

Public Speaking at Planning Committee - Protocol

1. The Council's standard neighbour notification and acknowledgement letters will inform people of the right to address the Planning Committee on a Planning Application.
2. Anyone who wishes to address the Committee will inform officers in writing by noon on the day before the date of the meeting.
3. Officers will inform applicants, objectors and supporters of the date and time of the Committee at which the application is to be determined.
4. The following maximum times apply regarding length of speaking rights:
  - (a) Applicant elects to speak or more than 6 material objections, each party to be given up to 5 minutes; and
  - (b) where 25 or more material observations, each party to be given up to 10 minutes.
5. The running order of the Committee will normally commence with those applications where members of the public/applicants wish to address the Committee.
6. When their item is to be discussed, objectors and supporters will be invited to present their case and the applicants shall then be given the right to respond.
7. Normally only one objector, supporter and the applicant will be allowed to speak. The Chairman shall decide whether or not to allow more than one representative to address the meeting.
8. A dialogue will not be permitted between the applicant/agent, objector, supporters and members of the Planning Committee.
9. The Planning Officer will summarise the arguments in the light of what has been said and expand, if necessary, on the recommendation.
10. Officers from other disciplines can also contribute, depending on the issues raised.
11. A decision will then be moved and voted upon by the Committee.

Site Visits by the Planning Committee - Procedural Rules

1. The purpose of a site visit is to assess the planning issues on the ground.
2. The deferred item is included in the next available agenda where applicants/objectors are allowed to address the Committee.
3. Site visits will normally take place on the afternoon prior to the evening Committee meeting.
4. Prior to the site visit the applicant/agent will normally be informed as to the time and date of the site visit.
5. Councillors should make every effort to attend the site meeting organised by officers for the Committee.
6. If attending the Committee site visit, Members should, wherever possible, travel together on the "official" coach.
7. Strict rules should govern the conduct of site visits:
  - Members will be accompanied by a Planning Officer and officers of other disciplines as required
  - The site will be viewed from wherever it is most advantageous to appreciate the issues; therefore Members may not need to leave the coach on which the visit is conducted
  - If it is necessary to leave the coach, an officer presentation shall take place before Members get off the coach
  - If Members need to get off the coach to appreciate the issues better, they will remain together as the Committee
  - Representations made by applicants or objectors on the site visit should not be accepted or encouraged
  - No decisions should be made on the site visit, nor should the impression be created that any Member(s) hold a particular view on the development of the site or a particular planning application