

## **PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEES – A PROTOCOL**

1. Two weeks before the relevant Planning Committee, a decision will be taken on which items should be placed on the agenda for that meeting.
2. For those applications that are to be placed on the agenda for the meeting, a letter will be sent to people who have responded to notification of the application saying
  - a) That the report is likely to be on the agenda for the meeting, including the date, time and venue.
  - b) That the full report including recommendations will be available 5 clear working days before the meeting from the appropriate Committee Administrator or via the Council website.
  - c) That the committee administrator should be contacted 5 clear working days before the meeting to verify that the application is on the agenda. The intention to make a statement on it must be confirmed by 5.00 p.m. two working days before the meeting.
  - d) Intended items cannot be guaranteed to make a particular agenda.
  - e) That, pursuant to the provisions of this Protocol, they may be entitled to speak at the meeting
3. A letter will be sent to the applicants informing them of their right to attend the meeting and (subject to clause 12 below) to make a statement if third parties have already expressed a desire to do likewise on the application. For the purposes of this protocol third parties are understood to be those persons directly affected by a development proposal but who, unlike the applicants themselves, have no right of appeal against any decisions which may be taken by the Council in its role as Local Planning Authority. In this context they must be objectors to the application in question. However, in the case of planning enforcement cases the comments from third parties could support the recommendations from officers and the applicant/owner would then be cast in the position of objector.
4. The scheme is available to allow public speaking on items appearing on a Planning Committee agenda.
5. **Third parties wishing to make a statement must contact the Committee Administrator by 5.00 p.m. two days (including the day of Committee) preceding the Committee (This will in normal circumstances be Monday 5pm).** Such advance notice is necessary in the interest of fairness to give the applicant notice of the intention and offer them the opportunity of reply.
6. People wishing to make a statement must arrive at the committee room 15 minutes in advance of the meeting where they will be met by the Committee Administrator.

7. A list of those requesting the opportunity to make statements will be drawn up by the Committee Administrator and provided to the Chair and members of that committee in advance of the meeting.
8. The applicant will only be allowed (subject to clause 12 below) to speak in response to a third party's statement.
9. Where both a third party and applicant/agent wish to speak, the third party will speak first.
10. Agents/spokespersons acting on behalf of third parties or the applicant may make a statement for them.
11. Only one third party speaker (or their agent/representative) will normally be able to make a statement on a planning application. This restriction will also apply in those cases where there are multiple applications in respect of the same site that are taken together. If agreement cannot be reached on who will speak, selection will be by the Committee Administrator after the drawing of lots.
12. For large planning applications the Chair of the Planning Committee may allow for more than one public speaker. Any changes to the speaking arrangements will be detailed in the letter sent to objectors (Point 2) and applicants (Point 3). Public speaking at Planning Committee is ultimately at the discretion of the Chair.
13. Where an item has been deferred from a previous meeting of the Planning Committee, and speakers addressed that previous meeting, further representations will be permitted in relation to that item. They may cover the same points made when the application was previously considered as the membership for that meeting might be different.
14. Where a report has been deferred from a previous meeting, and speakers addressed that previous meeting, a brief note of the main points made by those speakers will normally be included in the report when it returns to the Planning Committee for decision. The logistics of report production mean that it will not be practical for speakers to check that their comments have been correctly incorporated. Speakers are, therefore, advised to provide a written summary of their speech if they wish to have greater certainty that their words will be accurately reported.
15. At the meeting, speakers will be advised to direct their presentation to reinforcing or amplifying representations already made to the Council in writing.
16. Speakers may distribute a written summary of their speech to members of the committee but documents not previously submitted should not normally be circulated to the committee as all parties may not have time to react and councillors may not be able to give proper consideration to the matter. Speakers will be advised that substantive documents should be submitted to the Planning Officer as early as possible but by no later than 12noon on the date of the meeting.

17. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes, apart from when an interpreter is used or if the speaker has a learning disability. In such situations, the submission will be limited to six minutes.
18. If the speaker is a wheelchair user or has a hearing impairment they should contact the Committee Section in advance of the meeting to arrange for a portable PA or loop respectively. The Council welcomes the participation of speakers with a disability.
19. If the speaker's first language isn't English and they wish to address the committee, they can either bring a friend to interpret or make a statement on their behalf.
20. The Committee will normally deal with applications involving speakers first.
21. The speakers will be invited to make their statements in advance of any officer input on a case but after any member declarations.
22. Speakers will address the Committee before the Committee discusses the application.
23. As is the case in full Council, the Committee will not question the speakers.
24. The Committee will then debate the application and (where appropriate) reach a decision.
25. Members of the public or their representatives will not take part in the debate. They will not be allowed to question officers, Committee members or applicants.

**Revised January 2011**