



A Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Control Committee

Public Participation at Planning Control Committee

The Planning Control Committee is served by 11 Borough Councillors who make decisions on planning and enforcement matters affecting Christchurch that are not determined by officers using delegated powers.

Public Speaking allows interested parties to express their views on planning matters they have previously commented on, by addressing the Councillors directly at the Planning Control Committee meeting.

Is it best to speak at the Committee or write in with my comments?

The Planning Control Committee is pleased to hear representations about proposals but this is not a substitute for the written word. Planning applications to be considered will be detailed in a report within the Committee agenda. Members of the Committee will have read the reports and a summary of written representations will form part of those reports. A file of all the representations in full is also available for Members prior to the meeting. The agendas are available for inspection 5 working days before the Committee at the Council's offices and are also published on www.dorsetforyou.com.

Please note that no public speaking is allowed on the same application previously deferred by the Committee where presentations have already been heard.

How do I register my wish to speak?

It is essential you contact Democratic Services on 01202 795054. Alternatively, you can email: democraticservices@christchurchandeastdorset.gov.uk

Clearly state which application you wish to speak on, whether you are objecting or supporting and your name and contact details. All requests must be received by 12 noon on the Monday immediately preceding the Planning Control Committee.

You will also need to register your arrival with the Democratic Services Officer before the Committee starts. Speakers are requested to arrive by 5.45pm on the day of the meeting. This will enable the officer to guide those who will be speaking on the meeting procedure and seating arrangements.

How long can I speak for?

The Committee enables two speakers for and two speakers against any proposal. The maximum time for speaking is 3 minutes per person. If there are more than two potential speakers for either side, the committee officer will ask those wishing to speak to appoint two representatives to address the Committee.

For major applications the amount of time afforded to each category of speaker will be increased at the Chairman's discretion.

The time limits imposed will be strictly observed and interruptions will not be allowed. You will not be allowed to complete your presentation if the time limit expires. A buzzer or some other device will be used to indicate the end of each three minute speech.

What may I speak about?

Speeches by Objectors and Supporters must be in the form of statements. They must not be defamatory or offensive. There will be no opportunity for Objectors or Supporters to ask any questions, or circulate any photographs, statements or other material. You must ensure that your statement refers only to planning related issues as these are the only issues the Committee can consider.

If your statement raises new material issues, the Committee may wish to defer making the decision until such time as those new issues have been properly considered although you should bear in mind that the Council would *not* wish to see any new material issues being raised at the public participation stage, that could have been raised and addressed before the meeting.

Neither Objectors or Supporters will be questioned, however the Chairman may ask you to clarify a point of fact in very exceptional circumstances.

What is considered a planning related issue?

When considering whether to comment, you should be aware that the Planning Control Committee can only determine applications on the basis of their planning merits. Therefore, you should ensure that your comments consider whether the application:

- Is contrary to local policies or Government advice
- Allows overlooking from windows, thereby resulting in a material loss of privacy or would cause significant overshadowing or loss of light.
- Has a poor design and appearance or is out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area.
- Will result in the loss of important trees
- Will have an adverse effect on traffic, road, access visibility and parking
- Will result in noise and disturbance affecting local people

Matters which cannot be regarded as planning considerations are:

- Loss of personal view
- Loss of property value
- That the development differs from what the developers told you they were intending
- Disputes over land ownership
- Doubt over the integrity of the applicant
- Objections to the principle of development where outline permission exists
- Covenants and any other third-party legal matters

Can I provide handouts or use visual aids?

Members of the public are not allowed to provide additional display or written material on the day. Full plans submitted with each application along with site photographs will be displayed at the meeting. If you have additional information that you would like to provide to the Committee, this must be provided to Democratic Services by the Wednesday immediately preceding the meeting. Documents will be checked for accuracy prior to distribution to Members. Officers will not include materials/photographs supplied by Members of the Public within their presentations.

What happens at the meeting?

The Chair of the Committee will be responsible for the running order of the planning applications and is in charge at the meeting. The Chair will announce the order publicly at the start of the meeting together with any late adjustments. Normally those applications with public speakers are considered first. For each application, the order of speakers will be:

- Planning Officer
- Objector (including consultees)
- Applicant/Agent/Supporter (including consultees)
- Parish/Town Council Representative
- Local Ward Councillor
- Discussion by Members of the Committee leading to their decision

If you have any concerns about committee procedure, please contact Democratic Services. If you seek further clarification on the contents of your statement, please contact the Planning Department and speak to the Case Officer, whose name is given in the correspondence sent to you during the application process.