

<p style="text-align: center;">Addressing the Planning Committee</p> <p>A guidance note for Applicants, Agents, members of the public, parish councils and local District Councillors</p>		<p>South Cambridgeshire District Council</p>
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If you need this document in a large print, or any other, format, please let us know, and we will try to help!

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Introduction

1. South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to extending public involvement in the planning process. There are already extensive consultation and neighbour notification procedures for all planning applications. Now you can speak directly to councillors at Planning Committee meetings, subject to the following requirements.
2. This guidance note explains the Council's public participation policy for supporters, objectors, parish councils and local Members (not otherwise members of the Committee) at meetings. It tries to answer some of the questions you may have about the procedures and what to expect at the meeting. It is based on simple rules which the Council has devised to make the system as fair and easy to operate as possible.
3. You can only speak to the Committee about planning applications and other decision items. There will be a presumption that local Members will be allowed to speak about any item, including those that do not involve planning applications.

How can I find out how the Planning Committee works?

4. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer about procedure. Planning Committee meetings are currently held on the first Wednesday of the month (except January and, in general, May, when they are held on the second Wednesday) at South Cambs Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne. The Planning Committee agenda is published five clear **working** days before the meeting (generally 8 calendar days). The Planning Committee does not consider every application received by the Council. The majority of planning applications are determined by senior officers (some in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee and with local Members) under the Council's delegation scheme. You will need to check with the planning officer dealing with a particular application to see how it is to be considered and on what date.

Do I need to attend the meeting to make my comments known to the Committee?

5. No. Written comments will be considered by the committee as well. As the meetings are open to the public, you may simply want to attend as an observer.

How do I arrange to speak at the meeting?

6. So that you can speak as an objector or supporter (other than the applicant, agent or local Member), you must have made a written representation on the application or other decision item in question. Your right to address the Committee, if the matter falls to be considered by it, will be set out in the standard consultation letter sent by the Planning or other Service; this will include contact details showing how you can obtain copies of this guidance.
7. If you would like to speak at the meeting, **please register your interest no later than 12 o'clock noon on the Monday before the meeting.** You should assume that late registration will not be accepted. You can register your interest by contacting the Democratic Services Officer on 01954 713028, e-mail ian.senior@scambbs.gov.uk. The agenda is available online at www.scambbs.gov.uk/meetings a week before the meeting. Registration will be on a first come first served basis. This means that, for each application, the name and telephone number of the first person to call as an objector or as a supporter will be noted and any subsequent callers will be given those details (as appropriate) to enable them to organise how their case will be presented, and by whom.

What is the order of speaking on each application?

8. A planning officer will introduce the item. Members of the public will then be called to speak in the following order:-
 - One objector (3 minutes)
 - Applicant or agent or one supporter (3 minutes)
 - The Chairman or a member of the Parish Council (who is not also a District Councillor) for the parish covering the application site (3 minutes)
 - [At the discretion of the Committee Chairman] the Chairmen or members of neighbouring Parish Councils who are not also District Councillors) (3 minutes each)
 - One Local District Councillor for the application site (not otherwise on the Committee) followed, at the sole discretion of the Chairman, by other local District Councillors for the application site, where a contrary view is held (3 minutes each – no questioning by the Chairman or members of the Committee)
 - [At the discretion of the Committee Chairman] one local District Councillor representing each neighbouring ward that might be affected by the application in question followed, at the sole discretion of the Chairman, by other local District Councillors for each neighbouring ward, where a contrary view is held (3 minutes each – no questioning by the Chairman or members of the Committee).

At the conclusion of each speech, members may, **through the Chairman**, ask questions in order to seek clarification of points made by the speaker in his or her speech. The conclusion of the period of questioning will be at the Chairman's sole discretion. At the conclusion of speeches by public speakers, the Committee will proceed to discuss and determine the planning application or other item. During that discussion, the Chairman may ask a public speaker to clarify matters of fact **but not** matters of opinion. Public speakers will be expected to answer questions briefly and directly. They will not be allowed to participate in the committee's discussion.

9. The Planning Committee Chairman will direct you to a designated seat before you speak. You should assume that the three minute speaking allowance will be applied strictly by the Chairman, who will ask you to go back to your seat in the public gallery after that time and any Question and Answer session. Only in **exceptional** circumstances might the three-minute limit be extended at the sole discretion of the Chairman. The planning officer may add extra comments and the Committee will debate the issues once all public speakers on a particular application have been heard and before making a decision. Further contribution from public speakers (including parish councils and local Members not on the Committee) will only be allowed if the Chairman invites them to answer questions asked by Committee members that cannot be answered by officers.

Can I ask questions of other speakers?

10. No - you should seek answers to your questions before the meeting and state your case on the basis of information given to you.

Can I make a PowerPoint presentation, use slides or overhead transparencies or circulate supporting documents?

11. Unfortunately we are logistically unable to offer PowerPoint presentations, slides and Overhead transparencies. If you wish to circulate supporting documents, please do so no later than 48 hours before the meeting so that Councillors have adequate opportunity to consider the material. A list of Councillors' names and addresses is available from the Contact Centre on 08450 450 500 or online at www.scambs.gov.uk/councillors. If you would prefer to send them an e-mail, you should send it to planningcommittee@scambs.gov.uk, which will send a copy to each committee member. Please copy it to the Democratic Services Officer, the planning case officer and to your local Member or Members.

What can I say at the meeting?

12. You must confine what you say to a statement of fact or opinion, and:
- Be brief and to the point, avoiding complicated detail
 - limit your views to the planning application (or other item the Chairman might allow you to talk about)
 - confine yourself to relevant planning issues.

What are the relevant planning issues in considering applications?

13. These will vary from application to application, but will include:
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
 - Design, appearance, layout, scale and landscaping
 - Environmental health issues such as noise, smells and general disturbance
 - Government Planning Policy Guidance
 - Highway safety and traffic issues
 - Impact on trees, listed buildings, conservation areas and other designated sites.
 - Loss of an important view from **public** land that compromises the local character
 - Planning law and previous decisions
 - Visual and residential amenity
 - South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework

What matters are likely to be irrelevant in considering applications?

14. These will vary from application to application, but will include:
- Boundary and area disputes
 - Developers' perceived morals or motives
 - Effect on the value of property, including yours
 - Loss of a **private** view over adjoining land (unless there a parallel loss of an important view from public land – see above).
 - Matters not covered by planning, highway or environmental health law
 - Issues such as access, dropped kerbs , rights of way and personal circumstances
 - Suspected future development
 - The processing of the application.

15. In your own interests, you should not say anything derogatory or inflammatory, which could expose you to the risk of legal action against you.

How do parish councils get involved?

16. Parish councils are consulted about every planning application in their parish (and sometimes about applications in neighbouring parishes). Copies of planning applications can be viewed locally, at South Cambs Hall or using the following link on the Council's website: <http://egov.scambs.gov.uk/planningapps/pa.php> For the contact details of your local parish council clerk, please phone the Contact Centre on 08450 450 500, or go online to <http://scambs.moderngov.co.uk> and follow the link to Parish Councils.

The role of District Councillors

17. Councillors are elected to represent you (and South Cambridgeshire as a whole). You may want to contact your local Councillor to discuss a particular planning application. However, Councillors, especially those who are members of the Planning Committee, will not commit themselves to a decision before hearing the evidence and debate at the relevant planning meeting. They will need to take into account planning law and local and national planning policies as well as public opinion.

General Behaviour

18. If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If that person continues to interrupt, the Chairman will order his or her removal from the meeting room. For this purpose, interruption includes, but is not limited to, entering the area where Councillors sit, shouting or gesticulating, and distributing papers or photographs without the Chairman's permission and other than via a Council officer.
19. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.
20. No member of the public shall be allowed to bring into or display at any Committee meeting any banner, placard, poster or other similar item. The Chairman may require any to be removed.
21. Unless specifically authorised by resolution, no audio and / or visual or photographic recording in any format is allowed at any meeting of the Planning Committee.