

A Guide on How to Comment on Planning Applications

Your Council is committed to consulting neighbours and other parties who could be directly affected by planning applications. We want to hear your views so that we can take them into account when considering planning applications. This guide explains how you can find out more about a planning application, how to make your views known and what matters the Council can take into account in reaching its decision.

Where to view and find out about a planning application:

Planning Reception, Barnet House (2nd Floor), 1255 High Road, Whetstone, London, N20 0EJ

Tel: 020 8359 3000

Opening Times: 9.30am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays.

A duty planning officer is available to help you at the Planning Reception and to give general advice.

The officer will help by explaining plans and providing general guidance on planning issues; however, to ensure the application is dealt with fairly, the officer has to remain impartial.

Application details are published online at: www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-applications. Associated application documents are also made available online within 5 working days of the start of the consultation period, which is extended to account for any delay.

What matters can be taken into account

When dealing with a planning application the council has to consider policies set out in The London Plan, the Adopted Barnet Unitary Development Plan (2006) and any other material considerations. Planning Applications can only be decided on those matters relevant to planning (material considerations). The most common of these include:

1. Effect on traffic, access and parking;
2. Scale and appearance of the proposal and the impact on the surrounding area adjoining neighbours;
3. Loss of light;
4. Overlooking and loss of privacy;
5. Effect on nature conservation and loss of trees;
6. Effect on a Conservation Area;
7. Effect on a Listed Building;
8. Noise and disturbance resulting from a use;
9. Whether the use would be appropriate for the area;

What matters cannot be taken into account

Often people wish to comment on matters that cannot be taken into account because they are not controlled by planning legislation. Common objections include:

1. Loss of property value;
2. Loss of a view;
3. Private issues between neighbours such as land covenants, land and boundary disputes, damage to property;
4. Problems associated while construction works are being carried out, such as noise, dust and disturbance by construction vehicles. (If you are experiencing these problems the Environmental Health Section may be able to help);
5. Competition between firms;
6. Structural and fire precaution matters. (These are controlled by building control legislation);

How to get help in understanding a planning application

If you are registered disabled and feel you cannot attend the planning office, please contact the planning officer dealing with the application who will be pleased to explain the plans to you at your home.

How to put your views forward

We want to hear from you whether you are supporting or opposing a development. To make sure your views are not misinterpreted we can only accept comments in writing and preferably via our website at 'www.barnet.gov.uk/planning-applications'. Before writing to us you are strongly advised to view the application details online or to see them at the Planning Reception.

You may also wish to write to your Local Councillor or MP, whose name and address can be provided by the planning officer dealing with the application. Also, if a number of people share your views you may wish to organise a petition or a joint letter / email.

What happens to your letter?

We will acknowledge receipt of your letter / communication within 10 working days.

Planning Managers have been given the powers to decide some applications and, in reaching a decision, they will take your written comments into account. When an application has to be considered by a Committee, planning officers will write a report: this will include a recommendation and include a summary of the contents of your letter. The report will be presented to the appropriate Committee, which is made up of elected ward Councillors.

In some circumstances you may also be given the opportunity to speak at the committee meeting. For more information on speaking at these meetings please contact the planning officer dealing with the application as soon as possible.

The Committee will consider your comments along with the other planning issues relating to the case. The Committee are not bound by the planning officer's recommendation. It may grant or refuse planning permission.

If you have written to us we will inform you of the decision within ten days of it being made.

If you have any queries relating to the contents of this leaflet the planning officer, whose name appears on the consultation letter, will be happy to help you.