

Planning Statement

This statement provides current policy, standards and performance targets for the planning service. It should be read in conjunction with the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) approved 3 February 2006 for consultation.

Planning Policy

The London Borough of Barnet's general and detailed policies are contained in its adopted Unitary Development Plan (May 2006). Government policies are reflected in the UDP although guidance on specific topics is provided through its series of planning policy guidance notes (PPGs) and Circulars.

It is within this framework that planning decisions are made and are required to be made.

A. Planning Applications:

1/. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) will consider planning applications in accordance with the unitary development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

B. Enforcement:

Investigation of Complaints

1/. The LPA will investigate all allegations of unauthorised development and, where there is an apparent breach of planning control, the site will be inspected.

2/. The LPA will treat all enforcement complaints as confidential.

3/.The LPA will take all appropriate lawful steps, including the issuing of Planning Contravention Notices, to obtain information which is necessary to its investigation of apparent breaches of planning control.

4/. Officers of the LPA will comply with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 (as amended) for the purposes of investigating alleged breaches of planning control.

5/. When interviewing persons suspected of committing an offence officers will have regard for the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in the administering of cautions.

6/.The LPA will have regard to all material facts when deciding on appropriate action.

Enforcement Action

7/. The LPA will, where practical and expedient in the public interest, endeavor to resolve breaches of planning control through negotiation.

8/. In considering the appropriateness of enforcement action the LPA will have regard to policies contained in Government guidance and the Unitary Development Plan.

9/. The LPA may invite retrospective planning applications where, in its opinion, it is expedient to do so and in making such a decision it will have regard to the planning merits of the development and the likelihood of planning permission being granted.

10/. The LPA and will take enforcement action only where this is considered reasonable and expedient in the public interest.

11/. Where the LPA decide to take action this will be commensurate with breach of planning control.

12/. The LPA will only take enforcement action where it is satisfied the breach has occurred and is continuing.

13/. In taking enforcement action the LPA will use the most appropriate means at its disposal.

Issue of Notice

14/. A notice will only be issued with the appropriate authority and will comply fully with the relevant requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Prosecution

15/. The LPA will give consideration to prosecution where such action is expedient in the public interest and the Borough Solicitor is satisfied as to the evidence.

Direct Action

16/. The LPA will only resort to direct action as a last resort where all other means of securing compliance have been exhausted and only where it is expedient to do so. Any costs incurred together with annual interest at such rate deemed appropriate will be placed as a charge against the property.

C. General:

1/. Planning will respond to all letters, excepting objections to planning applications, within the corporate timescales.

2/. Planning will provide a service at the Planning Reception between the hours of 9am and 5.15pm on Monday to Thursday and 9am to 5pm Friday to provide general information and to enable planning

applications to be viewed. 24 hours notice will be required to view applications which have been determined.

3/. Planning will provide a duty officer service at the Planning Reception between the hours of 2pm and 5.15pm on Monday to Thursday and 2pm to 5pm Friday when a planning officer will be available to explain plans and assist residents in the submission of their planning applications.

4/. Planning will offer a pre-application meeting to each applicant/agent wishing to make a planning application for a major development within 14 days of any request and upon agreement to pay the appropriate charge.

5/. Case officers will be available 9am to 5.15pm to take telephone calls regarding their current planning applications. If whatever reason they are unavailable other officers within their area units will return the calls within 24 hours.

6/. The planning service will provide copies of public documents upon payment of the appropriate charge. Charges will be displayed in reception and reviewed annually.

Planning Standards and Performance Targets

A. Application Standards and Performance Targets

1/. Planning applications will be registered within five working days; target 90%. Where applications are incomplete applicants will be informed in writing and given 21 days to submit the required information.

2/. The LPA will undertake consultation on planning applications in accordance with the legal requirements and its adopted Code of Practice.

- 3/. Objectors and applicants will have the right to speak at Committee meetings in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- 4/. Written representations made on planning applications will be reported with those applications when they are determined. Respondents will be informed in writing of the decisions and the reasons for those decisions.
- 5/. The LPA will determine planning applications within appropriate timescales. Targets are 60% for major applications within 13 weeks, 65% for minor applications within 8 weeks and 80% for other applications within 8 weeks.
- 6/. The LPA will give clear reasons for its decisions on planning applications.
- 7/. The LPA will give applicants information about their rights, including the right of appeal where an application is refused or conditions imposed.

B. Enforcement Standards and Performance Targets

- 1/. All complaints regarding breaches of planning control will be acknowledged in writing within 4 working days of receipt. Target 100%.
- 2/. We will action (that is inspect the site and make a decision on the action to be taken) all but the most complex complaints within 4 weeks of receipt of the complaint. Target 90% of complaints.
- 3/. We will make a decision, including the initiating of enforcement action where warranted, in all high and medium high priority breaches of planning control within 12 weeks of receipt. For medium/high priority complaints the target will be 80% and for low priority 60%.

4/. Once a decision has been taken all complainants will be informed of the outcome of the investigation by letter and they will be invited, if they wish, to contact the case officer if they require clarification.

5/. Where a decision is taken under officer's delegated powers complainants will be informed of the decision within 4 working days of the decision being taken.

6/. Decisions will only be reviewed where there has been a material change in circumstances.

For further information/queries please contact:
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