

Any conditions attached to a permission, or reasons for refusal, will be set out clearly.

Where a decision has been made to refuse an application, applicants are welcome to speak to the case officer, to discuss whether an amended scheme might be supported.

If no resolution is possible, the applicant's rights of appeal are set out on the back of the decision notice.



All those making individual representations and organisers of petitions will be informed of the decision on the application within 10 working days of the issue of the decision.

ENFORCING PLANNING LAW

When an alleged breach of Planning law is reported or suspected, one of our Enforcement team will visit the site and the facts will be established.

We aim to undertake at least 90% of our initial site inspections within 10 working days, and to respond to complainants within this same timescale.

All complaints are treated confidentially.

If a breach of Planning control is established, then the person responsible for the breach will be informed of what action is required to correct it and a time limit will be given. The consequences of not taking the appropriate action will be explained. If no action is proposed then the reasons for this will be explained.

PERFORMANCE & COMPLAINTS

Details of the Council's development control process performance are published annually and our practices, policies and targets are always kept under review.

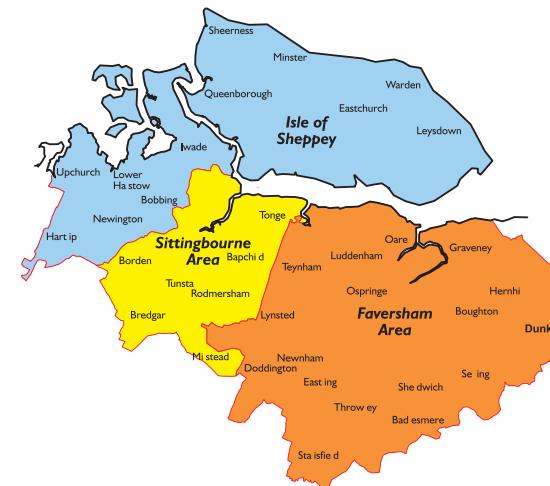
We are always looking to improve our services and greatly value your comments. If you would like to suggest any improvements which we might make, please let us know at our reception area, or write separately to us.

If you are dissatisfied with our service, please let us know. A booklet on the Council's official complaints procedure is freely available.

We will consider complaints very carefully and respond in writing within 10 working days.



WHO TO CONTACT



SWALE'S DEVELOPMENT CONTROL TEAMS

Faversham	telephone 01795 417308
Sheppey & Swale West	telephone 01795 417305
Sittingbourne	telephone 01795 417303

For advice on Listed buildings our Conservation Officer
telephone 01795 417375

For suspected breaches of Planning control
telephone 01795 417359 or 01795 417373

For matters relating to the Local Plan
telephone 01795 417344 or 01795 417377

Email us at planning@swale.gov.uk or Fax us on 01795 417417



PLANNING SERVICES

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL CHARTER

Development Control is a process which regulates the development and use of land. It is governed by law, and many of its procedures (the payment of fees for example) are set down by Central Government.

Development Control is seen by Swale Borough Council as a service to the whole community, ensuring that changes to our physical surroundings are of greatest benefit to the environment, the economy and the quality of life for its residents. Whilst new development can be controversial, the Development Control process is seen as a means by which the overall benefits to the community can be maximised, and any harmful effects minimised.

It is impossible to satisfy the demands of everyone in the borough, but applicants, neighbours, objectors and the general public are all customers. They will all be treated in the same courteous and positive manner without prejudice or favour of any kind.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

At Swale, discussions are welcomed before an application is submitted, in order to encourage high quality applications and to ensure that they can be dealt with as efficiently as possible.

A Planning Officer is available at Swale House throughout normal office hours to provide general information and advice.

It will often be wise however to make an appointment, to ensure that enquiries can be dealt with more promptly and effectively.





If a proposal is large or complex, a meeting can be arranged involving the team of officers who might be involved in the application process.

Advice will be given on the procedures for making an application or making representations, or on Planning policies and/or the merits of a

scheme. Whilst Planning Officers will give sound, professional and objective advice, this must be without any prejudice to the formal consideration of an application, and cannot refer to other areas of the law.

A customer's request for confidentiality will always be respected.

The Council has a number of Planning advice notes and other explanatory documents available free of charge at the Planning Reception area at Swale House and at the District Offices.

Other Planning documents, such as the Swale Borough Local Plan, are also available for inspection or purchase.

Sometimes you will be advised that your enquiry needs some research and you are advised to write to us. Many customers see an advantage in receiving a written reply.

We try very hard to ensure that all but the most complex enquiries receive a written response within 10 working days. We deal with all correspondence, whether by fax, email or letter, within the same timescale.

SUBMITTING A PLANNING APPLICATION

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that their application is submitted correctly. Swale's Planning team are always pleased to assist in completing the forms and giving advice. Location plans in the form of Ordnance Survey extracts to accompany applications are available to purchase on request. There is a fee payable for most types of application.

When an application is submitted, an acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days. If the application is invalid, for lack of information or other reasons, you will be told clearly at that time what you must do.

You will be informed at that time who the case officer dealing with your application will be, and given his or her direct telephone number.

A specific target date will also be given, normally 8 weeks, for a decision to be made. We do our best to ensure that all but the most contentious applications are dealt with in this timeframe, and many are dealt with significantly quicker.

We aim to deal with 80% of all applications within 8 weeks.

If you have heard nothing more from us within 6 weeks, you might care to give the case officer a call.

If you use an architect or agent, our direct contact will be with them and you should make sure that they keep you informed of any discussions they have with us.



DEALING WITH AN APPLICATION

We undertake wide consultation on most applications, but this is done according to the scale of the project.

A statutory register of all applications received is always available at Swale House during normal office hours.

Copies of valid applications will be placed in the Planning Reception area of Swale House for public inspection, and copies relating to Sheppey or the eastern part of the borough will be made available at the appropriate District Offices, within 5 working days of receipt.

The Council also produces a weekly list of new applications. Many bodies have this sent to them for a small fee, but it is also available on our web-site (www.swale.gov.uk).

All local residents directly affected will be sent a letter advising them of the application and giving them 21 days to make their views known.

Sometimes we are also required to advertise the application in the local press and post site notices. Replies are requested within 21 days.

If material amendments are made to the application, neighbours will be re-notified and given a further 14 days for comment.

A Planning Officer will be pleased to assist neighbours in understanding the proposal, but must reserve judgement on the merits of the scheme at this stage.

The case officer will visit the site within 28 days. If access is required, an appointment will be made, but this will not normally be necessary.

Once the site inspection has been made and any letters received from residents or other consultees, we may suggest ways of amending the scheme to improve it, address the concerns of neighbours, or make it accord with Council policy.

Sometimes neighbours will need to be re-consulted on the amendments, and this will take time. However, we will still try to issue a decision within 8 weeks, and more time will be sought only if there is a good reason for doing so.

Whilst neighbours responding to applications will not be sent an acknowledgement, their views will always be taken into account.

Information about the application is always publicly accessible and a Planning Officer will be available to help with any enquiries.

MAKING THE DECISION

In order to deal with applications more efficiently, most applications do not go before the Planning Committee for a decision. There are certain rules set down for this.

Those applications which are not delegated to officers are considered by the Planning Committee, which meets in public once a month on Thursday evenings. Agendas for the meetings are available beforehand. Interested parties are allowed to speak at these meetings, although there are restrictions. Occasionally applications are deferred, to enable Councillors to hold a site meeting; interested parties are invited to these meetings to hear what is said and to give their views on the application.

A booklet is available on public speaking at meetings, and Planning staff are always pleased to give further advice on these matters.

Once a decision has been made and all outstanding matters resolved, including legal agreements, a decision notice will be issued within 2 working days.

In very complex developments, there may be a delay for legal agreements. A decision and therefore notification, might be some time later.

