

Notifying the Public

A guide to the Council's notification and publicity policy in relation to the Planning and Development System

This leaflet is intended as a guide to the Council's notification and publicity policy in relation to the planning system. It explains the right of people to be informed about applications, how they can obtain detailed information, how they can make comments, and how comments will be treated.

If you are regarded as a neighbour you will be officially informed but even if you are not you can still express a view: anyone can.

Am I a neighbour and how will I be notified?

The Council is required to inform neighbours about planning applications. Neighbours are considered to be occupiers or owners of adjoining land and properties. In some circumstances the Council may inform other residents at its discretion, where it is considered the impacts may be wider. This is often the case for large developments when more people may be affected. Such applications may involve consultation by the posting of a site notice as well as writing to immediate properties.



Diagrams 1, 2 and 3 illustrate which neighbours will normally be notified in the case of a house extension or other type of applications on that site.

The Council will usually consult these people by letter.

The neighbour notification letter will describe the proposal contained in the planning application and how you can make your views known.



If I am not a neighbour, how will I know about any new development?

As part of the Council's policy to keep local people informed, weekly lists of planning applications are available for inspection on the website, in the Civic Centre (Communities and Environment Reception), at other Council offices and at local libraries.

In some circumstances it may also be necessary for the Council or the applicant to publicise the application by putting up a notice at the site and/or by placing an advertisement in the local paper.

What action can I take?

Before you make any comments, it is advisable to look at the application. You can do this on the website or by coming into the Communities and Environment reception. Our office is open: Monday to Thursday 8.45am - 5.00pm. Friday 8.45am to 4.30pm. Please bring a note of the application number which is printed in the top right hand corner of the notification letter and on the left hand side of the weekly list e.g. DC/O5/011111/FUL.

Applications can be viewed on our website at: <http://public.gateshead.gov.uk/online-applications/> You can search for an application either by its reference number or address.

How do I express my view?

Your comments should be made in writing (by letter, online or email). Telephone or verbal comments will not be taken into account. You may find it easier and quicker to comment through our website. To make sure there is no confusion any letter or Email should quote the site address and the application number. Please note that the Council cannot refuse planning permission simply because a number of people object to it.

The Council can only consider comment in relation to planning issues. You should ensure your comments are relevant. Relevant comments are those which relate to the use of land or buildings and the appearance of the area, including your own continued enjoyment of your own home.

Relevant examples:

- The effect of a greater number of vehicles in the area going to and from the development.
- Loss of light and or privacy.
- Over development out of character with an existing low density housing area.

Irrelevant examples:

- The effect the development may have on the value of your house.
- The development will obscure the view from the main window of your house.

Where do I send my views?

All views should be sent via our website (www.gateshead.gov.uk/publicaccess) or you can also write to the case officer quoted on the notification letter at: The Development Management Section Gateshead Council Civic Centre Regent street Gateshead NE8 1HH

How long do I have to make comments?

You have 21 days from either the date you receive the letter or the date on the weekly list in which to make your comments. If you are a neighbour, or have made a relevant comment and major changes are made to the application which lead to a revision, you will be informed and given a further time to comment (this may be less than 21 days).

What happens to the comments made?

Your letter will be acknowledged, normally within three working days. You should be aware that the Council cannot keep your comments confidential as the application file, including your letter, will be made available for inspection by the public and the applicant.

All relevant comments made will be taken into account before a recommendation on the application can be reached. We will assess how serious the issues raised by any representation are and whether they can be overcome by modifications to the proposal or by conditions imposed on the permission.

How is a decision made?

Major applications are decided by the Council's Planning and Development Committee. However the Service Director has been given the power by the Council ('delegated power') to determine certain kinds of applications. In these cases, if 5 or more relevant objections are received or if a Councillor objects it will then be decided by the Planning and Development Committee.

Councillors considering applications will be told about all representations, which will be summarised, at the Committee meeting.

Can I attend the Planning and Development Committee meeting?

Committee meetings take place every three weeks on Wednesdays. They are open to the public and the Council welcomes the public's attendance. If you would like to speak at a committee meeting please read the leaflet 'Having Your Say' which sets out the procedures.

Will I be notified of the decision?

All individuals who have made comments on an application in writing will be informed by letter once a decision has been made on the application.

If I don't like the decision can I appeal against it?

As a third party you do not have any right of appeal against a decision taken not in accordance with your views. Only the applicant can appeal against the Council's decision.