDING

HIGHWAY NETWORK;

3) INCORPORATE PROVISION FOR SAFE VEHICLE ACCESS, EGRESS AND INTERNAL MOVEMENTS;

4) PROVIDE THE OPERATIONAL MINIMUM LEVEL OF CAR PARKING NECESSARY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OR WHERE RELEVANT MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS MEASURES TO ASSIST OTHER MODES OF TRAVEL;

5) WHERE NECESSARY, INCLUDE SAFE SERVICING, PREFERABLY SEGREGATED FROM PEDESTRIAN FLOWS;

6) BE LOCATED WHERE THERE IS, OR IS THE POTENTIAL FOR, EASY ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

Appendix 3 - Definition of Major Developments

- The erection of 10 or more dwellings, or, where this is not known, where the site is 0.5 hectares or more;
- In other cases, where the floorspace to be created is 1,000 square metres or more, or the site area is 1 hectare or more;
- The winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral working deposits;
- All waste developments, meaning any development designed to be used wholly or mainly for the purpose of treating, storing, processing or disposing of refuse or waste materials.

Appendix 4 - Design & Access Statements

Design

The **design component** of a statement will cover the following elements:

- **Amount** of development proposed for each use expressed in terms of the number of residential units or floor space for other forms of development;
- **Use** or mix of uses proposed;
- **Layout**, the buildings, routes and open spaces within the development and their relationship to buildings and spaces outside the development;
- **Scale**, height, width and length of each proposed building;
- **Appearance**, aspects of a building or place which determine the visual impression it makes, including the external built form of the development;
- **Landscaping**, enhancement or protection of the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated, including screening and planting.

In addition the statement must demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the **context** of the proposed development. In order to achieve this applicants should follow a design process which includes:

- **Assessment** of the site's immediate and wider context in terms of physical, social and economic characteristics and relevant planning policies.
- **Involvement** of both community members and professionals undertaken or planned, including community groups, planning, building control, conservation and highway officers.
- **Evaluation** of the information collected on the site's immediate and wider context, identifying opportunities and constraints and formulating design and access principles for the development.
- **Design** of the scheme using the assessment, involvement and evaluation of information collected.

Access

The **access component** of a statement will cover the following points:

- The policy or approach adopted to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
- What, if any, consultation has been undertaken as to the access and what account has been taken of the outcome of any consultation including a brief explanation of the applicant's policy and approach to access, with particular reference to the inclusion of disabled people;
- How any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed;
- How prospective users will be able to access the development from the existing transport network and why the main points of access to the site and the layout of access routes within the site have been chosen;

- Access for emergency services should also be explained where relevant, including circulation routes around the site and egress from buildings in the event of emergency evacuation.

It is important to note that the requirement for the access component of the statement relates only to “access to the development” and therefore does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings.