



Planning Permission for Community Buildings

Introduction

This factsheet on planning permission has been produced by Community Places to assist community and voluntary groups who are planning a building project. It is not a comprehensive guide to planning but covers the key issues that you should consider right at the start of your project.

Do You Need Planning Permission?

Some improvements and building works require planning permission while others do not. This factsheet will help you to work out if you need permission, and if you do, what forms you will need to fill in and how much it is likely to cost.

What Developments Require Planning Permission?

- If you are already using the building as a community facility then you will need to check in the first place that you have planning permission for this use. If you do already have planning permission then go to the next points below and check if you need planning permission for the improvements that you intend carrying out.

However, if you do not have planning permission for use as a community building then you need to consider the following:

- is/was your building a shop, house, office or industrial unit before your group moved in? If the answer is **yes** then **you need “change of use” planning permission** to use it as a community building.
- is/was your building a crèche, day nursery, after school club, art gallery, museum, public library or public hall before your group moved in? If the answer is **yes** then **you do not need planning permission** to use the building as a community building as all of these uses are listed in the same category in the Planning Use Classes (NI) Order 2004.
- If you plan to **extend your premises** you will need planning permission.
- If you are only **altering the internal layout** of your building, i.e. carrying out renovation works such as providing a new bathroom, kitchen, replacing windows, rewiring and altering internal walls **you will not need planning permission**. However, if your building is listed you will need to apply to the Planning Service for Listed Building Consent even when you do not need planning permission for the works involved.

- You will also need planning permission if you want to add a new window, new external doors or change the slope of the roof as a result of internal alterations.
- If you intend placing a new sign on your building or outside your building you will need to get Advertisement Consent from the Planning Service.

How Much Will It Cost?

You should contact the Planning Service to confirm what the fee will be before you submit your application. If you send the wrong fee the whole application will be returned. Examples of fees are:

- A full application will cost £200 where no new floor space is created, for example where the proposal is only for adding new windows or external doors.
- The fee increases when new floor space is being created. For example an extension or roof conversion costs £200 for every 75 square metres created up to a maximum of £10,000.
- If you are applying to change the use from a house to a community building it will cost £550 for the first house and £200 for each additional house. If, however, you are applying to change the use from any other use the fee will be £200 for each 75 square metres up to £10,000.
- Listed Building consent currently has a concessionary fee of £50.
- The fee for Advertisement Consent is £150.

How Long Will It Take?

There are considerable delays at present in the planning application process and some council areas are experiencing longer delays than others. You should check with your local Divisional Planning Office (see overleaf) what the likely timescale will be.

What Do I Do Next?

If you need planning permission for your works and/or change of use you will need to obtain a planning application pack from the Planning Service. It contains a checklist explaining what you need to send with the application, the relevant forms and information on application fees. A pack can be obtained online at www.planningni.gov.uk and from your local planning office (see below). You should seek the help of an architect or some other experienced person in applying for planning permission. You may find our publication 'The Planning System - A Guide for Community Groups' helpful. Please contact us for a copy or access it on our website www.communityplaces.info

Planning Service Divisional Offices

Ballymena	2565 3333	Coleraine Sub-divisional Office	7034 1300
Belfast	9025 2800	Downpatrick	4461 2211
Craigavon	3834 1144	Omagh	8225 4000
Derry/Londonderry	7131 9900	Enniskillen Sub-divisional Office	6634 6555

Contact Details

Community Places
2 Downshire Place
BELFAST
BT2 7JQ

Telephone - 028 9023 9444
Fax - 028 9023 1411
Email - info@communityplaces.info