

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL – PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(COUNTY MATTERS AND COUNTY COUNCIL DEVELOPMENTS)

Planning Guidance Note 3: Design and Access Statements

Introduction

In May 2006 the government introduced changes to the planning applications process in Circular 01/2006. This introduced the requirements for the submission of *Design and Access Statements* with certain types of planning applications (see below) which came into effect on 10 August 2006. These statements form part of the Government's objectives towards sustainable development, with a greater emphasis on good design (PPS1). The purpose of the changes are:

- (i) to allow developers and agents to demonstrate commitment to good design and ensuring accessibility;
- (ii) to ensure proposals are based on a thoughtful design process and sustainable approach to access and explain the rationale behind these elements of the scheme;
- (iii) to improve the quality, sustainability and inclusiveness of development; and
- (iv) to provide a better understanding and transparency of proposals to local communities and stakeholders.

A design and access statement will be required for all planning applications (including outline applications), *except* where it relates to:

- (i) engineering and mining operations: - *this includes the erection of fences and construction of accesses and car parks but does not include patios or hardstandings.*
- (ii) development affecting, or within the curtilage of, an existing dwelling, so long as the site is not within a 'designated' area (in Leics. these include a conservation area or SSSI).
- (iii) change of use (only) to land or buildings: - *i.e. if you are not proposing any building works which require planning permission.*

Where a statement is required but not submitted, the County Planning Authority is not allowed to deal with it.

When a revision is required to a scheme that has already obtained planning consent (i.e. it is altered 'materially') then in some cases this new revision would need to be accompanied by an amended design and access statement for the parts of the development affected.

Below is a checklist that has been compiled from the published *CABE* guidance *Design and Access Statements: How to read, write and use them*. (Add link?) Many County Council applications are for relatively small-scale developments (i.e. mobile classrooms and their retention, extensions etc) and

do not need to address every single issue below. Those issues that need to be addressed for mobile classrooms and ancillary extensions have been marked with an *.

Content

The most important message to convey is that the application is based on a good understanding of the local character and circumstances. Therefore a general process needs to be followed to encompass this objective as set out in the list of objectives below.

Assessment

An examination of the context of the site and the surroundings including:

- *Physical characteristics* – the existing built form, landscape features, topography and movement routes;
- *Social context* – how the site would affect people in the locality;
- *Economic context* – the contribution the development will have on the local economy; and,
- *Relevant land use policies* that effect and shape the development of the site (i.e. land use allocation, transport, amenity etc).

Involvement/Consultation:

This means clearly showing what groups of people the scheme will be discussed with. This would be likely to encompass:

- User groups;
- Community groups;
- Professionals; and,
- Nearby Neighbours.

Evaluation

The information from the previous two stages should be evaluated to:

- Make explicit the constraints informing the scheme;
- Identify development options; and,
- Any conflicting requirements to be resolved.

Chosen scheme

The information collected above will then inform the design of the scheme. The statement should illustrate how the submitted scheme has evolved, explaining and justifying the chosen solution. It should illustrate how the proposal is based on an understanding of the circumstances that affect the application site and not written as an afterthought.

CHECKLIST OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE STATEMENT

Use	
* Justify the development in terms of the land use policies	
*Demonstrate acceptability in the context of surrounding uses	
*Explain how the uses and development will work together to make the place more useful to the community?	
*Demonstrate how design facilitates inclusive access	
Amount	
* Is the amount and density of development suitable for the site given the context of the site and surrounding area?	
* How does the proposed development affect a place in terms of the movement of people?	
Explain how the amount of development would positively/negatively impact upon open space, services and businesses in the locality.	
Layout	
* Explain why buildings are orientated in a particular direction and how it would work together with surrounding open spaces	
How does the site layout facilitate inclusive access?	
* Explain how the development relates to existing buildings in the locality	
* Explain why the layout of the development has been chosen	
Scale	
* Show the scale of the development and explain in the terms of good design how the site accommodates such a scale building	
Where used 3D graphics should show the site from realistic viewing points	
* Explain how the design considers balance of features such as doors, windows and their height/width	
Landscaping	
How does the design of outside places make them attractive and useful? What will be the treatment of outdoor areas and features?	
What is the strategy for long-term maintenance and management?	

What is the purpose of the landscape design (both public and private areas)?	
* How will the needs of all mobility's be met? (i.e. level surfaces and non-slip material)	
Appearance	
* What is the design rationale for the site and how does this relate to the scale and appearance of the development?	
* What range of materials is likely to be used?	
What will be the effects of time of day/days/year/years be on the development?	
ACCESS	
How will surrounding routes be linked? (i.e. lighting, views, and signs)	
How will various transport modes move through and around the site? (use diagrams if appropriate)	
Explain how the internal and external layouts influence each other?	
How would levels and views of the wider area vary as a result of the development?	
* Demonstrate that disabled people will not be segregated, and can access the site and building with other people	
* How will access for the emergency services be provided?	
How will symbols and pictures help people navigate the area?	