



**Tamworth Borough Council
Statement of Community
Involvement - Addendum
October 2020**

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Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Addendum, October 2020

Temporary changes in respect of the publicity of planning policy documents and planning applications during the COVID-19 outbreak.

As a result of the current COVID-19 outbreak we are making some temporary amendments to our Statement of Community Involvement (November 2018)(SCI) relating to how we publicise planning policy documents and planning applications. The temporary changes outlined below have been made to protect the health of our communities, residents and staff and to respond to the Governments social distancing advice and amended Coronavirus regulations and guidance brought into force on 14 May 2020¹.

The SCI sets out our vision and strategy for community involvement in planning including the development plan process and the decision making process on individual planning applications. May 2020 government regulations¹ and subsequent guidance² encourages local planning authorities to undertake an immediate review and update the policies in the SCI where necessary to ensure that plan making and application decision making can continue.

The council is maintaining most of the publicity and engagement measures in the SCI. The purpose of this addendum is to reflect latest government advice and make public reasonable steps to help the involvement of those in the community who may experience difficulties getting involved in the planning process through the internet.

Currently we are unable to place documents in our normal deposit locations:
Marmion house – planning policy documents and planning applications
Local libraries – planning policy documents only, due to restricted public access or temporary closures.

The new guidance initially covers the period up to 31st December 2020. We will keep the situation under review and will resume the use of our specified deposit locations as and when they are available and social distancing measures can be ensured.

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/505/made> Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure, Listed Buildings and Environmental Impact Assessment) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 apply, until 31 December 2020

² <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>

Public notice about this addendum is being made as follows:

- On the Council website
- In local press
- By contacting all people and organisations registered on the Council's planning policy database

Temporary measures addressing COVID-19 restrictions

Local Plan documents

Most of the ways in which the planning policy team interact with the public remain unchanged. The public will still be informed when new planning policy documents are available but whilst our normal deposit locations are unavailable we are making arrangements as follows:

- **Website** – our website, www.tamworth.gov.uk/planning is the main point of access for all planning information. We will use it to keep you informed about the plan making process and to provide opportunities for you to review information and provide comments;
- **Emails and letters** – where appropriate, we may write out directly to interested parties to seek their views and explain where the documents can be inspected online. Any letter or email will contain contact details to help any person who may have difficulty in accessing the documents online.
- **Press and social media** – we will use press releases and/or our social media channels to put out information about progress on preparing planning documents and to notify you of opportunities to get involved;
- **Statutory notices** – where required to do so by relevant legislation, we will publish notices in a local newspaper to notify you of certain key events and milestones;
- **Hard copy documents** - where access to documents online cannot be achieved, the Planning Policy team can be contacted in order to request a hard copy of the relevant document by post.

How to respond:

- Anyone can respond to any Planning Policy consultations by email and post as previously, emailing developmentplan@tamworth.gov.uk.
- Where representation forms accompany a consultation, hard copies will not be provided but can be requested to be posted out. The representation forms will be made available on the Council's website.
- Where we would have used face to face consultation and public meetings before social distancing measures came into force, in the future we will

investigate the use of online engagement and virtual meeting systems to ensure that engagement and public consultation takes place.

Planning applications

New temporary regulations and guidance came into force on 14 May 2020 providing some flexibility on the publicity and consultation of planning applications until 31st December 2020. They provide greater flexibility regarding the normal publicity requirements for reasons connected with the effects of coronavirus.

In summary the new regulations:

- require councils, in certain circumstances, to take reasonable steps (i.e. use of social media and communication via email) to inform anyone who is likely to have an interest in a planning or listed building consent application and to publish the requisite notice on a council website.
- increase the period of time for representations to be made once notice is given of a planning application by publication in a newspaper or website from 14 to 21 days. Please note that since the beginning of the lockdown period Tamworth Borough Council has increased the public consultation period 28 days to allow for the fact that post is not currently being issued on a daily basis.
- require the Planning Register to be accessible online if it is not possible to make it available for physical inspection
- remove the requirement for applicants to ensure that a hard copy of the environmental statement is placed at a given address, if it is not possible to do so, but require that it be publicised through electronic means.

During any period when COVID-19 restrictions are in place and access to Marmion House is restricted the Council will:

1. Continue to receive and process comments emailed and posted to us. However, we recommend that until we return to normal working conditions comments on planning and listed building consent applications are submitted online using the planning portal: <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/applications>
2. Continue to publicise planning and listed building consent applications via site notices, neighbour notifications and newspaper adverts as we have done prior to the pandemic. We will indicate where the relevant documents can be accessed online and will include contact details to help any person who may have difficulty in accessing documents online.
3. Continue to provide 28 days for representations to be made once notice is given.
4. Continue to make Environmental Statements available online alongside the planning application documents.

5. Continue to make Tamworth's planning register available online on the Council's website:

<http://planning.tamworth.gov.uk/northgate/planningexplorer/generalsearch.asp>

[X](#)

Planning committee

The government has given new powers to councils to hold public meetings virtually via video or telephone-conferencing technology. To date two planning committee meetings have successfully been held virtually, with more planned.

Meetings, agendas and minutes can be found here, along with details of how to get involved: <http://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=117>

Further advice

For local plans, policy and conservation please contact 01827 709278 or 709274 or email developmentplan@tamworth.gov.uk

For advice on planning and listed building applications or general planning advice please contact planningadmin@tamworth.gov.uk or telephone 01827 709281 (email preferred)

For public meetings please telephone 01827 709709 or email democraticservices@tamworth.gov.uk