

Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings

Introduction

The majority of planning applications are dealt with by Council Officers under delegated powers and are not considered by the Planning Committee. Such applications fall outside this scheme, and potential objectors should understand that making an objection does not automatically mean that the application concerned will be dealt with at Committee. On request, Officers will be able to advise how a particular application is to be dealt with.

Those applications that need a decision from Councillors are dealt with at the Planning Committee.

The Council has decided that the public will be allowed to make representations about planning applications directly to Councillors at this meeting. The public will also be allowed to make representations on other matters, in particular the enforcement of planning legislation, where these are reported to the Planning Committee. You are, of course, also able to contact Councillors and/or to make written representations during the period when an item is being considered by the Council.

How does the scheme work?

Those applying for planning permission, together with those who have written to the Council to object or to support an application, are told the date of the meeting which will consider the matter. Together with site owners and/or operators, those who have complained about breaches of planning legislation are also told of the date if it is intended that the Committee will consider the matter.

By giving notice to the Democratic Services Officer, any person may indicate their wish to make a statement to the Committee.

A period of time is allocated at the beginning of each item on the Committee agenda so that Councillors can hear any representations under the scheme. Your comments must be about that agenda item only. If you have given notice that you wish also to speak about other items on the agenda, you must wait until those items are heard. Statements will last for not more than three minutes. Where the total number of speakers for or against exceed the time available, they will be advised by the Council's officers to make arrangements for one of them to make a statement on behalf of all or that they will have to share the time.

If more than one person is registered to speak on the same issue, it is sometimes considered beneficial to put these people in touch with each other so that they can discuss the issue and formulate their views before the meeting is held. You will be asked for your consent for us to pass on your contact details to third parties who register to speak on the same issue. Personal contact information will not be made available without prior consent.

What notice is required?

A letter, e-mail or telephone call to the Council's Democratic Services team received by the close of business (5pm) two days before a Committee (which usually takes place on Wednesday afternoon) is required (e.g. by the close of business (5pm) on Monday for the meeting on Wednesday).

Address: Democratic Services, Lewis House, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JG

Tel No: 01225 394414

Email: Democratic_services@bathnes.gov.uk

The Order of Speaking will be:

Parish/Town Council representative(s) 3 minutes in total (per proposal)

Objector(s) 3 minutes in total (per proposal)

The applicant, agent, supporter(s) 3 minutes in total (per proposal)

(This means a maximum of 9 minutes per proposal)

Ward Councillor(s) 5 minutes in total (per Councillor)

What will happen at the meeting?

If you have given notice to speak, you should arrive at the meeting place about 15 minutes before the start time and take up a seat as previously directed when you gave notice. A list of the speakers will be available.

Applications will normally be considered in the order in which they appear on the agenda. It is not possible to tell you when a particular application will be heard as the time taken to consider applications varies. Speakers on particular applications will be heard in the order set out above.

After all the speakers have had their say, the Committee will, if necessary, receive advice from officers about the points raised. The Councillors will then consider the proposal. There is no further opportunity for you to speak at this stage.

What form may my representation take?

What you say and how you say it is up to you, but you should only address the planning issues. The Committee is entitled to expect that your comments will be polite and courteous to others.

Given the limited time available, it will not be possible for you to use any slides or other forms of presentation.

Please be advised that you cannot present documents in any form to the Committee Members at the meeting.

You should limit your comments to relevant planning issues. Although not an exhaustive list, these might include:

- the suitability of the site for development (including conflicts with any planning policies such as the Local Plan – available for inspection on the Council’s website or from Planning Services);
- design, appearance and layout issues;
- highway safety and traffic issues;
- impact on residential amenity/trees/conservation area/listed buildings;
- possible noise disturbance, pollution and smell nuisance;
- appeal decisions by the Secretary of State, planning case law; and previous decisions of the Council.

Issues that are not usually relevant in planning terms include:

- private property rights (boundary/access disputes; restrictive covenants)
- effect on the value of the property;
- matters covered by other laws;
- personality issues or private disputes;
- competition with other businesses¹

What if I have special needs?

The Council is anxious to ensure that everyone has access to its public speaking arrangements. If you have any particular needs or concerns about speaking at the meeting, please discuss them with the Democratic Services Officer. We will do whatever we can to help or reassure you.

Other important information

It is advisable to check with Planning Services (01225) 394041 a few days before the Committee meeting to find out if an application in which you have an interest is still to be considered at that meeting. It is sometimes the case that applications are withdrawn by the applicant at very short notice.

You do not have to attend a meeting to ensure that your points are registered with the Committee. The Planning Officer will report to the Councillors all relevant written comments received before a decision is taken.

The Planning Officer’s written report to the Committee is normally available to the public five working days before the meeting.

¹ Please note that these examples are for illustrative purposes only and do not constitute legal or professional advice.

You should note that the recommendation of the Planning Officer is not always agreed by the Committee.

Agenda Papers

The agendas and reports for most meetings are published five working days in advance. A small number of agenda papers will be available for those attending meetings.

Papers can be viewed on the Council's website;

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=552>

A public information copy is also available for viewing at each of the following venues:

- Reception, Guildhall, Bath
- Bath Central Library
- Reception, Civic Centre, Keynsham
- Keynsham Library
- Reception, The Hollies, Midsomer Norton
- Midsomer Norton Library

What we will do with your details

In most cases, we will include your name and whether you spoke for or against the application on the speakers' list which is attached as an appendix to the official minutes of the meeting. The minutes and appendices are published online and kept on the minute book for that meeting.