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**Castle Point Borough Council**

**Planning Application Validation  
Requirements Consultation Responses**

Published Date: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023

## **Overview**

The purpose of this consultation was to consult on the proposed changes to the validation checklist requirements. Our Validation requirements list sets out the documents that are required when submitting a planning application, as well as what elements are required within those documents. For example what plans are needed for what types of applications, what is required on each plan etc.

As part of reviewing our validation requirements we wanted to consult with interested stakeholders on the changes we are proposing. Below is a summary of the proposed additions to our validation requirements which we welcome your views on:

- Plans that are measurable and to scale
- The requirement for full existing and proposed plans at a scale of not less than 1:50
- Requiring floor plans to have labels
- The submission of documents containing photographs of the outside of buildings
- For full applications CIL form 1 and where CIL liable, CIL form 2
- For PD applications CIL form 5
- Where the development is in the Green Belt, full volume calculations of both the existing and proposed development
- All submitted documents shall be clear, precise and consistent
- Plans shall be clear, legible and easy to understand
- Plans shall not include unnecessary additions irrelevant to the planning process such as Building Control, structural or non-planning details to avoid additional clutter and confusion

## **Why your views matter**

We want to ensure that the validation list is sufficiently clear, so that we receive the right information first time. This will help us deal with planning applications more efficiently to the benefit of all users of the service.

## **What is the purpose of this document?**

This document sets out the responses received to the public consultation and how this feedback has influenced the new validation checklist.

In total, nine responses were received through the online consultation portal, four appeared to be from residents whilst the remaining five were from agents/architects/planning professionals. The relevant comments received in response to the two questions posed have been summarised below and where relevant comments in response to the points raised have been provided:

## What are your views on the proposed changes to the validation checklist?

- What is wrong with 1:100 scale plans – why do we now have to do 1:50 plans?

*This amendment was intended to allow the submission of plans at a greater number of scales as the previous checklist only allowed plans at 1:100 and not 1:50. This has been altered in the final validation checklist so that instead of requiring a scale at not less than 1:50 to say that elevations and floor plans should be at no greater scale than 1:50. 1:50 and 1:100 scale drawings are acceptable.*

- Required specialist surveys and reports should be kept to a minimum as this deters applications. Specialist surveys and reports should be subject to planning conditions not the validation stage.

*It is noted that a balance needs to be struck between receiving the necessary information in order to enable an application to be validated and subsequently determined whilst not asking for additional unnecessary reports to be provided at the applicant's expense.*

*It is however important that where planning permission is granted that the Local Planning Authority is convinced that what it is granting consent for can actually be satisfactorily built. If it cannot do this or be sure that something can be satisfactorily addressed by way of an appropriately worded condition, without the submission of additional documents, then additional documents and reports will be required to adequately inform the decision-making process.*

*Planning decisions cannot be made when officers do not have sufficient information to make a reasonable and justifiable decision.*

- Lawful Development Certificate applications should not be validated without the submission of an Environmental Statement, a Bat Report and consent from the Forestry Commission with associated Felling Licences.

*What can and cannot be considered under a Lawful Development Certificate are set out by central government in The Town and Country Planning Act. The matters raised are either something which cannot be considered under this application type, or, which fall under legislation which is not the responsibility of The Local Planning Authority.*

- There is not enough to protect the public from overdevelopment of existing land.

*It is not the place of the validation checklist to protect the public from the overdevelopment of existing land. This is the role of local and national policies whereas the scope of this document is to illustrate what information is required to submit a valid application.*

- It would benefit all if Building Control worked with Planning to ensure developments are fit for the future.

*It is not the place of the validation checklist to promote working across departments or areas of legislation. Building Control and Planning do work together as and when appropriate, but this falls outside of the scope of this document which seeks to illustrate what information is required to submit a valid application.*

- The correct distance from boundaries and correct parking needs to be enforced.

*It is not the place of the validation checklist to ensure conformity with policies. This is the role of local and national policies as part of the decision-making process whereas the scope of this document is to illustrate what information is required to submit a valid application.*

- Filling out CIL Form 1 for every application is unnecessary as not every development is CIL liable and creates additional work.

*It is acknowledged that this does add additional workload to applicants, agents and also the Local Planning Authority itself. However, the purpose of requiring CIL Form 1 for all applications is to make everyone involved in the process consider whether something is or is not CIL liable. At first glance it may not be immediately noticeable that a development is CIL Liable, but by completing the relevant paperwork it will either confirm or deny this assumption by making all parties consider all relevant criteria to ensure nothing is missed and consistency in the implementation of the CIL.*

- Planning Officers can visit the site so don't need photographs which can be misleading, whilst a site visit provides a better understanding of the site and surroundings.

*Planning officers can and do regularly visit sites to gain a better understanding of what is happening onsite, any potential changes in ground levels and also the relationship of the application site with its surroundings. However, some instances occur where clarification is needed during the validation process, or only a very quick look at something is required which could easily be cleared up if photographs are provided. This will ultimately save time by preventing officers needlessly having to visit sites for very minor queries and enable more time to be spent validating and determining applications.*

- The checklist states that when submitting for applications in the Green Belt certain information is required. There should be no development on Green Belt full stop.

*Anyone can submit an application in any location, regardless of its allocation, even if this is in the Green Belt. It is not the place of the validation checklist to ensure conformity with policies. This is the role of local and national policies as part of the decision-making process whereas the scope of this document is to illustrate what information is required to submit a valid application.*

- The proposed changes are presented in a clear and precise form.

- The proposed validation checklist is the basic information that is required.

*It is good to hear that the proposed changes and the rest of the validation checklist have been prepared in a clear and precise form. Hopefully this will help applicants and agents when submitting applications to provide the correct information and speed up the validation process.*

### **Do you have any other comments on the validation checklist such as things that should be added or changed?**

- An additional requirement should be that plans are dimensioned rather than simply providing a scale bar.

*Plans can be submitted with a scale bar or alternatively they can be provided with full dimensions, however, every aspect of plans without a scale bar will have to be provided with a dimension on the plans which can lead them to become cluttered.*

- A 360° graphic of the surrounding area should be required.

*Whilst these 3D visualisations are very useful both for staff at the Local Planning Authority as well as members of the public in understanding the extent of the proposal, and many applications are submitted with these, it would not be reasonable to require 3D visualisations to be submitted for every application as this often places further costs on applicants due to the additional time and expense required by agents to generate these visualisations.*

- They should provide the approximate running costs for proposed developments.

*Unfortunately, this is something that would require additional investigations, modelling and calculations to be undertaken and as such it would not be reasonable to require this information to be submitted for every application as this would place further costs on applicants due to the additional time and expense required by agents to generate these visualisations when there is no identified need to submit this information either in local or national policy.*

- If there is off-road parking it should be set out if this is available for use by others.

*Off-road parking is often provided as part of an application for the benefit of occupants of the proposed development, however where this is not the case, agents would be asked to clarify this, and this would be covered in the officer's report.*

### **What happens next?**

The responses to this consultation have been carefully considered and where appropriate, amendments have been made to the validation checklist. A tracked change copy of this is available on the councils website along with a plain version of the new validation checklist which will become effective from 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.