



# Walsall Council

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## *Planning Committee*

29<sup>th</sup> July 2010

### REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

### **Validation of Poor Quality Plans Submitted with Planning Applications**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- i) To comply with the Committees request to bring a report to this Committee meeting in order that the Committee can consider the implications of the current validation requirements in terms of accepting as valid plans that are of poor presentation and/or are inaccurate.
- ii) To advise members of the current position with respect to relevant regulations and procedures and to propose a way forward that will endeavour to raise standards.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i) That the Committee approves the proposed requirements as set out in the report.

#### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed local validation requirements and amendments to procedures can be delivered within existing budgets

#### **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Within Council policy. All planning applications and their requirements for validation relate to local and national planning policy.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Council must comply with the guidance set out in the Governments "Guidance on information requirements and validation" issued in March 2010 and the Development Management policy annex on information requirements and validation which took effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

#### **6. EQUALITY**

No issues arising from the report. The Development Management services have completed Equality Impact Assessments and are accredited to be in compliance.

**7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

The impacts of planning decisions on the environment are considered as part of the consideration of the planning applications in accordance with local, regional and national planning policies.

**8. WARD(S) AFFECTED**

All.

**9. CONSULTEES**

Legal Services

**10. CONTACT OFFICER**

David Elsworthy - Extension: 2409

**11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Guidance on information requirements and validation” issued in March 2010

David Elsworthy, Head of Planning and Building Control

1. The governments 'Guidance on information requirements and validation' contains guidance on how local planning authorities should undertake the validation process for accepting planning applications. Its tone is very much based on authorities taking a proportionate approach for information and that the process should not be used to prevent the start of an application where the applicant has taken reasonable steps to fulfil the requirements.
2. There is now a duty for local authorities to provide a local list of validation requirements in addition to the national requirements of using the correct form; providing the correct fee; certification of ownership; a location plan; a site plan; a design and access statement (where required) and an agricultural declaration. We are now concluding our local list with a view to placing it on consultation for eight weeks in mid August with a view to it being active in November.
3. The statutory requirements give guidance on the submission of site and location plans relating to an appropriate scale (typically 1:1250 or 1:2500) with a north point and sufficient roads and adjoining buildings to ensure that the exact location of the application site is clear. In addition the site plan should be to an appropriate metric scale; show all the buildings, roads and footpaths on land adjoining the site including access arrangements; all public rights of way crossing or adjoining the site; the position of all trees on the site and those on adjacent land; the extent and type of any hard surfacing and boundary treatment including walls or fencing where proposed. These requirements are therefore already being used to validate all applications.
4. Members of the committee have been concerned about the poor quality of plans submitted but these have largely centred on the existing and proposed elevations and a preference for three dimensional imagery. Clearly this is outside of the national requirements and therefore officers will be ensuring that these requirements will feature in the local list. However, such requirements will need to be reasonable in terms of necessity, precision, proportionality, assistance and fitness for purpose as required by government guidance. We could not therefore reasonably expect three dimensional imagery to be submitted for a householder application, whereas it could reasonably be expected for a major application.
5. It is therefore proposed that we focus on a requirement that supporting plans and drawings should be fit for purpose and precise. This will require that
  - All elevations and plans should be clear enough to show the proposed development, that they are proposing and drawn to an appropriate metric scale.
  - All elevations and plans are clearly and logically named and given titles which refer to their content.
  - That they are fit for purpose in that they are accurately drawn and that they will be able to be viewed clearly electronically on the council's web site and to the Planning Committee (if required).
  - That they clearly show (preferably by the use of colour) the proposed new buildings and/or extensions, differentiating them from the existing building(s).
  - That all plans include a block plan that shows the adjoining boundaries; the height and nature of the boundary treatment and the position and height of any building or structure within 10 metres of the other side of the boundary.
  - All elevations should clearly indicate the existing and proposed building materials and the style, materials and finish of windows and doors. Where a

proposed elevation adjoins another building or is in close proximity to it, the drawings should show the relationship between the two buildings and detail the positions of the fenestration details of each property “the drawings should show the relationship between the two buildings and detail the positions of all fenestration details in the proposed elevation and those in close proximity of it, in the adjoining property”.

- All applications should show complete floor plans where appropriate for existing buildings to be altered by the proposed development, highlighting any existing walls or buildings to be demolished (where applicable).
- Existing and proposed site sections, and site levels on the site plan, should be provided at an appropriate scale where a change in levels is proposed. These should clearly show how the proposed development relates to existing levels and adjacent land and buildings by the use of a fixed datum point, either off site but nearby, or at some point on the site which will not be affected by the works proposed.
- Details of proposed foundations and eaves where a change is proposed are also required together with details of how any encroachment on adjacent land is to be avoided.
- All applications that propose the creation of a new roof or an extension to an existing roof shall include an appropriately metric scale roof plan showing the shape of the roof, its location and specifying the roofing materials.
- All major applications (10 or more dwellings or 1000 sq.m. or more) must include coloured three dimensional imagery
- Wherever possible plans submitted should use A4 or A3 paper

6. Members may be aware that one of the recommendations that came out of the value for money scrutiny report in April this year was that we create an accredited list of agents. It is intended to bring this forward at the same time as the local validation list and the ability to consistently submit plans and drawings that meet the above requirements will feature as a requirement to be included on this list. It is not possible to prevent the submission of applications from non-accredited agents but it is anticipated that the introduction of the local list and an accredited agents list will assist in improving the quality of information that is submitted by agents.

David Elsworthy, Head of Planning and Building Control