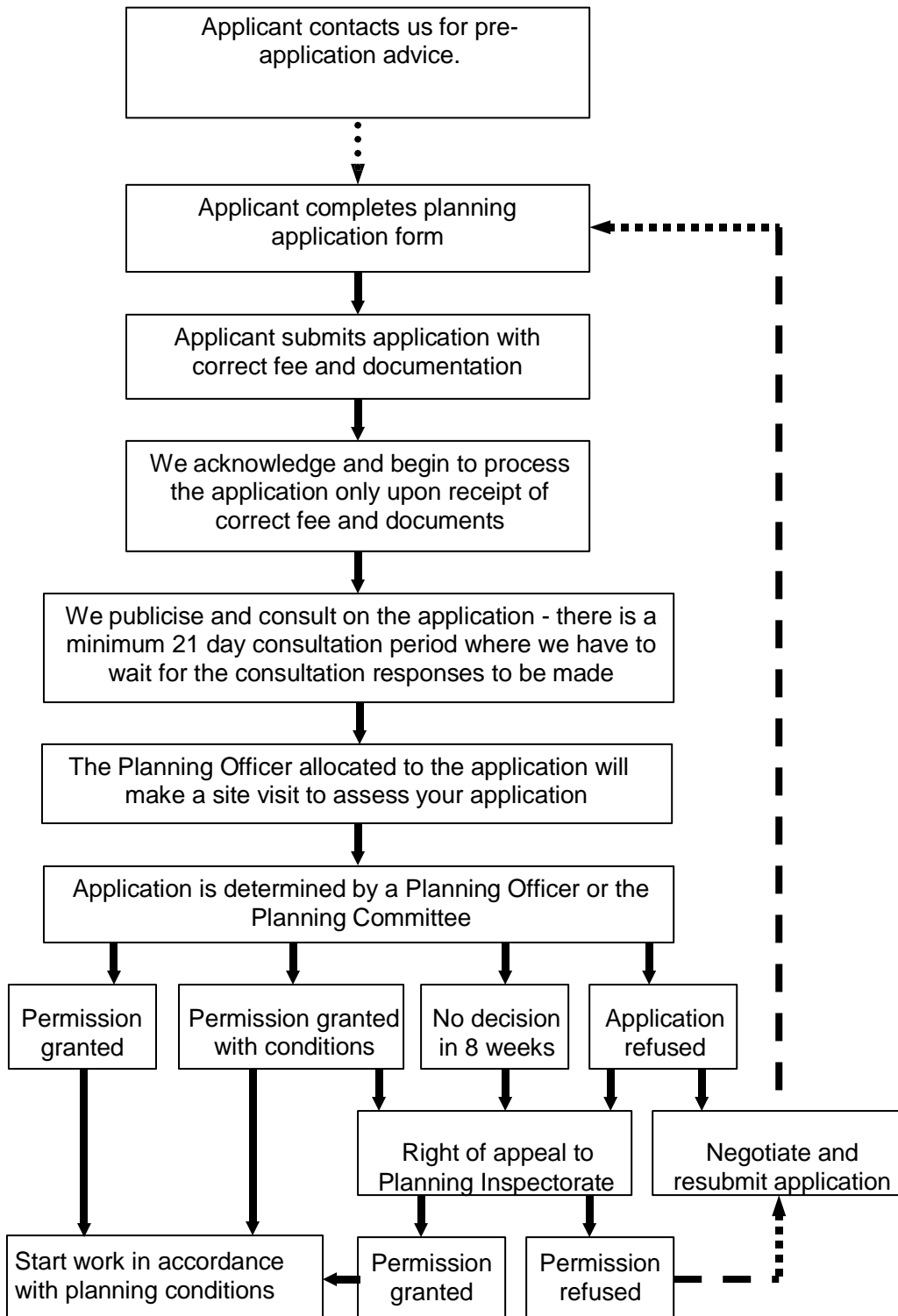


# South Somerset District Council



## How the planning process work?



## **Applying for planning permission**

South Somerset District Council as Local Planning Authority is expected to take 8 weeks to determine Householder planning applications and 13 weeks for major applications.

## **The purpose of Planning Services**

Planning Services' purpose is to make sure that:

- New buildings are in the right place.
- New uses for land and buildings are right for the location.
- New homes, places of work, shops and community facilities are properly provided where they are needed.
- Valuable open spaces, trees, historic buildings and areas of particular value are protected.

We often have to strike a balance between the needs of the district as a whole and the interests of those living near a proposed development. The Local Plan sets out the Council's policies and proposals for future development and the use of land. We also consider however the effect of proposals on the environment, traffic and local residents and any other development matters before making decisions.

## **How a decision is made on planning applications**

A planning application must go through a number of stages before permission is granted or declined. This is explained in detail below.

1. Pre-application process
2. Officer consideration stage
3. Amended plans
4. Planning Committee
5. Speaking at Committee
6. Decision Notice
7. View a decision on an application
8. Third party appeals and ombudsman complaints

### **1. Pre-Application advice**

Pre-application advice is a useful way to rehearse the main arguments before going to the expense of submitting an application. The application has a greater chance of success if pre-application advice is sought.

### **2. Officer consideration stage**

Once the application has been registered and the consultation letters sent out the application is passed to the Planning Case Officer.

The Council aims to determine most applications within 8 weeks of receipt (13 weeks for major applications).

Neighbours and consultees are given 21 days for comment.

When the Case Officer has visited the site and received all comments he/she will write a report recommending that planning permission is either granted or refused. At the discretion of the Case Officer, amendments to the plans or additional information can be requested if he/she thinks this will enable an application to be more favourably considered. Whether amendments are requested in any particular case will depend on the nature and extent of changes required. If wholesale redrawing of plans would be required, the Case Officer may decide that there would be insufficient time to determine the application within the statutory deadline (taking account of the need for re-consultation) and either determine the application as submitted, or give the applicant the opportunity to withdraw, with the option of submitting a revised application at a later date, once the concerns have been addressed.

### **3. Amended plans**

Unless the change is very minor (and this should first be discussed with the planning officer) we are unable in most cases to consider amended plans during the determination of a planning application. This is because, once the process has begun, there will often be insufficient time to determine the application within the statutory deadline, given the need to re-consult neighbours etc. again. Applicants are encouraged to obtain advice before submitting an application.

### **4. Development Control Committee**

Not all planning applications are reported to the Council's Planning Committee. Applications can be determined within the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

In other cases the application will be reported to the Area Planning Committee (made up of locally elected councillors). The Committee will then decide on the application.

Every planning application is evaluated on its own merits.

An area committee can approve minor applications but if an area committee wishes to refuse a major residential application the matter will be referred onto the higher district wide Regulation Committee.

### **5. Speaking at Committee**

Agents, applicants and interested members of the public can register to speak at the Planning Committee in respect of any application they have an interest in. Each speaker is allowed 3 minutes only. If more than one person wishes to speak for or against an application, it is requested that they elect one of their party to speak on behalf of all.

### **6. Decision Notice**

When the decision is made a Decision Notice will be sent to the applicant or agent (if the applicant has appointed an agent). If full planning permission is granted the permission is normally valid for three years from the date of the decision.

Please note that if planning permission is granted there may be conditions which require the submission of further details, for example, samples of materials, or landscaping, prior to the commencement of the development.

### **7. View a decision on an application**

If you wish to find out what the Council's decision was on a planning application, please go to [this page](#) where you will be able to search for an application and view its related plans and documents.

### **7. Third party appeals and ombudsman complaints**

Although there is provision within the Planning Act for applicants to appeal against the decision of the Council, there is no provision for neighbours or other aggrieved third parties to appeal. It is possible, however, for third parties to challenge the method by which a decision was reached, for example if they think that procedures were not properly followed. The Council has an internal complaints procedure. If the aggrieved party are unsatisfied they are able to write to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Further information about can be found on [here](#)