



Planning Application Advisory Note

On 12th June 2006 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued new guidance on changes to the development control system under Circular 01/2006. This Circular provides guidance on the implementation of a number of planning reforms and this briefing note focuses on two aspects of the reforms that will come into effect on 10th August 2006:

OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION & RESERVED MATTERS

Outline planning applications allow for a decision on the general principles of how a site can be developed while allowing for the subsequent approval of one or more of the reserved matters. Currently these reserved matters are:

- Siting
- Design
- External appearance
- Means of access
- Landscaping

From 10th August 2006 these reserved matters will be changed to:

- Layout
- Scale
- Appearance
- Access
- Landscaping

In addition, all outline planning applications should be submitted with a basic **minimum** level of information on:

- **Use** – the use or uses proposed and any distinct development zones within the site
- **Amount of development** – the amount of development proposed for each use
- **Indicative layout** – an indicative layout with separate development zones proposed within the site as appropriate
- **Scale parameters** – an indication of the upper and lower limits for height, width and length of each building within the site
- **Indicative access points** – an area or areas in which the access point or points to the site will be situated.

A Design and Access Statement will also be required to be submitted with all outline planning applications.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENTS

From 10th August 2006, Design and Access Statements will be required for all planning applications, except householder, changes of use and engineering and mining operations, and for applications for listed building consent. They are documents that explain the design thinking behind a proposal and how local context has influenced the design.

A design and access statement need not be very long, but the amount of detail should reflect how complex the application is. The statement will be available alongside the application for anyone to see, but does not form a part of it, it should be written specifically for the application it accompanies avoiding jargon or overly technical language to enable the design rationale for the proposal to be more transparent to stakeholders and the local planning authority.

For outline planning applications in particular, a design and access statement should explain the principles that will be used to guide the future details of the scheme. Local Planning Authorities should ensure that the development approved by an outline planning permission is constrained to the parameters described in the statement and that any future decisions relating to that outline permission are consistent with the statement (reserved matters details). In addition, it may be felt that additional information, building on the original statement, is required at the reserved matters stage. In both cases these requirements could be set out through the imposition of a planning condition at outline stage.

Content:

A design and access statement should cover both the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and how issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with. Statements should evolve throughout the design and development process. Areas to be addressed are:

- **Amount** – how much development is proposed
- **Layout** – the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces are provided, placed and orientated in relation to each other and buildings and spaces surrounding the development
- **Scale** – the height, width and length of a building or buildings in relation to its surroundings
- **Landscaping** – the treatment of private and public spaces to enhance or protect the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated through hard and soft landscaping and how it will be maintained
- **Appearance** – the aspect of a place or building that determines the visual impression it makes
- **Use** – the use or mix of uses proposed for land and buildings, their distribution across the site, the appropriateness of the accessibility to and between them and their inter-relationship to uses surrounding the site
- **Access** – this relates only to access to the development and therefore does not extend to internal aspects of individual buildings. This aspect should explain how access arrangements will ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network. It should explain how policy has been met, provide details of how any consultation has informed the proposals, where relevant it should explain access for emergency services.

Background Papers:

- 1 Circular 01/2006 (DCLG) – Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System – 12th June 2006.
- 2 “Design and Access Statements” – Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) 2006.

For further advice visit:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk> or <http://www.cabe.org.uk>