Committee: **Individual Cabinet Member Decision Making - Planning Services**

Date of meeting: 5 September 2018

Subject:	Planning – Local Validation Checklist
Lead Officer:	Thomas Walton (Business Support Manager)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor James Browne, Portfolio Holder for Planning Services
Link to Council Priorities:	P2
Exempt information:	None
Delegated status:	For resolution
Key decision:	No

Executive Summary:

National validation requirements set out what needs to be submitted alongside an application such as the relevant form, fee and plans. Legislation enables local authorities to apply additional requirements for documents that they deem necessary to make an informed decision. These additional requirements must be publicised in the form of a Local Validation Checklist.

The new Local Validation Checklist has been prepared to replace our current checklist which was adopted in 2013. Existing information was updated and improved, and new requirements added where necessary. It is to be published as an interactive web page on the current Elmbridge Borough Council website.

This report is to inform the Portfolio Holder of the outcomes of the public consultation and to seek approval of the Validation Checklist for publication.

Recommendation: that the Portfolio Holder for Planning Services approves the publication of the new Validation Checklist.

Report:

1.0   Background

1.1   The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that 'Local planning authorities should publish a list of their information requirements for applications for planning permission. These requirements should be kept to the minimum needed to make decisions and should be reviewed at least every two years. Local planning authorities should only request supporting information that is relevant, necessary and material to the application in question.'

1.2   Additionally, since our current checklist was adopted in February 2013, a new procedure to appealing against information sought by a Local Planning Authority has been introduced.

1.3   The process of validation is undertaken by the Business Support Team within Planning Services and is not a judgement on the planning merits of a

scheme. Validation seeks to ensure there is sufficient information to understand a proposal, ensuring that applications meet a reasonable standard when submitted. The assessment process carried out by the Development Management team then determines the acceptability of a proposal, following the usual steps of consultation and consideration.

2.0   Proposal

2.1   Our current validation checklist is a 15-page list of documents required in relation to various application types.

2.2   The new validation checklist gives two levels of information. Firstly, an overview of each application type so that applicants will be able to decide which application is right for their proposal. Secondly, applicants will be presented with a list of the National and Local requirements to validate their application. Supplementary information is provided as to the level of detail each document requires as well as the national and local policy that drive the request.

2.3   With the implementation of the new checklist we expect to receive higher quality application submissions. This will reduce the time spent on invalidating and requesting the additional information required to register the application. It will also speed up the determination process as case offices will have all the information they need up front to assess the application.

2.4   The wording for each document type from the current validation checklist has been revised. New requirements have also been included.

2.5   The format of the current validation checklist is not as user friendly as it could be. This update addresses this. Rather than a single document containing all requirements for all application types the information is displayed on an interactive webpage that greatly improves the user experience.

2.6   After selecting the relevant application type, you are taken to a webpage that displays background information, followed by a list of headings detailing the required information. Upon clicking, each heading will expand to reveal the explanatory information for that requirement.

2.7   The benefit of this system is twofold. Firstly, all the required information is displayed on one page without the need to have separate tabs open. Rather than picking through a single document and locating the relevant sections, the user is presented with exactly what is required for their chosen application type.

2.8   Secondly, the way the data is held in the background simplifies and reduces the work needed to keep it up to date. Each requirement and its supplementary information is held on a database. Depending on the application type chosen the relevant headings and data appear on the webpage, pulled from the source. Changes made to one requirement in the

source database will be immediately updated on all relevant application types.

3.0   Next step

3.1   Further to the agreement of the Planning Committee held on 12 June 2018, the Local Validation Checklist was subject to a six-week public consultation beginning Monday 18th June 2018. We notified the Resident's Panel, all Statutory Consultees and a working group of planning agents who regularly submit applications to the Council via email when the consultation opened. The consultation was also advertised on the Council website.

3.2   37 responses were received. Of these, 20 respondents agreed with the following and made no further comments:

1. The revised requirements were reasonable, having regard to the nature and scale of different potential developments
2. Is it clear what information will be required with different application types
3. The draft checklist is an improvement on the current one

3.3   The breakdown of the 37 respondents was as follows:

Contributor	Responses
Members of the public	27
Utility companies	1
Internal responses	3
Surrey CC	2
RA/Parish Council	2
Private companies	1
Statutory Consultees	1

3.4   Where suggestions were made with regards to content, these were tabulated and addressed where pertinent (see appendix).

3.5   Where comments were made regarding layout and formatting, amendments were made where necessary.

Financial implications:
None for the purpose of this report.

Environmental implications:
None for the purpose of this report.

Legal implications:
None for the purpose of this report.

Equality Implications:
None for the purpose of this report.

Risk Management Implications:
None for the purpose of this report.

Community Safety Implications:
None for the purpose of this report.

Background papers:
None

Enclosures/Appendices:
Minute extract - Validation Checklist - PLNG - 120618
Suggested amendments spread sheet

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