

'How To Guide' (6)

An Applicant / Agent Guide on How to submit an application, disclosing personal data and the application determination process and protocols

Please go to www.bedford.gov.uk/searchplans to view planning application information, How to Guides and links to appeals, enforcement, enquiries, planning forms and Committee.

Submitting and amending planning applications

All forms and guidance are available on www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms. Please refer to the [validation requirements](#) before submitting a planning application. If the correct documents / plans are not submitted initially this can delay your planning application.

Except for some Prior notifications which have a separate process detailed in [How To Guide no 14](#), Bedford Borough Council does not accept planning applications OR amendments submitted by email. Please submit by: Paper (we require 4 copies for all applications, apart from householder applications where only 2 copies are required) or electronically via the planning portal on www.planningportal.co.uk. If you submit via the portal you will receive a unique code starting with 'PP' for each new application submitted. Please keep a note of this code. For enquiries about the planning portal please contact them on 0333 323 4589 or support@planningportal.co.uk or online at www.planningportal.co.uk/helpcentre

For amendments to a current (undetermined) application: please supply in paper or electronically by the planning portal using the portal number you were given at submission of the application to upload the new documents. Please do not create new applications as these will be returned. For information on negotiating amendments to current applications please see pages 4 and 5

For amendments or resubmission of a determined application and discharging conditions: Please do not use a portal reference for an application that has had a decision as we cannot accept these. If you wish to re-submit or amend a determined application, please create a new application online or submit in paper using the relevant application type. For more information on the application types and discharging conditions please see page 5

Payments can be made by the following methods: online via the Planning Portal at submission or by telephone (01234 718068) during the hours of 8.45am to 5.15pm Monday – Thursday and 8.45am to 4.45pm – Friday or by cheque made payable to Bedford Borough Council quoting the site address or Planning Portal reference on the back and sent to Planning Services, 4th Floor Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP

Submitting paperwork which contains personal data

If you have included any personal data within a planning application it will be published online. If you do not wish this to be shown you will need to provide a replacement document with the personal data removed, by the method you submitted the application e.g. via the Planning Portal or by post. This does not include personal data supplied on the application form (as this is automatically removed) or medical information supplied to apply for a disability exemption, which we will not publish online if clearly marked.

Any future correspondence that you send us in connection with this application will also be published online. This would include any email addresses that the correspondence is copied to (business telephone numbers and email addresses are not classed as personal data). You therefore may wish to send blind copies by using the BCC e-mail facility or as a letter attachment that does not include any personal information.

Documents that are marked as confidential will also be published online if they form part of the planning application e.g. Viability statements, business statistics etc. If you do not want this information published online it cannot be considered during the determination of the application. If you require the documents to be considered please remove the sensitive data and resubmit. Please note that this applies to all planning applications including Lawful Development Certificates for an existing use or development (LDE's).

Please note that any information submitted that relates to protected birds or badger sets will not be published online if clearly marked.

Information submitted at pre-application stage

All pre-application submissions will remain unavailable to view online until a planning application (which relates to the same development) is submitted. At this point all information submitted will be published online, including the officer response. However, any personal data contained within the application form will not be disclosed. Please consider this when submitting a pre-application enquiry. Any information that you do not want in the public domain should not be submitted as we cannot guarantee it will remain confidential.

Please note that pre-application enquiries can also be released to view as part of a Freedom of Information request even if a planning application has not been submitted.

Bedford Borough Council Planning Scheme of Delegation

Standard planning applications can take up to 8 weeks to determine and major planning applications can take up to 13 weeks to determine. Not all planning applications are required to be heard at Planning Committee, these applications are referred to as 'delegated' decisions. Please click here if you would like to review [Bedford Borough Council's Scheme of Delegation](#).

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee is held every month, usually on a Monday (except on Bank Holidays) at Borough Hall from 6.30pm. If there are applications on the agenda that interest a lot of people the Planning Committee may be moved to a larger venue e.g. The Corn Exchange. Interested parties can register to speak at Planning Committee by contacting Margaret Clarke on 01234 228799 before 4.45pm on the Friday before the scheduled committee date.

To view a planning committee report you will need to access the relevant agenda. All agendas and minutes are available from this link www.bedford.gov.uk/planningcommittee

If you do not know the planning committee date the application will be heard at click on www.bedford.gov.uk/searchplans and select 'To View and Comment on Planning Applications'

Type in the planning application number or site address and click 'search'. Once the relevant case has been found click on 'Important dates' within the shaded area. This section will specify the Planning Committee date. Please then refer to the following link to search for the relevant Agenda which are saved in date order www.bedford.gov.uk/planningcommittee.

For applications determined by a Joint Planning Committee with Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council please click [here](#) for the arrangements please click [here](#)

Extensions of time

Planning applications must be dealt with within a set deadline however it may be necessary to agree an extension of time for example: if a committee date falls outside the determination date of an application, if a legal agreement is required or if the case officer agrees to allow amended plans following negotiations. In order to extend the time of an application both the applicant/agent and the case officer need to agree to a new date and confirmation must be sent in writing (usually by an e-mail direct to the case officer).

Negotiating Amendments to Planning Applications

Planning applications typically fall into one of the following categories:

Category 1 - Scheme acceptable as submitted – Approval without negotiation

Category 2 - Scheme unacceptable as submitted – Refusal without negotiation.

If the proposal is clearly contrary to policy for example, it is unlikely that negotiations can overcome this. In these cases the planning case officer will proceed to progress your application to a determination. Similarly, if the scheme is substantially sub-standard, perhaps in a number of different respects, the presumption is that it will be progressed towards a decision without negotiations being undertaken. The reason(s) for refusal will advise the applicant or agent what the problems are so that they can seek to address these in a re-submitted application, if they wish to do this.

Category 3 - Scheme unacceptable as submitted but needs only minor amendments which would not require re-consultation - Approval following negotiation.

If your scheme only requires a relatively minor change to make it acceptable, the presumption is that negotiations will be undertaken to obtain satisfactory amended plans before the application is put forward for a decision.

Category 4 - Scheme is unacceptable as submitted but needs minor amendments or further information to meet the objections or concerns of a consultee and no other third parties need to be re-consulted - Approval following negotiation.

Sometimes, people who are consulted on an application require specific changes to be made to the plans or additional information to be submitted. In cases such as this negotiation and amendments may be acceptable in certain cases.

Category 5 - Whether the application has been subject to pre-application advice.

If there has been no pre-application advice, and the issues raised could reasonably have been identified before submission we will normally proceed to a formal decision without negotiation.

If amended plans are accepted the applicant / agent will be contacted, usually by e-mail or telephone, and will be given a short indication of what amendments are required and why. If you are asked to amend your plans the case officer will give you a date by which you must submit the plans and any additional information. If the amendments are not received by the date given or you confirm you do not wish to make any amendments we will determine your application as it stands. We will not accept amendments after the date given to you by the

case officer. Please also note that only one round of negotiation and, if necessary, re-consultation with a consultee will be entered into per application. Applicants and agents are not encouraged to submit amended plans unless invited to do so by the case officer. If amended plans are received without being requested it is a matter for the discretion of the case officer whether those plans are accepted or not. If you decide that you do not wish to proceed with the application as submitted you can withdraw it at any time before the decision is issued.

Varying or amending a determined application

Officers can only be involved in discussions on their current, un-determined caseload, see below for the applicable option for your enquiry. Once the relevant form has been received and validated, an Officer will be allocated:

1. To vary a determined planning permission: Go to www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms and select one of the following options and pay the relevant fee (we do not accept applications by email)
 - For very minor changes e.g. moving window or door or similar, submit a 'Non Material Amendment' application
 - For all other variations submit a S73 application, 'Application for Removal or Variation of a condition' (If the changes are very substantial this may require a new planning application). *S73 is not the application type to discharge conditions please see point 2. below.*
 - If the change is retrospective you will need to complete a S73A application using the 'Application for Planning Permission' form.
 - Alternatively you may wish to reapply for permission
 - If the permission has expired and no work was lawfully started, a new application must be submitted.
 - Planning permissions cannot have the expiry date extended or varied unless a temporary permission was granted.
2. To discharge conditions please refer to the form for 'Application for approval of details reserved by condition' (For advice See ['How to Guide' 13](#))
3. For any planning advice please see details on www.bedford.gov.uk/planningenquiries this includes links to finding out what is Permitted Development ('PD') or not and the form and fee list for a written response from planning.
4. To vary / discharge a S106 agreement, see www.bedford.gov.uk/s106agreements
5. PPA negotiations require a request to the Local Authority supplying, Site Address, Location plan, Applicant Name, Address and all Contact details
6. If you want confirmation planning permission is not required, please submit a lawful development proposed certificate at www.bedford.gov.uk/planningforms

PLANNING OFFICER ABSENCE

Due to staff constraints, assigned applications are not dealt with by alternative Officers. In addition Officers can also only be involved in discussions on their current, un-determined caseloads. If your enquiry is something the relevant Officer needs to assist with, it will be forwarded to them so they can respond on their return to work and a copy of your enquiry will be added to our electronic file for future reference. If the application is going to Committee as detailed on the published agenda this will be looked at before the meeting.

All the application documentation, details and How to Guides to assist, are available for viewing on www.bedford.gov.uk/searchplans there are also links on this page to: [appeals enforcement](#), [planning forms](#) to submit an application or vary / discharge an existing permission, [S106 Agreements](#), [planning enquiries](#) and [planning committee](#). If you wish to amend a determined application please refer to page 5

REQUEST TO REMOVE AN AGENT FROM AN APPLICATION

In order to remove the current Agent details from a planning application we require written permission from them. This is because The LPA must be able to deal with the point of contact shown in the application. If there is to be a different point of contact, this needs to be confirmed by all the affected parties; otherwise we could have un-authorized parties withdrawing, amending or otherwise dealing with an application in a way that wasn't intended. This may reflect, for example, disputes with agents over fees or issues about copyright, although it is not the LPA's function to resolve these sorts of matters.

ENQUIRIES FOR DETAILS ONLINE

All applications can be tracked and checked online including viewing correspondence, plans and decision notices / Officers reports all which are published on the day of receipt and issue.

Please refer to www.bedford.gov.uk/searchplans and the link TO VIEW AND COMMENT ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS. Type in your application number and you can view all the required details. For the application plans, documents and correspondence please click on 'Documents' followed by 'View associated Documents'. Please refer to the 'Contents List' on more recent applications for more details about what is available. For General Public representations please click on the tab labelled 'COMMENTS'.

Please note we correspond directly with Agents where one has been appointed. He /She should then be able to keep the Applicant, up to date with information that you cannot see online.