

HAVING YOUR SAY ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A GUIDE TO THE PROCESS, MAKING YOUR VIEWS KNOWN AND SPEAKING AT PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

How planning applications are dealt with

When a planning application has been made, the Council informs nearby residents and carries out other consultations. The Council has an adopted Statement of Community Involvement relating to publicity for planning applications. Residents may feel that there should be wider consultation but a line has to be drawn somewhere. Normally those people directly adjoining the site will be consulted, often those opposite a site and sometimes more widely depending on the nature of the application.

Following the initial consultation letter, you will receive no further contact from the Council in relation to the application, unless amendments to the application are made and the Council considers these amendments to warrant further consultation with neighbours or other contributors. Please note that the Council will not directly inform neighbours or any contributors of the outcome of a planning application in writing or otherwise. All interested parties are able to view the status of each planning application by regularly checking the Council's website. It is advised that once the Council has determined each planning application, the full decision notice will be made publicly available for viewing on the website.

To view the plans, check on progress of the application and to view any amended plans, please check on the Council's website at www.nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk by selecting Planning and building control from the menu on the left hand side of the home screen, click the blue planning search button; type in the reference number in the top box and select planning only from the next box. Click Search Application Register. Once the application has been found, click on the blue underlined text. The application details will be viewable and the plans can be viewed by clicking the "documents" heading in the grey box and clicking the blue underlined text for each item.

Members of the Public have the option of viewing the documents online at the Town Hall if you do not have access to a computer or the internet. Please note that this is strictly by appointment only and the Council's Customer Services Team are unable to provide planning advice during the visit. To arrange a visit, please contact the Planning Contact Team on 024 7637 6328.

The Council would like to receive your views on planning applications. These views must be made in writing and addressed to the Head of Planning and Building Control at the address provided at the bottom of this document or email planning@nuneatonandbedworth.gov.uk. Please note, the Council will only count petitions received in respect of an application as one single representation, regardless of the number of signatories included. Please also be advised that the Council do not accept anonymous comments and a full name and address should be provided in order for us to register your comments and in order for your comments to be considered as part of the Council's overall assessment of the application.

The Council should make decisions within set timescales so there is a time limit of 21 days from the date on the consultation letter for commenting on planning applications. Please note if you do not reply in time, it may be too late to consider your views, a response will not normally be made to your comments and any comments you do make will be kept on files open to public inspection. If an appeal is made copies will be sent to the Secretary of State and the person making the appeal.

Applications can either be determined by the Head of Planning and Building Control on behalf of the Council under Delegated Powers or by the Planning Applications Committee.

Applications Determined by the Head of Planning and Building Control

Please note that, in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, not all planning applications will be referred to the Planning Applications Committee. In some instances, including where an application has met the relevant triggers to be referred to Planning Applications Committee, applications can still be determined under delegated powers.

Applications which have received less than 5 written objections may be determined by the Head of Planning and Building Control. Applications which have 5 or more written objections or 5 or more letters of support may also be determined by the Head of Planning and Building Control unless where the objection does not, in the Head of Planning and Building Control's opinion, relate to valid planning considerations, or where the objections will be addressed by the decision of the officer either by the refusal of the application, or by attaching suitable conditions, or where amendments to the application overcome the objections. Where the application is recommended for refusal and the Head of Planning and Building Control has informed the applicant and objectors of this, the Ward Members will be given notice of this, and allowed five working days in which they can refer the application to Committee.

If the ward members do not wish to refer the application, the application will not be presented to the Planning Applications Committee, but will be determined under powers given or delegated by the Committee to the Head of Planning and Building Control.

Applications Determined by Planning Applications Committee

Applications which have received five or more letters of objections from neighbours, interested parties, or statutory consultees within the 21 day consultation period will usually be referred to the Planning Applications committee, unless where the objection does not, in the Head of Planning and Building Control's opinion, relate to valid planning considerations, or where the objections will be addressed by the decision of the officer either by the refusal of the application, or by attaching suitable conditions, or where amendments to the application overcome the objections. Where the application is recommended for refusal and the Head of Planning and Building Control has informed the applicant and objectors of this, the Ward Members will be given notice of this, and allowed five working days in which they can refer the application to Committee.

In addition, in certain cases as set out within the Council's Scheme of Delegation, if a Nuneaton and Bedworth Ward Councillor requests an application to be dealt with by the Planning Applications Committee (within a certain time frame), or if the Head of Planning and Building Control considers that the application should be reported, the application may be determined by the Planning Applications Committee.

Comments will be summarised on the Committee Agenda so that Councillors are aware of them and can take them into account in their decision making. Once an application is ready to be determined by Committee, an agenda for the meeting will be prepared. Committee meetings take place generally on a 3 weekly basis and the meeting agenda will be made public 5 working days before the date of the meeting. The agenda item for each application being considered at the meeting will be uploaded to the Council's website at this stage.

A full copy of the agenda can be viewed on the Council's website by clicking Council, election and meetings from the menu. Click the committee meetings and minutes drop down menu. Click the Committee agenda, reports and minutes link and choose Planning Applications Committee tab on the left hand menu. Click on the green View Planning Applications Committee agendas, reports and minutes button. A list of agendas will be returned, with the newest shown at the top. Click the date of the committee you require, then click the Download the Agenda, Reports and Appendices link. Once an addendum is available, a further link to an Addendum will also be provided beneath to view.

Having Your Say at the Committee Meeting

As well as making written comments, you can register to speak directly to the Committee. The Council allows 2 speakers for and 2 speakers against the proposal on each application. You are encouraged to group together to present your case, however, if this is not possible, spaces for

speaking are allocated on a first come first served basis. Please contact the Contact Team on 024 7637 6328 to register to speak at the committee meeting within 21 days mentioned on the consultation letter. Only those people registered to speak and who specifically request it will be informed of the Committee date time and venue. Your attendance will be recorded and archived in the public interest, this will include name and address details which will be published on the Speakers List and made publicly available. The contact team can help with queries relating to facilities for people with disabilities and mobility problems.

The chair of the meeting will announce each item, the Planning Officer will report on the proposal and the main considerations, and the speakers will then be invited to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes. Objectors will be first, followed by supporters and the applicant / agent. Councillors may ask questions of the speakers if there are points of clarification and the Planning Officer may be asked to comment on the points made by the speakers. The members will then debate the item, to ensure a full and thorough debate, there is no time limit on their debate.

Points to Consider

It will help if you prepare what you are going to say before the meeting, you do not have to fill the 3 minutes, but you will not be allowed longer than 3 minutes to speak. When you are invited to speak, you can come forward to speak at the table provided, or stay where you are. The committee clerk will start a timer when you begin speaking and the chair will ask you to stop when 3 minutes has passed.

Any comments you make, must relate to planning issues such as highway safety, traffic, noise, amenity, privacy pollution, historic buildings, conservation, wildlife, environmental effects, disabled access, local plan policies, and the County Council and Government guidance.

Items which cannot be considered include; the developers motives, loss of views, impacts of property value, private rights, covenants, deeds and boundary disputes. Please do not make slanderous, abusive or personal comments or interrupt others when they are speaking.

The Decision

All decisions whether delegated or committee are based on a number of factors including national and local planning policies, Government Guidance, the planning merits of the proposals. The law favours approving all applications unless there are overriding planning reasons for not doing so. Your views will be considered in the assessment of the planning application, but they may not override other factors.

The Committee Members may feel it necessary to defer the application, this can happen for a number of reasons, to include allowing further time for the submission of further information, or to allow a visit to the site to take place. If this happens, registered speakers will be given the opportunity to speak to the committee again when the item is considered again at Planning Applications Committee.

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This document is available in other languages and formats on request.