

How we can help you find out if you need planning permission

January 2011

Introduction

Development such as extending a house or a commercial building requires planning permission. To obtain this permission you normally need to submit a formal application to the council. However, certain types of development have been automatically granted permission by the Government. This is called “permitted development” (or “PD” for short). Under permitted development rights people can, in some circumstances, build small extensions to their homes or build small outbuildings without the need to apply for planning permission.

How can I find out if I need to obtain planning permission from the council?

This document explains three ways that you can find the answer.

1) Do your own research

You can do a lot of research yourself to learn about when you would need to apply for planning permission. For example you can visit the Government’s “Planning Portal” website at www.planningportal.gov.uk where there is a wealth of information and some interactive tools to help you to find out if permission is required. We also have our own advice leaflet that explains some of the relevant rules.

2) Request our informal written opinion

To obtain our informal written opinion about the need for planning permission please write to us submitting the relevant information and plans (see below). There is also a fee of £50 for proposals that relate to existing houses (residential extensions and outbuildings etc) and £80 for all other requests. This fee should be submitted with your request and be made payable to North Somerset Council.

All requests relating to existing houses (for extensions and outbuildings etc) must be made on our [Planning enquiry form](#) which can be obtained by visiting our website or by calling 01275 428811. For requests related to buildings other than houses we will require a written explanation of what you propose plus the following information:

- The site address with a plan or map showing its location*. The location plan should show the site clearly outlined in red and be at a scale of 1:1250.
- Sketch plans and elevations of the proposed development. These drawings should include all key measurements (in metric) of the existing and proposed buildings.

* Note: Plans can be purchased direct by visiting: <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/>

We need to be able to fully understand your proposal so the more detailed the information you provide, the easier it will be for us to provide you with a clear answer. Without adequate information of a suitable quality we may not be able to give you a clear response. If this happens, we will write to you to explain what additional information you need to submit.

Once we receive your enquiry, and an assessment has been completed, we will send you a letter that will set out our informal view about your proposal. The letter will explain that the advice given is informal, based upon the information that you sent to us and does not bind the council in any way.

As part of our commitment to you we aim to provide a response containing our informal opinion within 20 working days. If we are not able to provide you with a response within 20 working days we will give you a date by which we will reply. We recommend that you act upon the advice we give you promptly. If you are unable to act promptly then we recommend that you contact us again to ask if the advice is still valid. A further fee may be payable.

Whilst we can give general advice by telephone we are not able to provide more site-specific advice over the phone or agree to undertake site meetings or site visits unless, in our opinion, it is necessary due to the scale and complexity of the proposed scheme. For the vast majority of cases the advice we provide will not be based on the findings of a site visit therefore it is essential that you provide us with as much relevant information as possible.

3) Submit to the council a formal application for a Certificate of Proposed Lawfulness

A Certificate of Proposed Lawfulness is a formal application to determine if planning permission is required and the decision is binding on the council. There is a fee for this type of application that is set nationally as half the amount that would be required to be paid if you had to submit a planning application for the same proposal. The information submitted with this type of application needs to accord with the requirements set out in our Validation Checklist, a copy of which can be found on our website together with the relevant forms.

Contacting us


Due to the nature of their work, our planning officers are often out of the office or are unavailable to receive telephone calls directly. However, we do always have a duty officer available during normal office hours to respond to general queries over the telephone.

Post: Development Management, Somerset House, Oxford Street, Weston-super-Mare.
BS23 1TG

Tel: 01275 888 811 **Fax:** 01934 426 844

Email: dccomments@n-somerset.gov.uk

This publication is available in large print,
Braille or audio formats on request.
Help is also available for people who require
council information in languages other than English.

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Please contact 01275 888 811