



PUBLIC SPEAKING AT DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S PLANNING COMMITTEES

These notes are intended as a guide to the procedure adopted by the planning Committees. They are not intended to restrict the Chair's exercise of discretion on the conduct of each meeting under the Council Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution.

How will interested parties find out about the committee date?

A letter will be sent to all those that have made representations on an application, and to the agent/applicant to advise them of the date of the committee meeting.

When do interested parties have to register to speak?

All interested parties (except Ward Members) must register to speak by noon on the last working day prior to the Committee meeting.

Who do they register to speak with?

Speakers will be required to register with the Planning Services Team dealing with the application.

How do interested parties register to speak?

Requests may be made by telephone, email or letter.

What happens if someone wishes to speak at the meeting but has not registered to do so?

You will not be able to speak.

How long would interested parties be allowed to speak for?

Ward Members and Parish/Town Council representatives will be afforded an appropriate amount of time for speaking, at the discretion of the Chair. Each other group of speakers (objectors and applicants/supporters) will be allowed to speak for five minutes unless the Chair exercises his discretion to allow them to speak for longer. If more than one individual wishes to speak, the time will be divided.

Will there be an opportunity to speak for longer in contentious cases?

This will be at the discretion of the Chair and will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. If additional time is allowed the same amount of time must be made available to the opposing party in the interests of equality.

What will happen if more than one person would like to speak?

Speakers will be encouraged to appoint a spokesperson.

What is the order of speaking/procedure for determination of the application?

- The Officer will present their report first.
- The Parish/Town Council representative will then address the Committee.
- The Ward Member will then address the Committee.

- The objectors will then make their representations and may be asked questions by the Committee but will not be permitted to make representations more than once.
- The applicant/supporter will then make his or her representations and may be asked questions by the Committee but will not be permitted to make representations more than once.
- Officers may comment on the representations and the merits of the application.
- The Committee will proceed to debate the application and make a decision. The minute will include the reasons for the decision.

Can supporters address the committee where the application is recommended for approval and there are no speakers against the proposal?

Yes, applicants/supporters will be allowed the opportunity to address the Committee regardless of the recommendation and whether or not objectors speak.

Will the applications on which there are speakers be brought forward to the beginning of the meeting?

Those applications where there are speakers will generally be brought forward to the beginning of the meeting.

Can the speaker ask questions during their presentation?

Although the speakers may ask questions during their presentation there is no obligation on anyone to respond.

Can the committee ask the Speakers questions?

Members of the Committee will be allowed to ask the speakers questions to clarify specific points but this is not to be used as an opportunity to allow further public speaking beyond the prescribed time limits.

Can the speakers circulate material at the meeting?

No new documents may be circulated to the Committee on the day of the Meeting. Photographs and any other documentation, including IT presentations, which speakers wish Members to have before them at the Committee Meeting must be provided by noon on the working day before the Committee Meeting. This is to ensure that Officers have a reasonable opportunity to check and assess the information/documentation in advance of the Committee Meeting and that Members have a reasonable opportunity to consider it.

Can Speakers address the meeting on items other than Planning applications?

Speakers will be allowed on matters other than Planning Applications which are to be determined by the Committee.