

# Have your say on planning applications



**SURREY**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

Surrey County Council handles planning applications for Minerals, Waste and county council property. We are required to publicise planning applications in line with our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which can be found on our website.

Our notification and publicity procedures aim to ensure that relevant individuals, groups and businesses that may be affected by an application are informed and given the opportunity to comment before a decision is made. Anybody may make comments on the proposal.

## Where do I get information about a planning application?

The publicity about a planning application will give details of the address of the application site and a brief description of the proposed development. A copy of the application documents will be available for inspection at the District/Borough Council offices, and at Surrey County Council offices, at the addresses given in the publicity. You would also be able to view or download the documents from our online register at <http://planning.surreycc.gov.uk>

In some cases, applicants may prepare their own publicity materials or exhibitions explaining the proposals. These will be publicised by the applicant.

## How can I influence planning decisions?

You can have your say by:

- Contacting your local County Councillor, they will be able to take views on applications within his or her area to the Planning and Regulatory Committee.
- Contacting your District Councillor who may be able to help.
- Sending your comments in writing to us by post (Planning Development Team, Surrey County Council, 35 Guildford Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7QQ) or by email to [mwcd@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:mwcd@surreycc.gov.uk)
- Sending a comment through our online register.
- Local petition - acknowledgement will be sent to the organiser or the first name appearing on the petition.
- Take part in their discussions about the application with a local interest group. Sometimes it is possible for groups to meet with the applicant or representatives of the council to discuss concerns and find solutions.

For your representation to be taken into account you must include name and full postal address. Every representation will be acknowledged and considered in the course of deciding the application. It is not possible to respond individually to each representation or questions, however. Comments we receive are sent to the district planning register, where they may also be published online.

## What should I comment upon?

Decisions on planning applications are limited by law to the development plan where material to the planning application and specific issues relevant to planning known as 'material considerations'. It is, therefore, best if you keep to these issues since anything else must be ignored. The most important thing to keep in mind is that your comments must relate to the use of land and should be directed to policies contained within the national and local planning documents and development plans, such as the Waste, Minerals or Local Plan.

If an application goes to committee then members must take local views into account when making their decision. Local opposition or support for a proposal is not, in itself however, a reason for refusing or granting planning permission.



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## **Is there anything that I may not comment upon?**

It is important to note that the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against the activities of another. Reduced property value, for example, would not be material. However, the protection of individuals is an important aspect of the public interest as a whole. The basic question is not whether individuals would suffer loss from a development, but whether it would unacceptably affect amenities which ought to be protected in the public interest. Good neighbourliness and fairness are among the measures against which proposals can be considered.

In the UK, the planning and pollution control systems are separate but complementary. The planning system should not duplicate pollution controls. Matters covered by other legislation or under Building Control cannot be taken into account.

## **How long do I have to respond?**

We are required to give the applicant a decision within eight to sixteen weeks, depending on the type of application. In practice, however, it is recognised by planning authorities and developers that more complex proposals will take longer to process. In these situations, an extended time period to determine the application may be agreed by both sides to allow the application and issues raised to be properly considered. The period to send in your representations on an application will be shorter and cannot be officially extended. Publicity on applications will specify a date by when comments should be submitted to us.

Although we are not obliged to take account of representations received outside this period we try to take account of any late views that may be received before a decision is made, but this cannot be guaranteed.

## **Further advice**

You can contact Planning Aid - a voluntary service offering free, independent and professional advice on town planning matters to community groups and individuals.

## **How are applications decided?**

The County Council may grant planning permission, with or without conditions, or refuse planning applications. A Case Officer considers all comments and representations made, in addition to all the relevant planning policies, and prepares a report summarising the application and the issues it raises. The application will be determined by the Planning and Regulatory Committee, made up of elected County Councillors, who consider the Officer's report and make the final decision, or by the Planning Development Management Team Manager under delegated powers.

Further details are available on our website.

## **How do I find out what the Council's decision was?**

When a decision has been made, anyone who has made representations in writing and any petition organisers will be sent a letter informing them of the decision. Newspaper adverts may be placed to publicise decisions on applications accompanied by environmental statements. Decision notices for decisions taken after 1 December 2005 are available to view on our online register. Decision notices will also be available for inspection during normal working hours at the Borough or District council offices, or at Quadrant Court, Woking.

Information contained in this leaflet is available in large print, on audio tape and CD. It can also be made available in other languages. If you require an alternative format, please contact: Contact Centre on [contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:contact.centre@surreycc.gov.uk)

Please check our website at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/planningandregcommittee](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/planningandregcommittee) or ring the Contact Centre on 03456 009 009 for dates of committee meetings