

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL SERVICES

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COMMITTEE

How the Planning Committees are organised.

Kirklees Council has two Planning Committees, each meeting on a 4 weekly cycle. The Planning Sub Committee (Heavy Woollen Area) normally meets at Batley or Dewsbury Town Hall, and the Planning Sub Committee (Huddersfield Area) meets at Huddersfield Town Hall. Both venues have public seating areas, where members of the public are able to observe how the decisions on planning applications are made.

Less than 10% of all planning applications are decided at Committee. Most are determined by Officers within a delegation scheme agreed by the Council. However, the applications that are decided by Councillors are usually the most contentious, often relating to large development sites, or proposals that have attracted a lot of public interest. So that everyone can be involved in the debate before a decision is made on these applications, members of the public are able to address the Planning Committee, and set out their own views on the proposal.

The Planning Committees are Council meetings that are open to members of the public. Any representations should be directed to the Councillor who is 'Chairing' the meeting. By convention, this person is addressed as 'Chair'. If you refer to a Member of the Council, then the correct way to do this is to refer to them as 'Councillor (last name)'. Dialogue between members of the public and Members of the Committee or Officers is not allowed once the meeting has started.

This note explains in detail what the procedure is if you want to put your case to the Committee. However, the main points are,

- Tell a Decision Support Unit officer before the meeting starts that you want to speak at the meeting
- You can only speak about an application when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Make sure you can put your case in three minutes or less.
- If you are part of a group of people wanting to speak about the same application, you may be asked to choose a representative.
- All comments have to be made to the Chair of the Committee

Committee Agendas

Copies of the Committee agendas are available at the meeting, or up to a week in advance from the Decision Support Unit (see 'contacts' at the end of the leaflet). You can also access the agenda from the [Council's web site](#)

Procedure for speaking at Committee

The following applies whether you want to speak for or against the application.

- ❑ Committee meetings start at 1.30 p.m. The Town Hall reception staff will be able to tell you where the meeting is being held. Anyone wanting to address the Members of the Committee should be there about 30 minutes before the meeting starts, so that a Decision Support Officer can take your details
- ❑ The Decision Support Officer will discuss with the Chair of the Committee how the speakers should be organised. The number of people who will be allowed to speak is at the Chair's discretion, and his/her decision is final. If there are a large number of people who want to comment on the same application, the Chair may ask the group involved to organise a representative so that the case for/against may be put collectively.
- ❑ The Chair will start the meeting. There will be a number of standing items on the agenda that are normally dealt with first, but this should only take about 10 minutes. The meeting will then move on to the 'plans list', which is the part of the agenda where planning applications are determined.
- ❑ The Chair will indicate which application is being dealt with. The Planning Officer will make a short presentation, and the Chair will then ask members of the public who have indicated that they want to speak to address the Committee. The Chair will have a list of people who have indicated that they want to comment on the application, and he/she will call your name at the appropriate time. Members of the public will be asked to speak first. Other interested parties, for example applicants or their agents, will be invited to speak afterwards.
- ❑ Your case should be concisely made, concentrating on the 'planning' issues that the Members of the Planning Committee can take into account, such as,
 - *The planning history of the site*
 - *The visual impact of the development*

- *Affect on public amenity*
 - *Access, traffic and highway considerations*
 - *The impact on listed buildings, conservation areas, or protected trees.*
- Matters that cannot be taken into account include,
- *Effect on property values*
 - *The character or identity of the applicant*
 - *Boundary or property disputes*
 - *How the application affects a view (as opposed to the wider affect on public amenity)*
 - *Issues of commercial competition*
- **You should make sure that you can make your case in about three minutes. The Chair may have to ask you to conclude your presentation if the allotted time has been exceeded.**

PLEASE NOTE -

All comments have to be made to the Chair of the Committee. Dialogue with Planning Committee Members or Officers is not permitted.

The Committee will then discuss the application. Officers may be asked for more information, but further comments from members of the public, applicants or agents will not normally be taken, unless the Chair invites further comment. Once a decision has been taken, the Chair will move on to the next item.

Decisions on planning applications can be challenged by the applicant making an appeal to the Secretary of State. In the English planning system, third parties e.g. objectors to the application, have no rights of appeal against the decision.

However, the Local Government Ombudsman can investigate any claims that the Council did not follow its own procedures, or allegations of impropriety. Ask a Council Officer for more information if you are considering approaching the Ombudsman.

Contacts:

Decision Support Unit

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