

SO you want to ...

OPEN A BED & BREAKFAST OR GUEST HOUSE

This leaflet should help you with some advice and useful contacts

South Norfolk Council Planning Services

Before you start

Consider whether the business is viable and what consents you may need.

Organisations exist which can help with starting a new business and grants or loans from South Norfolk Council may be available. Do you need help with a business plan or with general business advice? Contact Business Link, the Norwich Enterprise Agency Trust (NEAT) and the Economic Development Unit of the Council for further advice and assistance.

You may wish to contact the Tourism section of the Council's Economic Development Unit as they will be able to offer further advice and guidance.

Do you need planning permission?

This will depend on the scale of business use proposed in relation to the overall size of the property and the impact of the use on the character of the dwelling. For example, if you have a four-bedroom property and you wish to use one bedroom for bed and breakfast use it is unlikely that you will require permission. If you wish to use three of those bedrooms on a regular basis, or have a separate dining room and lounge for guests, or need to employ staff then permission would normally be required.

Check first before you start!

Write to the Council's Development Control section in Planning Services with full details of the location and type of property, how many rooms you wish to use, the intended trading times and the parking available. We will contact you to advise you whether you need planning permission.

What if permission is required?

You will need to make a formal application that will take about 6-8 weeks to process. More information is available about this process in separate leaflets.

Do you need Building Regulation approval?

Again, you may do. It will depend on whether the business use of your home is of a scale where a 'change of use' would occur. If so, there may be a need to make certain alterations to meet fire safety standards.

If you are writing to the Council to ask about any permission you may require, include the question about building regulation approval in your letter and we will provide a joint response.

Food regulations

You should also contact the Council's Environmental Services section as catering activity needs to meet strict regulations and registration is necessary. Further advice and training is also available.

You will need to register as a Food Premises and your property will need to be inspected periodically to ensure that it meets current hygiene regulations.

Waste management

Arrangements for trade waste should be made with the Council's Direct Services organisation or another private refuse contractor. You should be aware of the waste management legislation that is enforced by the Environment Agency.

What about Business Rates?

This is considered and assessed by the Valuation Agency - part of the Inland Revenue. The use of rooms exclusively is likely to attract Business Rates and you should contact the Valuation Agency to check first before you start.

Health and Safety

You should be aware of your responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act and may wish to contact the Health and Safety team of the Council's Environmental Services section for more advice in this respect.

East of England Tourist Board

The Tourist Board produce a guidance booklet that is for sale from the Tourist Information Offices. This provides advice on all regulatory matters that you will need to consider, such as Fire Certificates, and also provides very useful advice on tourism matters.

Alcohol

If you are proposing to sell alcohol, you may need a liquor licence. Contact the Council's Licensing section for further advice.

Other matters:

You should also check with the Inland Revenue concerning your own taxation, your insurance company and with the utility providers as some, for example, phone and power companies may have a different tariff for business customers. It is also advisable to check the deeds on the property to ensure that there are not any restrictions which would prevent you from running a business from home. If the property is rented it is wise to gain the written permission of the landlord. If you have a mortgage on the property you will normally need to inform the mortgage provider.

ONE STOP SHOP Service

South Norfolk Council Planning Services provides this service for small businesses. If you complete a questionnaire about your proposal we will contact the other sections likely to be involved within the Council and provide a co-ordinated response. This service, which takes about 4 weeks, provides advice at an initial stage only but can be useful prior to submitting a formal application. You should contact other agencies outside the Council separately.

Useful contacts:

South Norfolk Council: Planning Services

- Development Control 01508-533845
- Building Control 01603 430100

Environmental Services

- Food Control 01508 533714
- Pollution Control 01508 533708
- Direct Services 01603 810441

Economic Development

- grants, loans, premises 01508 533666/ 533834
- Tourism 01508 533816

Licensing

- Alcohol & entertainment 01508 533692
- Food 01508 533714
- Animal 01508 533714

Norfolk County Council:

Economic Development 01603 222143
Planning – General enquiries 0844 8008020
Planning & Transportation 01603 222143
Trading standards 0844 8008013
Norfolk Fire Service 01603 810351
Social services 0844 800 8014

Other:

Environment Agency 08708 506506

Health & Safety Executive 01603 753800

Norwich Enterprise Agency Trust 01603 283465

Norwich Valuation Office - Business Rates 01603 241000

Women's Employment Enterprise & Training Unit 01603 767367

Norfolk Rural Business Advisory Service 01603 748844

Business Link for Norfolk 08457 218218

The Business Library, Norfolk & Norwich Millennium Library
01603 774760

Norwich Tourist Information Centre 01603 727927

East of England Tourist Board 01473 822922