

"I have obtained the following guidance from our Planning Department on how responses to Planning Consultations are best set out.

1. Be concise and to the point. Bullet points are better. An essay is less easy to read and understand.
2. Stick to facts that can be verified. Anecdotes and guesses don't carry any weight with Planners, Planning Committees or Planning Inspectors. They can damage your case either way.
3. Avoid emotional responses. The issues are emotive, but emotional replies cloud the issue and don't carry much weight.
4. Identify the positive as well as the negatives, consider them from a balanced point of view and summarise them. You may find benefits you hadn't thought of, and it will show a willingness to have an open mind.
5. Benefits - Bring out benefits that the development may bring
 - New blood.
 - Scope for improvement to infrastructure like road junctions, pavements and public transport.
 - Improvements to public facilities like sports facilities, libraries and parks.
 - Community Infrastructure Levy or CIL brings significant funding to communities. 15% goes to Parish and Town Councils and 25% if a made Neighbourhood Plan is in place.
 - New employment opportunities.
 - New affordable and social housing.
6. Confine your comments to what are called 'Material Considerations' as only they can be considered under the relative regulations. These categories can be used to support as well as opposed an application. They are:
 - Overlooking/loss of privacy
 - Loss of light or overshadowing
 - Parking, highway safety
 - Noise
 - Effect on listed buildings and conservation area
 - Layout and density of building
 - Design, appearance and materials
 - Disabled person's access
 - Nature conservation
 - Previous planning decisions
 - If making comment on Infra-structure, please make sure that you are objective. Give hard facts and figures and your qualification if appropriate. Avoid subjective comments; for example, 'the junction is congested at 9:00AM' which may be the case in a Chinnor context, but if compared with either the Headington or Wolvercote Roundabouts, it would be free flowing.
7. Avoid non-material considerations. They may be important to you, but the regulations don't allow them to be considered. These are:
 - Loss of view
 - Negative effect on the value of properties
 - Land ownership or restrictive covenants
 - Applicant's personal circumstances
 - Business competition
 - Too many already - however you can make the case that further increases in the population will put pressure on the community, changing it's character, and that the rate of increase in population will make it much harder to assimilate new residents into the Community.
 - Damage to property fears.
 - Disturbance during building works.
 - Other matters controlled under building regulations or other non-planning legislation.
8. It is probably a good idea to write out your thoughts and put them to one side for a while and then revisit them several times with these guidelines before submitting them."