

Appendix 4 – Representations received where no comment was needed

- Scheme is very good – archaic not to have one.
 - All other Councils within Gloucestershire allow public speaking and some even webcast their meetings – this facilitates important engagement from local residents and can only be positive for the Council's reputation.
 - Committee Members had discussed his points after he had spoken.
 - The process had helped him to gain information on reasons for decisions and allowed some items of the application to be improved via planning conditions.
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- Opportunity to speak is a good one – process can be sterile without it.
 - Allows balanced and diverse review of potential planning conditions.
 - Similar schemes have been implemented in other authorities across the county – Tewkesbury Borough could be seen to be refusing to engage with the community if the scheme was removed.
 - Administration of the scheme has been effective.
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- Although a representative of the Parish Council has been unable to attend the meetings, the Parish Council is supportive of the scheme.
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- Scheme worked well and gave interested parties the opportunity to have direct impact into the planning process.
 - Wish the scheme to remain in place.
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- Firmly believes in allowing public speaking at Planning Committee.
 - Experience as a Councillor who introduced public speaking to Cheltenham Borough Council as Planning Committee Chairman and from a business involved in making presentations to Planning Committees.
 - For many residents the consideration of a planning application may be the only interaction they have ever had with the Council and it is essential they have the opportunity to address the Committee rather than be limited to writing a letter – it is their “one day in court”.
 - Reputation of the Council – very few Councils do not allow public speaking at Planning Committee.
 - Listening to an individual, as opposed to reading letters, helps to concentrate the mind.
 - Allows a final opportunity to provide last minute clarification and confirmation of points raised since the publication of the Committee papers.
 - Provides a balance to the Committee - without public speaking the only voice heard and physical presence is the Case Officer.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Has not participated in the scheme but support it and will make use of it when the need arises.• Supports any measure to enhance the democratic accountability of the Borough Council. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chairman has observed one Planning Committee meeting.• Felt that public participation worked well.• System operates successfully elsewhere and contributes to transparency and the idea that all parties get a fair hearing.• In favour of the scheme continuing. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Administration side was straightforward – communications from Democratic Services about what would happen on the day were to a high standard and very helpful.• Ability to have one last say to the people whose decision would have an important impact on the local community was critical – gave true democratic participation in a complicated process.• Hopes that the practice of allowing the public to speak will continue. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Background – planning consultant for 8 years, Planning Officer at Cotswold District and Cheltenham Borough Councils.• Organisation of public speaking is very good and letters go out in good time.• Display with 3 minute countdown clock is preferable to alternatives such as Officer interrupting the speaker to advise when 1 minute is left.• Different from Cotswold District Council where it appears the speakers are not being listened to as no debate or comment comes from the item after they have spoken.• 3 minutes is long enough for each speaker and is consistent with other schemes across Gloucestershire.• Some London authorities have a scheme where people can just turn up on the day but the applicant can only speak if there is an objector speaking which is incredibly unfair.• Has been waiting for Tewkesbury Borough Council to bring in a scheme for a very long time.• Useful in situations where there may be something missing from the Officer report.• Before the scheme was brought in the only way to get additional points across was by putting them in writing – would expect that correspondence to Members has reduced as a result of the scheme. |

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- Main objective was to ensure a fair hearing and it was important from his point of view to ensure all relevant facts were presented to the Committee.
 - With the best will in the world he would not expect Members to take in all the details of every application on the schedule, particularly smaller applications which were not in their Wards.
 - All of the attention is focused on the speaker for that 3 minute period.
 - In his case, once he had spoken he felt that all of the relevant facts had been presented to the Committee and was confident that the final decision would be fair and democratic.
 - Very pleased that the scheme was brought in and hopes that it will continue.
 - 3 minute slots are long enough.
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- The opportunity to show how they felt and to point out factual inaccuracies in the Officer report was extremely valuable.
 - They had also been able to suggest conditions for incorporation into the planning permission.
 - Councillors had listened to their views and were sympathetic to their requests.
 - 3 minutes is quite a short amount of time but not inconsistent with what they wanted to do.
 - Vital that members of the public are able to continue to come and speak at Planning Committee.
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- Had not attended a Planning Committee meeting or used the scheme but certainly would if it was felt necessary.
 - Any involvement in the planning process was to be welcomed.
 - Parish Councillors were aware of the scheme and if they wanted to speak they would go to him as the Chair.
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- Winchcombe Town Council had used the scheme on a number of occasions and felt it was working well.
 - The scheme introduced democracy to the planning process and it was important that it continued.
 - 3 minutes was plenty of time for each speaker.

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- Critical that public speaking was introduced – there had always been an expectation that there would be an opportunity to speak at Committee.
 - Even if the result is not what they were hoping, speakers feel they have had a fair hearing.
 - 3 minutes is the optimum time for speaking, any less and speakers would not be able to get their points across, any more and they risked losing the audience. If the slots were for 5 minutes people would feel they needed to speak for the full amount of time.
 - Electronic clock works well and the beep is necessary to let speakers know when there is only one minute left.
 - Sitting at eye level with Members and Officers is important – does not have the same effect when sat at the back of the room or in the gallery.
 - Does not feel there is a problem with the current position of the speaker; although a couple of Members were sat with their backs to the speaker, they gestured to show that they were listening.
 - A strong Chair is vital. If people are allowed to speak beyond 3 minutes there could be a perception that the process is unfair.
 - Other authorities have an opportunity for Members to ask questions of the speakers but he recognised that it would be easy to lose control of the meeting if this was introduced.
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- Had never attended a Planning Committee meeting and favoured written comments but understood others did like the opportunity to speak at meetings.
 - Comments about information leaflet:
 - Who is allowed to speak? Reference to 'Ward' Councillor could be confusing, would suggest using 'Borough' Councillor.
 - 3 minutes per speaker – this should be at the discretion of the Committee as there would be certain cases where more time was required.
 - Saw potential difficulties with the first come –first served registration process. If someone had more knowledge and would do a better job, they should be the one to speak.
 - Whilst he realised that a 'Councillor' and a 'Member' were the same thing, other people might not so he suggested that this should be consistent throughout the document.
 - How are Parish/Town Councils involved? Not all Parish/Town Councils had offices where plans could be viewed.

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- Had used the planning process around 6 times in the last 4 years; once with the scheme in place.
 - Very much in favour of being able to speak for 3 minutes.
 - Opportunity to rectify any errors in the Officer's report and focus Members' minds on a particular application which is especially important when schedules are so large.
 - Makes Planning Officers more accountable.
 - Hopes that the scheme continues.
 - 3 minute slot was long enough to be able to get his points across.
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- Has served on Planning Committee for a total of 12 years in two different authorities both of which had public participation.
 - Found the involvement of Parish Councils invaluable.
 - Only Stratford-Upon-Avon allowed Members to ask questions of speakers. Slots were 3 minutes and were allocated to the Parish Council, an opponent and a supporter. Ward Members who were not Members of the Committee could also speak.
 - Ability to ask questions of speakers was extremely useful in terms of gaining clarification on points.
 - Members need to be warned not to ask leading questions and the Chair may need to intervene to stop this – believes that the benefit far outweighs the risk.
 - Public participation should lead to decisions on the best information available. May not be in line with the central government's wish for quick decisions but the interests of the residents and their communities demand the best information and the best decisions for the long term that can be achieved.