

Planning Protocol: Working with Local Business

Introduction

The Council is committed to helping local businesses during this period of recession.

It is recognised that obtaining planning advice and ultimately a planning permission is a complex process particularly for small businesses who cannot afford specialist consultants to prepare a planning application.

This protocol provides a commitment by the Council to assist local business through the planning process.

It also indicates the commitments that the business should give towards the process.

The Council's web site provides general information on planning and business
http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/environment/planning/business_planning-2.htm

What the Council will do

Applicants are encouraged to seek advice before submitting a planning application. This will enable advice to be provided over the necessary documentation to support an application and for matters of policy, design and layout to be considered at an early stage. This will help minimise delays when applications are submitted.

Initial approach

The Council will provide an initial opportunity for an informal telephone conversation with the leader of the relevant area team or their deputy or if it is a minor matter to meet the Duty Officer at the Civic Centre from 1pm any weekday (subject to prior appointment).

This will provide initial advice on whether planning permission will be necessary, potential issues and information requirements in relation to a planning application.

Officers will also provide information on other consents that may be necessary and key contacts, for example building control and licensing.

Pre-application

The Council will provide written advice in relation to a proposed application including informal officer comments on the proposed development and information requirements for a planning application. With the exception of the larger developments and change of use (over 100 sq m floorspace) this will be provided free to local businesses when proposing the development (including change of use) of premises for their business use.

Information on pre-application advice is available at:
http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/environment/planning/business_planning-2/pre-application_advice_for_developers.htm

After submitting the application

On receipt of a planning application planning officers consult with the public, other Council departments and any other affected people/bodies (the statutory consultation period is then 3 weeks)

If there are issues of concern the Council will instigate a review meeting within 6 weeks of registration of the application and identify amendments that could address any issue or problems. The Council would not refuse an application from a local business without first discussing the reasons and any ways of overcoming these.

The Council will normally determine applications within 8 weeks of registration of the application.

What businesses should do

Discuss proposals at the earliest stage and be responsive to officer advice and Council's published policies and planning guidelines

Provide a high quality application, including necessary plans and other material.

Details of how to make a planning application are available at http://www.richmond.gov.uk/home/environment/planning/business_planning-2/making_a_business_planning_application/making_a_planning_application.htm;

Make any amendments or send additional information as quickly as practicable.

Unacceptable proposals

It is important to recognise that while the Council wants to support local business there will continue to be proposals that are unacceptable. Planning legislation requires that all decisions on planning applications are taken in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are likely to be issues with a proposal officers will provide advice as early in the processes as possible.

Monitoring and review

The Council will work with the Chamber of Commerce and South London Business to monitor the effectiveness of this protocol.

Views from businesses or other stakeholders on this protocol and the planning service.