

## **Scheme for Public Participation at Planning Committee Meetings**

Members of the public have the right to attend most Committees arranged by the Council. In addition there is a Public Participation Scheme in place which allows the public to make submissions to meetings of the Council or its Executive Committee.

The majority of planning applications received by the Council are determined by Officers under the Council's delegation scheme; however, major or contentious proposals are dealt with by the Council's Planning Committee. The Committee usually meets every four weeks on a Tuesday morning at 9.00am in the Council Chamber at Tewkesbury Borough Council Offices and the Agenda is published on the Monday of the week prior to the meeting. It is a non-political meeting and all decisions are made strictly on planning grounds.

Everyone has the right to make written representations about a planning application and all are carefully considered before a decision is made. In addition to this provision, the public speaking facility was introduced in May 2015. It allows individuals to speak at the Planning Committee to state their views on specific proposals.

### **When is public speaking allowed?**

Public speaking is allowed on any application contained within the Planning Schedule of applications considered by the Planning Committee. Public speaking is not allowed on items contained within the Agenda such as potential enforcement action, tree preservation orders etc.

If public speaking has taken place on an application and it is then deferred, for example, to enable Members to visit the site or to allow further negotiations, further public speaking will be permitted when the application is reconsidered by the Committee; the original speakers will be automatically re-registered unless notification is received to the contrary.

### **Who is allowed to speak?**

The following individuals can speak and will be called in the following order:

1. A representative of the Town or Parish Council or Parish Meeting(s) within which the application is located – to put forward considered views of that Council/Meeting rather than their own independent views.
2. A representative on behalf of the objectors.
3. A representative on behalf of the supporters (this includes the applicant or their agent).
4. Ward Councillors.

No one is required to speak; it is an entirely voluntary opportunity.

Members of the Committee who have a Code of Conduct interest in an application within the Agenda which prevents them from participating in the debate will be able to speak for three minutes prior to leaving the meeting.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Town and Parish Councillors are reminded of their responsibilities under the agreed Code of Conduct.

## **Procedure for Applying to Speak at Planning Committee Meetings**

It is the responsibility of the person wishing to speak to check that an item is on the Schedule of Planning applications for the meeting. This can be done by calling the Planning Case Officer or the Democratic Services section. The Agenda for the meeting, including a copy of the Schedule, is published five clear working days before the meeting; this is usually the Monday of the week before the meeting. The Agenda and Schedule can be viewed at the Council Offices or on the Council's website [www.tewkesbury.gov.uk](http://www.tewkesbury.gov.uk)

Members of the public wishing to speak at Planning Committee meetings will need to telephone Democratic Services on 01684 272021 – this is the only way to register a request to speak. The deadline for registration is 10.00am on the day before the meeting.

Registering to speak will not guarantee the opportunity to speak at the Committee. This is because there may be many requests to speak on certain applications. The Chairman of the Committee will only allow one speaker "for" and one speaker "against". The onus is entirely on the parties concerned to communicate with each other and agree who should act as the spokesperson. If no agreement is reached the speaking slot will be given to the first registered speaker.

Public speakers are requested to submit a copy of their representations, either by email to [democraticservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk) in advance of the meeting or by handing a copy to the Committee Administrator at the meeting.

### **How long are public speakers allowed to speak?**

Within each speaking slot, a maximum of three minutes per speaker per application will be allowed in which to speak. This time must be strictly adhered to and speakers are encouraged to practice their presentation in order to use the time constructively.

### **What is the procedure for consideration of applications at Planning Committee?**

The Chairman will introduce the application and the Planning Officer may then provide a short presentation.

Speakers will be asked by the Chairman of the Committee to move to a designated seating area before they speak. The three minute limit will be strictly applied by the Chairman and speakers will be asked to return to their seats in the public area after that time.

When there are no further speakers, the Chairman will start the debate. Finally the Committee will be asked to take a decision on the application.

### **What are speakers allowed to say?**

Speaking slots will be purely provided to enable views to be expressed. Speakers will not be permitted to enter into debate with Members or Officers, nor with each other, and the Chairman will not allow cross-examination of either the applicant or the objector by either party.

No new written material, documents, plans, photographs or other visual aids may be presented on the day of the meeting.

Planning Committee meetings are held in public and comments of a personal, slanderous, defamatory or otherwise offensive or abusive nature must not be made. The Chairman of the Committee has the right and duty to stop anyone speaking if such comments are made and the speaker may then forfeit their opportunity to continue to speak.

#### Advice for Public Speakers

- Keep observations brief and relevant.
- Speak clearly using the microphone.
- Please limit your views to relevant planning issues, for example:
  - impact of the development on the character of the area;
  - external design, appearance and layout;
  - impact of development on neighbouring properties;
  - highway safety; and
  - government guidance.
- Avoid referring to non-planning matters as these cannot be taken into account when the Committee determine the application e.g.:
  - “trade” objections such as competition issues;
  - boundary or property disputes;
  - the developer’s motives;
  - “moral” arguments;
  - matters covered by other laws;
  - loss of “view”;
  - personality issues; and
  - reduction in property values.
- Please remember that you are addressing Members of the Planning Committee and not the public gallery.