

### South Norfolk Council

## Do I need Planning Permission? Working from Home 2024

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Planning permission is not always required to carry out development. In some cases, development will be permitted under [permitted development rights](#). To receive a formal confirmation of this, an application for a [certificate of lawful development](#) can be submitted to the Council.

### 2. First Steps

- 2.1 The increased prevalence of agile, home working has led to a rise in start-up business ventures therefore, it may be that you are considering working from home as a first step towards building up a business. Under certain circumstances, the use of part of your home or an outbuilding as a base for a business may not require a planning application to be submitted. The crucial factor in deciding whether or not you need to submit a planning application is the effect of the business itself. The planning legislation governing working from home states that planning permission will not normally be required to homework or run a business from home, provided that the home working or business use is incidental to the use as a dwelling house. The local planning authority must consider whether any purposes to which it is put are reasonably incidental to its use as a dwelling house. Where such uses result in a material change of use of a dwelling house, planning permission will be required. Whether a material change of use has taken place, or will take place, is a matter of fact and degree and this will be determined on the individual merits of each case.
- 2.2 When determining whether a material change of use has occurred, or will occur, a local planning authority must consider whether home working or a business has led, or will lead, to a notable change in the character of the property's use. Environmental impacts may be used to indicate a notable change of character of the property, for example: increase in traffic and parking, disturbance to neighbours caused by regular or the number or timing of, visitors or deliveries, abnormal noise or smells, or the need for any major structural changes or major renovations.

### 3. Factors

- 3.1 Should your business grow, and the activities relating to it intensify to a degree where it could not be considered ancillary, a change of use will have occurred and planning permission is likely to be needed. The factors that the District

Council will take into account in considering whether planning permission is necessary include the following:

- Does the intended use significantly affect the character of the dwelling in terms of the appearance, noise generated, smell, or arrival and departure of visitors?
- Will special machinery or equipment, not normally found at the dwelling be installed?
- Could the room or rooms used easily revert to residential use at the end of a working day?
- Are the uses minor, or only occur briefly or intermittently?
- Are there regular deliveries of equipment?
- Does the business require the employment of personnel not resident at the house?

3.2 Provided that the character and use of your home remains essentially residential, planning permission is not required.

#### 4. Planning Policy

4.1 The current planning policy for South Norfolk Council relating to working from home is referenced in the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) which was adopted in March 2024. The relevant policies are:

**GNLP Policy 2 – Sustainable Communities** requires provision for accommodating technology-based services such as broadband, fibre optic networks, telecommunications, and electric charging. In addition, the supporting text for this policy states that:

‘New technologies - This section of the policy requires development to make provision for the delivery of technology-based services and electric vehicle charging. Such a strategic approach is important for economic growth and will have environmental and social benefits, such as assisting in **home working**. The policy encourages developers to work with service providers on the delivery of a broad range of existing, developing and future technologies, with broadband, fibre optic and telecommunication networks a current focus’.

**GNLP Policy 6 - The Economy** – requires that the needs of small, medium and start up businesses are addressed through:

‘encouraging the provision of small-scale business opportunities in all significant residential and commercial developments’

‘support for rural enterprises through the conversion of rural buildings...’

‘encouraging flexible building design and innovative approaches in new and existing residential developments to encourage local working and business opportunities’.

4.2 Policies in the South Norfolk Development Management (DM) DPD (2015) will also be used when assessing working from home proposals. The relevant policies are:

### **Policy DM 1.1 Ensuring development management contributes to Achieving sustainable development in South Norfolk**

- a) The Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development, together with a responsibility to meet objectively assessed needs identified in the Local Plan and other unforeseen development needs and Opportunities emerging that are generally consistent with the Council's Vision and Objectives for the area.
- b) The Council will work proactively where possible with applicants to find solutions so that development proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that jointly and simultaneously improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.
- c) Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan (and, where relevant, with policies in adopted neighbourhood plans) will be approved without unnecessary delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- d) Where there are no directly relevant Policies to the application or the relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision, then the Council will consider the impact of the proposal in each of the economic, social and environmental dimensions jointly and simultaneously, for now and in the future. The Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking account of whether any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against:
  - i. The policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole or
  - ii. Other national planning policy guidance or
  - iii. The Council's overall Spatial Vision and Objectives for the area as set out in the Joint Core Strategy.
- e) The Council will give significant weight to supplementary guidance and community led plans where these are relevant.

### **Policy DM 2.3 Working at home**

Planning permission will be granted for proposals for the change of use of part of the dwelling, extension of a dwelling or for the erection of a new building in the curtilage to allow working at home provided that:

- a) The proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of any nearby residential occupiers or on the character and appearance of the area;
- b) The direct and indirect effects of the scale of the business activity, including the employment of non-residents at the business, must remain ancillary to the overall use of the site for residential purposes; and
- c) There is adequate off-street parking to cater for both business and residential uses.

### **Policy DM 3.4 Residential extensions, conversions within settlements**

Within development boundaries proposals for residential extensions and conversions to create new dwellings will be permitted provided they:

- a) Incorporate a good quality design which maintains or enhances the character and appearance of the building, street scene and surroundings; and
- b) Do not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers or adversely affect neighbouring commercial uses.

Specifically, proposals must provide and maintain:

- c) Suitable amenity and utility space; and
- d) Adequate access and parking

### **Policy DM 3.5 Replacement dwellings and additional dwellings on sub-divided plots within development boundaries.**

Within development boundaries the replacement of existing dwellings and sub-division of existing residential plots and gardens to create new dwellings will be permitted provided that it:

- a) Incorporates a good quality design which maintains or enhances the character and appearance of existing buildings, street scene and surroundings; and
- b) Does not have an unacceptable impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers. Specifically, proposals must provide and maintain:
- c) Adequate private amenity and utility space;
- d) Adequate access and parking; and
- e) Adequate levels of amenity with reasonable access to light and privacy, free from unacceptable noise or other pollutants.

### **Policy DM 3.8 Design Principles applying to all development**

- (1) The Council will work with applicants to achieve high quality design and positive improvement from all development, protect and enhance the environment and existing locally distinctive character and encourage innovation; the Council will refuse development that fails to take the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way the area functions.
- (2) Major development should be masterplanned using an inclusive recognised process demonstrating how the whole scheme will be delivered and related to adjacent areas, including the programming of infrastructure requirements. A masterplan will also be required for sites of less than 500 dwellings in the case of large developments incorporated into a smaller settlement or on sites of particular complexity.
- (3) Dwellings should be designed so that internal spaces are suitable, adaptable and will be able to accommodate a range of residents over time.
- (4) Planning permission will be granted for development that has been designed to, where relevant to the proposed development: respect adjoining structures, spaces, routes and local landscape; provide an attractive, accessible and safe environment; and conform to the following criteria:
  - (a) The scale, height, massing, form and appearance of development is designed with a satisfactory relationship of structures, spaces and routes within the site and a successful integration into the surroundings;
  - (b) The development is created with high standards of design, building materials, finishes and landscaping reflecting the use of distinctive local

building traditions, materials and heritage assets where relevant; or innovative contemporary design solutions reflecting local context and reinforcing or creating local distinctiveness;

- (c) Access is provided by routes and public spaces that meet different requirements of accessibility (including pedestrians, cyclists and people with mobility or sensory difficulties) without an unsatisfactory domination of traffic;
- (d) A clear distinction is made between public and private spaces within the site; all public and private spaces to be suitable for their purpose, attractive, landscaped, safe; and with adequate lighting where provided that is carefully controlled to minimise overspill;
- (e) Visually attractive frontages and hard & soft boundary treatments are created to adjoining streets and public areas, public spaces and the open countryside; all appropriate frontages to contain windows and doors that assist informal surveillance of the public realm by occupants of the site;
- (f) Buildings and spaces are orientated to: gain benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy and wherever possible designed around a Sustainable Drainage system;
- (g) The entire development is designed to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for anti-social activity on the site and in the surrounding area;
- (h) Landscaping of the development is designed to retain important existing natural features, reflect the surrounding landscape characteristics of the area and contribute to relevant objectives of the local Biodiversity Action Plan; and
- (i) Convenient, safe and visually attractive areas are created for servicing buildings and parking of vehicles and cycles without dominating the development or surroundings

**Note:**

**If the development involves any works of a building or engineering nature, please note that before any such works are commenced, it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that all other necessary consents, including those under the Building Regulations, are also obtained. Advice on Building Regulations this can be obtained from the Building Control section, CNC Building Control section of the planning directorate. For more information please visit the website at [Who are we and what do we do? - CNC Building Control](#)**

**For further information about householder and minor inquiries and or pre-applications please visit our website at:**

**<https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/pre-application-planning-advice-south-norfolk>**



If you would like this information in a different format, such as large print, audio, Braille or in a different language please inform the officer you are in contact with or contact our equality lead at [Equalities@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:Equalities@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk)