

Item No. 12.	Classification: Open	Date: 2 February 2016	Meeting Name: Planning Committee
Report title:		Consultation on validation checklists for planning applications	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
From:		Planning Policy Manager	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Planning Committee:

1. Note and provide feedback on the public consultation on revised validation checklists for planning applications that began on Friday 8 January 2016 (approved under delegated authority by the Director of Planning on 7 January 2016) for 10 weeks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. The validation checklists set out what information is required to be submitted to the council for different types of planning application.
3. We have recently produced a series of draft revised validation checklists. These have been revised to:
 - Make the requirements as easy to understand as possible and thereby reduce the percentage of invalid applications;
 - Include hyperlinks to additional guidance in order to try to improve the quality of submitted documents;
 - Highlight proposed additional upcoming requirements relating to the New Southwark Plan; and
 - Pick up changes in validation requirements and related policy and legislation e.g. added a requirement for a schedule of accommodation and floor plan identifying the standard under M4 of the Building Regulations that each home in the development will meet (to reflect recent changes to the building regulations following the housing standards review).
4. We have placed these revised validation checklists on the council's website for consultation for a 10 week period from Friday 8 January to Friday 18 March 2016. We opted for a 10 week consultation period to avoid the purdah period related to the London Mayoral election which begins on 21 March.
5. Current users of the online validation checklists are able to comment on the revised content. In addition we have emailed a list of developers and agents active in the borough to invite them to respond to the consultation. We are also emailing everyone on our Local Plan database to make them aware of the consultation. Respondents are able to provide feedback using online forms linked to each checklist. Alternatively they can send or email their representations to us.

CONSULTATION

6. The National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) does not stipulate the exact arrangements for consultation with stakeholders, leaving this for local planning authorities to define. The details of the proposed consultation are set out in the section above.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Legislative and policy background and the roles of the local authority

7. The NPPG recommends a three step process for reviewing and revising local lists. Step 1 involves reviewing the existing local list to identify the key information requirements linked to statutory requirements, policies in the National Planning Policy Framework or development plan, or published guidance that explains how adopted policy should be implemented. Having identified their information requirements, local planning authorities should decide whether they need to revise their existing local list.
8. Step 2 states that where a local planning authority (LPA) considers that changes are necessary, the proposals should be issued to the local community, including applicants and agents, for consultation. Hence the proposal for consultation recommended here.
9. Step 3 indicates that LPAs should take into account consultation responses when preparing the final revised local list. This should be published on the planning authority's website.
10. Information requested with a particular planning application must be:
 - reasonable, having regard in particular to the nature and scale of the proposed development; and
 - about a matter which it is reasonable to think will be a material consideration in the determination of the application.

These statutory tests are set out in section 62 (4A) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Growth and Infrastructure Act) and article 11(3)(c) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Order) 2015.

Financial implications

11. There are no immediate resource implications arising from this report as any additional work required to complete the consultation will be carried out by the relevant policy team staff and budgets without a call on additional funding.

Community impact statement

12. The New Southwark Plan has been subject to equalities impact assessment (EqIA) report and sustainability appraisal. The proposed changes to the validation checklists are not anticipated to have any significant implications for community impacts as they relate to information requirements for planning applications that will be assessed in accordance with the Development Plan, including the emerging New Southwark Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy

13. This report deals with the current consultation taking place concerning the revised validation checklists. The intention is to make the Council's requirements on planning applications clearer and provide guidance of emerging changes likely within the New Southwark Plan.
14. Planning Committee is merely being asked to note the consultation and accordingly there are no legal issues arising from the consultation on the validation checklists.

Strategic Director of Finance and Governance (CE/15/021)

15. The Departmental Finance Manager notes there are no immediate financial implications arising from this report as any additional work required to complete the consultation will be carried out by the relevant policy team staff and budgets without a call on additional funding.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held at	Contact
None.		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix A	Validation checklist webpage: http://www.southwark.gov.uk/info/485/planning_applications/3252/planning_applications_validation_checklist_forms_and_fees
Appendix B	Example checklist for major planning applications

AUDIT TRAIL

Lead Officer	Juliet Seymour, Planning Policy Manager	
Report Author	Doug McNab, Planning Policy	
Version	Final	
Dated	19 January 2016	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
Director of Planning	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team		21 January 2016