

Council scrap site notices and press adverts for planning applications on house changes

tCI commentary:

If a council is going beyond its statutory requirements, it must be a good thing for residents to be confident that there are adequate opportunities to be involved, and be able to comment on, proposals and applications. That said, there is also an 'appropriateness' measure which councils regularly apply to the level of consultation which is advisable or 'expected' of applicants. There is a risk that in eliminating both press adverts and site notices from the process that the Council will inadvertently miss out allowing someone who is 'likely to have an interest in a proposed scheme' to have knowledge of and involvement in the consultation process. Under the current press advert and site notice inclusion, those who may be interested/impacted (but who are not necessarily neighbours so not 'affected', by the council's definition) are still able to engage should they wish to. Perhaps a more suitable approach would be to place the onus on the applicant to display the notice instead.

Article:

Press and public notices detailing planned changes to houses in Ipswich will no longer be published, it has been revealed.

Ipswich Borough Council's executive was presented with a revised statement of community involvement (SCI) on Tuesday, which was approved.

Currently, when plans for a house build or extension to a home are lodged a notice will be printed and posted in public, such as on landposts in the vicinity of the home, and notices published in the local press as part of the consultation period.

The report ahead of Tuesday's meeting said that Ipswich Borough Council's current SCI exceeded the statutory requirement.

The report continued: "The council is keen to engage on planning matters as widely as possible but given budgetary restraints, it is recommended

that site notices and press adverts are no longer issued for householder applications.

“However, adjoining neighbours will still be notified directly by letter and the application will continue to be advertised on the council’s website.”

The revised protocol also includes changes on how the planning authority engages with residents on planning policies more generally.

The approach to consulting on major applications will not change however.

A borough council spokesman said: “We want to adopt a simpler and more targeted consultation process when it comes to householder planning applications.

“We can make better use of resources by being more focused.

“All residents will be contacted about planning applications that affect them.”

The consultation period, which normally lasts around 21 days, requires the planning authority to offer a public consultation with neighbouring community groups and residents, those with a statutory right of consultation such as town or parish councils, any consultees directed by the secretary of state or others likely to have an interest in a proposed scheme.

The council said that officers spent four hours a week posting site notices, meaning that scrapping the site notices would save an estimated 150 hours of officer time and around £700 in processing costs each year.