OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Validation Strategy

Contents

Updated May 2021

Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to reduce the number of planning applications which are invalid upon receipt, thereby maximising resources for processing valid applications and helping applicants get quicker decisions. This document highlights the most common reasons for applications to be made invalid. It also explains how the Council will make validation process more transparent with clearer guidance on submission of applications. Removing the significant number of invalid applications the Council processes, will allow the functioning of a quicker, consistent and efficient planning service.
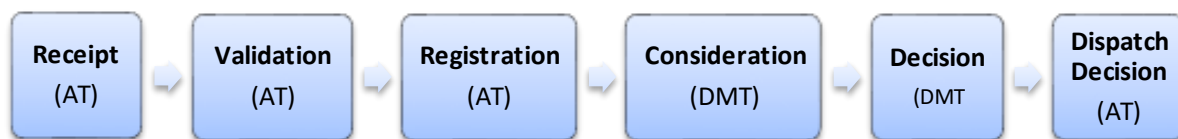
We encourage you to submit your planning application online via Planning Portal, where you can also make online fee payments (calculated for you) and attach plans and documents.

The aims of the strategy are to:

- Speed up the planning application process to make it more efficient by minimising the need for requesting missing and unsatisfactory documents
- Provide applicants with greater certainty of the scope and extent of the information required
- Ensure submissions are acceptable and that all necessary information is provided to enable the application to be determined
- Provide a quicker, more predictable, consistent and efficient planning service

Planning process

Applications submitted to Oxford City Council will go through the following steps:

Receipt (AT)	→	Validation (AT)	→	Registration (AT)	→	Consideration (DMT)	→	Decision (DMT	→	Dispatch Decision (AT)

Applications Team = AT
Development Management Team = DMT

Validation
During this stage the Customer Services Applications Team will:
- Check that all forms have been correctly filled in, signed and dated;
- Check that the correct fee has been submitted;
- Check that the site location plan is to scale, has been outlined in red and matches site maps on our system;
- All drawings and plans are checked to ensure they meet the national and local requirements;
- Contact the applicant/agent if any additional information/fee is required;

Updated May 2021

Registration

During this stage the Application Team will:
- Send an acknowledgement letter via email or post including the planning reference number and the expected decision date;
- Consult the relevant third parties e.g. Highways, Environment Agency;
- Produce site notice(s), which the case officer displays this at the site by attaching it to a fixed object (i.e. fence)

Consideration and Decision

Once a planning application has been validated, the local planning authority should make a decision within the statutory time limits, which are usually 13 weeks for applications for major development and 8 weeks for all other types of development (unless an application is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, in which case a 16 week limit applies). Please note that the 8 or 13 week "clock" will only begin once all pertinent information has been submitted and the application has been validated and registered: i.e. should the applicant take an additional 2 weeks to supply requested information the process will be delayed accordingly.

What information is already available for public?

The Government guidance:

- Making an application
  https://www.gov.uk/guidance/making-an-application

Oxford City Council website:

- Pre-application advice
  https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning_applications/331/get_pre-application_planning_advice

- Understanding the planning process
  https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning_applications/726/the_planning_process

- List of national and local planning application requirements
  https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning_applications/724/apply_for_planning_permission

- Maps, Plans & Planning Applications: What to Submit
  https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning_applications/724/apply_for_planning_permission

- Planning fees and charges
  https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning_applications/724/apply_for_planning_permission

Updated May 2021

- Flooding guidance
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20066/planning_applications/724/apply_for_planning_permission

- Community Infrastructure Levy
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20187/community_infrastructure_levy

- Contaminated land
https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/download/148/contaminated_land

Planning Portal website:

The Council highly recommends the use of Planning Portal for submission of planning applications. The site has a great deal of useful information for applicants, and also has a fee calculator and will allow submission of plans and fees online.

- Do you need permission?
https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200125/do_you_need_permission

- Apply online:
https://1app.planningportal.co.uk

- Paper forms: available to download for submission through post/email
https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/61/paper_forms

- The decision-making process: how and when applications are decided
https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200126/applications/58/the_decision-making_process

Common reasons to make the application invalid

The Council receives a high number of invalid applications which do not provide all the information requested in the Local and National Validation Lists. Below are some of the most common reasons why applications are made invalid;

Documents and fee:

- Wrong application form submitted
- No fee or incorrect fee paid
- Application form completed incorrectly (example eg. wrong certificate signed, missing sections)
- Documents such as CIL form, contamination land questionnaire and design and access statements not provided
- Inadequate flood risk assessment (should be product 4 from the EA)
Submitting application and supporting documents/fee separately, e.g. application submitted via planning portal and fee via cheque which arrives several days after the application has been processed as "invalid"

Updated May 2021

Drawings:

- No scale, scale bar and North arrow
- No existing floor plans and elevations
- No proposed floor plans and elevation drawings
- Drawings don't match/not accurate/missing information
- No site location plan
- No red and blue lines on the location plan

To assist in the reduction of invalid applications some Local Authorities provide validation checklists. These are essentially tick-lists to make sure applicants submit everything necessary for their applications. The applicant fills in the validation checklist and encloses it with the application.

Moreover, it is strongly advised that the applicant/agent submits all information at once, rather than piece by piece, as this saves time on both sides and prevents extraneous correspondence regarding the same application.

Top Tips on how to reduce making an invalid application:

- Always check local requirements

- Have you submitted the correct form

- Have you signed and dated your documents

- Have you paid your fees

- Have you included your design and access statement

- Do your location and site plans meet requirements

Updated May 2021