

Burgh and Tuttington Parish Council

Commenting on planning applications (1/2)

Planning applications received by the district council pass through a series of steps before a decision to approve or refuse is made. Planning officers can make a decision themselves under what are known as **delegated powers**. More complicated proposals pass to the planning committee of elected district councillors to decide. Also, any application can be **called in** by a district councillor to the planning committee for consideration.

The public are able to submit comments on planning applications under consideration. Certain organisations called **statutory consultees** are asked to give their opinion on the merits or otherwise of an application. Their points are then considered by those who make the final decision. The parish council is one such statutory consultee for planning applications submitted from their parish, or sometimes from adjacent parishes.

Parish councils can provide local context to an application. However, points made by parish councillors must be restricted to planning criteria - called **material considerations**. The basic assumption is that a planning application should be approved unless the material considerations indicate otherwise.

Parish councils might recommend approval or refusal of a planning application but the weight this carries at the district council will depend upon many factors. Often it is recommendations for amendments to planning applications by parish councils which can be particularly useful.

Material considerations that can be used to comment on a planning application include:

- Suitability for the area in general
- In keeping with the immediate area and buildings in terms of size and appearance
- Impact on visual appearance to the landscape through loss of trees or hedgerows
- Extensions being in character with the original building
- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Loss of light or overshadowing of adjacent buildings or neighbours
- Parking safety and access
- Highway safety
- Affecting a public footpath
- Increased traffic disturbance
- Increased noise disturbance
- Impact on listed building and Conservation Area
- Layout and density of building
- Design, appearance and materials
- Suitability of disabled access
- Proposals in the local development plan
- Conflict with local or national planning policies
- Previous planning decisions
- Nature conservation

(contd....)

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Commenting on planning applications (2/2)

Factors that cannot be used in considering planning applications include:

- Loss of value to property
- Loss of a private individual's view
- Boundary disputes including encroachment of foundations or gutters
- Private covenants or agreements
- The applicant's personal conduct or history
- The applicant's motives
- Potential profit for the applicant or from the application
- Private rights to light
- Private rights of way
- Damage to property
- Loss of trade to individual competitors
- Age, health, status, background and work patterns of the objector
- Time taken to do the work
- Building and structural techniques
- Matters covered by other statute
- Alcohol or gaming licence