
PUBLIC SPEAKING PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Introduction

Herefordshire Council is committed to public involvement in the planning process. As part of this commitment there is a scheme of public speaking for applications that are being determined at a meeting of the Planning Committee. There are already extensive consultation and neighbour notification procedures for applications, but the ability to speak at the committee meeting enables an even wider opportunity for the applicant/supporters, objectors and the Parish/Town Council, to put forward their views directly to the Members of the Committee, before the decision is made.

How does the scheme work?

This scheme only operates for planning applications that for various reasons are the subject of a report to the Planning Committee. In order to have the opportunity to speak you will have:

- Made an application being the applicant or agent, or
- Made your views known as the Parish/Town Council
- Made your views known as a member of the public on an application within the period specified for receipt of representations.

The right to speak applies equally to those who are objectors or supporters or their representatives.

If the application is to be considered by the Committee you will be notified in writing and advised of the procedure for registering your wish to speak. Time will be allowed for speaking after the Chairman of the meeting calls the item and officers have given their presentation. After speaking is completed Members will normally debate the merits of the application and make a decision. In the case of some applications, Members may decide to defer determination. In these instances only those who registered to speak at the first meeting will be permitted to do so when the deferred item is considered at a subsequent meeting.

What is the registration period?

The letter to you will set out the date and time of the meeting that will consider the application(s) you are interested in. In order to register your wish to speak you must contact Committee Services no later than **48 hours** before the start of the meeting by telephone, fax or e-mail. The telephone/fax number and e-mail address will be set out on the letter.

Please be prepared to give details of a telephone number and times when you can be contacted to the Committee Services Officer. Where more than one person registers to speak for or against a proposal, speakers will be encouraged to share the time allotted. Where no agreement is reached the Committee Services Officer will allot the time to the first person to register. If you have any special needs, please advise the Committee Services Officer on registration.

Where and when are meetings held?

Normally meetings are held at Brockington at the time stated on your letter. A map showing its location is included below. If an alternative venue is chosen then you will be given notice.

At the meeting

If you have registered to speak you are asked to arrive at the Council Chamber **30 minutes** before the meeting starts. Committee Services Officers will be in attendance to advise on seating and to answer any other queries that concern you.

Order of speaking and time allotted

The order of speaking will be:

- (1) Parish/Town Council appointed representative(s) - **3 minutes in total**
- (2) Objectors - **3 minutes in total**
- (3) Applicant/Agent/Supporters - **3 minutes in total**

Please note that in each case there is just one 3 minute slot per category. Speakers are welcome to share a 3 minute slot.

In exceptional circumstances the Chairman has discretion to allow a longer period for speaking

Please ensure that your mobile phone is switched off at the meeting and note that the following are not permitted:

- visual aids such as plans or photographs;
- the circulation of material at the meeting;
- the taking of photographs;
- the use of voice recording equipment

What can I say?

Your comments should be limited to relevant planning issues already raised in your representation such as:

- planning policies, including those in the relevant Development Plan;
[These can be viewed on the Council's website – www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/2205.asp or, at Hereford Customer Services, Franklin House, Commercial Road, Hereford, HR1 2BB]
- appearance and character of the development;
- traffic generation, highway safety and parking;
- overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy;
- noise disturbance or other loss of amenities;
- layout and density of buildings;

You should avoid matters that cannot be considered by Committee such as:

- boundary disputes, covenants or other property rights
- personal remarks (i.e. the applicant's motives)

You may not ask questions of others at the meeting, nor, other than for clarification, will the Chairman ask you questions.

Once you have spoken you will take no further part in the meeting.

Important information

It is advisable to contact the planning application Case Officer a few days before the meeting to confirm the application is still to be considered. Applications are sometimes withdrawn at short notice. You do not have to attend a meeting since the points you have raised will be summarised in the report. The Committee Agenda is available for public inspection at least **5 working days** before the meeting. You should note that the Committee does not always agree with the recommendation of the Case Officer.

Committee Services can be contacted on:

