

Chorley 3 Tier Forum
18th November 2013

Highways Involvement in Planning Applications

Lancashire County Council officers work closely with Local Planning Authorities following national planning policy and local policy/guidance.

As the Local Highway Authority, LCC is a statutory consultee to the Local Planning Authorities and has no higher status than any other statutory consultee.

Whilst LCC officers work closely with Local Planning Authorities it is important that members of the public do not think that LCC is 'making a planning decision' on applications and if LCC officers are present in Planning Committee meetings to discuss the merits/demerits of an application this could perpetuate this misunderstanding.

LCC officers regularly meet with the local planning officers. This is a very important element of LCC's support, we aim to achieve this routinely on a weekly or 2-weekly cycle subject to the planners' preferences - so we can communicate about up-coming or current applications.

Officers provide detailed comments on applications including the cumulative impacts, covering highway issues raised by local objectors and in accessible language as well as the technical information we normally refer to, in order to help inform all interested parties as fully as possible about our advice and the reasons behind it. As part of joint working officers do highlight potential problems/concerns with planning officers in advance, and informally as an update when objections are provided at short notice. Highway officers do attend informal or preparatory meetings (e.g. Parish Council meetings, Chair's briefing) where key matters need to be explained and local concerns heard in advance of a decision-making meeting.

Officers give the planning authorities every support and detailed comments in understanding our position outside of the decision-making meeting so that our absence from the meeting is not a barrier to good decision-making. This overcomes additional resourcing issues that would be created with planning cycles every 4-6 weeks of which some are outside normal working hours. In addition it is important that LCC support is fair to all 13 Local Planning Authorities with recommendations consistent throughout Lancashire.

As well as this local protocol, highway officers must act within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF published March 2012) following other guidance and best practice such as Guidance on Transport Assessment. This policy framework and guidance gives highway officers very clear instructions that we must not raise highway objections to an application unless the residual impacts (i.e. after all reasonable remedial measures have been taken into account) result in a severe impact which cannot be accepted. This approach requires a very robust appraisal process and meaningful dialogue with the developer consultants/representatives to

overcome all concerns and provide an opportunity for these to be addressed before conclusions are provided from the Local Highway Authority.

In practice, NPPF means that highway-related concerns can often be overcome as a consequence of better/updated information/analysis or better remediation measures provided by the developer.

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