

## Advice Note

### Broadland District Council (BDC)

### 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 Broadland District 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 Broadland Development Management (DM) DPD (2015) will also be used when assessing working from home proposals. The relevant policies are:

**DM Policy GC1 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development**

When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.

Planning applications that accord with the policies in this DPD (and, where relevant, with policies in neighbourhood plans) will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date at the time of making the decision then the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise – taking into account whether:

- i. Any adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework taken as a whole; or
- ii. Specific policies in that Framework indicate that development should be restricted.

**DM Policy GC3 – Conversion of buildings outside settlement limits**

Outside settlement limits proposals for the conversion of buildings for employment uses and tourist accommodation will be permitted where:

- i. The building is capable of conversion without substantial alteration. Proposals for residential use will be permitted where criteria (i) above is satisfied and the conversion will lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting.

**DM Policy GC4 – Design**

Development will be expected to achieve a high standard of design and avoid any significant detrimental impact. Schemes which are of an innovative nature or which reduce reliance on centralised, non-renewable energy sources will be particularly encouraged. Proposals should pay adequate regard to:

- i. The environment, character and appearance of an area;
- ii. Reinforcing local distinctiveness through careful consideration of the treatment of space throughout the development, the appearance of new development, the scale of new development and landscaping;
- iii. Meeting the reasonable amenity needs of all potential future occupiers;
- iv. Considering the impact upon the amenity of existing properties;
- v. Making efficient use of land and resources;
- vi. Being accessible to all via sustainable means including public transport;

- vii. Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;
- viii. Incorporating appropriate infrastructure linking to the surrounding area;
- ix. The creation of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities; and
- x. Minimising resource and energy consumption and how it is located and designed to withstand the longer term impacts of climate change.

#### **Policy H4 – Change of use of a dwelling**

Proposals for change of use of a dwelling, including to allow working from home will be considered acceptable in principle provided that:

- i. The sale of any goods is limited to those produced on site; and
- ii. The scale and nature of the use relates acceptably to the surroundings; and
- iii. The benefit arising from the new use outweighs the loss of the dwelling.

#### **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. For more information please visit the website at [Who are we and what do we do? - CNC Building Control](#)**

**For pre-application planning advice including householder and minor enquiries please visit our website at:**

**[Pre-application planning advice: Broadland – Broadland and South Norfolk \(southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk\)](#)**



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