



**South Downs National Park Authority**

**Redaction policy**

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**Responsibility: DM Systems and Technical Support Manager**

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**Approved by: Lynne Govus**

## Document History

Revision Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Author
1	7.2.2024	New document	Carol Hopkins-Brown

# Redaction policy

## **Documents associated with planning applications, planning appeals, and enforcement**

South Downs National Park Authority publishes planning applications, appeals and enforcement notices as part of its commitment to provide the statutory public register in electronic format.

Some documents associated with the statutory planning function will contain personal data. The way we process personal data and sensitive personal data is governed by the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 alongside the National Park Authority's own Data Protection Policy. The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) provides general advice on the processing of personal data and how to comply with the Data Protection Act.

There is a responsibility on all staff that are handling, storing and publishing planning information to ensure that it is done according to National Park Authority protocols and in line with data protection legislation. This includes staff at host authorities handling planning information on behalf of the National Park Authority under S101 agreements.

All information received by the planning authority will need to be captured, scanned and where necessary, redacted to ensure that information published online through the National Park Authority's online public register for planning does not breach the Data Protection Act.

The advice provided by the ICO confirms that applicants and objectors should be made aware of which elements of their personal information will be published on the website. When we acknowledge applications, applicants are advised that their application will be placed on the statutory public register. We already notify interested parties that all comments in relation to planning applications and appeals will be viewable on-line and in the public domain and this is reiterated on our main [website here](#), and on the [public register page](#).

## **Personal and Sensitive data - Criteria for redaction**

The Planning service will take care when publishing personal data or sensitive personal data on the website. The following data will be redacted so that it cannot be seen in all instances, using electronic methods, **or exceptionally the document withheld**, meaning it will not be publicly viewable on the website:

- signatures (hand written)
- personal telephone numbers including mobile phone numbers (this does not include obvious commercial or business phone numbers such as the contact details for a planning agent).
- personal email addresses (this does not include obvious commercial or business email address).
- registration plates on motor vehicles
- identification of children's/youth's information (including photographs)
- personal financial information (bank statements etc.)
- government issued ID – passports, driving licenses etc
- utility bills

This also includes special category data and criminal convictions data:

- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political opinions
- Religious or philosophical beliefs
- Trade Union membership
- Genetic data
- Biometric data (Where used for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person)
- Healthcare data
- A person's sex life
- A person's sexual orientation
- Information relating to Criminal Convictions and Investigations

The Planning Service will also use its discretion to redact or withhold any comments or information it considers to be derogatory or offensive. However, it is important to note that the publishing of comments and views expressed in letters and reports submitted by applicants, consultees and interested parties on the National Park Authority's website, does not mean that the planning authority agrees or endorses these views, or confirms any statements of fact to be correct. The SDNPA has [adopted a protocol](#) for dealing with any representations that are alleged to contain inappropriate content.

## **IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER**

**Anonymous/request to withhold name** - On our website, we have advice for interested parties who wish to comment on casework but would prefer to have their personal details withheld from view, or who wish to remain anonymous. [Important Information Related to the Submission of Representations and Confidential or Anonymous Representations Authority](#). This advice applies equally to interested parties who submit comments online and subsequently request their details be withheld, or representations submitted by email, or in writing. In these circumstances, it is important to screen the communication for emotive language through which they inadvertently identify themselves e.g.

- I am the closest/most impacted/only neighbour
- They will overlook my garden/see in my upstairs windows
- I have lived on the street for x years
- My wife/husband passed away recently
- I know the applicants well and our children went to school together
- Run off from their property floods my garden

Subsequently, all anonymised documents should be appropriately screened and redacted accordingly. Where the redaction required is extensive the interested party could be made aware and may be invited to revisit their comments and submit alternative comments. Where there are no contact details it may be safer to withhold the communication from public viewing.

**Special/personal circumstances** - Planning applications can contain references to special or personal circumstances, especially those relating to accommodating relatives, or development beyond defined settlement boundaries (e.g. justification for new rural dwellings). This may contain sensitive personal data and should be appropriately screened and redacted accordingly

**Persons with Disability** - Planning applications for improvements to disabled access or where the development seeks to secure greater safety, health or comfort will often contain health and medical details about the applicant and/or relatives of the applicant. These should be thoroughly screened and redacted accordingly.

**Certificates of Lawful Development** - Applications for Certificates of Lawful Development (existing uses) are accompanied by evidence to support the claim that the use has persisted for such a period as it is deemed to be lawful. These applications will invariably contain a wide variety of documents that will contain personal or financial information and should be appropriately screened and redacted accordingly.

## **Other data that may require redaction**

**Protected and notable species** - Planning application sites can often intersect areas where there exists evidence of protected and notable species. Applicants and their agents should consider this when compiling their submission and make the planning authority aware of any content referencing to protected and notable species in the submission. Submitted documents should be appropriately screened and redacted accordingly. Particular consideration will be given to the redaction of, **or exceptionally the document withheld**, references to:

- Badgers and badger setts which are protected under the [Protection of Badgers Act 1992 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/24);
- nesting bird species protected under [Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/60/schedule/1);
- rarer species of bat, some rarer dragonflies, butterflies and moths protected under [Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/60/schedule/5) ;
- plant species protected under [Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/60/schedule/8).

**Commercially sensitive information** - Planning applications often contain information that might be considered commercially sensitive but are included as justification for a development, for example, in regards viability. Applicants and their agents should consider this when compiling their submission and make reference to the presence of commercially sensitive information in a covering letter. These should be thoroughly screened and redacted accordingly.

**South Downs National Park Authority February 2024**