

TOP TIPS TO APPLICANTS AND AGENTS' SUBMITTING PLANS AND DOCUMENTS IN CONNECTION WITH PLANNING APPLICATIONS



Background

The Development Management service at Reigate & Banstead Borough Council is working towards a paper-less office, i.e. maximising electronic working processes and electronic records and keeping the amount of paper information held to an absolute minimum.

Currently around 50% of planning applications are submitted electronically via the Planning Portal and the Council wishes to promote this service further so that more applications are submitted in this way. The advantages for both the Council and the applicant are:-

- It is more sustainable - no paper usage.
- More efficient - saves time in double keying information into the back office system and reduces the margin for errors.
- Speeds up the receipt of planning applications - saves time and money as applications are received and processed much quicker.

In addition, consultations with statutory and other consultees are carried out electronically and these bodies are required to view the planning documents via the Council's website.

It is, therefore, important that documents that are made available to view on the Council's website are presented in a clear manner. This note gives guidance to those submitting planning applications on what the Council is looking for in submissions.

How you can help – Top 10 Tips

The following points highlight some of the key areas in which applicants and agents can assist to ensure that their applications are processed promptly and information available to users on the website is clear:-

Electronic Working and Document Presentation		
1.	Use the Planning Portal to submit your planning application electronically.	This has the benefits set out above. The Council can only receive such submissions via the Portal.
2.	When creating documents use meaningful names such as, site plan, existing elevations, proposed elevations etc. Also ensure that amendments have a revision number included, for example Ex elevations Rev1.	This assists those users to identify the documents when downloading them from the website.
3.	Wherever possible, ensure that plans and documents are scanned at the correct orientation.	This will make it easier for users to view the documents and prevent them from having to rotate them.
4.	Ensure that the file size of documents is kept to the minimum.	Any planning files which are received electronically are displayed on the website. Large file sizes can cause problems to users, especially those in poor broadband areas.
5.	Ensure that plans show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A plan and version number – A scale bar – Dimensions (in metric) – For amendments, a revised version number 	This assists users to ensure they are referring to the correct plans as well as being able to scale plans, especially where they cannot reproduce them to the correct scale.
6.	Ensure that bold, dark lines are used in drawings rather than light grey or pale coloured lines.	Light or coloured lines do not replicate well when scanned or printed out and cause problems for users.
Ensuring your application is complete – main reasons for being invalid		
7.	Lack of or incorrect fee, unsigned fee cheque.	<p>Planning fees are set nationally and details of the applicable fee are published on the Council's website and the Planning Portal.</p> <p>The Council is unable to validate any application unless the correct fee has been received at the time of submission.</p>
8.	Lack of location plan and /or block plan	It is a national validation requirement to provide a site location plan identifying the extent and location of

		<p>the site.</p> <p>Without this information the Council cannot register and deal with an application.</p> <p>Frequently it is necessary to show the proposed development in the context of any other buildings on the site, or buildings and highways on adjoining land. This is best shown on a block plan, 1:200 or 1:500 scale, to help the Council assess the impact of the development.</p>
9.	Incomplete or incorrect forms.	<p>The relevant application form should be used and completed providing all information requested. Often sections are missed which result in the application being treated as invalid. Please read through your documentation before submitting.</p>
10.	<p>Lack of specific information, i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • affordable housing statement • flood risk assessment • energy statement • loss of retail questionnaire 	<p>Different types of applications will require different levels of information and supporting documentation to be submitted. Details of the requirements and guidance as to when specific documents are required are set out in the Local Validation List published on the Council's website.</p>

Advice on application forms, fees and when additional information is or maybe required

Not all of the information itemised in the local lists will be required for every application. Indicative criteria and thresholds are set out below for each type of information to help applicants decide whether a particular document is required with their application in each particular case.

If in any doubt about what information or document might be required in order to meet the relevant national or local requirement, or if you have a query about the need for information specific to a proposal please contact the Council for advice.