

## Commenting on Planning Applications

Proposals for development often raise interest amongst the general public. Your opinions on a scheme, whether in support or opposition, are integral to the decision making process.

Be it a proposal for a modest conservatory, a new Tesco or the redevelopment of a town centre, the impact (whether positive or negative) on you and the wider environment is something that will be taken into consideration. The Council recognises that you have a unique insight into the potential effects of a development on you and your neighbourhood, but it is the individual's responsibility to ensure their views are known.

### To Object or Not to Object, That is the Question...

Participating in the planning process is about more than just objecting. *Supporting* a proposal or *suggesting amendments or conditions* that will alleviate your concerns are just as important.

All comments should be based on fact and it is important to understand precisely what is being proposed and the potential impact this may have. Plans can be viewed at the Council's offices or electronically on the Council's website. Councils also have a responsibility to give professional advice on specific applications through either the case officer or the duty planning officer.

### Making Comments >

When a decision is made on a planning application, only certain issues can be taken into account. These issues are often referred to as '*material considerations*'. For example, a common objection which is *not* a material consideration, and so would not be taken into account, is devaluation of property. However, the reasons why a property may be devalued by a proposed development, e.g. overshadowing, loss of privacy, noise and disturbance etc *are material considerations* and would be considered.

Your Council will have specific planning policies relating to particular developments and impacts. If you contact your planning department they will advise you which policies are relevant; these should be referred to in your comments. There is often a time limit to comment (usually 21 days); although comments may be accepted after this date, provided a decision has not already been made.

### How to Comment >

All comments must be submitted in writing, either by hand or electronically, and may be made public as part of the planning application (this varies from Council to Council). Verbal comments are not accepted. However, if a development is to be determined at a planning committee (which is rare) a Council may offer speaking rights to the public as an extension to their written representations.

It is important to be precise and to the point when commenting. It can be tempting to cover a variety of matters, but including irrelevant or factually questionable points may mean that the relevant issues are lost.

### What Next? >

If an application is refused then there is a right of appeal; you will be invited by the independent Planning Inspectorate (who determine appeals) to make your comments known again. If, on the other hand, an application is approved, there is no third party right of appeal.

**Planning Aid England provides free, confidential and independent advice on the planning process.**

**Call: 0330 123 9244 or**

**Email: [advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)**

