

Public Consultation & The Planning Process

Unless you work in strategic land promotion, or are a property developer, Councillor, housing enthusiast or a stalwart NIMBY there is a strong probability you will have never engaged with your local planning system.

Obtaining planning permission is an incredibly complex, risky and costly process to navigate. It requires patience, an eye for detail and significant financial backing.

An allocated site in the Local Plan is by no means guaranteed a positive outcome at planning committee. You also have to factor the local politics at play in the local area (and more recently at a national level, with Boris Johnson's recent brownfield comments), local residents, and other stakeholder groups including action groups against new homes.

Nothing appears to get the blood pumping more in local communities than the potential development of new homes. Housing is like marmite, people either seem to love it or hate it depending on your housing need and where you are on the housing ladder.

Action groups are becoming more common and are increasingly well organised, well-funded and very knowledgeable. They are often led by people who have plenty of time on their hands, own their own homes and are skilled at delaying and frustrating the planning process.

Research by Shelter found people who are opposed to local housing are three times more likely to actively oppose, than supporters are to actively support an application (21% compared to 7%).

The politics of the planning system means public engagement and stakeholder consultation has never been more critical. This is one of the reasons why Catesby took the decision a number of years ago to bring this element in-house. We are the face of our applications, people build a relationship with us directly and we are able to deal with questions, agitators and more challenging parties head on. By giving people the opportunity to know who we are, a point of contact, and responding directly, helps to build relationships.

It's important to us we work with local stakeholders including Planning Officers, Councillors and where possible, local interested parties, to ensure we put forward a well designed development that provides real community benefits for the area.

The Covid pandemic has for at least the short to medium term resulted in a need to adapt consultation methods. The use of online platforms such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom are all now seen as legitimate tools for use in public consultation.

'The silent majority' including those looking to take their first steps on the housing ladder, key workers, growing families and people with disabilities looking for a new home, often found it difficult to attend and engage with public consultation.

Our use of online platforms including social media, websites, videos, surveys and virtual roundtable meetings has allowed Catesby to reach a wider demographic. We hear from voices that may not have previously engaged with the planning system and public consultation, by enabling them to actively engage in the process at a time and location that suits them.

There is definitely not a one-size-fits-all approach to public engagement with each site requiring a unique approach. Different platforms for consultation are adapted to differing geographical and demographic factors on a site by site basis.

Interested in our approach to land promotion and public consultation? Find out more about strategic land promotion and get a no-obligation appraisal of your site contact today.

Could your land have development potential?
Find out more about land promotion:

Katie Yates

Associate Director -
Marketing & Communications
Catesby Estates plc
T: 01926 836910
E: katiey@catesbyestates.co.uk

