

Appendix 3 – Representations and Comments of Working Group

Key Points Raised	Working Group Comments (if any)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows good practice and had worked satisfactorily for him as an objector. • Had found it a handicap that he had not been permitted to show any data directly to the Committee e.g. table of data, map, photograph – the ability to project a Word or Powerpoint slide would match the facility given to applicants whose plans and documents were published in the Agenda documents. • Is there a way for the Parish Council to accredit a non-Member to speak on its behalf? It can be a difficult for smaller Parish Councils to find an available Member at short notice. • Smaller Parish Councils and the general public are unaware of the existence of the scheme – need something similar to the useful information on the website about making written representations embedded in the “tree” that leads to the detailed application. 	<p>The Working Group recognised that exercising discretion left the Council open to arguments of unfairness and would add significantly to the amount of additional information they had to take into consideration if every speaker was able to introduce new material at the meeting. It was noted that there was an opportunity for additional representations to be submitted up until 5.00pm on the day before the meeting which provides the Officers with the opportunity to consider all new material and advise the Committee on any implications.</p> <p>In terms of accrediting a non-Member of a Parish Council to speak on its behalf, the Working Group felt that this would be extremely difficult to police. However, it was suggested that the Scheme could be amended to allow the Parish Council Clerk to attend on behalf of the Parish Council and read an agreed statement setting out the views of the Parish Council.</p> <p>With regard to the “tree” on the website, it was noted that the Planning department was currently revising its procedures as a result of the systems thinking review and appropriate advertising of the scheme was something which could be addressed as part of that.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In favour of being able to speak. • Would have been helpful if Members had been able to question her. • Would be helpful to have formal statement of the motion passed as she left the meeting with a different understanding to what was published in the Minutes. 	<p>More than one of the consultees had suggested that they would like Members to have the opportunity to ask questions of the speakers. The general feeling amongst the Working Group was that there would be no real benefit and that it could considerably extend the length of meetings. (See also Paragraph 4.3.4 of the report).</p> <p>Members did not feel that it would be appropriate to issue a formal statement of the motion which had been passed and it was noted that the Minutes of the meeting were the definitive record.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully agrees with the initiative to invite members of the public to speak at Planning Committee and hopes it will become permanent. • 3 minute period is not long enough, suggest extending to 5 minutes. • No contribution from Committee Members made it seem as if the decision had already been made and the Members were condescendingly going through the motions of listening to the speakers but not taking on board what was being said. • If time slots are extended, it should allow time for Members to question the speaker. • A firm Chair is necessary to control proceedings. 	<p>A Member indicated that some high profile applications had been determined at the Planning Committee meeting earlier that week and 3 minutes had been more than adequate for the speakers to get their points across.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to speak at Planning Committee is positive. • Chance to get their voice heard, present a counter argument and allay fears about the application. • The position of the public speaker needs to be relocated – currently there are Members with their backs to the speaker which gives the impression that they are not really listening. • 3 minute slots are long enough. • Well looked after when attending the meeting. • If they had not been invited to attend the meeting would not have known about the scheme. • Information contained within the leaflet was sufficient. 	<p>It was noted that the Working Group had considered alternative room layouts following the Planning Committee meeting on 15 March. In future the room would be set out in a slightly different configuration to ensure that there were no Members with their backs to the speakers whilst ensuring that everyone was able to see the electronic clock. It was also agreed that it would be beneficial for the Councillors' name labels to be set out in advance and this would be trialled at the next meeting.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background in estate management, 33 years of experience in planning and development. • Whole process needs to be as clear and transparent as possible. • Needs to be an appropriate balance between expediency and propriety and the opportunity for a full discussion and open debate on planning issues. • Information leaflet is very clear, concise and informative. Comments as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who is allowed to speak at Planning Committee? Refers to a need to register in advance, first come-first served basis. There should be a degree of flexibility for higher profile, strategic applications where there are a variety of views. - 3 minute slots – should be the ‘norm’ but not necessarily long enough in every instance so there should be a degree of discretion. - Guidance on use of visual aids is confusing – states that no new written materials are permitted but it mentions that you can submit them by 5pm on the day before the meeting. Question mark over what is ‘new’ material. He would suggest that discretion be applied in terms of use of visual aids e.g. Powerpoint, photographs. - What speakers are allowed to say – long list of examples, he did not necessarily agree with what should and should not be taken into account. 	<p>The Working Group had considered the information leaflet and made suggestions for minor revisions.</p>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a Parish Councillor attends the Planning Committee on behalf of a Parish Council they should be reminded before they are allowed to speak that they should only give the formal view of the Parish Council and that no other view should be stated. 	<p>Whilst speakers were advised when registering that the Parish Council slot was to represent the formal view of the Parish Council, Members agreed that the onus should not be on Member Services to determine whether the representation correctly reflected the Parish Council's consultation response.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcomed the opportunity to present representations. The time restriction of 3 minutes dominated the process to a point where time management was more critical than what residents had to say. Suggestion to offer an additional 3 minutes to the objector if the applicant does not turn up to the meeting. Imagined that the Committee would have time to read through the presentation as it was delivered to the meeting. Concern that the remit for consideration of a planning application is not met if there is no debate or questioning. To restrict the Parish Council in this process is patronising and discriminatory and they deserve a better hearing than the opportunity offered by this process. For any input to influence the decision-making process, surely it would have to be registered and considered prior to the meeting or it would be classed as 'too late' i.e. beyond the closing date for objections. With the appropriate objective, remit, shared purpose and commitment from participants to manage it professionally, it must be a positive addition to the planning process – a good but timely decision will always be better than a quick decision. 	<p>3 minutes was generally considered sufficient by the majority of participants (see also Paragraph 4.3.3 of the report). If additional time was allowed for the objector this would create unfairness and bias.</p> <p>It was not the intention of, or relevant to, a scheme for public speaking. Written materials would detract from the points being made by the speaker.</p> <p>A scheme of public speaking was not a requirement for the consideration of a planning application with or without questioning.</p> <p>The Parish Council was a statutory consultee and as such has other opportunities to make representations on an application.</p> <p>Not relevant to the scheme – the planning process involved extensive consultation.</p> <p>The scheme was the last part of a long consultative and consideration process; it was the final opportunity to summarise the important points before a decision was made.</p>