

Planning - our service commitment

The Planning Section carries out Spelthorne Borough Council's duties as a Local Planning Authority. Its Policy team prepares planning policy documents and the Development Control team processes planning and other applications.

What you can expect from us:

- ensure everyone is treated equally and fairly regardless of race, family/marital status, gender, religious belief, age, disability, or sexuality
- a polite, respectful and effective service
- give you clear information and advice

The Planning Policy team will:

- prepare a Local Development Framework to meet the Borough's needs to the period 2026;
- respond to national and regional/sub-regional planning policy issues in a way which safeguards the well-being of the Borough;
- respond to major development and transport schemes in a way which safeguards the interests of the Borough

The Development Control team will:

Before an application is submitted

- welcome you to use our pre-application advice service to get informal advice before you submit a planning application;
- aim to respond to general written requests for information within 10 working days. If not, we will acknowledge your query and follow up in more detail by a specified later date;
- offer specialist conservation and listed buildings advice upon request

Submitting an application

- help you to submit your application electronically via our 'Planning Portal' link;
- aim to register your application within 5 days which will include notifying you if your application is invalid, advising you what information we need;
- notify immediately adjoining neighbours of applications and give them 21 days to comment

Processing an application

- make details of planning applications (including copies of plans, representations, and officer reports) available on the internet via our system called "Public Access";
- inspect the site of the proposed development within 21 days of receiving your application;
- take all letters commenting on planning applications into account when making a decision and summarise these within our reports;
- where necessary seek only one set of small scale amendments to submitted planning applications in order to meet government deadlines for quick decisions;
- advise you by letter at least five working days in advance if your application, or a development you have commented on, is being considered by the planning committee, and the Councils procedures for public speaking

Determining an application

- determine your planning application in line with the policies in our Development Plan and any other relevant issues;
- advise applicants, agents and contributors of the outcome of a decision within 5 working days of it being made

Appeals

- advise applicants of their rights of appeal if they are unhappy with the decision, but encourage them to discuss whether a revised scheme might be acceptable;
- Notify contributors on an application within 5 days of an appeal being accepted by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), and explain procedures and timescales;
- prepare appeal statements, where necessary, to support the Council's decision, and ensure these are available on Public Access

Enforcement

- acknowledge complaints about breaches of planning control within 3 Working days of receipt (by phone, in writing or by email);
- undertake an initial site visit within 5 Working days of the original complaint;
- with ongoing or more complex complaints, advise complainants of progress within one month, and keep all parties informed at key stages of the investigation;
- aim to ensure that breaches are resolved successfully using the best methods, and that action is taken quickly when necessary

We aim to determine:

- 60% of major planning applications within 13 weeks;

- 75% of minor planning applications within eight weeks;
- 90% of all other planning applications within eight weeks;

- 85% of applications for work to preserved trees within eight weeks, and 100% of notices for work on trees in conservation areas within six weeks

How you can help us

To help us give you the best possible service please;

- ensure you give us the correct information, plans and fees with your application;
- quote any reference number we have given you so we can deal with your query as quickly as possible;
- respond to any revisions or additional information we ask for as quickly as you can;
- let us know of any changes you wish to make to your proposal as soon as you can;
- treat our staff with courtesy - they are trying to help you.