



# **Public Speaking** **at meetings of the Planning Committee**

(date)

## When and where do Planning Committee meetings take place?

The Planning Committee meets in the Council Chamber at South Cambs Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA at 2.00pm on a Wednesday, which is usually the first Wednesday each month. Further details, including contacts, directions, and variations to dates are available on the Council's website or by phoning Democratic Services on 08450 450 500.

## Can members of the public attend Planning Committee meetings?

Yes. The vast majority of agenda items will be considered in public. However, the law does allow Councils to consider a limited range of issues in private session without members of the Press and public being present. An example would be a planning enforcement issue in which sensitive personal matters are discussed, or options, which, if publicised, could prejudice the Council's position. In every case, the public interest in excluding the Press and Public from the meeting room must outweigh the public interest in having the information disclosed to them.

## Can members of the public speak at Planning Committee meetings?

Yes, so long as they fall into one of these categories:

- One objector to a proposal (including someone on behalf of a protest group)
- Applicant (or the applicant's agent) or one supporter of the proposal

who has already written to the Council in response to formal consultation. Elected or co-opted members of parish councils (who not also district Councillors) and local district Councillors also have speaking rights. Those wishing to speak must register with Democratic Services by 12 o'clock noon on the Monday immediately before the meeting. Speaking to a Planning Officer will not register someone to speak at the meeting; they must register with Democratic Services. Parish Councillors (usually the Parish Council's chairman) and local district Councillors not on the Planning Committee also have speaking rights. Members of the public and parish councils are not allowed to ask questions of each other, officers or the Committee once the meeting has started. Further details are available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services.

## What can people say and for how long can they speak?

Each speech is limited to three minutes. Speakers must restrict themselves to material planning considerations such as:

- 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
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework
- Visual and residential amenity

Councillors will **not** be able to take into account issues such as:

- boundary and area disputes
- the perceived morals or motives of a developer
- the effect on the value of property

- loss of a private view over adjoining land (unless there a parallel loss of an important view from public land)
- matters not covered by planning, highway or environmental health law
- **private rights of access and covenants**
- suspected future development,
- processing of the application.

Speakers should be careful not to say anything derogatory or inflammatory, which could expose them to the risk of legal action. After the objector and applicant (or agent or supporter) have spoken, Committee members may ask speakers to clarify matters relating to their presentation. If those registered to speak are not present in the meeting room by the time the relevant item is considered, the Committee won't be able to wait, and will determine the application – officers will be able to say whether a particular item is at the beginning, middle or end of the agenda, but cannot give an accurate idea of when it will be considered.

## Can public speakers give Committee members written information or photographs relating to an application or objection?

Yes, but **not** at the meeting itself. Councillors will be given lots of information to read and digest before the meeting, so need to be given as much time as possible to read or view the information. Contact details are available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services. The same information must be sent to every member of the Committee and to local Councillors representing the parish in which the proposal is located. All the members of the Committee can be contacted by sending one e-mail to [planningcommittee\(at\)scambs.gov.uk](mailto:planningcommittee(at)scambs.gov.uk) (replace (at) with @). Any information sent to Councillors should be copied to the Planning Officer dealing with your application.

## How are applications considered?

The appropriate planning officer will introduce the item. Councillors will then hear any speakers' presentations. The order of speaking will be (1) One Objector, (2) The Applicant or the agent or one supporter (3) Parish Council (4) local Councillor(s). The Committee will then debate the application and vote on either the recommendations of officers in the agenda or a proposal made and seconded by members of the Committee. Should the Committee propose to follow a course of action different to officer recommendation, Councillors must give sound planning reasons for doing so.

**Further information is available from Democratic Services, South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambs Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA – Telephone 08450 450 500.**

**The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you.**