



**Stockton-on-Tees**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## **PLANNING**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

Below are a list of the most commonly asked questions of the Council when dealing with Members of the public in planning related matters.

For ease we have grouped those questions into three main topic areas;

- Do I need planning permission
- Making an application
- Commenting on a planning application

We also have a separate Local Enforcement Plan and Planning Enforcement FAQ for further guidance on planning enforcement and how the Council will approach planning enforcement matters.

### **DO I NEED PLANNING PERMISSION**

#### **Do I need planning permission?**

You may not always need planning permission to carry out minor works to your property, this can include element such as;

- Building a porch
- carrying out internal alterations
- new doors or windows
- side and rear extensions
- decking under 30cm high off the ground
- garage conversions

For more details on permitted development rights, visit the Planning Portal, however please be aware that in some cases there may be restrictions on your property which would mean you require planning consent.

It may be necessary to get separate approval under building regulations or listed building consent.

#### **Can I get advice before I submit my application?**

Yes, the Council offer a pre-application advice service to help assist you in making choices about you proposals. This can include advice on whether permission is need or can involve seeking an informal officer opinion on your development.

By following the Officers informal opinion this can save time by ironing out any problems before you submit the application.

### **How can I obtain pre-application planning advice?**

The Council provides a pre-application advice service to those looking to submit a planning application this ranges from those looking to build an extension to larger forms of development such as a new office building or housing development.

The simple and easiest way to gain planning advice from the Council is to use our online planning form. Further advice and guidance on pre-application advice can be found on our webpages.

## **MAKING AN APPLICATION**

### **How can I submit my planning application?**

You can submit your planning application to the Council in one of three ways;

- Apply online through the Planning Portal
- Apply by email: [planningdevelopmentservices@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:planningdevelopmentservices@stockton.gov.uk)
- Apply by post to:
  - Planning Development Services
  - Municipal Buildings
  - Church Road
  - Stockton-on-Tees
  - TS18 1LD

### **Are people allowed to comment on my application?**

Yes, there is a statutory process which allows 21 days for people to comment on a planning application and in most cases we will write to those we consider are directly affected by your proposal.

### **Who comments on the technical details?**

As part of the planning process a number of statutory consultees may be asked to provide advice and guidance on a number of aspects such as the impacts on highway safety, flooding and wildlife.

These comments are then taken into account when making a decision. The applicant will also have the opportunity to respond to any queries and should this happen you may receive further notification.

### **What will the Planning Officer do when considering my application?**

The case officer will review your initial application and make a site visit to get an understanding of the potential impact your development may have.

After that visit, they will consider the consultation responses and carry out a further assessment of the proposals. In some cases it may then be necessary to seek amendment to the development acceptable and in these situations case officer will work with the applicant/agent.

If the changes are considered minor, we may make a decision without any further publicity or in some cases it may be necessary to re-consult people.

At the end of the assessment, the case officer will write their report setting out there recommendation. The application will either be approved, with or without conditions, or refused.

A written notice of the decision is sent to the applicant/agent.

### **Will my application be considered at Planning Committee?**

No, not necessarily, although the planning committee is a group of elected councillors who have been trained in making planning decisions, the majority of applications will be decided by senior planning officers.

This is because the Planning Department has the ability to make decisions where they fall under a set of agreed criteria – this is known as the scheme of delegation. Only those applications which fall outside of the scheme of delegation are considered by planning committee.

Further advice can be found on Planning Committee can be found on the Council's webpages.

### **How long does it take to determine a planning application?**

Much will depend on the nature of the application and whether or not there are problems which the application may want to try and address.

Whilst there are nationally set target dates that define when the Council should be looking to make a decision on an application. Typically the target dates are 8 weeks for minor planning applications and 13 weeks for major planning applications, although in some cases extensions to the determination period may be sought.

### **What can I do if my application is refused?**

You have two main options, you can resubmit your application seeking to address the reasons for refusal - a revised application is free provided the application is of the same scale and nature and it is made within 12 months of the date of refusal.

Alternatively, you can submit an appeal against the Council's decision to the planning inspectorate.

## **COMMENTING ON A PLANNING APPLICATION**

### **What is a public consultation?**

Planning applications are subject to consultation with members of the number. In most cases this will involve writing to the neighbours directly affected by the proposals. However there are occasions where we will need to give wider publicity to an application through a site notice displayed at the proposed development and/or a public notice in the local press.

The application is then available for 21 days for people to comment on.

### **Where can I view a planning application?**

The easiest way to view a planning application is via our website known as Public Access.

### **How can I comment on a current application?**

You can only make comments on a planning application by submitting these in writing, which you can do in one of three ways;

1. Comment online via our public access system (as detailed below)
2. Comment by email: [planningdevelopmentservices@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:planningdevelopmentservices@stockton.gov.uk)
3. Comment by post to:  
Planning Development Services  
Municipal Buildings  
Church Road  
Stockton-on-Tees  
TS18 1LD

*Often the quickest and easiest way of making comments is via our public access system, by following the simple steps below;*

1. Open the webpage, Public Access
2. Search for the application using the application reference number
3. Click on the Comments tab and from there you can login and comment.

### **What information do I need to provide to comment on a planning application?**

All correspondence about an application must include the following information;

- Your name and full address (including your post code);
- The application number
- The site address;
- A clear statement that you are objecting/supporting or making observations

### **Who can comment?**

Anyone can make comments in support or against a planning application.

Should we receive additional or revised information which we consider would result in a material change or need further neighbour input to the proposals we will re-consult and allow a further period in which to respond or make additional comments. In these cases the period for comment may be shorter, but we will advise you of the timeframe in which to make comments

If you intend to comment outside the consultation period you should check the status of the application Online Search facility in case the application has been determined.

### **What can I comment on?**

Whilst you can make comments on anything, it is only the material planning considerations which carry any weight in determining a planning application. Advice and guidance on material planning considerations can be found at the Planning Portal.

Although the following are not material planning considerations;

- Loss of property value
- Loss of a view
- Personal circumstances of the applicant

In all cases you should your reasons for objecting or supporting the application and any relevant local knowledge. Material planning considerations also carry more weight when then can be clearly evidenced.

### **What happens to my comments?**

Planning Officers take into account all the comments from consultees and the representations received, as well as the relevant policies and other material considerations when completing their report and recommendation.

### **How is an application determined?**

Applications may be determined by Officers under our Scheme of Delegation or by the Planning Committee. If the application is considered by Planning Committee we will write to everyone who made representations to notify them about the meeting and to provide an opportunity to speak to the Committee.

Further guidance on the committee process is contained on our webpage.

**What happens after the decision is made?**

If the application is refused then the applicant has the right to appeal against the decision on the basis of those reasons for refusal provided.

If an application is approved, then planning permission is granted, there is no third party right of appeal.