

# Public speaking on planning applications

June 2011

**Applicants, their agents and members of the public are allowed to speak at council meetings when planning applications are considered under the Town and Country Planning Legislation. This advice note tries to answer some of the questions you might have about our procedures. It is based on some simple rules that the council has formulated in order to make the system as fair and easy as possible. This advice does not apply to committee site meetings.**

## **Who can speak?**

No more than two speakers are allowed to speak about a planning application. One person is permitted to speak in support of the proposal and/or one person against. If you are the applicant and the application has attracted supporters, you may speak or defer to a supporter. If you are one of a number of objectors, a spokesperson will have to be agreed. If agreement cannot be made, the Chairman of the Committee will select the person who first notified the Solicitor to the Council of their wish to speak or agree to hear more than one speaker and reduce the time allotted to each speaker.

## **How do I register my wish to speak at a meeting?**

If you wish to speak you must write or send a fax or email to the Solicitor to the Council (see the contact information at the end of this document) indicating your request to speak, giving details of the planning application and indicating whether you wish to speak for or against the application. You must include your name, address and telephone number and it must be received by noon on the day before the meeting.

## **If I am an objector, do I have to speak at the Committee meeting for my views to be taken into account?**

No. If you sent us your comments within the consultation period, your objections are reported to the Committee anyway and it is up to you whether or not you wish to attend the meeting. You may decide that, because the officer's recommendation is to refuse the proposal, there may be little point in amplifying your objection; you should note, however, that the Committee does not always accept the officer's recommendations.

## **If I am the applicant or agent do I have to speak at the Committee meeting?**

No. If the officer's recommendation to the Committee is to approve the proposal you may decide that there is little to add to the report and you are urged not to take up Committee time in repeating the officer's comments. If the officer's recommendation to the Committee is to refuse the proposal you may wish to present your case for approval. You should note, however, that the Committee does not always accept the officer's recommendations.

## **What order will the items be in the Committee meeting?**

Public Speaking on Planning Applications will normally be at the start of the meeting. Unless the Chairman considers otherwise the Committee will normally hear those wishing to speak against the application first, and the applicant or their supporter second.

## **For how long will I be able to speak?**

Public speaking on planning applications is limited to three minutes per applicant and/or supporters and three minutes for the objectors, subject to a maximum of public speaking period of 30 minutes. Each speaker will only be permitted to address the Committee once and will not be able to participate further during consideration of the item. No visual aids/presentations or display boards are permitted.

## **What are the relevant issues?**

The relevant issues will vary with the nature of the application and the site, but may include: local planning policies, Government Circulars and advice, case law and previous decisions, highway safety, noise, disturbance, design and appearance, conservation (buildings, trees etc), overshadowing, loss of privacy and loss of light etc. Detailed guidance about planning processes and procedures can be found at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk), which is operated by central government.

## **What issues are irrelevant in reaching planning decisions?**

Under planning legislation the following issues are not usually relevant: matters covered by other laws (e.g. alcohol licence), private property rights (e.g. boundary or access disputes), the developer's morals or motives, loss of a private view over other people's land, and effect on the value of property.

## **How long will public speaking on planning applications last and what happens next?**

Normally for up to 30 minutes, but where there are a large number of applications with people wishing to speak, the Chairman might reduce the time allowed for each speaker, or exceptionally, allow more time in total. Following this, the Committee will determine the applications in the order listed on the agenda.

## **What happens if the applicant decides to amend the application at the meeting?**

Applicants who make a suggestion to the Committee that they will modify their submitted proposal to meet the planning requirements will normally be invited to submit a new application. This will enable the revised proposal to be properly assessed, as well as allow interested people to make their views known. The Committee's decision will be determined on the basis of the application as it stands at the meeting.

For further information please contact the Council's Democratic Services Team who represent the Solicitor to the Council:

**Planning and Regulatory Committee**

Sue Efford tel 01275 884244 email [Sue.Efford@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Sue.Efford@n-somerset.gov.uk)

**North Area Committee:**

Joanna Pyke tel 01934 634911 email [Joanna.Pyke@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Joanna.Pyke@n-somerset.gov.uk)

**Central Area Committee**

Leo Taylor tel 01934 634621 email [Leo.Taylor@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Leo.Taylor@n-somerset.gov.uk)

**South Area Committee:**

Heather Sanders tel 01934 634907 email [Heather.Sanders@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:Heather.Sanders@n-somerset.gov.uk)

Alternatively, you can write to them at the Town Hall, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, BS23 1UJ,

**This publication is available in large print, Braille or audio formats on request.**

**Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.**

**Please contact 01275 888 811.**