

Appendix 3- Guidance on the Right to Speak at Planning Committee and Strategic Applications Sub-Committee meetings

If you are thinking of speaking at the committee meeting, please read the following guidance:

1. Who can speak at the Planning Committee meeting?

When an application before the Committee for decision has a related petition of objection of 25 or more signatories or 15 or more individual letters of objection,

(i) a spokesperson for the objectors is given the right to address the Committee. The spokesperson may be the lead petitioner, a representative of the written objectors, their agent or their ward councillor.

(ii) the applicant or their agent will be given the right to speak in respect of their application whether or not the objectors or petitioners have exercised their own rights to speak.

2. If I am an objector and an item goes to Committee how do I indicate that I wish to have a right to speak

In addition to applications where there is a valid petition of 25 or more signatories, applications will also go before Committee where there are 15 or more written objections from different households. If you want to be considered for speaking at Committee please therefore leave an email address with any objection so that you can be contacted if this trigger figure is reached.

Once written objections reach the trigger point (15 objections) you will be contacted by a Committee Services officer and asked to confirm if you want to speak

It will then be a matter for the Chair (where appropriate with prior consultation with ward councillors) to determine who should speak for objectors if more than one objector has requested to speak.

3. What if I find it difficult, due to Covid 19 social distancing restrictions, to get 50 signatories for a petition.

In these circumstances you should approach your Ward Councillor and request that they consider requesting that the matter be taken out of delegation and be considered by the Planning Committee. If the Ward Councillor does so and the matter is referred to Committee, they can either speak on your behalf at Committee or request the Chair of the Committee to exercise their discretion and enable you to speak. Please note that if the ward councillor speaks on your behalf, or if the Chair allows you to speak, the applicant or their agent will be given the right to speak in response.

4. How many people are allowed to speak?

In circumstances where more than one petitioner / objector wishes to speak the chair will invite you to nominate one spokesperson. If there is a second petition for or against, then the Chair will generally exercise a discretion to allow one spokesperson for the additional petition to speak to add to what has already been said. See below on the time allocated to speakers

5. How much time is allowed?

A total of five minutes is allowed for the lead petitioner. A further two minutes is allowed for secondary petitioners. The applicant or their agent will have five minutes to respond.

Consultees will have three minutes to address the Committee

This time allocation does not include time spent answering the committee's questions.

6. Will I be asked questions by the committee?

Yes, but only questions of clarification on what has been said. You may decline to answer questions

7. What time should I arrive if I wish to speak?

You should arrive no later 5.45pm and report to the democratic services officer giving your name and the item you wish to speak on.

During the Covid 19 restrictions meetings now take place online using Microsoft Teams software. To gain access you should contact committee services who will supply online access details.

8. What is the order of the committee procedure?

The chair will take items dependent upon the number of people in attendance.

1. The application is introduced by the Chair.
2. Presentation of report by planning officer.
3. The Chair will call upon the spokesperson for a petition objecting to the proposal to speak. Committee members may ask questions of clarification.
4. The Chair will call upon the spokesperson for the objectors to the proposal to speak. Committee members may ask questions of clarification.
5. If there is a petition in support of the application the Chair will call on them to speak. The Committee members may ask questions of clarification.
6. The Chair will call upon the applicant or their agent to speak. The Committee members may ask questions of clarification.
7. The Chair may ask a ward councillor to speak and Committee members may ask questions of clarification.
8. The Chair will ask if any consultees wish to address the Committee. Committee may ask questions of clarification.
9. The planning officer will comment on any factual matters raised by the speakers.
10. The Committee will debate the applications and ask questions to officers.
11. The Committee will vote on the application and reach a decision.
12. After each decision the Chairman will inform the meeting of the decision.