

Procedures for speaking at planning committees

1. If you wish to speak at a planning committee

1.1. Please register with Democratic Services before 12 noon on the working day before the Committee is due to meet by emailing - democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

1.2. The time, date and details of the venue can be found on the agenda.

1.3. Speakers are advised to be available from the advertised meeting start time, as the order that agenda items are discussed may vary.

2. At the meeting

2.1. The Committee Chair will run through procedures and check whether registered speakers are present. Agenda items may not necessarily be discussed in the order they appear on the agenda.

2.2. For each item, the Committee Chair will introduce the item and ask the Planning Officer to present their report and any updates. The Chair will then call any registered speakers to present their comments to the Committee.

2.3. The order of speakers will be:

- a) Planning Officer who presents their report
- b) One third party speaker for and one third party speaker against the proposal
- c) One Parish/Town Council representative
- d) One Ward Councillor
- e) Applicant or their agent/representative
- f) Planning Officer who concludes prior to Member discussion

2.4. Third party speakers for or against the proposal will be registered on a first come first served basis.

2.5. Where there is significant demand for public speaking on a proposal more than one speaker for and against the proposal may be permitted, but this will only be at the discretion of the Committee Chair. The Chair in determining whether

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to allow additional public speaking time should refer to the Guidance Note attached to this procedure.

- 2.6. Where more than one ward councillor wishes to speak they should in the first instance seek to collaborate and agree between them who will represent the ward and the content of the presentation. If ward councillors cannot agree this, the allocated time permitted (5 minutes) will be divided.
- 2.7. Third Party Speakers, Agent/Applicant and Town/Parish representatives will be limited to speak for 3 minutes each after which you will be asked to stop.
- 2.8. Ward councillors will be limited to speak for 5 minutes (unless the time allocation has been divided between ward councillors) after which you will be asked to stop.
- 2.9. Once speakers have completed their presentation to the committee the Committee Chair will allow committee members to question a speaker strictly on points requiring clarification and in order to inform the committee debate. The Chair reserves the right to terminate any contribution if it is deemed not to be addressing the clarification requested.
- 2.10. Once you have spoken and answered any questions from the committee members, you will be invited to return to the public gallery and observe the remainder of the meeting.
- 2.11. The Committee will then discuss and debate the application.

3. Tips on speaking

3.1. What should you speak about?

- a) Explain the proposal or the reasoning behind it, or
- b) Explain the effect of the development on you
- c) Make your comments within the framework of planning legislation, for example:
 - Planning Policy (Development Plan)
 - Government guidance
 - Design, appearance, layout
 - Residential amenity
 - Highway safety and traffic
 - Character of the area, historic buildings
 - Noise, disturbance, smell

What should you not do?

- d) Talk about non-planning issues (e.g., private property rights/right to a view, effect on property value, developer's motives etc)
- e) Make personal or slanderous statements which could result in legal action against you
- f) Refer to sensitive personal information about any other person (for advice on what this means please contact the Council)
- g) To make the most effective use of your time try not to repeat Committee report information

Guidance for Chairs of Planning Committees in the use of Chair's Discretion re. Public Speaking

This is guidance only. Ultimately the Chair has responsibility for deciding whether to use their discretion to allow additional public speaking time, however upon receiving a request to do so this should be considered allowing for reasonableness and practicality and considered on a "case-by-case" basis. The onus is on the Chair to ensure that the business of the meeting is dealt with in an efficient and business-like manner.

If the officer recommendation in the report before Committee is to REFUSE planning consent, the Chair would not normally exercise their discretion to allow additional public speakers, above those indicated in the Public Participation Policy.

If the officer recommendation in the report before Committee is to GRANT planning consent, the Chair should reasonably consider using their discretion to allow additional speakers, above those indicated in the Public Participation Policy, if: -

- (i) The application has generated a significant number of Third-Party objections, relating to material planning considerations;
- (ii) That advice is taken from both legal and democratic services staff as to the desirability of allowing additional Third-Party contributions in the interest of reasonableness, and the extent of any application of discretion;
- (iii) That the Chair exercises their discretion in a reasonable manner; there is no requirement to allow every requesting objector the opportunity to speak;
- (iv) If the Chair allows objectors increased time to speak, that an increase in speaking allocation for the Applicant/Agent/Third-Party in favour of an application is permitted, if requested; this does not have to be exactly the same but proportionate;
- (v) If the matter under discussion has previously been deferred that preference be given to objectors yet to speak on the item;
- (vi) That objectors who are direct neighbours or have financial interest in the site or own land or property adjoining the site are given preference;
- (vii) That the time permitted for Third-Party public speaking on an item does not exceed 30 minutes in total;
- (viii) That Third-Party public speakers are reminded to avoid repetition where possible and to observe the time allocation provided.