



# Guide to Planning

## What is the Planning System?

The planning system aims to ensure a balance between enabling new development to take place and protecting the environment and local facilities.

Without a planning system everyone would be allowed to build wherever they wanted, without considering the effects of this on other people, and without taking into account the need for community facilities such as schools, open space and leisure activities.

**Planning permission** is required for most types of development. This is gained through the submission of a **planning application**.

Decisions on planning applications are made by the Borough Council. These decisions are based on local, national and regional planning policy.

## Do I need planning permission?

Most building work, as well as changing what land and existing buildings are used for, requires planning permission.

If planning permission is required, it should be granted before any work begins.

The owner of the land or property is responsible for complying with planning rules.

## Permitted Development and Change of Use

Certain types of minor building work, e.g. walls and fences below a certain height, small extensions, conservatories and porches, do not require planning permission. This is known as **permitted development**. However, this should always be confirmed with a Planning Officer.

There are also some cases where changing the use of a building will not require permission.

Further details on permitted development and change of use can be found on [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk).

## Other types of permission required

The display of advertisements, alterations to a listed property, development within a conservation area and work affecting protected trees may also require the submission of an application.

## Who can I talk to?

If you are thinking about carrying out any type of development, **you should always contact a planning officer to check whether or not you need permission.**

The Development Management team encourage pre-application discussions. You can contact the team on 01438 242159 or [planning@stevenage.gov.uk](mailto:planning@stevenage.gov.uk).

Most building work is likely to require building regulations approval. This is completely separate from obtaining planning permission. Contact the Building Control team for more information on 01438 242264.

## How can I have my say?

There are two ways to get involved in the planning system and to shape the decisions made:

**a) Planning applications-** Anyone can make comments on a planning application. Comments must be submitted in writing.

**b) Plan preparation** - Decisions on planning applications are made in line with local plans, so getting involved in the production of these is essential. Formal consultation periods will be publicised offering the opportunity for people to submit comments on these plans to the Council.

## How is an application determined?

Planning applications can be granted, refused, or granted with planning conditions attached.

Most decisions on applications are made by Planning Officers.

Decisions on large or contentious planning applications are normally made by our Planning Committee, made up of elected Councillors. Further information can be found in the leaflet 'Speaking at the Planning Committee'.

In all cases, a decision notice will be issued detailing the outcome of the application.

## What if I am not happy with the decision?

If an application is refused, or planning conditions attached, the applicant can make an appeal against the decision. The appeal must be made within a specified time.

Appeals will be decided with by an Independent Inspector, whose decision is binding.

Appeals cannot be made by anyone except the applicant.

