

Commenting on Planning applications

When a planning application is submitted to a local planning authority, there must be a public consultation period of three to eight weeks to give people affected by the application the opportunity to comment, either supporting the application or objecting to it. When groups of people work together to prepare their comments, they will have a much greater chance of influencing the decision that the local planning authority reaches.

It is very important that the application is read properly before commenting and that comments are restricted to material considerations. It is common for people to object to planning applications citing grounds that are not valid. The local planning authority will not be able to take these objections into account when reaching their decision. However, as responsibility for dealing with planning applications has been delegated to local authorities, valid reasons for objection vary from one authority to another and there is no central, comprehensive list of valid objections.

A list of objections that will generally be accepted is presented below. This is followed by objections that are commonly made but are generally not accepted.

Objections that are generally valid include:

1. The proposed development is contrary to national, regional or local planning policy, government circulars, orders or statutory instruments.
2. The proposed development is not in keeping with the stylistic context or scale of the local area.
3. The proposed development will have a negative impact on the amenity of another property, through noise, overlooking, overshadowing, smells, light pollution, loss of daylight, loss of privacy, dust, vibration or late night activities.
4. The proposed use is not compatible with existing uses, for example an industrial use in a residential area.
5. The development may cause traffic problems such as traffic generation, access or safety problems.
6. The proposal reduces the amount car parking available or provides insufficient parking space itself.
7. There is a history of rejecting similar developments in the area.
8. Approval would create a precedent meaning that it would be difficult to object to similar proposals.
9. Local infrastructure is not adequate to service the proposed development.
10. The proposal is a piecemeal development that would prevent proper development of the area.
11. The proposal will have an economic impact, such as impacting on tourism or on small businesses.
12. The proposal will have environmental health impacts such as the use of hazardous materials or ground contamination.

13. The proposed development will impact on listed buildings or a conservation area.
14. The layout and density of the proposed development is inappropriate.
15. The proposal is an inappropriate development within a green belt.
16. Proposed advertising creates visual clutter.
17. The proposed development includes insufficient landscaping.
18. The proposed development will demolish or adversely affect an ancient monument or site of cultural or architectural value.
19. The proposed development will damage the natural environment or will result in significant loss of trees or the loss of trees for which tree protection orders are in place.
20. The cumulative impact of the development when considered alongside other development will have an adverse impact on the area.
21. There is inadequate access for people with disabilities.
22. Archaeological issues.
23. The type of housing proposed will not satisfy local housing needs.

Objections that are generally not valid include:

- A. Building regulations issues.
- B. Private issues such as boundary disputes.
- C. Reduction in the value of properties affected by the proposed development.
- D. Impacts resulting from the construction of the development.
- E. Loss of existing views.
- F. The possibility of the proposed development causing problems in the future.
- G. The personal or business circumstances of the applicant
- H. Problems with notification of the application.
- I. Competition with existing companies.

Most planning applications are decided by Senior Planning Officers under delegated authority, however if a planning application is considered at a planning committee meeting, people that objected to the application should be invited to attend. A representative of those objecting may be permitted to make a short presentation to the committee.

If the applicant appeals against the decision there should be a further opportunity to object.