

Teesdale District Council

Public Speaking at Planning Committees

This leaflet tries to answer some of the questions you might have about public speaking, the procedures and what to expect at the meeting itself and is equally applicable to objectors, applicants, agents and supporters.

- Q. ***Does the right to speak scheme alter the existing procedures for publicity for planning applications?***
- A. No. Planning applications will continue to be publicised in well-established ways including neighbour consultation, site notices and notices in the Teesdale Mercury. If you wish to object to a proposal you should do so in writing within 14 days to the Development Control Manager giving, as fully as possible, your reasons for objection. Your objection will be acknowledged. Where applications are reported to Planning Committee for determination, letters of objection are summarised in the committee report and copies of the letters are also circulated so that members have the fullest possible information.
- Q. ***If I object to a proposal, do I have to speak at the committee meeting?***
- A. No. Your objection is summarised in the committee report and copied to all members. It is entirely your decision as to whether or not you attend the committee meeting. You may feel that, because the officers' recommendation is to refuse the application, there is little point in amplifying your objection. Please note, however, that officer recommendations are not always accepted by the committee.
- Q. ***If I am the applicant or agent, do I have to speak at the committee meeting?***
- A. No. If the officer recommendation is to approve the application you may decide there is little to add and you are urged not to take up committee time in repeating the officers' comments. If the officer recommendation is to refuse the application you may wish to present a case for approval of the proposal. Please note that officer recommendations are not always accepted by the committee.
- Q. ***If I want to speak, how do I arrange to do this?***
- A. Before the committee meeting we will write to the applicants or their agents advising of meeting details (date/time/venue etc); every person who has commented in writing about applications to be considered at that meeting will also be informed. If you want to speak you must contact the **Democratic Services Unit**, either in writing, by e-mailing <mailto:democraticservices@teesdale.gov.uk> or by telephoning Donna Harris direct dial (01833) 696291, by no later than 4pm, two working days before the committee meeting.

Q. ***What is the order of speaking on each item at Planning Committee?***

A. The planning officer will introduce the item.

Objector(s) then speak. (Total maximum of 5 minutes).
Committee members may question objector(s).

Applicant/agent/supporter(s) then speak. (Total maximum of 5 minutes).
Committee members may question applicant/agent/supporter(s).

Please note: Speakers may ask questions but it should be noted that the Council has no powers to require others to speak.

A member of the Council who has both a personal and prejudicial interest in the application, subject to having previously requested permission from the Committee Chair, may address the committee. (Maximum of 5 minutes).
Committee members may question the member.

Please note: Whilst the member with a prejudicial interest will be permitted to be present from the beginning of the item, he/she must play no part in the proceedings other than to make an address and answer any questions from members.

The planning officer will have an opportunity to respond to comments made.

A member with a prejudicial interest who has addressed the committee must leave the meeting at this point until the item has been determined (and may not remain in the public gallery).

The planning officer may wish to round up, giving any guidance to members which he/she considers pertinent.

The committee will debate the application and a decision will be made.

Q. ***What will be the order of items at the committee meeting?***

A. Copies of the agenda will be available five days before the meeting. All the applications to be considered at that meeting will be listed but the time taken to determine each item is difficult to predict and thus an accurate assessment on when an application will be heard cannot be given.

Q. ***How long will I be able to speak for?***

A. There is a time limit of 5 minutes for each category of speakers, including a member who has been permitted to speak. Thus objectors, for example, will normally be heard in the order in which they have contacted the Democratic Services Unit until the 5 minutes have expired. Objectors are encouraged to get together and make a joint case by appointing a representative or varying the order of speakers to ensure that all the points which they wish to make can be

made within the 5 minutes jointly allowed.

Q. *Can I ask questions of other speakers?*

- A. You may include questions in your address to members, but the committee has no powers to require other speakers to answer your questions. It may be better if any questions are asked before the meeting and that any comments you make are based on the information given to you. You must not interrupt other speakers, nor interrupt the committee debate.

Q. *What are the relevant issues in considering proposals?*

- A. These may vary according to the nature of the proposal and the site but applications must be determined in accordance with the approved Development Plan unless material considerations outweigh that approved policy. Material planning considerations may include the following:

Structure Plan and Local Plan
Government Guidance and Orders
Case law and previous decisions
Highway safety and traffic
Design, appearance and layout.
Conservation of areas, buildings, trees etc.
Impact on residential amenity – privacy, noise, disturbance, smell, etc.

Q. *What issues are not relevant in considering proposals?*

- A. These too vary from case to case but the following are not usually material planning considerations and cannot therefore be given consideration in the determination of the application:

Matters covered by other laws (e.g. alcohol licence).
Private property rights (e.g. boundary or access disputes).
Who the applicant is, their morals or motives.
Loss of view from property over other people's land.
Effect on value of property.
Possible future development.

Q. *Who do I contact if I have any other questions?*

- A. In respect of public speaking, please contact the Democratic Services Manager. If you have any queries in respect of the planning application please contact the case officer for that application as set out in the acknowledgement and notification letter.