

How to comment on a planning application



Find the details of the planning application online

- If there is a planning notice on site it will have an application reference number which you can search on the planning websites for [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole \(BCP\) Council](#) or [Dorset Council](#).
- If you do not know the application number you can also search by address, postcode or date the application was submitted to help you find the correct one.
- You can view the proposals for the site and review any supporting documents such as ecological surveys that have been submitted and also review comments made by other people.
- This can help inform your response or allow you to add weight to what others have already said.

Submitting a response

- Responses can be submitted in writing, via the post, by email or online through the planning portals according to the contact details provided for [Dorset Council](#) and [BCP Council](#).
- Letters and supporting documents can be submitted as attachments with an online comment – submitting comments through the online portals ensures they are processed and added to the application documents quickly.
- Make a note of the deadline for comments and ensure your response is submitted in time. The consultation period is typically around 3 weeks.

What to include

- Address your letter to the case officer and state the application number (address and proposal for the site can also be helpful).

- Be clear about whether you are objecting to or supporting the application.
- Keep your letter brief, calm and polite and avoid using emotive language.
- When referring to any of the application documents in your response, make it clear which documents you are referring to and provide page references or refer to section or paragraph numbers for clarity. It also helps to include the date of the relevant document. This provides clarity if documents are subsequently updated and resubmitted.
- Avoid including any information you are unsure about or exaggerating claims which may discredit the content of your response.
- Include information about important habitats and wildlife which have been found at the site – attach supporting evidence such as photographs if appropriate.
- Avoid making any unsubstantiated criticism of the applicant or the council.
- Base your letter on planning issues rather than your personal opinion – it may be more appropriate to object on grounds other than wildlife, if these are more likely to affect the decision (other planning issues can include development ‘need’, access, traffic and transport, drainage, visual impact, layout, design and impact on local infrastructure and amenities)
- Refer directly to any relevant policies from the Local Plan or national legislation.
- State how the application could be changed to address your objections. If measures to mitigate or avoid the impacts you are concerned about may be possible, suggest how it could be done.

