

Proposed response of Redditch Borough Council to CLG consultation on 'Publicity for planning applications'

Q1: What are your views on making web publication mandatory for a period of 21 days for planning notices where there is currently a requirement to advertise in a newspaper?

This option could be pursued whether we change the arrangements for newspaper advertisement or not.

This appears to be a more appropriate mechanism for consultation when considered in relation to current social trends, and access to the internet is now becoming sufficiently widespread that it would not be likely to result in the exclusion of significant quantities or sectors of the community.

Further, the removal of the requirement to publish advertisements in a newspaper would result in a reduction in cost to the local authority which is welcomed. It is not perceived that this option would disadvantage a significant number of members of the public.

Thus, this proposal is supported by this authority.

Q2: Do you think it should be mandatory for notices for all planning applications to be made available on a local authority website?

Many authorities, including this Council, already display information on their websites relating to all applications, including details of proposals and plans. However, it is appreciated that this is not the same as drawing attention to the existence of applications in an online notice, as these advertisements be more easily accessed once the existence of an application is known. As it has a cost attached, it is not prioritised by all Local Planning Authorities.

Whilst systems and procedures will need to be introduced in relation to the advertising of some applications on the website, as at Q1 above, it is not considered reasonable or necessary for all applications to be advertised in this way, and this does not seem to comply with the proposed proportionate approach that is put forward in the consultation document.

Q3: The requirements to advertise in newspapers for certain types of planning applications and consents, and possible amendments to these, are identified in Table 1. What are your views on these possible amendments?

The necessary work to set up an alternative IT-based system will have minimal demands on resources, and would be likely to reach a much wider audience, and is therefore supported.

Redditch Borough Council welcomes the opportunity for a reduction in costs, but with due caution as there is only little evidence to suggest how effective newspaper advertisements have become.

Q4: Do you consider that the period for publicising site notices for listed building and conservation area consent should be increased to 21 days?

Yes, there is no perceived logical reason for the length of time being any different purely on the basis of the type of application, as the remainder of the process remains very similar to that of a planning application, and is subject to the same timescales.

It is welcomed that the opportunities for engagement are being expanded and becoming consistent.

(The CLG should note that this authority already does this as standard practice and thus the change is welcomed.)

Q5: Do you have any comments on the impact assessment (see Annex 1), in particular the anticipated impact on small businesses and equality issues?

None.