



# PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

## EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

**Q. I am about to lodge a development application with Council. In what circumstances will it be referred to an external consultant for assessment?**

A. Applications are referred for external assessment where there is a potential for a perceived or real conflict of interest arising from an individuals (or companies) association with North Sydney Council. Examples include:

- \* an individual is a Councillor or a staff member,
- \* a company is a business partner or contractor to Council,
- \* the property is owned by Council,
- \* there is potential for the perception of bias,
- \* the Council stands to benefit in material or non material terms through the approval of the proposal.

**Q. Who pays the fees of the Consultant planner?**

A. The fees of the Consultant planner will generally be borne by the Council.

**Q. Is there any internal oversight of the process of the application?**

A. The applications onward management will be overseen by an Assessment Officer. You will be advised that your application has been identified for external assessment and the contact officer's details shortly after lodgement. All enquires should be directed to this officer in the first instance.

**Q. Will I have opportunity to speak to the external assessor?**

A. The Consultant Planner is required to provide Council with an initial review of the application. If required, further correspondence will be sent to the applicant after this date outlining any issues and/or the need for amended plans and/or additional information. In the event that a meeting with the Consultant planner is necessary to discuss the requirements of any issue raised, a meeting can be arranged through the Assessment Officer (who will also attend this meeting).

**Q. How will amended plans be treated?**

A. Any amended plans or additional information submitted in response to the initial review of your application will be referred to the Consultant Planner for comment before they are formally accepted as an amendment. If the Consultant planner forms the view that the amended plans or details do not overcome the concerns raised by the initial review they will be rejected by Council and assessment will proceed based on the originally submitted plans.

**Q. If my amended plans are accepted, what additional fees are payable?**

A. If amended plans are submitted and accepted normal fees as outlined in Councils fees and charges policy will apply.

**Q. What is Councils policy in regard to the ongoing negotiation of applications?**

A. Please note that it is Councils general policy that only one opportunity will be given to amend an application. This reflects the fact that the application process is intended to one largely of assessment and not negotiation. However Council does wish to facilitate positive outcomes and further meetings with Councils consultant may be made available at your expense if a positive outcome is likely to be achieved.

**Q. What is Councils Staffs role in the review of the External Consultants draft report?**

Council staff will not amend or alter the Consultant Planners report. However, the Consultants report will be reviewed for completeness and to ensure that it is to an appropriate standard. Any amendments subsequently suggested following this review must be accepted by the consultant planner prior to the publication of the report. Any exception to the contents of the consultants report taken by Councils planning staff based on policy or process grounds will take the form of a clearly stated notation to the report.