

## COUNCILLORS SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE – A PROTOCOL

### Introduction

This protocol has been drawn up in response to *'Probity in Planning – The Role of Councillors and Officers – Revised Guidance Note on Good Planning Practice for Councillors and Officers Dealing with Planning Matters'* (Local Government Association, May 2009).

More specifically, Part 9 – Public Speaking at Planning Committee, states that “where public speaking is allowed, it is important that clear protocols are established about who is allowed to speak, including provisions for applicants, supporters, **ward councillors**, parish councils and third party objectors arrangements.

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 7 days prior to the meeting concerned.
3. Permission to speak is at the Chairman's discretion and ward councillors wishing to speak should contact the Chairman in advance of the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent by email to the Chair and committee clerk at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting and shall not unreasonably be refused.
4. The Committee will normally deal with applications involving speakers 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 as follows: third party objector, applicant, officer, member of parliament ward councillor(s) and then 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 councillor submissions must be relevant.
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 react 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 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 prejudicial interest in an application, they may attend to make their representation but they must withdraw after they have spoken.
12. 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<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Added 03/12/10 to reflect the contents of the constitution.