

## **How to comment or object to a planning application.**

### **How do I comment on a current planning application?**

If you feel that an application would have a positive/negative affect on you, your property or the surrounding area, you may want to comment on the application. To help you decide, copies of all documentation submitted in support of an application are available to view via the Council's web page and the Harlow Council Planning Register.

Comments may be made by:

- Selecting Comment below the application you wish to comment on via the online Planning Register.
- Writing to the planning department at the following address:  
Harlow Council  
Civic Centre  
The Water Gardens  
Harlow  
Essex  
CM20 1WG
- Emailing the planning department at [planning.services@harlow.gov.uk](mailto:planning.services@harlow.gov.uk)
- Alternatively, you may wish to ask your local Councillor to speak on your behalf.

Please always quote the application reference number on your communication.

### **How long do I have to comment or object to an application?**

You have 21 days from the date of the site notice, or letter sent, which ever is the later. However after that date, only comments or objections received prior to the consideration of the application will be taken into account.

### **What grounds can I use to object or comment?**

Only those comments that relate to planning issues can be taken into consideration when determining a planning application. These might include:

- Design of the proposal;
- Impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
- Impact on the amenity of neighbours' (e.g. sunlight/daylight, privacy, overbearing);
- Parking provision;
- Level of traffic generated;

- Environmental impact (e.g. noise, loss of trees/habitats)

Unfortunately those comments made in relation to non-planning issues cannot be taken into consideration. These include:

- Property Values
- Personal circumstances
- "moral" issues

However, by supporting or objecting to an application this does not mean the application will be approved or refused respectively. In determining an application the Local Planning Authority are obliged to consider all planning considerations that relate to the application. These considerations will often conflict with one another and it is the role of the Local Planning Authority to balance an application against the policies in the Local Development Plan and against all of the relevant material planning considerations. Consequently if the decision has been made that does not reflect your comments this does not mean that they have simply been ignored.

### **Publicising Comments.**

By law, all comments received must be open to public inspection, which will include publishing them on the internet where they can be seen by anyone, including the applicant. Private information, such as signatures, email address and telephone numbers will be redacted so that they are not visible.

Please be aware that any comment you make is also kept on the case file and must be made available in full on request to the applicant or any interested party

Any views, comments or representations must include the date, name and address of the sender and should clearly state the grounds on which they are being made. Our advice is that if you wish to be certain that your signature or telephone number will not be published, you should not include them in your correspondence.

Failure to include a registered and valid address will result in your comments not being taken into account as part of the consideration of any application.

It should also be made clear, with the inclusion of a reference number where available, which application is being commented upon, as there may be more than one application for the same site.

Please note that any comments made will **not** be acknowledged unless specifically requested. A summary of the comments will be set out in the planning officer's report.

If an application is considered by the Council's Development Management Committee you may have the chance to speak at the committee meeting providing you register your request with the committee clerk 24 hours before the meeting.

If the application is subject to appeal, all comments received in respect of the application are forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate. In the case of a householder application, in the event of an appeal that proceeds by way of the fast-track process, any representations made about the application will be passed to the Secretary of State and there will be no opportunity to make further representations.

### **Petitions or Repetitious Letters**

Generally petitions or identical letters are not given any greater weight in the consideration of a planning application or appeal than an individual personal letter. It is often better for individuals to write a letter explaining their own views. Receiving a large number of the same letter does not affect the material planning considerations considered during the determination of any planning application. If you wish to submit a petition it will be considered provided that;

- each page of the petition is headed with the aim of the petition;
- the names and addresses of those signing are provided, are legible and valid addresses;
- the comments are material in planning terms and clearly stated;

### **Offensive and racist comments**

Please note, that offensive, racist, discriminatory, threatening and other statements that are not appropriate will not be published. Offensive statements lower a person's reputation personally within their trade, profession or business. Racist statements are those that are offensive or discriminate against individuals on racial grounds, including their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins. Gypsies and other minorities are racial groups. Statements that discriminate on grounds of religion, sexuality or disability will also not be published. Comments that include such statements will be rejected but can be resubmitted in a more acceptable form. The Council is also bound by the Equality Act 2010 which applies to those providing services and public functions and prohibits direct and indirect discrimination and harassment all of which these types of remarks might amount to.

## **Anonymous or Private/Confidential Comments**

Failure to provide your name and address will mean that your comments will be treated as anonymous and consequently will not be considered. Due to the legal requirement to make representations available for public inspection, anonymity or comments marked 'private or confidential' cannot be accepted.