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### What is a planning application?

In most cases anyone wishing to extend or make external alterations to their property, construct a new building, or change the use of an existing building must make an application to the council for planning permission.

### Publicity for planning applications

When planning applications are received by the council we will publicise them by a variety of means, including individual letters to local residents (known as 'Notification of Application' letters), site notices and notices in the Bristol Evening Post. For further information on the publicity arrangements you can see the council's [Statement of Community Involvement](#)

### How can I find out more about the application?

If you've received a "Notification of Application" letter, this will tell you the address of the property in question and the description of what is proposed in the application. Applications generally include an application form, drawings and other relevant technical reports and it is always advisable to see this information before you make any comment.

You can find this information on the website [www.bristol.gov.uk/planningonline](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/planningonline), or online at our Customer Service Points across the city (details about location of service points can be found on the website [www.bristol.gov.uk/customerservicepoints](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/customerservicepoints)). Sometimes, such as for very large applications special arrangements may be made. Copies of the documents relating to a planning application may be available at a local library or somewhere close to the site.

Details of this will be in the Notification of Application letter.

If you have difficulty accessing the internet, or if you need this information in other formats or languages please call us on 0117 922 3000 to discuss what alternative arrangements can be made.

### How can you make your views known?

The council will take the views of members of the public, amenity or resident groups, and other interested parties into account when making a decision on the application. You can send your comments by post, or by email to the address on the accompanying letter or you may comment online via the website.

When writing, please give the application number, the address of the property concerned and your name and address. It is also helpful to add in the name of the council's case officer which you will see in the top right hand corner of the Notification of Application letter.

We ask for a reply within 21 days because a decision on whether to proceed with the application can be taken anytime after this period. However, all written comments received up to the time the decision is made will be considered, that is within eight weeks for most applications or 13 weeks for a major application.

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## applications Your chance to have your say

### Other support

There may be a resident or amenity group in your area who may be able to help you find further information on the planning process, and/or get the views of others who may be affected. Please see the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network website [www.bristolnbn.net](http://www.bristolnbn.net)

In addition, the council has set up a network of neighbourhood groupings, called Neighbourhood Partnerships, who again may be able to offer advice and assistance. The Neighbourhood Partnerships enable residents to raise issues of concern with their councillors and to meet face to face with agency representatives to discuss how these issues can be resolved. Each Neighbourhood Partnership has a named contact officer who will provide additional information and support to residents who wish to get involved. Further information is available on our web site at [Neighbourhood Partnerships](#).

If you would like independent advice on a planning matter, South West Planning Aid may be able to help: they are a national charity which provides free professional advice on planning to community groups and individuals who cannot afford professional fees. They can be contacted at [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk).

### Planning obligations

Some larger proposed developments may require additional or improved community services and facilities, as without which the development may have a detrimental effect on local amenity and the quality of environment. In such circumstances, we would expect the developer to offer measures which would make a positive contribution to mitigate the impact of new development. These are called “planning obligations”, and these obligations to enhance the quality of both the development and the wider environment are controlled by “Planning Agreements”.

The council's [Supplementary Planning Document 4 \(SPD4\)](#) sets out the basis for when and where such contributions are required, and this might be something that you would want to offer a comment about when you write to us. For example, the proposed development could be required to make a contribution to improve recreation facilities in your area, and you might like to offer a view on priorities in the area.

### What will happen to my comment?

When we receive your comment, we will only acknowledge receipt if you have commented by email or included an email address. We will not normally contact you again during the life of the application, unless the application is to be determined by a committee of councillors or it is significantly altered or withdrawn.

All written comments will be considered, but only planning issues can be taken into account in deciding whether to approve or refuse the application. Typical planning issues will include :

- the effects of a proposed use, such as traffic, noise, overshadowing on neighbouring homes
- a change in the appearance of the building.

Other issues such as a loss of view, affect on property values or disputes about shared walls cannot be taken into account as they are not considered to be a relevant planning issue.

Any written comments you make regarding an application will be available for public inspection and the person making the application may well wish to see your letter. Your reply will also be made public via the website.

We will not display your telephone number, signature or email address to the public.

## How is a decision made?

Most applications are determined by senior officers of the Planning Department using authority delegated to officers by the council. In general this would be the case for the minor and non-contentious applications that accord with the Bristol Local Plan.

If a decision is made in this way, we will always write to you advising you of the decision and telling you where you can see the details of the decision and accompanying officer report.

Large scale and particularly sensitive or controversial applications are usually decided by elected councillors at a Development Control committee meeting. Such decisions are made after considering a report prepared on behalf of the Service Director, Planning & Sustainable Development. This report will include a summary of the views expressed in connection with the application but doesn't include copies of each individual letter.

Development Control Committee Meetings generally take place on Wednesday afternoons and are open to the public see [www.bristol.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/meetings). Copies of the reports are available five working days before the meeting and can be seen in the reception area in the Council House. They are also available online at the city council's website.

There are rights to speak at the committee meeting, details are available on the website on 'Having Your say at Bristol City Council's [Development Control Committees](#)'. It is important to note that in order to ensure that you will be able to speak at the meeting that you register your interest in accordance with the guidelines by 12.00 noon of the day before the committee meeting.

You can find out the method of decision and likely decision date from the allocated case officer, and you can track the decision of the committee using our website.

## Appeals

The applicant has a right of appeal against any decision taken by the council and this can be against:

- a refusal
- any conditions imposed on an approval,
- any failure of the council to determine the application within eight or thirteen weeks.

Appeals are submitted to and dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate ([www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk](http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk)). All those originally informed of the application and anyone who has commented will normally be notified and given the opportunity to make further comments.

## What can you do if you are dissatisfied with the council's decision?

The right of appeal against a decision is only open to the applicant, and if the council approve an application, third parties such as neighbours cannot appeal. However, if you think the council reached its decision in an improper way, you can complain to the Corporate Complaints Manager using the Fair Comment Complaints Procedure available online ([www.bristol.gov.uk/complaints](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/complaints)), or by picking up a copy of the Fair Comment leaflet at any council reception.

If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman for England and Wales. They will review the procedures and practices in making the decision, but will not support a complaint solely on the basis that the council's decision is considered wrong.

# **applications** Your chance to have your say

## **Contact details**

City Development,  
Brunel House,  
St Georges Road,  
Bristol BS1 5UY

Enquiries line: 0117 922 3000

Email: [development.management@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:development.management@bristol.gov.uk)

Website: [www.bristol.gov.uk/planning](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/planning)

### **Office opening hours for appointments:**

Monday to Friday:

Between 9am and 4pm

## **Translation/Special Requirements**

If you would like this information in a different format, for example Braille, audiotape, large print or computer disc, or community languages, please contact Customer Services on 0117 922 3000