

Commenting on a planning application

A guide on how to tell us your views and how to speak at the planning committee meeting.

This guide is for anyone who wants to make comments on a planning application.

It explains how to find out about an application and how to make your views known, both in writing and by speaking at the Planning Committee. It also explains how the planning application process works and how decisions are made.

Commenting on a planning application

Why are you being consulted?

We have contacted you because someone has made a planning application for a development that may affect you. We want to make you aware of the proposal and give you an opportunity to comment. You may wish to view the planning application and plan drawings or keep in touch with the application's progress.

How to comment or find out more information

Application documents, plans and commenting on applications are available online at:

birmingham.gov.uk/planningonline

If you don't have internet access at home you can visit your nearest library, where you will be able to view the plans using their public internet access facilities. Please note that you may need to be a library member in order to use a computer in the library.

Alternatively you can e-mail or write. Contact details can be found on the back of this guide. Comments should reach us by the date given in our letter to you. We may not be able to take into account comments received after this date. Your local Councillor may also be able to help submit your views on the application or make representations on your behalf.

Help with understanding the application

If you wish to talk to a Planning Officer about the application, please contact us. If you are housebound or have a disability that makes it difficult for you to view or understand the plans, or you need an interpreter, please let us know. We will do our best to help.

What sort of comments can we accept?

Under planning law, we can only take into account comments on planning issues. For more information on this please see **What can I say to the Committee?** on page 3, which applies equally to written comments.

What happens next?

All comments received are taken into account before a decision is made. By law, any comments you make about the application must be made available to the public. We are unable to acknowledge receipt of your comments, but we will inform you of the decision. Our target is to consider all planning applications within 8 weeks, but larger or more complex applications can take longer. We aim to inform you of the outcome within 5 working days following the Council's decision.

(Should an application go to appeal, your original comments including your name and address may also be published on the Planning Inspectorate's website).

Most of these applications (approximately 90% do not go before the Planning Committee). **It is important to note that the right to speak only extends to applications decided by Committee.**

It is your responsibility to follow the progress of an application as we do not notify you of a committee date unless a request to speak has been received.

Speaking at the Committee meeting

Registering your request to speak

If you are thinking of speaking, please contact us as soon as possible. Do not wait to find out when a report is going to Committee before registering to speak. Put your request in early as it can easily be withdrawn. We cannot accept speakers after 12 noon on the Monday before an application is to be heard by the Committee (the following Thursday).

There are two ways that you can register to speak. You can either register your request by contacting us on (0121) 303 3141 or on our website at:

birmingham.gov.uk/planningspeakers

IMPORTANT

No other form of speaking request will be accepted.

What happens then?

In the interests of fairness, we will then try to contact other parties to give them the opportunity to speak to the Committee too. We will contact you when the Committee date has been confirmed.

Who is entitled to speak?

You will be able to speak at the Committee meeting if you:

- Object to a planning application which is recommended for approval.
- Support a planning application which is recommended for refusal.
- Have submitted a planning application and the Committee is being recommended to refuse the application, or if an objector is speaking to the Committee against your application.

The Planning Committee meeting

The Planning Committee decides generally on larger or more complex planning applications in the City, and those with a significant number of objections. Any written (or verbal) comments we receive in advance of the meeting are reported to the Committee who take them into account when making a decision on an application. In addition to this well-established practice, you have the opportunity to speak to the Committee when they meet to discuss the application. Comments and objections made in advance of the meeting carry just as much weight. Where applications are reported for information only (usually progress reports on large schemes), the applicant may be invited to make a 10 minute presentation.

A Planning Officer will introduce the application and make any additional comments to the written report. Speakers will then be asked to address the Committee - objectors first, followed by supporters and/or the applicant/agent. The Planning Officer will then be asked to respond to any points raised and then the Committee will discuss the application and make a decision.

Alternatively, live streaming has now been introduced and you may find this more convenient. To watch the Planning Committee live visit:

birminghamnewsroom.com

What can I say to the Committee?

We can only allow applicants/agents and supporters a total of 3 minutes in support of the application, and objectors a total of 3 minutes against the application, **regardless of the number of people who wish to speak**. In most cases, only one person per side may speak on behalf of either the objectors, supporters or applicant. However, if the application raises lots of different views from different parts of the community the Chair may allow more than one person per side to speak.

Comments must be on planning issues. These include loss of light or privacy, highway safety, traffic and parking issues, noise, amenity, pollution, historic buildings, conservation, wildlife, design and appearance of the development.

You will only be allowed to address the Committee once, when a particular application is first considered. If an application is deferred after you have spoken, only written comments are subsequently allowed.

We also have to take into account national and local policies and Government guidance, and you may wish to refer to these.

Visit [birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicies](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/planningpolicies) for more information.

Issues which cannot be taken into account include the developer's motives or morals, loss of view, effect on property values, private rights, covenants, construction noise and boundary disputes.

Please do not make statements that are personal, slanderous or abusive, and do not interrupt another speaker or the Committee debate.

Please note that the introduction or submission of additional evidence in the form of written documents or photographs for display, circulation or distribution will not be permitted at the Planning Committee meeting.

After the meeting

A letter will be sent to all speakers to inform them of the decision made on that application.

What we will do with your personal data

Speaking at Planning Committee

If you are requesting to speak at Planning Committee we may need to pass on your contact details to other speakers who have requested to speak on the same application. This is because there is a combined total of 3 minutes for speakers on either side to make their comments. Sharing the contact details allows you to collaborate and support each other.

Getting in touch

The quickest and easiest way of getting in touch:

Web

General planning advice:
planningportal.gov.uk or
birmingham.gov.uk/planning

Watch the Planning Committee live:
birminghamnewsroom.com

To comment on a planning application:
birmingham.gov.uk/planningcomments

To speak at Committee:
birmingham.gov.uk/planningspeakers

E-mail

Planning and Regeneration:
planningandregenerationenquiries@birmingham.gov.uk

Call

Register to speak at Committee:
(0121) 303 3141

Visit

Planning Committee
The Council House
Victoria Square
Birmingham
B1 1BB

Your views

Let us have your comments, compliments or complaints:
birmingham.gov.uk/yourviews

For a copy of this leaflet in large print, alternative format or another language, please contact us.

If you have a speech impairment, are deaf or hard of hearing you can contact Birmingham City Council by Next Generation Text (also known as Text Relay and TypeTalk). Dial 18001 before the full national phone number.

Minicom: (0121) 303 1119 or (0121) 675 8221

You can call the council's Contact Centre using your own advocate to translate for you without written notice. If you need to arrange for this service, go to Brasshouse Translation and Interpreting.

