

Design and Access Statements

Rev. A dated the 25th June 2013

As part of the current governments drive to simplify the planning system, an amendment to the Town and Country Planning [Development Management Procedure] Order 2010 [DMPO] is proposed and comes into effect on the 25th June 2013. The effect of the amendment is to reduce the number of types of applications which must be accompanied by a design and access statement and to simplify their required content. The Council have therefore revised their guidance to reflect the changes.

The purpose of a Design and Access Statement remains essentially the same: it is to explain how the applicant has considered the design thinking behind a planning application and what is appropriate and feasible for the site in its local context. It shows the processes to be gone through and the conclusions reached.

1. When is a Statement needed?

Design and Access Statements are required for:

- Development which is major development;
- Where any part of the development is in a designated area and consists of:
 - [i] the provision of one or more dwelling houses;
 - [ii] the provision of building or buildings where the floor space created is 100m² or more.

“Designated area” means a conservation area or a property/land within a World Heritage Site¹.

A Design and Access statement is not required for an application for planning permission which is:

- To remove or vary any condition;
- To extend the time limit for the implementation of an extant planning permission;
- For engineering or mining operations;
- For a material change in use of the land or buildings; or
- For development which is waste development.

¹ See <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>

2. What should the Statement contain?

Formal guidance can be found in the Government's Guide on Information Requirements and Validation [March 2010] which can be found at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7727/1505220.pdf

The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) has also produced a useful document entitled "Design and Access Statements- how to write, read and use them"² which is still available through the Design Council and this can be found at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110118095356/http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/design-and-access-statements.pdf>

The new regulations require the Statement to be about:

- The design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- How issues relating to access to the development have been dealt with; and shall
- Explain the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the development;
- Demonstrate the steps taken to appraise the context of the development and how the design of the development takes that context into account;
- Explain the policy adopted as to access, and how policies relating to access in relevant local development documents have been taken into account;
- State what, if any, consultation has been undertaken on issues relating to access to the development and what account has been taken of the outcome on any such consultation; and
- Explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the development have been addressed.

3. What format should the Statement take?

The Design and Access Statement should be a single document reflecting an integrated approach. It should be concise but should cover all the necessary issues. The level of detail included in the statement will depend on the scale and complexity of the proposal. For example, a major housing scheme may need a statement many pages long explaining the full design thinking, consultations undertaken, public involvement, options considered, and the justification for the design proposed. All Statements should include a written description and justification of the planning application, supported where appropriate by photos, maps and drawings.

² However, it should be noted that this document does not currently address the new changes referred to above.

4. When should the Statement be written?

A Design and Access Statement should be prepared at the start of the development process and should evolve as the scheme is defined. The Statement is required to explain and justify the decisions made on the proposal and therefore it should not be written at the end as an afterthought. Early drafts will be useful to assist pre-application discussion, which the Borough Council encourages.

5. What happens to the Statement?

Although not a formal part of the planning application, the Statement must accompany the application and will be used by the third parties, consultees and the Council to understand and assess the proposal and to reach a decision on the application. It will be scanned onto the Council's website and made available for public viewing. The intentions and promises made in the Statement will normally be tied into any permission granted, by the imposition of conditions and/or legal agreement.