

PROTOCOL FOR COUNCILLORS SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Introduction

This protocol has been drawn up in response to *'Probity in Planning – Advice for Councillors and Officers making planning decisions (Local Government Association, December 2019)*.

More specifically, Part 10 – Public Speaking at Planning Committee, states that “where public speaking is allowed, clear protocols should be established about who is allowed to speak, including provisions for applicants, supporters, **ward councillors**, parish councils and third party objectors”.

This protocol should be considered alongside the Public Speaking Protocol Document, which governs third party objector and applicant submissions.

1. Two weeks before the relevant Planning Committee, a decision will be taken on which items should be placed on the agenda for that meeting.
2. Members of the Planning Committee pool and the relevant ward councillors if an application in their ward is being considered will receive an agenda 5 clear working days prior to the meeting concerned.
3. Permission to speak is at the Chair's discretion and ward councillors wishing to speak should contact the Chair in advance of the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent by email to the Chair and Committee Administrator at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and shall not unreasonably be refused.
4. The Chair will normally organise the meeting to ensure that applications involving speakers are dealt with first.
5. Only one ward councillor will normally be allowed to speak on an application in their ward unless special circumstances apply. Special circumstances could include ward councillors wanting to represent opposite sides or when an application affects a neighbouring ward resulting in a councillor from that ward also being allowed to speak.
6. The order of speaking is usually as follows and subject to the Chair's discretion:
 - a. officer presentation,
 - b. third party objector,
 - c. applicant,
 - d. member of parliament and / or ward councillor(s) (not sitting on the committee)
 - e. the committee with any ward councillors on the committee speaking first
7. Members of Parliament and ward councillors should seek to limit their submission to 5 minutes.

8. Members of Parliament and ward councillors' submissions must be relevant to the application being heard.
9. Ward councillor speakers may distribute a written summary of their speech to members of the committee but documents not previously submitted should not normally be circulated to the committee as all parties may not have time to consider them and committee members may not be able to give proper consideration to the matter. Ward councillor speakers should submit substantive documents to the Planning Officer well in advance of the meeting.
10. Ward councillors (not on the planning committee) will not take part in the debate. They will not be allowed to question officers, Committee members or applicants.
11. Where a ward councillor has a pecuniary interest in an application, they may not speak at Planning Committee under this Protocol.
12. If a councillor has a pecuniary interest in an application and they are entitled to speak under the Planning Committee's Public Speaking Protocol, they shall nominate a representative to speak on their behalf or feed in their views to a 3rd party spokesperson pursuant to paragraph 14 of Planning Committee's Public Speaking Protocol.
13. All councillor speaking at Planning Committee is at the discretion of the Chair, who has the discretion to override any other provisions of this Protocol
14. In accordance with Para 23.8 of the Council and Committee Procedure Rules the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition may attend and speak at all Committees.

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