

This leaflet is intended to provide Devon County Council schools with background information about the planning system and the need for planning permission for school developments.

### **The role of planning**

The planning system plays an important role in shaping and protecting the quality of our towns, cities and the countryside. Development Management is a process that regulates development and the use of land, and involves the consideration of planning applications, the monitoring of development and enforcement action where breaches of control have occurred. It is a process governed by law, and can be complex.

Development Plans provide the framework within which effective Development Management can operate. The Development Plan for Devon comprises currently the Devon Structure Plan and the various District Local Plans.

### **Do I need planning permission?**

Most extensions, new buildings and other building works at school sites need planning permission before works can commence. Obtaining planning permission takes some time due to the need for planners to consult others. It is important to allow sufficient time for the planning process when planning a project (minimum 8 weeks) and it is advisable to get in contact with the planning officers when you are considering a project.

Unlike householder applications, which are dealt with by District Councils, the County Council is the planning authority responsible for processing applications relating to school developments.

### **Get advice first**

Therefore advice should be sought from the Development Management Section, within the Environment, Economy & Culture Directorate at County Hall, Exeter to establish the need for planning permission and to discuss the procedure, timetabling and issues that need to be addressed. For schools within Dartmoor and Exmoor National Parks, planning permission must be obtained from the relevant National Park Authority, and for voluntary aided or foundation schools planning permission can be obtained from the relevant district council. It is important to contact the right authority, as applications submitted to the wrong authority will be returned to the applicant.

It may be the case that planning permission is not required for certain things, and these proposals may be considered as permitted development. The planning officer is the best person to advise on this.

Should planning permission be required, it is recommended that a pre-application discussion takes place at an early stage to consider the possible implications of the development. In addition, early discussion with the planning officer often speeds up the application process.

### **What does the planning application process involve?**

It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure the application is submitted correctly including eight sets of forms and plans, the appropriately signed certificates and appropriate fee.

The planning application process normally takes about eight weeks from submission, but this can vary and the planning officer will be able to indicate the likely timescale involved for a particular development.

The process involves 5 stages:

1. **Planning application submitted** with accompanying fee and validity of application checked
2. **Planning application registered** and application number and target determination date confirmed.
3. **Planning consultation process** carried out allowing 21 days for responses from both the general public & statutory consultees.
4. **Consideration of representations** given and further information/negotiation sought where necessary.
5. **Recommendation/determination** made using delegated powers or by making a recommendation to the County Council's Development Management Committee. In some instances the application may need to be referred to Govt. Office for the South West before the decision is issued adding potentially a minimum of 4 weeks to the process.

#### **What types of factors are taken into account?**

The Development Plan for the area will always be the key factor when considering the application as will 'material considerations' such as environmental effects and impacts on the landscape, floodplain, design, amenity and the transport system.

A further important consideration will be the need for a School Travel Plan (STP). The STP is a written document produced by the school in partnership with Devon County Council's STP Officer. More information on STPs can be found at [www.devon.gov.uk/school\\_travel\\_plans](http://www.devon.gov.uk/school_travel_plans)

#### **What happens if the school is a Listed Building and/or within a Conservation Area?**

Works to a Listed Building or works within a Conservation Area may require Listed Building Consent and/or Conservation Area Consent in addition to a separate planning permission and these must be obtained before work can commence. Obtaining such consents can take much longer than ordinary planning permission as they are always considered by the Government Office for the South West. Advice should be sought from the Development Management Section to establish the need for such additional consent.

#### **What happens if planning permission is granted?**

Once planning permission has been given the applicant may need to submit for approval any details of development which have not been approved beforehand. These details will be described in conditions attached to the submission, and approval for such matters will often be sought before any development can commence.

Development must be carried out in accordance with approved plans. It is the applicant's responsibility to let the Development Management Group know if amendments to the approved development are being sought. The consideration of any amendments will be dealt with through the minor amendment procedure which will include the submission of relevant plans and the appropriate fee.

For further information or planning application forms, please contact:

Development Management  
Environment, Economy & Culture Directorate  
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