Public Speaking at Planning Applications Committee Meetings

The Council has a public speaking scheme which will allow members of the public, representatives of an amenity group, residents' association or business association and the applicant to speak at the Planning Applications Committee on some planning applications and other related consent applications.

For an amenity group, residents' association or business association to be eligible for the scheme, it must be pre-registered with the Council. An application form and details can be obtained from Democratic Services Team or downloaded here.

A maximum of four persons will be allowed to speak on an application, two persons in objection (one of which may be an organisation registered with the Council for public speaking purposes), and two persons in support (one of which may be the applicant or agent.)

Objectors and supporters of planning applications can only speak by prior arrangement.

The public speaking scheme does not apply where applications are dealt with at officer level under a scheme of delegation.

How does the Public Speaking Process run at the Planning Applications Committee meeting?

Officers will introduce the application, outlining the scheme and reporting any late information that may have been received since the agenda was printed.

The Chairman will then invite any objectors including, where relevant, a representative of an amenity group, residents' association or business association, to speak and he/she will be given 4 minutes to outline his/her views or may choose to share the time with someone else, or may appoint another person to speak on their behalf. This time limit will be strictly enforced.

The objector will not be allowed to ask questions of councillors, officers or others. The Chairman may allow members of the Committee to ask for clarification of any points raised.

The Chairman will then invite the applicant and/or any supporters to move forward and respond. The time limit of 4 minutes again applies. The applicant or supporters may choose to share the time with someone else or may appoint another person to speak on their behalf. No questions may be asked of councillors, officers or others. The Chairman may allow members of the Committee to ask the applicant or supporters for clarification of any points raised.
Please note that once a speaker has completed his/her remarks, he/she will not be able to take any further part in the discussion.

The Committee will proceed with its deliberations on the application and make a decision. This may be to:

- approve the application
- refuse the application
- defer for further consideration

**What applications are eligible for public speaking?**

Applications which are being determined by the Planning Applications Committee are eligible for public speaking if one of the following criteria is met:

For an application for a development within an urban or village settlement, either:

- 10 or more written representations from separate households or businesses; or
- a petition signed by more than 50 signatories, including addresses, objecting to or supporting the application

has been received no later than 10 working days before the date of the Committee meeting.

For an application for a development outside an urban or village settlement, either:

- 5 or more written representations from separate households or businesses; or
- a petition signed by more than 25 signatories including addresses, objecting to or supporting the application

has been received no later than 10 working days before the date of the Committee meeting.

Where an application generates considerable public interest, in relation to speaking at the meeting, only those persons from addresses within the vicinity of the site will be eligible to speak at the meeting. The vicinity will vary according to the nature of the proposed development and its potential impact on the community. The Executive Head - Regulatory will determine the circumstances in which this will apply.

**How will I know that the application I am interested in is eligible for public speaking?**

People, who have made a written representation in relation to an application which becomes eligible for public speaking, will be notified in writing of the date of the Committee meeting and of the deadline for registering with the Council their desire to speak.

**How do I register my interest in speaking?**

You can only register your interest in speaking after you have received the Council’s invitation to speak. Notifications made before receiving the invitation will not be valid.
You need to register your wish to speak by contacting the Democratic Services Team at the Borough Council offices by telephone 01276 707335 by e-mail democratic.services@surreyheath.gov.uk.

A letter will also be accepted, but will inevitably take longer to arrive than the other methods of registering your interest to speak.

**Who may address the Committee?**

An objector, supporter or a representative of an amenity group, residents’ association or business association, previously registered with the Council, may only speak if he or she has made a written representation at least 14 days before the date of the Committee meeting, and has made a prior arrangement with the Democratic Services Team.

The applicant will also be able to address the meeting.

**What happens if more than one person/registered organisation wishes to speak?**

Speakers will be chosen on a first-come, first-served basis. However, in certain circumstances the Executive Head of Corporate, after consultation with the Chairman of the Planning Applications Committee, can exercise discretion in agreeing the allocation of the available speaking slots in relation to any particular planning application.

Contact telephone or e-mail details of the persons or registered organisation who have requested to speak and have been allocated a speaking slot will be passed on to any subsequent callers wishing to speak with the same or similar stance with regard to the application and who were not allocated a slot. The persons/organisation allocated a speaking slot may wish to share their allocated time.

**Can someone speak on my behalf?**

Yes. If you are one of the first people to register your interest you have the right to speak at the meeting. You could, however, ask a friend, relative or professional adviser to speak for you, or you could agree with another objector/supporter that he or she speaks at the meeting.

If you are not one of the first people to register, you may contact the persons who registered first to ask him/her to include your concerns in his/her presentation.

**What can I speak about?**

The Committee may only consider relevant planning issues so, if you are the one to speak, you will need to limit your views to relevant matters such as:

- external design, appearance and layout
- highway safety and parking
- loss of light or overshadowing
- loss of amenity
- residential amenity

The Committee is not able to take into account such items as:
• private property rights  
• the applicant’s morals or motives  
• effect on property values  
• loss of a view  
• matters covered by other legislation

**Will I be able to introduce any further material on the evening?**

No PowerPoint or overhead presentations will be permitted. No material, including plans, photos, letters, or statements can be handed to the Committee members at, or just before, the committee meeting. Any such material may be submitted directly to Committee members and copied to the relevant planning officer.

**Can I see the officer’s report before the meeting?**

Yes. The agenda (and reports) for the Planning Applications Committee will be available at Surrey Heath House at least 5 working days before the meeting. Copies are placed on the Surrey Heath website (www.surreyheath.gov.uk). A verbal update giving information received after the reports have been written, will be made at the meeting.

The Committee report will summarise the main planning issues relating to the application and will outline the main objections raised.

**What happens if an application is deferred?**

Objectors and supporters will normally only be given one opportunity to speak on an application. However, if the application is deferred for any reason before the application is discussed, the public speaking scheme will apply and the registered speakers will have the opportunity to speak when the application is considered at the later meeting.

Consideration of the application will not be deferred if the registered objectors or supporters are unable to attend the Committee meeting.

**What happens after the decision is made?**

If an application is refused the applicant may appeal against the decision to the Planning Inspectorate. Objectors will be advised of any such appeal. Where an application has been granted, there is no opportunity for objectors to appeal.

**Who is on the Committee and who else will be there?**

The Planning Applications Committee is made up of 16 elected councillors and 6 substitutes. Council officers attend to advise the Committee and make a formal record of the meeting. Other councillors may be present to speak (for example, on applications within their ward) but they cannot vote.

Any member of the public, including the applicant, may attend to listen to the debate and representatives of the media are usually present.

*The Planning Applications Committee meets in the Council Chamber at the Borough Council Offices, Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road, Camberley at 7.00pm once every 4 weeks, usually on a Thursday.*

*PP-Speaking\April 2017*
There is disabled access and car parking is available on site in the evening.

If you are to speak at the Committee meeting you should arrive at the Council Chamber in good time for the start of the meeting. A Democratic Services Officer will be present at the Committee meeting. You should register with him/her between 6.30 pm – 6.45pm.

This leaflet is intended to answer most of your questions about public speaking at the Planning Applications Committee. However, if you need further information and advice, or you would like a copy of this leaflet in large print, please contact Democratic Services on 01276 707335 or e-mail democratic.services@surreyheath.gov.uk