

Planning Statements

Purpose

The purpose of this guidance is to provide an overview of the content of Planning Statements to be submitted with planning applications as set out in the 'Validation Checklist for Planning Applications'.

Legislative Context

Article 5A of The Planning (General Development Procedure) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 enables Councils to publish a Planning Application Validation Checklist specifying the information, plans or evidence which must be submitted with a planning application to make it a 'valid' application and enable it to be processed. Council's Validation Checklist was implemented on 09 June 2025 and sets out that Planning Statement is required for all planning applications with the exception of minor householder applications and advertisements.

What is a Planning Statement?

A Planning Statement is a written document that explains the rationale for the proposed development and how it complies with the Northern Area Plan 2016 (NAP 2016), and relevant policies contained within the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and the regional Planning Policy Statements. It provides the opportunity for you to explain the context of the site, justification for the proposed development and how it complies with the NAP 2016 are relevant regional and local planning policies and to put forward any other material planning issues that should be considered in the assessment of the application.

When is it required?

A Planning Statement is required to be submitted for all planning applications with the exception of minor householder applications and advertisements. All other planning applications must be accompanied by a Planning Statement.

What should be contained within a Planning Statement?

The detail of a Planning Statement will depend on the nature and complexity of the proposed development. It should be a clear and concise document that is easily understood and supported by evidence/reports/surveys to substantiate claims.

A Planning Statement should contain the following information:

- **Executive Summary** – for complex applications a summary of the key points within the overall Statement.
- **Introduction and Overview** - Description of the proposed development and outlines any supporting documents submitted to support the application.
- **Site Analysis** – provides a description of the characteristics of the site (size, topography, existing land use, potential constraints and opportunities of the site) and surrounding context. Photographs and reference to submitted topographical survey could be included.
- **Context** - explains the need for the proposed development and its suitability for the site taking account of the characteristics of the site and surrounding land uses. Photographs and reference to other supporting documents could be included.
- **Proposal Description** – sets out the detail of the proposed development including key features (height, area, layout, rationale for the design etc.). It should detail where the concept of the design came from and how it reflects the character of the surrounding area. Reference to the Design and Access Statement (if applicable).
- **Access and Infrastructure** – details of access provision to the site including any proposed new accesses or alteration of an existing access and provision of parking. Details of availability of existing infrastructure to accommodate the proposal should also be detailed or any new proposed infrastructure required to support the proposed development.
- **Planning History** – set out any relevant planning history within or adjacent to the site, including any Pre-Application Discussions relevant to the proposed development.
- **Planning Policy Compliance** – sets out the requirements set out in the NAP 2016 and the relevant regional and local planning policies and explains in detail how the proposed development complies with each of these policies including

any mitigation measures to overcome constraints. If the proposal conflicts with any of the policies it should set out how it considers these can be addressed.

- **Other Material Planning Considerations** – details of other material planning considerations that should be taken into account in the assessment of the planning application. This may include how any pre-application discussion advice was considered and adhered to or any community consultation that was undertaken (for local category of applications only as major category of applications will require a separate Pre-Community Consultation Report).
- **Conclusion** – summary of the key points to be taken account of to enable planning permission to be granted