Application of the national scheme of delegation for planning decisions - Guidance note

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Aims and objectives of the guidance note

From 31 October 2026, the National Scheme of Delegation for the determination of planning applications will come into force.

This guidance note sets out how this National Scheme of Delegation will operate in Blackpool.

This Scheme identifies two schedules of application types.

Schedule 1 application types*

Schedule 1 applications will always be determined under delegated powers. Schedule 1 includes:

1. Householder development

(a) an application for planning permission for development for an existing dwellinghouse, or development within the curtilage of such a dwellinghouse for any purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwellinghouse, or

(b) an application for any consent, agreement or approval required by or under a planning permission, development order or local development order in relation to such development

This does not include an application for change of use or an application to change the number of dwellings in a building

2. Minor commercial development, meaning

(a) an application for planning permission for development of an existing building, or part of a building, currently in use for any of the purposes falling within Class A of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (this classification covered shops, professional services, cafes, restaurants, bars and drinking establishments and hot-food take-aways which now fall either within Class E or sui generis)

(b) an application for any consent, agreement or approval required by or under a planning permission, development order or local development order in relation to such development,

…where such an application does not include a change of use, a change to the number of units in a building, or development that is not wholly at ground floor level or that would increase the gross internal area of a building

3. Minor residential development, meaning

Development of up to 9 new dwellings (flats or houses) on a site smaller than 0.5 hectares and other minor development in relation to flats)

4. Reserved Matters applications (where the application does not relate to a phased development approved in an outline planning permission)

5. Permission in Principle (PIP) applications

6. Certificates of appropriate alternative development

7. Prior Approval applications for Permitted Development

8. Discharge of condition applications

9. Non-Material Amendment applications

10. Certificates of Lawfulness for an Existing Use or Development

11. Certificates of Lawfulness for a Proposed Use or Development

12. Applications to approve Biodiversity Net Gain plans

13. Requests to agree, modify or discharge a planning obligation under a Section 106 Agreement

*Schedule 1 applications that relate to a Listed Building Consent, are submitted under s73, or are an 'own-interest application will be considered to fall under Schedule 2

Schedule 2 application types

Schedule 2 applications will usually be determined under delegated powers, but may be determined by the council's planning committee. Applications falling within schedule 2 will be subject to a 'gateway test'. In order for an application to be determined by the council's planning committee, the head of development management and the chair of planning committee (or vice-chair as need be) must agree that it is the most appropriate route for the application. For this to happen, a schedule 2 application must either raise a 'significant planning matter' or an 'economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area'. Schedule 2 includes:

1. Applications for planning permission not listed in Schedule 1

2. Applications to develop land without compliance with conditions previously attached (known as a section 73 application of the Town and Country Planning Act) (including where they relate to developments that would otherwise fall under Schedule 1)

3. Applications for development that has already been carried out (known as a section 73A application of the Town and Country Planning Act) (including where they relate to developments that would otherwise fall under Schedule 1)

4. Reserved Matters applications where the application relates to a phase of development approved in an outline planning permission.

5. Requests to agree to modify or discharge, or applications for modification or discharge of a planning obligation (under sections 106A(1)(a) and 106A(3) respectively of the Town and Country Planning Act) where it relates to a Schedule 2 application

6. Applications for Listed Building Consent

7. Applications for the variation or discharge of conditions of Listed Building Consent

8. Applications for Advertisement Consent

9. Applications for consent under Tree Preservation Orders

10. Own-interest applications that would otherwise fall within Schedule 1

'Own-interest applications' are those submitted by the local authority itself or by a member or officer of the authority, or are where the authority, a member of officer has an interest. Such applications may also be determined by the planning committee where that is considered appropriate in the interests of transparency and public accountability.

The 'triage' process

Government guidance recommends that council's apply a 'triage' process to planning applications to avoid all Schedule 2 application types having to go through the 'gateway test'. It is proposed that Schedule 2 applications be triaged as set out below.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, to be determined by the head of development management or the principal planner in their absence, the following application types listed under Schedule 2 above will not proceed to the 'gateway test':

- Application types 2, 3 and 5 unless the original application was determined by the planning committee
- Application types 7, 8 and 9
- Minor-scale applications

Ward councillor referral

Ward councillors may request that Schedule 2 applications within their ward be subject to the 'gateway test'. Any such request must be accompanied by a written explanation as to why the councillor considers the application may constitute a 'significant planning matter' or an 'economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area'. The 'gateway test' will be applied as set out below.

The 'gateway test'

The 'gateway test' will be applied to Schedule 2 applications selected through the 'triage' process. It will determine if it is appropriate for them to be determined by the council's planning committee rather than under delegated powers. An application will only be determined by the council's planning committee where it is considered to constitute a significant planning matter or an economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area.

The 'gateway test' will be carried out by:

Officer - the head of development management or principal planner in their absence

Member – the chair of planning committee or vice-chair in their absence

If any of the officers above have an interest in an application, an 'own-interest application', it will be determined by the planning committee.

What will constitute a 'significant planning matter' or an 'economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area'?

Generally, the following forms of development would be considered to be a 'significant planning matter' or an 'economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area' in Blackpool:

Form	Description
Residential development	Schemes creating 50 units or more either through new-build or conversion
Employment development	Schemes providing more than 10,000sqm of new floorspace within classes B2, B8 or sui generis
Commercial (retail, food and beverage)	Major-scale edge or out-of-centre development
Hotel/holiday accommodation	New hotels providing 100 bedrooms or more created through new build or conversion Schemes creating 50 units or more of self-contained holiday accommodation through new-build or conversion
Leisure development (tourism)	Developments to the west of the tram tracks or on the Leisure Quarter site

Community development	Any new/extended school or health centre, or any development at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, providing more than 2,500sqm of new floorspace
Heritage impact	Listed Building Consent applications for council owned buildings where the works are significant Listed Building Consent applications for substantive partial or total demolition Substantive partial or total demolition of a Locally Listed Building
Strategic views	Any development that would have a substantive impact upon a strategic view as defined in the local plan
Departures from the development plan	Major-scale development that departs from the development plan designation on an allocated/designated site
Other	Any scheme accompanied by an environmental statement required by the environmental impact assessment regulations

Own-interest applications

In the event that the chair or vice chair, or the head of development management or principal planner have an interest in an application, the matter will be referred to the planning committee.

Where the council or one of its wholly owned companies, a member or an officer has an own-interest application, it will be referred to planning committee in the following circumstances whether or not it is a Schedule 2 application or constitutes a 'significant planning matter' or an 'economic, social or environmental issue of significance to the local area':

- The grant of planning permission would secure the sale of the site for a capital receipt in excess of £100,000
- The grant of planning permission would secure a rental income in excess of £100,000 over the lease period
- The officer is the chief executive officer or a director of the council
- The officer works in the planning department

Who will determine applications under delegated authority

The majority of Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 applications will generally be determined by the head of development management. The head of development management will also determine applications usually considered by the principal planner as need be during times of absence where necessary to ensure that statutory deadlines are met.

The principal planner will generally determine the following applications:

Schedule 1

- Householder development applications, including those for planning permission, prior approval, certificates of lawfulness, discharge of condition and non-material amendments
- Other Schedule 1 applications as need be in order to meet statutory determination deadlines when the head of development management is absent

Schedule 2

- Applications made under s73 of the Town and Country Planning Act where they relate to householder development
- Applications for advertisement consent
- Applications for consent under Tree Preservation Orders
- Other Schedule 2 applications as need be in order to meet statutory determination deadlines when the head of development management is absent.

Useful numbers/contacts

Development Management – 01253 476193

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