

A guide to public speaking at Planning Committees

What is the Planning Committee?

Most planning applications are determined by officers under “delegated” powers. However, the Committee determines significant or controversial applications. Members can “call in” an application for determination by Committee.

The Planning Committee comprises 12 elected Members.

The officers prepare a written report on all applications that are reported to Planning Committee. This report is an assessment of the proposal and all material considerations relating to the case. Material considerations include all letters sent in opposition or support. Meetings are attended by officers who present items and provide advice.

Members of the public have the opportunity to speak at Committee to state their views, either supporting or opposing specific proposals.

How do I know if the application I am interested in is going to Committee?

All ‘interested parties’ are advised when an application is going to Planning Committee, approximately a week before the committee meeting. The interested parties will be the applicant or their agent and all people who have made written representations about the proposal.

How do I arrange to speak at the Planning Committee?

Only individuals who have made written representations will be eligible to speak. If you would like to register to speak, please contact us on 01452 396775 or 01452 396746 any time after the publication of the agenda but by no later than 17.00 on the day before the Planning Committee meeting

How many people may speak about an application?

Registering to speak will not guarantee an opportunity to address the Committee. This is because with some applications there may be many requests to speak from the same viewpoint. In this situation we ask that a single speaker represents the group. The onus is upon the parties concerned to communicate with each other and agree who should act as the spokesperson. If an agreement on a spokesperson is not reached, the speaking slot will be given to the first registered speaker.

The Chair has the final decision as to who is to speak and has discretion to allow additional speakers.

How long will I be able to speak for?

We allow five minutes each for the applicant/supporter and objectors to an application. Speeches are timed and the Chairman will indicate when the time is up.

What will happen at the Committee?

The Committee will normally consider applications in the order in which they appear on the agenda. A planning officer introduces the application, outlining the scheme and reporting any late information that has been received.

The Chairman will then invite the registered objector to speak for 5 minutes to outline his/her views. This time limit will be strictly enforced

What will I be able to speak about?

Time is limited so comments to the Committee should be restricted to relevant planning issues such as;

- The impact of the development on the character of the area
- Design, appearance and layout
- Impact of development on neighbouring properties
- Highway safety
- Planning policy and government guidance

Avoid referring to non-planning matters such as;

- Boundary disputes or other property disputes
- The developer's motives
- 'Moral' arguments
- Matters covered by other laws
- Loss of 'view'
- Personality issues
- 'Trade' objections

Any speaker who makes statements that in the opinion of the Chair are considered to be racially motivated or discriminatory will be required to cease speaking and to leave the meeting. In these circumstances the Committee will then be instructed to disregard any comments made by the speaker

Contact

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