



# A Guide to Making a Planning Application



Planning Leaflet **4**



Oifig an  
Rialaitheora Pleanála  
Office of the  
Planning Regulator



An Roinn Tithiochta,  
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta  
Department of Housing,  
Local Government and Heritage



# A Guide to Making a Planning Application

Where planning permission is required to carry out development or to change the use of land or buildings, you must prepare and lodge a planning application with your local planning authority (city or county council). This leaflet is a practical guide to assist you in preparing an application for planning permission.

You must submit the correct documents with your planning application to ensure that it complies with planning law. If your application is not complete, it will be returned to you.

This leaflet is not a definitive legal interpretation of planning law. For more information, you should consult with your local planning authority.

## 1. Where do I apply for planning permission?

You should lodge your application for planning permission with the planning authority for your area, which will be one of the 31 local authorities in Ireland (city or county councils). Application forms and information are available from your planning authority either at their offices or on their website. Planning permission for more complex developments, i.e. strategic infrastructure and strategic housing developments must be obtained from An Bord Pleanála.

| For more information see Planning Leaflet  
| 14 – “Strategic Infrastructure Development”.

## 2. How do I apply for planning permission?

You must complete a planning application form and submit it with the required documents (see Questions 9 to 15 below) and the appropriate fee to your local planning authority.

## 3. Are there different types of planning permission?

Yes. There are two types of planning permission. An application may be made for:

- permission, or
- outline permission.

The most common type of application is for permission, sometimes referred to as full permission. An application for full permission requires detailed plans and full particulars of the proposed development.

There are circumstances when you may want to apply for outline permission. For example, you may wish to see if the planning authority agrees with your proposed development in principle but you may not wish to incur the expense of having detailed plans prepared. If you obtain outline permission, you must obtain full permission before starting work.

In most cases, a subsequent application for full planning permission must be made within three years of when the outline permission was granted. Outline permission cannot be sought for:

- retention of a structure,
- works to a protected structure or a proposed protected structure,
- developments which require an environmental impact assessment (EIA),
- developments which require an integrated pollution control (IPC) licence, or
- developments which require a waste licence.

## 4. Where do I get an application form?

You can obtain a planning application form from your local planning authority either via their offices or website. There may be different forms for different types of development - domestic, agricultural, industrial, etc.

## 5. Can I get advice from the planning authority?

Yes, you may consult with your local planning authority before lodging a planning application. It is a good idea to do so, particularly when you are unsure of local planning policies or if your proposal is complex. However, there is no obligation for you to do so.

Prior contact with your local planning authority can be useful to confirm:

- the documents (and the number of copies) which you must submit with your planning application;
- the detail needed;
- fee to be paid; *and*
- public notice requirements, etc.

All planning authorities must provide access to pre-application consultations within a reasonable period of a request being made under the provisions of Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). It can be helpful to get the planning authority's advice on particular aspects of the development plan that may influence the decision on the planning application.

Every local authority office and website provides details of how to access this service and the terms and conditions which apply. This service is provided without prejudice to the planning authority's final decision.

## 6. Who can make a planning application?

If you wish to lodge a planning application, you must have sufficient legal interest in the

site or property to allow you to carry out the proposed development or make the application. Alternatively, you must have the written consent of the person who has that legal interest. If a planning application is made by a prospective purchaser or tenant, the owner's written consent should normally be provided with the application.

## 7. What information must be included in a valid planning application?

In general, a valid planning application must always include:

- copies of public notices; (newspaper notice and site notice) (See Questions 13 & 14);
- the name and address of the applicant, the area and location of the land or structure concerned and the legal interest of the applicant;
- all the required plans, maps and drawings and a schedule listing the plans, maps and drawings;
- a location map (minimum scale 1:1000);
- site or layout plans (minimum scale 1:500);
- other plans and elevations of proposals; (minimum scale 1:200) (except for outline permission);
- a plan showing the position on the land where the site notice has been erected;
- the appropriate fee; *and*
- six copies of plans and maps. In the case of protected structures or proposed protected structures, ten copies are usually required.

You should always check with your planning authority that you meet all the requirements. An incomplete application is invalid

and will be returned to you with the fee. The statutory eight week period for deciding an application begins from the time you submit a valid application. When the last day for giving a decision falls on a weekend, public holiday or other day the planning authority is closed, the decision will be given on the next working day. In calculating any time limit, the period between the 24th December and 1st January is disregarded.

There may be specific requirements depending on the type of development you want permission for.

You must show clearly and in sufficient detail:

- your development proposals, including site layout plans and other scaled plans depending on the nature of the proposed development;
- what the development will look like when finished, which can include plans and visuals; *and*
- how the proposed development will relate to the site and to the adjoining structures and properties. Drawings and streetscape illustrations are useful in this context.

## 8. Can I get help in filling in the form?

Planning application forms come with explanatory notes. You should read these notes carefully before completing the form. The planning authority can give you advice. You can also get an agent (e.g. a planning consultant, engineer, architect) to make the application on your behalf.

## 9. How much will my application cost?

You must pay a fee with the planning application and it must accompany the application or it will be invalid. The amount depends on the type of development proposed and the type of permission sought.

You pay a flat rate fee for an application to construct a new house while fees for commercial developments are based on the floor area. Reduced rates apply to applications for outline permission and a refund of fees may arise for certain repeat applications. The fees for applications for permission to retain unauthorised development are three times greater than the normal fee. Full details of fees are listed in the explanatory notes accompanying the application form.

In addition to the fee you pay at the time of application, it may be a condition of any grant of planning permission that you also pay a development contribution to the planning authority. This contributes to the cost of public infrastructure and facilities (e.g. roads, surface water drainage, recreational and community facilities, etc.) which facilitates your development. Development contributions differ from place to place and for different types of development. They are separate from any fees you may pay for connection to services such as water and sewerage. You can ask your planning authority for details.



## 10. What documents do I need to submit?

The documents which you need to submit with your application will depend on the type of development proposed. They will need to show clearly and in sufficient detail:

- your development proposals,
- what the development will look like when it is finished, *and*
- how it will relate to the site and to adjoining structures and property etc.

Your local planning authority can clarify any specific documents and details they may require. In general, however, you must always submit the following:

- a completed planning application form,\*
- the relevant planning application fee,\*
- the page of the newspaper showing the notice,\*
- a copy of the erected site notice,\*
- six copies of the site location map\* (at a scale of not less than 1:1000 in a built-up area and not less than 1:2500 in all other areas),

- a plan showing where on the land the site notice has been erected,\*
  - six copies of a site or layout plan (at a scale of not less than 1:500).\*
- (All maps must be in metric scale. If the development applies to a protected structure or to the exterior of a structure within an Architectural Conservation Area, the application must be accompanied by photographs, plans and other details, which will show how the development will affect the character of the structure),
- six copies of any other plans, elevations and sections,
  - ten copies where an application includes works to be carried out on a Protected Structure/Proposed Protected Structure, *and*
  - ten copies where an application is accompanied by an E.I.A.R. (Environmental Impact Assessment Report).

*If the application is for outline permission only, the documents marked \* in the above list must be submitted. This is to enable the planning authority to assess the siting, layout or other proposals for development in the application.*

Applications for a change of use should also include a statement of the existing use and of the proposed use with details of the nature and extent of the proposed use.



**If in doubt or if you are preparing your planning application yourself, please consult with your local planning authority beforehand.**

### 11. What should the site location map show?

A site location map must be of sufficient size and contain details and features which identify the site. It must also be the correct scale (which must be identified on the location map). The scale should be at least 1:1000 in built-up areas and 1:2500 in other areas (or other scales as may be agreed with the planning authority).

The location map should be marked to identify:

- the land or structure relating to the application, with the site boundary shown in red;
- any other land in the vicinity of the proposed development owned by the applicant or landowner should be outlined in blue. Any wayleaves should be outlined in yellow;
- the position of the site notice or notices erected; and
- the Ordnance Survey sheet number of the map (indicating the north point).

### 12. What should other drawings and particulars show?

Planning law and regulations specify what needs to be included in the drawings and

details you submit with your planning application. Make sure your application meets these requirements and that the person preparing your application is familiar with them. If in doubt or if you are preparing your planning application yourself, please consult with your local planning authority beforehand.

The main requirements that plans, drawings and maps accompanying a planning application must comply with include the following:

- site or layout plans must be drawn to a scale (which must be indicated on the drawings) of at least 1:500 or a scale agreed with the planning authority;
- site or layout plans must show the site boundary clearly marked in red and the principal features such as buildings, roads, boundaries, septic tanks, percolation areas, bore wells, significant tree stands and other features on, adjoining, or in the vicinity of the land or structure to which the application relates;
- site or layout plans shall indicate the distances of any structures from the site boundaries;
- site layout plans and other plans must show the level or contours, where applicable, of the land and any proposed structures relative to Ordnance Survey datum or similar;
- other plans, elevations and sections must be drawn to a scale of not less than 1:200 (or another scale agreed with the planning authority);



**You must give public notice of your proposals at least two weeks before making an application.**

- drawings and elevations of any proposed structure must show the main features of any buildings adjoining the proposed structure at a scale of at least 1:200;
- any proposals for reconstruction, alteration or extension must be marked to distinguish them from existing structures;
- plans and drawings of floor plans, elevations and sections must indicate in figures the principal dimensions (including overall height) of any proposed structures; *and*
- any map or plan based on an Ordnance Survey map must indicate the relevant sheet number and the north point must be shown on all maps and plans, other than elevations and sections.

**13. What public notice must I give?**

You must give public notice of your proposals within two weeks of lodging the application. This must be done:

- by publishing a notice in a newspaper circulating in the locality; (the planning authority will provide you with a list of approved newspapers for this purpose); *and*
- by erecting a site notice, which must be on durable, weatherproofed material.

You must erect the notice at a conspicuous position on the land or structure, so it is not obscured at any time. Where there is more than one entrance to the site, additional site notices are required. A site notice must be A4 in size and printed in indelible ink on a white background for a first notice. If you apply for permission for a subsequent development on the same site within six months of the first application, the site notice must have a yellow background. You must ensure that the site notice is maintained on site for a period of five weeks from the date the application is lodged. If the notice becomes damaged or if it is removed it should be replaced immediately, otherwise your application may be invalidated.

**14. What needs to be in the newspaper and site notices?**

The notices must state the following:

- the name of the planning authority;
- the name of the person applying for permission;
- the type of permission being applied for;
- the nature and extent of the proposed development;
- the location, townland or postal address of the site to which the application relates;
- the planning application may be inspected or purchased at a fee, not exceeding the reasonable cost of making a copy, at the offices of the planning authority during its public opening hours; *and*
- a submission or observation in relation to the application may be made in writing to the planning authority on payment of the prescribed fee within the period of five

weeks, beginning on the date of receipt by the authority of the application.

Full details of the information to be contained in the notices are in the explanatory notes of the application form. The planning authority will provide you with a site notice form which sets out the details which must be included on a site notice. You must ensure that you or your agent sign and date the site notice.

### **15. Before submitting your application ask yourself:**

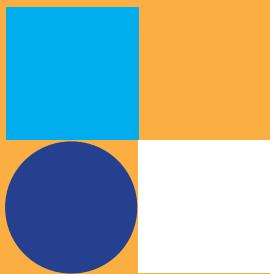
- Do I need to ask my local planning authority for advice on my proposal?
  - Am I making the correct type of application i.e. for permission or outline permission?
  - Have I completed the application form correctly?
  - Have I enclosed all the correct documents, with the required amount of detail and the correct number of copies?
  - Are the location and layout maps and drawings properly prepared, scaled and dimensioned?
  - Have I paid the correct fee?
  - Is my newspaper notice in compliance with the Regulations, in an approved newspaper and within the time limit?
  - Is my site notice in compliance with the Regulations, erected within the time limit and sited correctly?
  - Have I included all of the necessary information (e.g. do I need to include results of percolation tests for a septic tank)? If I am not the site owner, have I included a letter of consent from the owner?
  - Have I (or my agent) signed the form?
  - Do I need to meet any other non-planning requirements? (e.g. fire safety certificate under the building regulations, consent to connect to a public sewer)?
- Further information can be obtained from your local planning authority or registered planning consultant.

The law governing the planning system is set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001, as amended. You can purchase these from the Government Publications Sales Office, telephone (01) 6476834 or at [publications@opw.ie](mailto:publications@opw.ie) or download them for free from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage's website [www.gov.ie/housing](http://www.gov.ie/housing). Legislation is also available to view and download from: [www.irishstatutebook.ie](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie).



**Office of the Planning Regulator**  
Fourth Floor (West Wing)  
Park House  
Grangegorman  
191-193A North Circular Road  
Dublin 7  
D07 EWV4

opr.ie  
[info@opr.ie](mailto:info@opr.ie)  
01 854 6700



Disclaimer: Issued January 2021. While every care has been taken in the preparation of this planning information leaflet, the Office of the Planning Regulator assumes no responsibility for and gives no guarantees concerning the accuracy, completeness or up to date nature of the information provided and accepts no liability arising from any errors or omissions. Please notify any errors, omissions and comments by email to [info@opr.ie](mailto:info@opr.ie)