What Needs Planning Permission?

Planning Permission is required for the construction of buildings and other development, such as roads and car parks. It is also required for some changes of use of land or buildings e.g., changing from a shop to an office. Some permissions are granted automatically by regulations which apply across the whole country. Details of the most common forms of what is known as "Permitted Development", explaining what changes you can make to your home, are set out in a series of leaflets produced by the Development Control Team in the Planning Department.

The Council has adopted Local Charters for people making planning applications and those interested in other people’s planning proposals which explain the services you are entitled to receive. The Council has also adopted a ‘Local Protocol for Planning Decision Making’ which explains the procedures, including how you can have your say at the Planning Control Committee meeting where decisions are made on planning applications. These are all published in leaflet form and appear on the Council’s website – www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk

Why we have a Town and Country Planning system in the UK

What Things are considered when Making a Decision on a Planning Application?

These are the so-called “material considerations” where the word “material” in this context means relevant to the purpose of Town and Country Planning and the particular circumstances of the application. The system is designed to operate in the overall public interest and not to protect the interests of one person over another. Listed below are the main planning considerations and also the matters which cannot be taken into account in making a decision on a planning application. How the relevant matters are considered in relation to a particular planning application will usually depend on what the policies say in the Local Plan or Local Development Framework.

Planning Considerations

• The design layout and landscaping of buildings.
• The relationship between new and existing buildings, particularly in relation to privacy, daylight and sunlight.
• The presence of trees and other landscape features.
• Access, traffic and transport issues.
• Noise and smell.
• Affect on wildlife and the countryside.
• Affect on historic buildings and Conservation Areas.
• Contribution to the local economy.
• Cumulative impact.

Not Planning Considerations

• Affect on property values.
• Existence of restrictive covenants on the use of land or buildings.
• Ownership and access rights.
• Property maintenance issues.
• Competition between individual businesses.
• Loss of view.
• The fact that the application is for a different form of development from a recently determined application.
• Identity of or history of the applicant.
• Whether the applicant is motivated by the need for development to be profitable.
• The personal circumstances of the applicant (except in very special cases).

These lists are not exhaustive, but give a general picture of what things can be taken into account when making a decision on a planning application.
Why we have a town and Country Planning system in the UK

Britain is a relatively crowded island, with a continuing need to build more homes, places for business, shopping and leisure activities. The total population of the U.K. is only growing slowly, but the number of people wanting their own home is growing faster as household sizes become smaller. A growing and changing economy creates demand for a wide variety of buildings to accommodate businesses. A growth in income means people have more money to spend on shopping and leisure pursuits and this also creates the need for new buildings. We also need to build more hospitals and schools.

On the other hand, we want to keep our treasured countryside and our heritage of historic buildings. We need open spaces for sport and recreation. We have obligations to the natural world of plants and animals to help maintain the variety of life on the planet.

So we need a way of deciding where development should take place and where it should not. This, in essence, is why we have a system of Town and Country Planning in the U.K.

What are the Overall Aims of the System?

The aim is to guide future development of urban and rural areas in the long-term interests of everyone. This means making choices about the way land is used to ensure that development is ‘sustainable’. The definition of sustainable development is ‘development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

The Government has set out four key principles to be followed in the way the planning system regulates the development and use of land in the public interest, which can be summarised as follows:-

• Provide for the nation’s needs for new development in a way that has the least impact on the environment.

• Use previously developed areas in the most efficient way, but also making places which are attractive to live and work in.

• Conserve our manmade heritage and natural resources (including wildlife, landscape, water, soil and air quality) especially those which are of national and international importance.

• Ensure that the pattern of new development minimises the need to travel.

How Does this Work at a Local Level in Cannock Chase District?

Working within the context of the laws which regulate the planning system, national and regional policy, the Council operates as a Local Planning Authority. In this role, it is required to do two main things:-

(1) Have a ten year plan (currently called a Local Plan, but soon to be known as a Local Development Framework) which contains policies setting out how much new housing and commercial development is needed and where it should be built.

The Plan also has policies which explain where development will not be allowed or will be strictly controlled e.g., in the Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Areas of Special Scientific Interest and in Conservation Areas. Specific sites allocated for new development will have detailed guidance about design, layout and landscaping.

(2) Make decisions on planning applications submitted by people wishing to carry out development, ranging in scale from a house extension to a housing estate, a shop front to a shopping centre and a factory extension to a business park.