

Planning for Small Business

Get Involved
*Your Community,
Your Choice*

East Midlands
Planning Aid
Service

The planning system exists to ensure that we get the right development in the right place and at the right time. Its traditional role is to protect the countryside from unnecessary development and to promote the regeneration of run down areas in towns and cities. The planning system controls all types of development including the building of new houses, shops, offices and leisure facilities. In making decisions on development, the planning system must balance the need for new development against the need to protect and improve the environment.

This information sheet explains how planning relates to issues which are of particular concern to small business. It is produced to help show how planning is relevant to you, and how you can get involved in addressing the issues that concern you through the planning system.

How does Planning Relate to Small Business

• Location of development

Local planning authorities produce planning policies which guide the location of different types of development and allocate specific sites for business development, housing and retail uses in their planning policy documents. Sites allocated for employment development need to be protected by planning policies which prevent such sites being developed for other uses, such as residential use.

• High quality development

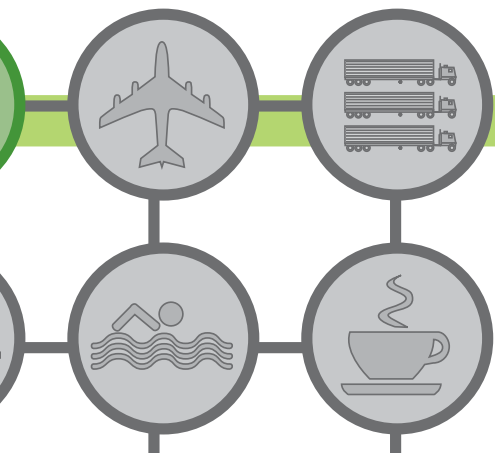
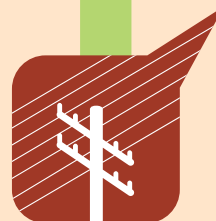
Attractive, high quality environments are important for maintaining and enhancing an area's economic potential, so planning policies need to be in place so that planning applications which would have a negative impact on the quality of the built environment can be refused or amended. Planning policies are also used to improve local environments and reduce the potential for crime through improving design and street lighting. Most police forces have an officer that advises the local council on crime issues that affect planning.

• Urban Regeneration and Rural Development

Local planning authorities will have policies which support and encourage business development in particular urban and rural areas that need new jobs in order to improve the local economy, the lives of local people and the quality of the environment. In rural areas, local planning policies must also recognise that diversification into non-agricultural activities can be vital to the continuing viability of many farm enterprises and should be supportive of well-conceived business schemes that are consistent in their scale with their rural location.

• Red Tape

The planning system follows strict procedures and can be time consuming and frustrating. Finding a balance between competing interests can be very difficult. However, planning should prevent harmful development and it is therefore important that the policies used to decide how and where development takes place are written with the help of the people most affected by them. Getting involved with the planning system early can help to alleviate frustration later on.



How You Can Influence Planning

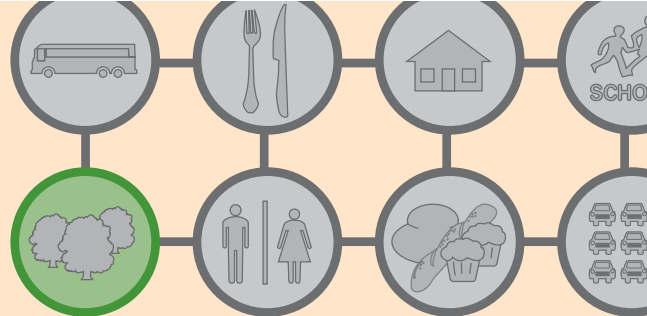
Each council must prepare planning policies for their area, which will include policies relating to issues affecting small businesses. The planning policies provide the basis for making planning decisions by giving details of what types of development will and will not be allowed in an area. By having your say on new planning policies and applications to build, you can directly influence the way planning decisions are made and the way your environment changes.

Each local planning authority has to produce a document called a Statement of Community Involvement which sets out the ways they will consult people on new planning policies and planning applications. This will include consulting local groups and organisations that represent the interests of small businesses. All local planning authorities have consultation databases and individuals and groups can ask to be included on this list to ensure that they are notified of new planning documents.

In addition to planning policies at the Local level, the East Midlands Regional Assembly, sets broad planning policies for the whole of the East Midlands. The East Midlands Plan, sets out the vision for how growth and development will take place across the region. As part of this vision, the Regional Plan also includes policies that guide the way decisions are made at a Local Level. The East Midlands Plan is currently being reviewed and it is important that they take into account the needs of small business.

You can directly influence planning by:

- Commenting on the documents produced by local planning authorities and the regional planning body during consultation periods (your local Council website is usually a good source of information about proposed planning documents)
- Commenting on planning applications in your local area during consultation periods. (Again, your local Council website is usually a good source of information about new planning applications and how you can comment on them.)
- Raising your concerns to organisations which represent small business, such as the Federation of Small Business, which is a pressure group seeking to protect and promote the interests of the self-employed and owners of small businesses.
- Getting involved with other non-government organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce or local business forums which represent small business within your local areas. These organisations can help raise concerns with local planning authorities and influence the formulation of policies.



For further information on planning issues please contact Planning Aid.

The planning system can be very complicated, so to make the process more understandable, Planning Aid offers free, independent, advice and support to groups and individuals who cannot afford a planning consultant.

Planning Advice Helpline:

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Reference and further information:

- Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (ODPM 2005)
- Planning Policy Guidance 4: Industrial, Commercial Development and Small Firms (ODPM 1992)
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (DCLG 2008)
- Regional Economic Strategy for the East Midlands: A flourishing region 2006 – 2020 (East Midlands Development Agency, 2006)
- Federation of Small Business: <http://www.fsb.org.uk>
- East Midlands Regional Assembly: <http://www.emra.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing-planning-transport/regional-spatial-strategy-rss>

