

PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

We have a scheme that allows people to address the Council's Planning Committee on particular applications but there are some rules that must be followed to make the process run smoothly. This leaflet answers some of the commonly asked questions about the scheme and what to expect at the meeting itself.

Can I speak on all planning applications?

No, you can only speak on a planning application where you have submitted comments in writing within the publicised date for comments and where that application is to be determined by the Planning Committee.

How will I know when the application I am interested in is going to Committee?

If you have commented on a planning application that is to be determined by the Planning Committee, we will write to you about a week before the date of the Committee meeting to let you know you may be entitled to speak.

When and where does the Planning Committee meet?

The South Planning Committee meets on the first Thursday of each month at the Council Offices, Penns Place, Petersfield and the North Planning Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month at Amery Hill School, Alton. (Please contact **Planning Services** for more information).

Who can speak at the meeting and for how long?

There will be a **maximum** speaking time of nine minutes allocated for each planning application, the time being divided as follows:

- Objector (3 minutes)
- Parish (3 minutes)
- Applicant or agent (3 minutes)

Only **one** person will be able to speak against a planning application. Where more than one person wishes to speak against the application, only the first person to apply will be allowed to do so, but one spokesperson can, by mutual agreement speak on behalf of all objectors.

The time limit will be strictly followed and cannot be exceeded. All speakers must **stop** when requested to by the Chairman. You are strongly advised to keep your comments short and to the point to achieve maximum effectiveness. Councillors frequently observe that comments made in less than one minute are much more memorable, and thus effective.

How do I arrange to speak at the meeting?

We will write to you to let you know that you may have the opportunity to speak at the Planning Committee. You must then give us written notice of your wish to speak. You should do this by contacting the **Meeting Administrator** (see address below) by post, email, or fax by 48 hours before the Committee meeting. You cannot arrange to speak at the meeting itself. Speaking to a Planning Officer will **not** be sufficient to register a wish to speak to the Committee. All requests to speak **must** be made in writing to the **Meeting Administrator**.

We will also ask you if we can pass on your details to other objectors and will let you know, as soon as possible whether your request to speak has been accepted.

Although we will make every effort to be as helpful as possible to speakers, we cannot give a precise time when the item may be heard during the evening. We need to make sure that the meeting runs efficiently, so if you have had your request to speak accepted, you must register with the **Meeting Administrator** at least 10 minutes **before** the meeting starts at 6.30pm.

We will show you where to make your presentation and where to sit before and after you have spoken.

What happens if somebody has already registered to speak?

Our scheme allows only **one** person to speak against a planning application. We will deal with requests to speak on a “first come, first served” basis and if someone has already registered to speak, you will not be able to do so.

However, if the person who first registered to speak gives permission, we may be able to put you in touch so you can share and discuss comments, although a speaker who represents a number of people will still only have a maximum of three minutes to put their views across.

Can I provide additional presentational material to the Committee?

No. Councillors will already have received a full report on the proposal and the relevant files, letters, plans and often photographs will be available at the meeting. You should not be presenting new information or arguments at the Committee meeting. You **will not be allowed** to circulate further material at, or just before, the meeting.

If you send any information direct to Councillors ahead of the meeting, you should also copy it to the Head of Planning Services at the Council Offices more than 24 hours in advance so that it can be placed on file to ensure that in the interest of openness, fairness, and transparency, other people, including the applicant, objectors, and supports can see what you have said. New material will not be allowed to be taken into account if other people have not had a proper opportunity to consider it.

What happens at the meeting?

The Chairman will announce the application and a planning officer will give a brief introduction. Speakers will then be invited to address the Committee in the following order:

- Objector

- Town or Parish Council
- Applicant or agent

Speakers will not be allowed to question Councillors, Council staff or other speakers during the meeting. At the discretion of the Chairman, Councillors may ask you factual questions of clarification only.

What will I be able to speak about?

This will depend on the application, but it should be restricted to matters covered by planning legislation. Examples may include:

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| ✓ Local planning policies | ✓ Traffic generation and overall highway safety |
| ✓ Government advice | ✓ Overlooking and loss of privacy. |
| ✓ The effect on the street or area (but not loss of private view). | ✓ Noise and disturbance from the proposed development (but not from construction work). |
| ✓ Size, layout and density of buildings | ✓ Ground contamination |
| ✓ Design, appearance and materials | |
| ✓ Adequacy of parking | |

Matters that we **cannot** take into account include:

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| ✗ Matters controlled under other legislation such as Building Regulations (e.g. structural stability, fire precautions.) | ✗ Competition |
| ✗ Drainage | ✗ Moral issues |
| ✗ Loss of property value | ✗ Need for development |
| ✗ Loss of view across adjoining land | ✗ Private issues between neighbours (such as land and boundary disputes, damage to property, private rights of way, deeds and covenants). The issue of covenants has no role in decision-making on planning applications. |
| ✗ Sunday trading | |
| ✗ Disturbance from construction work | |
| ✗ The identity or personal characteristics of the applicant | |

The laws of slander are very strict. If you say something defamatory in public about a person which is not true, even if you believe it to be true, you may be at risk of legal action. You should avoid defamatory comments of every sort when speaking at Committee.

Where can I see the planning officer's report on the application?

You will be able to see the report at the Council Offices five clear working days before the Committee meeting and copies will be available at the meeting. You will also be able to see them on-line through the Council's website shortly after the agenda has been published. The address is: www.easthants.gov.uk

What happens if I fail to register to speak or do not turn up at the Committee?

If you:

- do not attend the meeting after having given notice of your wish to speak; or
- if you do not arrive at the meeting in time; or
- if you have not registered in with the **Meeting Administrator** to speak in advance before the meeting

you will not be allowed to speak and the Committee will decide the application **without** your involvement.

If the application is deferred to be considered at a later meeting, no public speaking will take place and you will have to apply again to speak.

Summary

- Make sure you register to speak in writing with the **Meeting Administrator**
- Check date, time and venue
- Arrive 10 minutes before the start of the meeting
- Tell the **Meeting Administrator** of your arrival
- When invited by the Chairman, speak clearly and concisely and keep well within the time limit
- Do not introduce new issues or arguments – keep to the arguments that have already been made.
- Do not try to circulate additional written information, plans, or photographs at the meeting
- Do not use rude or abusive language or make defamatory comments

Contacts

- **Meeting Administrator**

James Harris, Democratic Services,
East Hampshire District Council, Council
Offices, Penns Place, Petersfield,
Hampshire, GU31 4EX. Tel – 01730
234098. Fax – 01730 234071

Email: james.harris@easthants.gov.uk

- **Planning Services**

East Hampshire District Council, Council
Offices, Penns Place, Petersfield,
Hampshire, GU31 4EX. Tel – 01730
234336 or 234337. Fax – 01730
234348

Email: planningdev@easthants.gov.uk

The Council Offices are open: -

9.00 am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday

Further planning advice is available through the Planning web site at: www.easthants.gov.uk