

THURNHAM PARISH COUNCIL –

PLANNING GUIDANCE

Why is the planning system important?

The planning system shapes new development all over the district, making sure it's positive for people, the economy and the environment.

The system exists to ensure that development is in the public interest, weighing up its economic, environmental and social benefits and drawbacks. It plays a key role in making sure the places where we live and work are attractive, vibrant and well designed.

The planning system can make sure that development supports regeneration which meets the needs of local communities. It can support the development of affordable housing. It can make sure that new development in historic areas takes into account its surroundings, and it can prevent development where it would cause unacceptable environmental damage.

Most significant developments need planning permission from the local planning authority to go ahead. The first stage of this usually involves the person or organisation that wants to carry out the development submitting a planning application.

The planning system aims to ensure that all views on new development are taken into account. Members of the public are entitled to see and comment on all planning applications. This is your chance to press for planning decisions that are positive for your local community.

How this guide can help you

This guide sets out eight simple steps to take if you want to find out more about a planning application, and support or challenge it.

Whether you have a special interest, like archaeology or wildlife, or more general concerns about the kind of development your area needs, this guide will help you present your views appropriately, effectively, and to the right people.

The planning application process: a summary

When the local planning authority receives a planning application, it is bound by law to publicise it. For applications for major development it must publish a notice in a local newspaper and either post a notice on the site that passers-by can see, or notify the occupiers and owners of adjoining properties.

Alongside inviting the public to comment, local planning authorities have to consult a range of organisations whose interests may be affected by a proposed development. These can include, for example, the local highways authority if the development could mean an increase in traffic. Issues concerning waste, water or air pollution are referred to the Environment Agency, and Natural England assesses applications that could affect wildlife.

Members of the public have a few weeks to comment on a planning application. The deadline for comments is 21 days from the date a site notice is put up or notice is served on neighbours, or 14 days from when an advert appears in a local newspaper. Parish and town councils have 21 days from the date they were notified to make an official comment.

Local planning authorities will either approve the application, sometimes with conditions or obligations, or refuse it. In either case, the authority must give reasons for its decision.

Local planning authorities should usually make a decision within eight weeks. If it takes longer, the applicant can appeal to the Secretary of State with responsibility for planning.

If the application concerns development on or around Green Belt, outside of town centres, on playing fields, in heritage sites or in flood risk areas, and the local planning authority intends to approve it, they will, in some circumstances, have to inform the Secretary of State with responsibility for planning. The Secretary of State may then 'call in' the application and make a decision on it following a public inquiry, taking the matter out of the local planning authority's hands. This call-in right applies to any planning application, but is generally used only for major development or in particularly controversial cases.

This eight-step guide will help you find out more about a planning application, support it or challenge it. It outlines the top tips for viewing and understanding planning applications.

ALWAYS REMEMBER, IF IN DOUBT, SPEAK TO THE LOCAL PLANS TEAM AT LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL WHO WILL BE ABLE TO HELP

Step 1: Look at the planning application



Do you know of a planning application in your area and want to find out more about it? The first step is to review the application on the local planning authority's website or at their offices.

But before that, you have to work out who makes the planning decisions in your area, so you know where to go. As we are part of a three-tier local authority system, consisting of a county and city council and parish / town council's you will find the majority of decisions are taken by Lancaster City Council.

PARISH COUNCILS ARE ENTITLED TO RECEIVE COPIES OF ALL PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Local planning authorities are required by law to keep a public register of all planning applications, which you are able to access easily. A hard copy of planning applications, along with any maps, plans and supporting documents, is usually kept at the local planning authority's main office. All applications, plans and supporting documents are also available online at the Council's website. If you struggle to find the application you're looking for contact Regeneration and Planning Services at Morecambe Town Hall or by calling 582000.

Looking at planning applications: top tips

1 - Call in advance

If you decide to visit the authority, phone Regeneration and Planning Services first to find out their opening hours and to check that the relevant, up-to-date file will be available. You may be required to request files a few days in advance. The planning register is available for the public to see between 09:00 and 17:00 Monday to Friday.

2 - Take copies of documents

The law dictates that the local planning authorities should let you take copies of planning applications and related documents. You may be charged for photocopying.

3 - Look on the register for previous applications

APPLICATIONS FOR MAJOR DEVELOPMENT ARE ADVERTISED IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

Finding out about past planning applications for a particular site can give you lots of relevant information. For example, if you're supporting a development turned down in the past because there wasn't enough public transport, you could focus on suggesting ideas to solve this problem. You should also look at recent planning applications in the wider area to get a picture of any development trends, and how they could affect the economic, social and natural environment of the area as a whole. This record of past applications is sometimes referred to as the 'planning history' of a site, and the City Council may charge for providing it because it has commercial value. You can look up a site's planning history by using the planning register or online at the City Council's application database on its website.

4 - Go to your town or parish council if you can't see the planning register

PLANNING APPLICATIONS HAVE TO INCLUDE A MAP OF THE DEVELOPMENT SITE

The parish council will be able to help if you have trouble getting in to see the planning register at the City Council as we receive copies of all planning applications in the area and we are happy to share these with you. Please contact the parish clerk by email: thurnhamparishclerk@gmail.com or by calling 07828254149 after 6pm daily.

What to look for in an application

How will this development affect you and the community? You'll have to examine the planning application very carefully to find out exactly what a proposed development consists of and how it could affect the local community. You may also find it useful to look at other applications for the same area, to get a wider picture of how new development is likely to shape its future.

Planning applications and accompanying documents should describe the proposed development's size and location, how it will function, and its relationship with the immediate surroundings.

You should concentrate your support or objections around these three main issues, because they are the key things, the so-called *material considerations* that decision-makers will take into account. It can be valuable to cover other concerns, but keep your focus on these main issues. For example, complaining that you don't like terraced houses, or that a building will spoil your view, will be less relevant than saying that a new development proposal doesn't take account of flood risk. Equally, saying that you support an application because you think it will improve property values is not really relevant, but you could give your support because you think the proposal will improve the quality of local public spaces.

The application may also include other information on:

- surface water and sewerage;
- vehicle and pedestrian access; other adjacent land owned by the applicant;
- details of any tree felling (although the application may not show precisely the trees proposed for felling);
- materials to be used in the development;
- design of the buildings and the direction they face; and
- what the applicant intends to use the development for.

How to find out about new planning applications in your area:

- ask the City Council to send you a weekly list of planning applications. There may be a charge for this service. Alternatively, ask the City Council to provide the service by email which is free;
- ask the City Council to let you know about any application that is likely to be of interest to you;
- contact the parish council, who are legally entitled to receive copies of all planning applications in the area;
- keep in touch with your local Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) district or county group, which usually gets weekly lists of planning applications; and
- scan local newspapers for information about more significant applications.

Looking at an application: your checklist

- Look for information not only in the planning application, but in all the other documents, plans and drawings provided by the applicant.
- Check to see if the application constitutes a special case, which may have a bearing on your response.
- Satisfy yourself that the description of the proposed development accurately reflects what it will be like in reality. If planning permission is granted, it will be on the basis of the development matching up to what's described in the application form, so seek clarification from the planning officer, applicant or landowner if you're unsure about anything.

- Applicants are required by law to provide a certain amount of information along with a planning application. The application should only be considered once they've provided it. Certain types of application require extra information. For example, applications for retail development outside town centres sometimes require an impact assessment. This considers how the development could affect existing town centre businesses. If you need more detail about a proposal, ask the City Council to make sure the applicant provides all necessary information.
- Remember that planning officers are there to help. Ask for advice if you're unsure about how to interpret an application, or what the wider effects of the proposal might be. Contact them by phone or email, or, if necessary, make an appointment to see someone in Regeneration and Planning Services.

Step 2: Visit the site of the proposed development

Compare the application to the physical reality.



Once you've looked at the planning application, the next step is to visit the site so you can build up a mental picture of the development and its likely effects.

Remember that you could be trespassing if you go on the site without permission. Stick to public rights-of-way, or get permission from the landowner before visiting.

There are lots of things you should consider during your visit:

- Is the application accurate? Are local features like rights-of-way, trees, hedges and boundary fences shown? Are the maps up-to-date? Are all properties marked? Does the application correctly describe how the site has been used in the past?
- How well would the development fit into its surroundings? Would it blend in, dominate or provide a welcome contrast? Is it a sympathetic design? Remember that details as simple as the alignment of a roofline, its design and pitch or the materials used can affect a development's impact on its surroundings.
- If it's a larger development, how will it affect the local area, particularly the road network?
- Could it lead to further development? Would this be beneficial or damaging?
- Does it meet a need in your area for a particular type of development, for example affordable housing or small business units?
- Has the site been developed before? How well connected will the development be to local services such as public transport, shops and schools?

Step 3: Decide your stance on the application

Top tips on forming a view on the proposal.



Now that you've looked at the application and visited the site, you can decide what your stance on the application will be.

21 - THE LENGTH OF TIME PARISH COUNCILS HAVE TO COMMENT ON A PLANNING APPLICATION

The City Council's decisions on planning applications are guided mainly by the policies in their '*Development Plan*'. Your criteria when judging an application may be different. For example, you may have a particular interest in protecting local wildlife, or improving local services in your area.

Taking a view on the proposal: top tips

1 - Set clear objectives

Consider what you want new development in your area to achieve, and establish some clear objectives against which you can judge proposals. This will make your case to the planning authority more persuasive. Remember that good development can enhance the environment.

2 - Use local knowledge

If you know the area well or have specialist knowledge, you may be able to give the planning authority useful information. Try to get as much local knowledge as possible. Find out anything that could be relevant, from groups of trees particularly valued locally to whether there's a need for affordable housing in the area.

3 - Think long term

It's important to take a long-term view of a development's impact. Consider the future consequences of the development and whether the proposal will help achieve sustainable development in the area.

4 - Consider the potential pros and cons of the proposal

For example, will it put a building or derelict site to better use? Will it meet a local need for a certain type of development? Perhaps you are concerned that the proposal is not designed to complement local character, or that it might damage an important wildlife habitat? Some potential negative impacts can be addressed by asking the City Council to put conditions or obligations on any planning permission granted. If this is successful, keep an eye on any future planning applications for the site in case there is an attempt to have the conditions or obligations removed or changed.

5 - Stick to principles

Is a point of principle at stake which overrides the short-term questions surrounding a development proposal? For example, you might want to support the development of a new employment site that will bring jobs to the area. Or you may want to oppose an application that would destroy something historic.

6 - Consider if it's setting a precedent

Could a poor decision on a planning application set a precedent for a pattern of development that you do not believe is sustainable? For example, a small development outside a village's development boundary may create housing, but in the long term could it lead to an unplanned expansion of the village?

7 - Imagine cumulative development

Could a proposal, broadly acceptable in itself, be a stepping-stone to something that would be unacceptable? For example, is there a risk that a house built for seasonal renting to holiday makers could one day be sold off as a permanent home in an area where this would normally be inappropriate?

8 - Consider the potential for improvement

Always look to see if there are improvements that could be made to the proposal, either through changes to the proposed development itself or through the use of planning conditions. Improvements could include design alterations or measures to make sure that the development uses less energy, water or raw materials.

Step 4: Examine the Development Plan

Planning decisions are made in accordance with the City Council's Development Plan.



The next thing to do is to look at the development plan.

The development plan sets out agreed planning policies for the area and is the background against which planning decisions are made. It consists of the *Local Plan* for the area, and also any *Neighbourhood Development Plans* that are in force. The development plan is published on the City Council's website. The local library may have a hard copy, or you can buy one direct from City Council.

The final decision on any planning application **MUST** be taken in accordance with the development plan, unless special circumstances (known as material considerations) apply.

When deciding what stance to take on a planning application it is vital to study the development plan closely and identify any policies that are relevant to the case. Be prepared to quote these policies when you put forward your arguments for or against the proposal. If policies in the plan contradict your stance, you will need to argue why they do not apply in this particular case.

What's in the development plan?

The development plan is made up of a number of documents.

It will include any *Development Plan Documents* from the local authority's Local Plan. Every Council is required to prepare a Local Plan, which outlines how the area will develop over the following 20 years or so. A new style of Local Plan was introduced in 2004, called a Local Development Framework. These are now referred to simply as 'Local Plans', but their basic structure remains the same.

The Localism Act also introduced a new neighbourhood planning tier. If Neighbourhood Development Plans are developed in the area and go through a referendum successfully they will also become part of the development plan.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents, usually included in the Local Plan, can give further context and detail to development plan policies. These documents can include design guides, or address development in a certain neighbourhood or affordable housing policy for the area.

These documents are not part of the statutory development plan. They don't have the same weight when the City Council are considering planning applications. But they can be a material consideration. They are likely to be particularly useful if the Council consulted the public during their preparation and they've been subject to a Council resolution adopting them. Public consultation is required before any new Supplementary Planning Documents can be considered to carry weight in decisions on planning applications.

Material considerations

Material considerations can include:

- government policy;
- opinions put forward during the application stage;
- the designated status of a site or its surroundings (for example, if it's an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty);
- the planning history of the site - including existing planning permissions, previous refusals and appeals; and
- the effect on a conservation area or listed building.

A particularly important new material consideration, called the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', is being introduced as part of the new national planning policy document, the National Planning Policy Framework. The presumption in favour of sustainable development states that if a development plan is 'absent, silent, indeterminate or where relevant policies are out of date' with regard to a development proposal, planning permission should be granted.

Two types of policies in development plans

Development Plan Documents are generally made up of two types of policies: site-specific and generic development control (or general) policies.

Site-specific policies set out how the Council will deal with planning applications in a particular place, such as a conservation area.

General policies set out how the Council will deal with planning applications for particular types of development, such as housing, retail or industry. These sometimes include strong indications of the locations that the Council does - and does not - consider suitable for a given type of development.

If the development plan doesn't say what you want it to

If the plan clearly implies support for a proposal you are opposed to, and material considerations don't help, you may need to consider adjusting your stance. It may be that trying to improve the details of the planning application is the best approach to take. It's worth checking whether local policies are in line with current national planning policy. If not, they carry less weight.

Influencing future development plan policies

You will not be able to overturn a policy in the development plan simply by opposing a planning application. However, you may be able to influence the development plan when it's updated, so that it better represents the interests of your community and environment.

Development plans and national policy

Plans at the local level have to generally agree with national planning policies. If you are dealing with a more substantial planning application, you may find that these general policies are also relevant in their own right.

Higher level planning policy is set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) and [National Planning Practice Guidance](#). National policy covers a broad range of topics, including Green Belt and flood risk.

Step 5: Decide on your action

Will you support the application, ask for changes or oppose it?



Now it's time to decide what action you're going to take on the planning application.

You could:

- support the application because it will have benefits for the local area, either now or in the long run;
- support the application but ask for details of the proposed development to be reconsidered and changed;
- take no action, since the proposal's overall effect would be neutral or of little relevance to your particular interest;
- register an objection to the application, but suggest action that could be taken to address your objection, such as amending the proposal or attaching planning conditions or a planning obligation; or
- request that the application be refused permission because of its adverse effects, which can't be dealt with satisfactorily by using conditions or obligations.

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES ARE LEGALLY REQUIRED TO KEEP COPIES OF ALL PLANNING APPLICATIONS ONLINE

Step 6: Put your comments in writing

Top tips on commenting effectively.

When you're completely clear on your position, the next step is to make your comments in writing to the Council before the appropriate deadline. You must do this if you want your comments on a planning application to be properly considered.

Sample letters / emails are linked to at the end of this article.

Writing your letter or email: top tips

1 - Refer to the development plan

List development plan policies that support your case and explain why. Recognise and respond to development plan policies that conflict with your views. Explain what other planning issues you believe should affect the decision.

2 - Consider the public interest

Explain how the development affects the local community as a whole. Avoid focusing on issues such as land ownership, the effects of the proposal on the value of neighbouring property, or the personal circumstances of the applicant.

3 - Be clear and courteous, avoid personal issues and concentrate on the facts of the case

Separate out each point you want to make. Explain what you want to happen and, where appropriate, suggest conditions you want to see put on the application to improve the sustainability of the proposal. Try to be concise.

4 - Get comments in on time

You'll generally have 21 days to respond to a planning application. If possible, get your comments in before the deadline. If this is impossible, send a short letter summarising your views within the deadline and follow it up later with more detailed comments. Late comments may be taken into account, particularly if your views don't cause any delay in the decision, but you can't rely on this. If you're sending an email, remember to include a postal address.

5 - Consider approaching the applicant

You could approach the applicant to let him or her know your views or to persuade them to improve the application, either before or after you write your letter/email.

Step 7: Gather support

Engage your community and your local planning authority.



Telling the City Council your views is just the start of the process. You'll need as much support as possible, from within the Council and the community, to make sure that the authority's decision takes account of your views. The more people who agree with you, and are willing to say so, the stronger your case will be.

For most major cases (unless the Government decides to call in the application), City Council councillors make decisions on planning applications. The planning officer should report the existence and gist of your written comments to the councillors when they meet as the planning committee. Don't assume members of the committee will read your letter directly.

Influencing decision-makers: top tips

1 - Meet your local planning officers

A few days after you submit your views to the planning department, phone the case officer at the Council to make sure your comments have been received and to ask how they are likely to be treated. You might want to arrange a meeting with the officer involved to explain your case. Face-to-face, you may be able to bolster arguments that the Council thinks are weak, or argue against different viewpoints.

The planning officer handling the application will write a report to councillors to help them decide whether to grant planning permission. The officer may include a summary of your comments in the report.

8 WEEKS - THE TIME LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES SHOULD TAKE TO DECIDE NON-MAJOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

You're legally entitled to look at the planning officer's report to the councillors' planning committee at least five days before they meet to make a decision. It's important to take this opportunity. You'll be able to see what information councillors are being given, and what decision the planning officer recommends they make. It will help you know how to brief councillors if you get a chance to speak at the meeting where a decision will be made and give you time to alert the local media if necessary.

Sometimes a planning decision is delegated by the councillors to the chief planning officer. It is normal practice for council officers to take decisions on most minor applications. Try to find out early on who will decide on your particular application, and when, as this will affect what other action you need to take.

2 - Approach your local councillors

It's a good idea to write to, phone or meet councillors before the decision is taken to make sure your views are heard. Ask the Council's Democratic Services for their names and contact details, or look at the Council's website. It's especially important to contact the councillors representing the ward affected by the planning application.

Suggest a site visit by councillors if you think an issue can only be fully appreciated on the ground.

It used to be the case that local councillors could not take any action that implied how they might vote on a planning application before it was discussed by the local planning committee. Changes made by the Localism Act however have changed this, so local councillors should be able to get more involved with campaigns on local planning applications.

Whether you're supporting or opposing a planning application, give councillors the reasons for this. You might also want to suggest conditions that should be attached to any planning permission granted.

13 - THE LENGTH OF TIME IT SHOULD TAKE TO DECIDE ON MAJOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Your goal is not only to convince the councillors that you have a case in planning terms, but to demonstrate the support your case has in the local community. Planning officers are mainly interested in the planning arguments, but councillors will often give weight to wider views. Planning is not a science and councillors may judge the issues differently from officers.

Liaise and coordinate your efforts with groups like the parish council, local organisations (CPRE group and residents' associations, for example), local businesses, your MP, community leaders, and organisations the planning authority might consult (for example, the Environment Agency or Natural England). A petition signed by locals can also be helpful, although lots of individually signed letters tend to carry much more weight.

3 - Approach the right councillors

It makes sense to approach the councillors who sit on the planning committee and take the decision. Your ward councillor may be permitted to attend and speak on behalf of local people at a meeting you organise, even if not on the committee. Pay special attention to the views of the councillor who chairs the committee and steer clear of party politics. Councillors are required to make planning decisions on grounds relevant to planning, not on party lines.

Step 8: Speak at committee meetings

Speaking at the committee meeting where the application is considered could make all the difference to your chance of success.

Councillors tend to respond to strong local feeling. The Council will give you the chance to speak for a few minutes at meetings to express their views.

How to organise speaking at a meeting:

- contact the Council to enquire about the procedures on when people are allowed to speak;
- give early notice that you want to speak.
- When given permission to speak, confirm the date and location of the meeting and how long you will be allowed to speak for; and
- find out who else is speaking at the meeting and make sure you put any shared views across strongly and avoid repetition. You can use the planning officer's report to the committee, which should identify the most significant responses to the application.

How applications are assessed

Who assesses a planning application and how?

No matter what a planning application is for, it goes through the same basic approval procedure. However, different types of application are determined against different policies and by different people - the 'who' and 'how' of planning:

Application for Change of Use of land or buildings

- **Who:** The planning authority – Lancaster City Council
- **How:** Applications are assessed against the policies in the Local Plan and other material considerations. The content of these documents needs to be compatible with Government planning policy.

Application for new road or expansion of an existing road

- **Who:** The highway authority – Lancashire County Council – if it's a local road; the secretary of state for transport if it's a trunk road or motorway scheme.
- **How (major road):** Applications for motorway and trunk road schemes are assessed against planning policies at the regional and local level. But the processes for deciding on the proposal is governed by the Highways Act 1980.
- **How (local road):** Local road schemes fall under the land use planning system. Therefore, applications are assessed against the policies in the Local Plan and other material considerations. The content of these documents needs to be compatible with the Government's planning policies.

Application for a new quarry, or an extension to an existing quarry

- **Who:** The minerals planning authority, which is Lancashire County Council.
- **How:** The main policy document is the minerals development framework. It needs to be compatible with the Government's mineral planning statements. The Local Plan will also be relevant.

Planning application concerning the management of waste

- **Who:** The waste planning authority, Lancashire County Council, in most cases. Some applications will be decided by Lancaster City Council.
- **How:** The waste planning authority produces a waste development framework and proposals will be tested against the policies in this and other material considerations. The Local Plan will also be relevant.

Sample letter of objection

Use this sample letter as a guide to writing an effective letter of objection to your local council about a planning application.

Your address:

R Bailey
28 Wilson Grove
Morecambe
LA3 2PQ

Address of the local authority dealing with the application, as stated on the site notice/neighbour notification/newspaper advertisement for the planning application, and the date:

Regeneration and Planning Services
Lancaster City Council
Dalton Square
Lancaster
LA1 1PJ

01 February 2015

Name of planning officer dealing with case:

For the attention of Mr D Mann, case officer

Dear Sir / Madam

Reference:

PLANNING APPLICATION NO 00/0741

One-line summary including what the application proposes, where it is (the site) and who is proposing it (the applicant):

Proposed erection of five houses adjacent to Small Bere, Oxcliffe Road, Heaton-with-Oxcliffe by Mr D Runk

Interest and general line of person making representation:

I write in connection with the above planning application. I have examined the plans and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the development of these houses in this location.

Reference to Government policy and site-specific local development plan policy which, if not adopted, is the most recent and has already been consulted on:

Small Bere is a dispersed settlement where development proposals should be considered very carefully: infilling could ruin the character of the village while estate development would overwhelm it. The protection of Small Bere's visual, historic and archaeological qualities is also supported by Policy C6 in the Local Plan for Lancaster City Council and paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Where applicable, reference to the Neighbourhood Plan for the area:

The Small Bere neighbourhood plan is also being developed in consultation with the community and Lancaster City Council. Policy H4 states that beyond market housing provision made in the district's site allocations development plan document only proposals for affordable housing for local people are supported. As the site subject to this proposal is not included in the emerging site allocations development plan document, on which the public have been consulted, it goes against the development plan for Small Bere.

Reference to Government policy and to 'planning history' - the Council's previous planning decisions in the area:

Pressure for the development in the village is considerable, mainly for housing city commuters, but has been successfully resisted in four similar cases (including two on appeal) in the last five years. The reasons for rejecting those schemes also included the inadequacy of the lanes apart from Main Street to accommodate even small increases in traffic, and because road widening would destroy ancient field boundaries. In addition, I am concerned about Lancashire County Council's proposals to reduce bus services through the village. This could limit opportunities for the residents of the new development to travel by public transport.

Reference to other issues which affect the community as a whole, rather than individual interests. You could also mention the parish plan:

The proposed siting of the development is particularly ill-considered: it is on a greenfield site used by many villagers and tourists for recreation and walking dogs, and building here would both diminish the striking view into the centre of the village from the Bere Hills and be prominent from most angles within the village. The chalet style design is out of keeping with the village's strong historic character - no other dwelling in the village has a balcony, for instance. While design issues might be solved by conditions or revised proposals, these could not remedy the siting problem.

Reference to development plan generic development control policy which, though not yet adopted, is the most recent and has already been consulted on; as well as to further issues of concern to the wider community:

Furthermore, there is no need for this kind of open market housing in the village. Lancaster City Council has more than five years' supply of housing land to meet the requirements of its emerging Local Plan's policy H1. Small Bere already has enough large houses: the only identified need is for affordable housing for residents who work locally, as recently confirmed by your Heath and Housing Services Housing Needs Survey. As an alternative to this proposal, we would support the construction of a terrace of five houses built on Main Street, if it was ensured that these were affordable homes for local people.

Reference to other bodies in the local community who support your position:

We understand that the Parish Council and the Heaton-with-Oxcliffe History Society share these concerns.

Formal request to speak at the Planning Committee meeting at which the application may be decided:

If this application is to be decided by councillors, please take this as notice that I would like to speak at the meeting of the committee at which this application is expected to be decided. Please let us know as soon as possible the date of the meeting.

Signature:

Yours faithfully,

Sample letter of support

Use this sample letter as a guide to writing an effective letter of support to the City Council about a planning application.

Your address:

R Bailey
28 Wilson Grove
Morecambe
LA3 2PQ

Address of the local authority department dealing with the application, as stated on the site notice/neighbour notification/newspaper advertisement for the planning application, and the date:

Regeneration and Planning Services
Lancaster City Council
Dalton Square
Lancaster
LA1 1PJ

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Proposed erection of five houses adjacent Small Bere, Oxcliffe Road, Heaton-with-Oxcliffe by Mr D Runk

Interest and general line of person making representation:

I write in connection with the above planning application. I have examined the plans and know the site well. I wish to offer my support to the proposal, for the reasons outlined below.

Reference to Government policy and site-specific local development plan policy which, though not yet adopted, is the most recent and has already been consulted on:

I am aware of the concerns of some in the community that this proposal for infill development will damage the character of the village. However, I believe that Small Bere is a village well suited to sympathetic and well planned expansion. Policy C14 of Lancaster City Council's emerging Local Plan (awaiting independent examination) states that the village could expand to the degree of 60 new households. In my opinion a number of high quality infill proposals, similar to this application, would meet this need in the most sympathetic way possible, avoiding the need for a new 'estate' development. The latter would be much more likely to disrupt the character of Small Bere, and would make it more difficult to incorporate the new houses into the community.

In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework states that there should be a wide choice of high quality homes to meet people's needs; this development would help to meet the demand for such housing in Small Bere.

Where applicable, reference to the Neighbourhood Development Plan for the area:

The Small Bere neighbourhood plan is also being developed in consultation with the community and Lancaster City Council. The development proposal will contribute to Small Bere's ambition to become an exemplar community for reductions in carbon emissions by going beyond the high design requirements of draft policy D2, and incorporating features that will ensure these new houses are 'zero-carbon'. I acknowledge that market housing development on this site does not conform to policy H6 of the emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan, which requires that all new housing provision above that allocated for in Lancaster City Council's emerging site allocations document should be affordable. I think that the high quality of the proposals however, combined with the long-term sustainability of the site chosen, outweigh the force of this policy. The developer has also indicated that one of the homes on the site will be affordable; this will make a contribution to meeting Small Bere's affordable housing needs.

Reference to Government policy and to 'planning history' - the local authority's previous planning decisions in the area:

Small Bere is a thriving village, and there is considerable demand for housing here. Applications for larger-scale housing developments have been refused in recent years because of concerns about their impact on the existing road network. The siting of this proposal is much improved on these past applications, and in line with the National Planning Policy Framework. It makes provision for travel by sustainable means: village facilities would be easily accessible by foot or bicycle, and bus stops for travelling either east or west to nearby towns and larger villages are within easy walking distance of the proposed entrance to the development.

Reference to other issues which affect the community as a whole, rather than individual interests. You could also mention the Parish Plan or Village Design Statement, if these exist for your area:

The site for this development has been well chosen. It is within the boundaries of the village, as defined by policy S10 of Borne's emerging Local Plan, and therefore nearby to Small Bere's local services, such as shops, the pub and the village hall. I am aware of the concerns of some in the community that the development will mean the loss of some open space that is used for informal recreation. I note however that the scheme includes the provision of a smaller, but landscaped public green area, which will be open to use by all. I am also aware of demand among the community of Small Bere for new houses in the area. Many who have grown up in the area would very much like to remain, but family-size houses such as those proposed rarely come available on the market. This development proposal is therefore welcomed by this section of the community.

Reference to development plan generic development control policy which, though not yet adopted, is the most recent and has already been consulted on; as well as to further issues of concern to the wider community:

Policy H9 of Borne's emerging Local Plan states that proposals for development that are particularly innovative in their approach to reducing the carbon emissions of the district should be considered in a favourable light. As described above in relation to Small Bere's emerging Neighbourhood Development Plan, this application certainly falls into this category, and therefore in my view should be given planning permission.

Reference to other bodies in the local community who support your position:

I understand that this proposal is also supported by the Small Bere Women's Association.

Formal request to speak at the local planning authority committee meeting at which the application may be decided, some local planning authorities require respondents to planning applications to give notice, in their response, of their wish to speak at committee meetings:

If this application is to be decided by councillors, please take this as notice that I would like to speak at the meeting of the committee at which this application is expected to be decided. Please let me know the date of the meeting as soon as possible.

Signature:

Yours faithfully,

R. Jones