

Planning Agents Forum

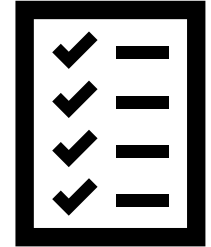
Best Practice for planning
statements

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Planning Statements



“In the context of under-resourced planning departments, a really good planning statement does a lot of the work that the planning officer would have to do. The statement can form the basis of the officer’s own report. If it is soundly written and well-reasoned, it makes it easy for the officer to present to elected council members and more difficult to dismiss”

Colin Haylock, a Past President of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI).

What is a Planning Statement?

- Planning statements are a key part of any successful planning application. This is because they enable planners to better understand the merits of a scheme and not make presumptions due to a lack of supporting information.
- It should identify the key issues and how the proposal accords with the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations.
- The goal of a good planning statement should be to provide a balanced justification for the development.
- It is an applicant's opportunity to justify the scheme.



When are Planning Statements Useful?

They are useful for all types of planning application provided they are tailored to suit the scale and complexity of the scheme.

- For householder developments in the majority of cases there are two main issues, namely; residential impact and visual impact. The statement should focus on these key issues.
- For Minor application types the main issues will be dependant upon the nature of the proposal and the context of the site. The statement should focus on whether the location and impact on the character and appearance is acceptable and accords with policy, together with any relevant planning history and other material considerations and site specific issues.
- For Major application types planning statements are likely to be more complex and ideally, should be formulated to reflect advice contained in a pre-application enquiry. The statements should identify the key issues and these should be addressed accordingly.

What should a Planning Statement include?

Part 1

- Style and Layout of Planning Statement – similar to an Inspectors Decision which focuses and addresses the key issues in a succinct manner e.g.

Main Issues

Reasons

(Sub headings of key issues e.g. Location of Development, Character and Appearance, Neighbour Impacts etc)

Other Matters

Conditions

Conclusion *(with focus on the social, economic and environmental benefits of the proposal and how these outweigh any negatives of the development)*

- At the end of the planning statement it is helpful if you can include a summary page which sets out the planning balance and conclusion.
- Photos of the site and surrounding area and photomontages can also help.

What should a Planning Statement include?

Part 2

Topics to include:

- **Local context**
- The **planning history** of a site including any fallback positions that may be relevant
- How the proposed development accords with the **local development plan and national planning policy** including where different policies appear to pull in different directions
- Whether **emerging policies** should be taken into consideration and what weight should be given
- Any **other material considerations** that should be taken into consideration including (for example; design, density and scale (with reference to the Cornwall Design Guide), biodiversity and ecology, climate change, community engagement etc)
- If you have received **pre-application advice** from us, it is helpful if you can provide a summary of your understanding of the advice we gave you, and how your proposal meets with that advice

What makes a good Planning Statement?

- **Succinct.** It is not necessary to copy policies in full. The references and a very short summary of how the development complies will suffice!
- **Careful use of copy and paste.** Ensure the statement refers to the correct location of the proposed development and/or the description of the development!
- **Not too long.** For those agents whose statements are quite lengthy, we would encourage the inclusion of a summary and conclusion page at the end.

Working Together



- A good and well written planning statement can form the basis of the Officer's report. If it is soundly written and justifies the proposed development it makes it easier for the officer to incorporate a significant amount of the material into their own report thereby saving time and facilitating quicker decision making.
- It is imperative that mutual respect is given at all times from both sides throughout the processing and determination of the planning application. This helps build positive working relationships and engagement between agents and planning officers.

Any Questions/Feedback?

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If you have any further questions or comments,
please email:

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