How To Make Comments On An Application

Of course it's entirely up to you how you comment on any application. So you may take or leave the advice that follows. It's simply a set of tips based on what we've found tends to have some influence on planners when they make their decisions. But there'll always be local knowledge that falls outside these suggestions, and written in the right way that can be useful too.

You can of course support or object to an application. If you want to support, we think you will be able to do that without any guidance from us, so what follows applies mostly to writing objections - though it could be used to support an application if you feel you need to justify your support.

Here are some of the main things about an application you may wish to comment on:

1) Where the proposed site is located;
2) The proposed layout, number and density of buildings;
3) The size of the proposed new houses;
4) The effect on the landscape;
5) The effect on the character of the village;
6) The effect on historical features, which may include listed buildings;
7) Access to and from the site and highway safety;
8) The risk of flooding, on the site itself, and to other properties as a resulting of building the new houses;
9) The effects on trees, hedges and wildlife, particularly protected species;
10) The design and appearance of the new buildings;
11) The effects on communal views;
12) The inclusion of affordable housing, if any;
13) Overshadowing / overlooking of neighbouring properties and loss of privacy;
14) Will local infrastructure (roads, schools, health facilities etc) be adequate for the number of new houses proposed.

If you just want to make comments highlighting any of the factors above, that's fine. But it’s important to understand that overall applications will be assessed against planning policies, so we think in a perfect world objections should also be based on those policies, by highlighting if and where an application contravenes any of them. If you'd like to include policy references with your comments, the part of this guide that deals with that - which we warn you, is probably the most complex part - can be found on our site at https://www.stnp2036.org/relevant-policies-that-may-apply-to-an-application.html

But if you don't want to go to the extent of referencing policies, don't worry! If you simply make reference to the points listed above, a planning officer will be able to relate your comments to policies.

Planning applications are assessed on facts not emotion. Now sometimes you may disagree the facts presented in an application are accurate, sometimes you may think relevant facts have been deliberately missed out, and sometimes you may find they are downright falsehoods! It's perfectly valid to point such things out in your comments, and to ask the planning officer to ignore any false or misleading claims made by an applicant. If you can give clear evidence as to why the application is inaccurate, all the better.

In addition to inaccuracies and policy violations, you may feel that your objections to an application could be overcome if certain changes and improvements to it were made. Explain those things in your objection. If the planning officer agrees with you they may become planning conditions that the applicant has to adhere to later when building takes place.