

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CHARTER

The Development Control Service has three main functions:

- i) the determination of planning applications;
- ii) investigation of breaches of planning control;
- iii) providing evidence in support of any appeals arising from i) and ii).

The Council has a statutory duty to process both applications and appeals for which it is the Planning Authority and this includes not only planning applications, but matters relating to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas; trees; advertisements; and Certificates of Lawfulness.

The Council has a statutory duty to investigate planning enforcement complaints, but has sole discretion as to whether to instigate formal enforcement action in each case.

Mission Statement

“To improve the quality of life for all in Runnymede by promoting high-quality sustainable development and by taking appropriate enforcement action in respect of unauthorised development”.

Services to the Public

There are a number of users of the Development Control Planning Service, including applicants and their agents, landowners, neighbours to development sites, residents' associations, amenity groups, bodies who are consulted over development proposals, and those who breach planning regulations. Some of these groups have conflicting interests. Nevertheless, the Council aims to provide a reasonable and equitable service to all who come into contact with it.

Provision of Information

- The Technical Services reception area is open to the public from 8.30am – 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and from 8.30am – 4.30pm on Fridays.
- During these hours, planning applications and planning histories can be examined and copied on demand. (We would ask that prior notice be given if a number of applications on sites are to be researched, and a charge is payable for copying).
- General planning advice can be requested from a duty planning officer.
- Advice can be given on proposed planning applications for applicants/agents (the more information regarding a proposal that is provided enables a more considered view to be given).
- Advice to neighbours can be given about valid concerns on planning matters.
- Details of planning applications, including application forms and drawings can be inspected (and downloaded) from the Council's website at www.runnymede.gov.uk
- Comments on planning applications can be made via email through a direct link on the Council's website.
- The Local Plan (including supporting maps) can be inspected and downloaded (in either text or PDF format) from the Council's website.
- Various leaflets are available from Technical Services reception, and planning information is also available on the website.
- Neighbours around a planning application site will be individually notified in writing, and given 21 days to respond. Comments received outside this period will be considered if received prior to the application being decided.
- Where a minor amendment is made to an application prior to determination, neighbours will be offered a further 7 days to comment.
- All planning applicants will be sent a yellow site notice and asked to display it at the application site (although it is not a legal requirement for it to be displayed).
- Certain major proposals will be advertised in the public notices section of the Surrey Herald and a formal notice displayed at the site.
- All those making comments on planning applications will be notified of the decision.
- All general enquiries or letters are acknowledged. We aim to provide a response within 14 working days (sometimes for speed this may be a telephone response).
- The Statutory Register lists all planning applications and decisions and is available for inspection during office hours.

For planning applicants and their agents, we will:

- Be prepared to give advice on planning proposals. Often this will be quicker if given over the telephone or informally. Requests for pre-application meetings will be granted where possible, although these are time consuming and keeping them to a minimum will help us process formal applications more quickly
- Register valid planning applications within 5 working days and tell you within this period where applications are invalid or more information is required.
- Send an acknowledgement letter detailing the application reference number, case officer and telephone number to contact for enquiries or progress of your application.
- Only accept minor amendments to applications. Major amendments will not normally be accepted, and should be the subject of a revised application.
- Visit the application site. If necessary, a suitable appointment will be made to arrange access.
- Aim to determine 80% of planning applications within 8 weeks – the majority under delegated powers.
- Provide a detailed written report, publicly available, which sets out the reasoning for the recommendation.
- Determine the application in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations direct otherwise.
- Process planning applications in accordance with our Code of Conduct for Planning Matters.
- Allow you to address the Planning Committee in certain circumstances.
- Advise you at the earliest opportunity where a planning obligation is required.
- Aim to issue decision notices within three working days of the decision.
- Clearly set out any conditions attached to a permission or reasons for refusal.
- Provide a detailed written report in respect of planning appeals.

For those interested in, or commenting upon planning applications, we will:

- Provide an opportunity to comment on planning applications – by letter or email.
- Explain details of an application and what is proposed.
- Offer advice on what constitutes a material planning consideration in terms of comments.
- Arrange to provide details of planning applications to disabled or frail residents when requested.
- Inform you of any material amendments to the application.
- Not determine any planning application until the given period for comment has expired
- Notwithstanding the period given, accept comments up until the application is determined.
- Acknowledge receipt of all letters of representation received.
- Ensure that all comments received are fully considered before making decisions.
- Summarise representations received in all reports on planning applications.
- Ensure that all representations are available for inspection by members of the Planning Committee and the general public, including applicants.
- Allow you to address the Planning Committee in certain circumstances.
- Let all those making representations know the decision made on the application.
- Inform interested parties of planning appeals, and offer an opportunity to comment to the Planning Inspectorate.

Monitoring Development

- When planning permission has been granted, some details or conditions may need to be agreed before development commences. Please check the decision notice or any planning obligation, to confirm this.
- Applications for discharge of most conditions, except for complex matters which may require consultation with other bodies, will be processed within 21 working days of receipt of all relevant information.
- Development must be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. The Technical Services Department will randomly monitor development to ensure that they are correctly implemented.

