

Proposed changes to the Code of Practice for Councillors and Officers dealing with Planning Matters

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12. Public Speaking at Planning Committee

12.1 Wherever possible, objections or representations to planning applications should be made in writing. Written representations received will be made available for public inspection and objections summarised and reported to the Planning Committee. Councillors have the opportunity to inspect all letters received before the decision on the application is made.

12.2 The Council operates a scheme of public speaking at Planning Committee meetings. Normally the following people can speak at Planning Committee in relation to any specific application:

- One speaker representing the applicant – usually the applicant themselves or their agent.
- One speaker representing the objectors.
- The relevant Parish Council representative.
- A Division Member.

In exceptional circumstances the Chair has discretion to allow any other person to speak if it is considered necessary to do so.

Order of Speakers

1. The objector has ~~three~~five minutes to put their case.
2. A representative of the relevant parish council then has ~~three~~five minutes to put their case.
3. A division member who wishes to speak on the application will be allocated ~~three~~five minutes to put their case.
4. At the appropriate time, any other person allowed to speak at the discretion of the Chairman will be allowed ~~three~~five minutes to put their case.
5. Finally the applicant, or their representative, will be allowed ~~three~~five minutes to put their case.

There is no discretion for the Chair to extend the stated speaking times.

12.3 The speaker representing the applicant must have the permission of the applicant to represent them.

12.4 The speaker representing the objector(s) can be a neighbour, an interested individual

or a representative of a residents group.

12.5 The first objector to register to speak will normally be appointed as the spokesperson. Where there is more than one person wishing to speak, objectors are encouraged to agree on a spokesperson who is prepared to cover all the points of concern, so as to make best use of the time available.

12.6 Persons wishing to speak on an application, which is to be considered at a Planning Committee and who have previously made representations on the application, should contact Democratic Services by 12 noon 3 working days before the Planning Committee meeting. Contact details will be provided on the relevant Planning Committee agenda.

No late notification will be accepted and speakers cannot “turn up” to speak at Committee without the due notice being given.

12.7 The purpose of the scheme is to enable speakers to put forward any points they wish to make directly to the Committee. There will be no need to read any submission already made in writing, as this will already be summarised in the report Councillors have before them. If a representation is prepared by a speaker for the meeting it is helpful if a written copy could be provided to Democratic Services in good time in advance of the meeting.

12.8 Speakers should confine their comments to matters relevant to planning applications.

12.9 People wishing to speak at Planning Committee cannot hand out documentation to members of the Committee except at the discretion of the Chair. Photographs may be handed out, provided that a minimum of 20 copies have been delivered to the Council by 12.00 noon on the last working day prior to the meeting. There is also no provision to display maps, photographs or other information on boards or on screens in the meeting room on behalf of those making representations at the meeting.

12.10 The Chair of the Committee retains the right to decline to hear someone if they behave improperly, offensively or if they, in the Chair's view, intentionally obstruct the business in hand.

12.11 Officers may comment on the representations and the merits of the application in the light of those representations.

12.12 The Committee will proceed to debate the application and make a decision.

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