

HAVE YOUR SAY

A GUIDE TO COMMENTING ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The views of the public are an important factor in the consideration of planning applications and the Council attaches great importance to public consultation, whether by direct neighbour notification, site notices or a notice in the local paper. The Council welcomes comments from the public, whether you are in support of or are objecting to a particular planning application.

However comments can only be considered if they are made on planning grounds. This leaflet is intended to provide some guidance on what can, and cannot, be considered, to assist people who are thinking about writing to us about a planning application.

Introduction

In determining planning applications the Council must consider the development plan and other material considerations. The “other material considerations” must relate to the use and development of land.

Some examples of “material considerations are:

- The Council's policies, as set out in the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- The County Structure Plan.
- Government policy, as expressed in Planning Policy Guidance notes and circulars.
- The planning history of the site – the existing uses, and what has been permitted or refused previously.
- The design and appearance of the proposed development, and how it would fit in with the character of the area.
- The number of dwellings, and how they are arranged on the site.
- Parking, access and highway safety.
- Overlooking and loss of privacy or loss of daylight/sunlight as a result of the development.
- The protection of the countryside, its character and appearance.
- The protection of listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeological remains.
- Control of pollution and noise.

Of course, this list is not exhaustive, and not all these factors will be relevant to every planning application, but comments on these types of grounds can usually be fully considered.

On the other hand, the following are generally not material considerations:

- Loss of financial value of a property as a result of a development.
- Increased competition to individual businesses.
- The personal circumstances of the applicant. This can be a material consideration, but is generally given very little weight.
- Matters covered by other legislation, such as the Building Regulations.
- Who is intended to occupy the proposed development.
- The race, creed or colour of the applicant. (Note: the Council will disregard racist comments).
- Private property rights (e.g. boundary or access disputes, restrictive covenants).
- Whether an application is for retrospective permission.
- The applicant's morals or motives or past record.
- Possible future development – we have to consider the application before us, not what might be applied for in the future.
- Loss of view over other people's land.
- How long a person has lived in the village or street.

If you want to comment on a planning application, you should do so in writing (or via e-mail to development.control@southnorthants.gov.uk). You should bear in mind that:

- Planning application files are open to public inspection, so your comments may be seen by other people, including the applicant.
- Defamatory comments could leave you open to legal action.
- The Council will disregard any racist comments.
- Anonymous letters will be disregarded.
- In order for your comments to be considered need to receive them before the deadline set out in the notification letter, site notice or press

advertisement. We will still consider comments received after the deadline, provided that the decision has not already been taken.

All comments on planning grounds received before the decision is taken will be fully considered.