

## ***West Suffolk branded header***

### **Planning matters**

**August 2013**

## **Guide to having a say on planning applications**

### **Finding out about planning applications**

The council:

- publishes a weekly list of all applications received in local newspapers;
- places a notice on each application site; and
- writes directly to residential properties adjoining the site.

You can view details of all planning applications in the Forest Heath area on the council's website: [www.forest-heath.gov.uk/planning](http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk/planning)

For planning applications in St Edmundsbury you can view them on: [www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/planning](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/planning)

You can submit any comments you wish to make about an application through the website. Access to this information is also available at the relevant council's main offices.

You normally have 21 days to comment on an application.

### **Ways you can take part**

- Speak to the planning officer dealing with the application (this is always recommended and you will find their name with the application).
- Find out whether planning officers will make the decision to approve or refuse (determine) the application using powers delegated to them by councillors, or whether it is to be reported to the Delegation Panel, or to the Development Control Committee for decision.
- Put your comments in writing (post or email) to the council.
- You may also wish to contact your borough/district councillor.
- Details of where to send your comments will be with the application and you will need to refer to the relevant planning application number.

If delegated powers are used by officers or the panel to determine an application (the usual way in which decisions are made), your written comments, along with any others that are submitted will be fully considered in reaching a decision.

If the Development Control Committee will determine the application you can:

- speak to the committee yourself (see below for more details);
- elect a spokesperson for your group to speak to the committee;
- ask your borough/district councillor to speak on your behalf.

You can find out who your councillor is on:

[www.forest-heath.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.forest-heath.gov.uk/councillors)

[www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/councillors](http://www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk/councillors)

If you have sent your comments in writing and the application is going to the Development Control Committee for a decision we will write to tell you the committee's date and invite you to attend and speak at the meeting if you wish.

An agenda which includes the reports written by planning officers on each application to be considered by the Development Control Committee is publicly available five working days before the meeting. This will be available on the council's website or in the Bury St Edmunds office (for applications in St Edmundsbury) or Mildenhall office (for applications in Forest Heath).

**You will need to tell the committee clerk by 12 noon the day before the meeting if you wish to speak.**

Forest Heath: [committees@forest-heath.gov.uk](mailto:committees@forest-heath.gov.uk)

St Edmundsbury: [democratic.services@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@stedsbc.gov.uk)

### **At the committee meeting**

The planning officer to give a short presentation outlining the development proposal, key issues and any updated information.

When called by the Chairman, you or your representative will come forward to the committee table to make your statement before returning to the public seating area. Committee members may ask a visiting speaker to clarify an issue after a statement is made.

The Chairman has the discretion to vary procedures as necessary to assist the conduct of the meeting.

Order of speakers:

1. A planning officer will provide an update if necessary;
2. Town or Parish Council if registered to speak
3. Objector to the application.
4. Applicant, agent or a speaker for the proposal;

The committee will then discuss the application and make a decision.

### **Speaking at the committee**

Usually, only one person is allowed to speak on behalf of the application, and one on behalf of objectors. If more than one person want to speak the time allowed (3 minutes) will be divided between the speakers.

Normally you will put your own case and it should not be necessary to ask a lawyer or other expert to speak for you.

If more than one person wishes to speak, in support of or against the same application, they will be asked to choose a spokesperson to represent them in each case. If a consensus cannot be reached on a spokesperson, only the first person that registered to speak will be allowed to do so.

The committee clerk will draw up a programme of speakers and the committee Chairman will call the names when it is time to speak. You can speak for up to three minutes, after which you will be asked to stop. Visual material or handouts are not permitted.

### **What you can speak about**

You should explain the effect the development would have on you. Your comments should be relevant to planning issues, which could include the following:

- residential amenity;
- highway safety and traffic; noise;
- disturbance;
- nuisance;
- design;
- appearance;
- layout;
- character of the area;
- historic buildings;
- trees;
- planning policy (Local Plan, Structure Plan);
- Government guidance.

Committee or delegated decisions cannot take into account non-planning issues such as private property rights, loss of a view, effect on property value, developers' motives, and so on. The wider public interest needs to be taken into account in planning decisions, along with national and local planning policies.

Do not:

- make statements of a personal or slanderous nature which could result in legal action against you;
- be abusive;
- interrupt other speakers, or the committee debate.

### **The arrangements above for speaking only apply when an application is on the agenda of the Development Control Committee**

The arrangements do not apply to:

- formal consultees, such as Suffolk County Council, English Heritage, the Ramblers Association, and so on;
- applications dealt with under delegated powers by the Development Manager or through the Delegation Panel;
- legal and enforcement issues;
- information, policy and performance reports.

If you have made written comments about any application we will inform you of the decision. You can also view the detailed decision notice on the council's website.

### **Committee meeting locations**

Forest Heath District Council: Council Chamber, District Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council: Conference Chamber, West Suffolk House, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU.

### **Development control contacts**

Forest Heath District Council: Tel: 01638 719480. Email: [dc@forest-heath.gov.uk](mailto:dc@forest-heath.gov.uk)

St Edmundsbury Borough Council: Tel: 01284 763233. Email: [planning.helpdesk@stedsbcc.gov.uk](mailto:planning.helpdesk@stedsbcc.gov.uk)