

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY COMMENTS ON A PLANNING APPLICATION?

The procedures below relate to comments such as yours, which have been received within the statutory period for making comments. They do not apply to comments received after that period.

WHAT WE DO WITH YOUR COMMENTS

- We acknowledge your letter or email.
- We place your comment on the Council's website, with signatures, personal telephone numbers and personal email addresses removed, but retaining typed or printed names and retaining addresses. Standard letters will not normally be displayed.
- Your comments will be considered before a decision is made on the application. The case officer will summarise your comments in the report on the application and assess their relevance. The full letter will be available to the decision makers whether that is a senior planning official or Councillors.
- We will inform you of the decision on the application. Some applications take a long time to decide so it may be a number of months before you hear from us. Progress on an application, including the report and decision notice, can be checked on the Planning Applications Online page of the Council's web site (www.pkc.gov.uk).

WHO MAKES THE DECISION ON AN APPLICATION?

- The final decision is not made by the case officer, although the case officer prepares a report with a recommendation.
- The decision on most planning applications is taken by a senior planning official but in some cases the application is decided by Councillors, either at the Development Control Committee or at full Council.
- The Council's "Scheme of Administration" states when an application has to be referred to Councillors. It is not normally possible to tell if an application will be decided by Councillors, rather than by officials, until the recommendation has been prepared.
- If the application is being considered by Councillors, you will be given the opportunity to request to be heard and you will be informed of the procedure to be followed.
- Your letter of comment will be considered whether or not you speak at the Committee or Council meeting. These are in public so you have a right to attend even if you do not want to speak.

WHAT WE CANNOT DO WITH YOUR COMMENTS

- Because of the volume of correspondence we receive on planning applications, we cannot enter into detailed correspondence or discussions with individual objectors on the points they raise. The Council's statutory duty is to take account of comments received within the statutory period, not to reply to them. Accordingly, comments should not be in the form of questions but should be clear statements of areas of concern.
- It is not normally necessary or appropriate to meet objectors. What we need is a clear written statement of concerns. All of those involved in deciding the application can then take that into account. In those cases where we need more information from objectors, we will contact you to seek clarification. The views expressed in your letter will not be the only matters taken into consideration. The Council has to come to a balanced assessment taking into account the Development Plan, other material considerations, comments for or against the proposal and any comments from statutory consultees such as Scottish Natural Heritage. The planning content of any comments received is the important consideration, not the number of objections. Further information is available in "Commenting on a Planning Application?" on the Council's web-site or from Pullar House.
- Objectors have no right of Appeal against the Council's decision. Although it is possible to challenge a decision at the Court of Session that can only be on narrow 'legal' grounds, not on the merits of the planning assessment. Accordingly, it is important that you make the most of the opportunity to influence the planning decision at the stage when comments can still be taken into account.