



# Commenting on Planning Applications

**A guide to getting involved  
in the planning process**



Most new buildings, major alterations to existing buildings, as well as changes in the uses of land or buildings need planning permission from the District Council. Our aim is to balance an encouragement for development which provides homes, jobs, and services for the community against the protection for the character of our towns, villages and countryside.

We assess all planning applications against the policies of the Development Plan. This is made up of the East of England Regional Plan, the Essex and Southend on Sea Structure Plan and the Uttlesford Local Plan. Guidance is also provided in adopted supplementary planning document. Copies may be inspected at the Council Offices, in local libraries and on the Council's web site [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk). Central Government produces its own policies on issues relevant to the whole country and these are taken into account as well. These may also be viewed at the offices or online.

The Council considers all applications impartially and is committed to helping people to get involved in the planning process.

### **Consulting on a planning application**

When we receive a valid planning application we notify the occupiers of properties immediately neighbouring the site and allow 21 days for replies. Sometimes, if the site is remote and there are no obvious neighbours, we will post site notices rather than send letters. Some applications such as those involving listed buildings or which are in a conservation area will also be publicised in the local papers and have site notices

posted. Lists of planning applications received and decided can be viewed at our offices and via the Council's web site. The Council also consults the appropriate Town or Parish Council on all planning applications, and where appropriate with various other bodies such as The Highway Authority and Environment Agency according to the type, size and location of the proposed development.

## **Viewing Planning Applications**

The plans and other documents submitted with planning applications can be viewed at the Council Offices in Saffron Walden and Community Information Centre in Great Dunmow between 8.30am and 5pm Monday – Thursday and 8.30am – 4.30pm on Fridays. The documents are also available to view on the Council's web site [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk). Some Town and Parish Councils also make provision for their copies to be viewed.

## **How to submit comments on a planning application**

Comments on planning applications can be made direct from the Council's web site, emailed to [planning@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:planning@uttlesford.gov.uk) or sent in writing to the Planning Department, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER. All comments must include the application number. Comments on planning applications are public documents and are made available for public inspection. In the case of applications where the applicant appeals against the Council's decision comments

made on the application will be made available to view on the Planning Inspectorates web site. Therefore only details which you are happy to be made available for public inspection should be included. Comments marked as confidential or sent in anonymously cannot be taken into consideration.

## What can be considered

In reaching a decision on applications, the Council always takes into account the views of those people who are likely to be affected by the development. Planning legislation requires us to determine applications in accordance with the policies in the development plan, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We can usually only refuse permission where it would be contrary to the policies laid down in the Development Plan, or where it is clear that the proposal would damage the environment or the amenities of local people to an unacceptable degree. The types of issues which **can** be taken into consideration are:

- Design and appearance of the proposal
- Size and scale of the proposal
- Overbearing/overshadowing impact
- Loss of privacy / increased overlooking
- Impact on traffic and parking
- Impact on listed buildings and conservation areas
- Impact on trees and landscape

Issues which are not planning matters and **cannot** be taken into consideration are:

- Effect on property values
- Loss of view
- Competition with existing businesses
- Boundary disputes and land ownership
- Preference for a different development
- Future development that does not form part of the submitted application

## **Applications for certificates of lawfulness**

These applications are different from normal planning applications. In these cases the applicant is seeking to establish that a use or development does not require planning permission. These applications are decided on matters of fact and not whether they are acceptable in planning terms. Information or evidence relating to such applications can be submitted to the Council to be taken into account when reaching the decision but comments on the planning merits of the proposal cannot be considered.

## **Making the decision**

Most planning applications are determined by the Director of Development Services under delegated powers (further details of the delegated agreement can be viewed on the Council's website). Larger applications are decided by the Development Control Committee which meets every third Wednesday at 2pm in the Council Chamber at our Saffron Walden Offices. Details of meetings, including documents, are published at least one week in advance and are available on our web site and at our offices. All meetings are open to the public. People wishing to speak at the meeting can do so by contacting

our Committee Section on 01799 510369. For more information please see the Council's leaflet "How to Get Involved in Meetings" – A guidance leaflet for planning applicants and objectors.

## **Appealing against the Council's decision**

Only the applicant can appeal against the decision made by the Council - either in the case of a refusal or against conditions which have been placed on an approval. Appeals have to be made to the Planning Inspectorate, a Government executive agency, within six months of the date of the decision. Copies of all representations made during the course of the application are passed to the Planning Inspector and anyone who made representations is informed of the Appeal being made. There is an opportunity for further representations to be made direct to the Planning Inspector if appropriate.

## **Contact Details**

**Web Site:** [www.uttlesford.gov.uk](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk)

Select Planning

**Planning Helpline:** 01799 510467

**Planning Information Desk:**

01799 510547/676

Council Offices  
London Road  
Saffron Walden  
Essex  
CB11 4ER

Community  
Information Centre  
High Street  
Great Dunmow  
Essex  
CM6 1AN