

PLANNING CONSULTANCY : Consultation



Alder King's planning team have excellent experience and knowledge of devising, arranging and managing stakeholder and public consultation programmes.

While still discretionary consultation is now a crucial part of the planning process and Local Planning Authorities have to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement, pursuant to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, setting out how the community might be involved in the planning process. Consultation provides a vital means of exchanging information with people likely to be affected by a particular development proposal. It involves all those with a relevant interest in the decision making process and can substantially reduce the time and cost that might otherwise be needed to resolve unforeseen problems at the planning application stage.

Consultation can take a number of forms according to the complexity, value and timescale relevant to each planning application.

For a simple, straightforward planning application it may only be necessary to consult with the local authority's statutory consultees and immediate neighbours.

For a complex application or a major regeneration project a local authority is likely to require:

- ▶ agreement on a specific Statement of Community Involvement at the outset, detailing how the applicant intends to involve all individuals, groups and organisations with a relevant interest in the consultation process;
- ▶ a Report of Community Involvement to accompany the planning / other applications, showing how the various parties have been engaged and the steps that have been taken to respond to their comments as the scheme has evolved.

We will tailor consultation to the particular requirements of each project with a view to advancing proposals to the planning application stage as quickly as possible in the best interests of the client.

Public Consultations

For larger scale developments we generally try to avoid involvement in large-scale public meetings, where experience shows that the most vociferous people can unduly influence others. Instead we prefer to engage members of the community through a variety of means including:

- ▶ Stakeholder events, seeking input from participants or giving details of proposals, with team members present to provide explanations and answer any questions;
- ▶ Workshops, where we will typically divide those attending into small discussion groups affording all participants an equal opportunity to have their say. These will usually be followed by a group or "plenary" session to distil common findings;
- ▶ Questionnaires, inviting people to express their views on development proposals. These can be produced in a variety of formats;
- ▶ Written and verbal feedback direct and / or via any website.