

Charter on Public Speaking at Planning Committees



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The arrangements for public speaking are set out below:

If an application is to be decided by the Planning Committee, members of the public who are affected by that application have the right to speak at the committee meeting. The practical arrangements on the day remain at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee, whose decisions on such arrangements is final.

How are applications discussed at Planning Committee?

Applications will normally be heard in the order listed on the agenda for the committee meeting. However, the Chair has the discretion to amend the order in which applications are heard to best suit public interest and the capacity of members / the speakers present.

A Planning Officer will provide a presentation of the key points of the application, making reference to appropriate plans, photographs, and planning policies. Officers may only be asked questions by members of the committee which seek to clarify relevant information. A Planning Officer may defer certain questions to the Applicant or the Agent, if present, if it requires a more detailed response.

After the Planning Officer has delivered their presentation, registered public speakers will be invited to address the committee. Members of the committee are entitled to ask public speakers any questions that are relevant to the application being discussed. The Ward Councillor(s) at the District Council will be invited to speak after the public have addressed the committee. County Councillors may also have the opportunity to speak, but only to discuss matters that fall under the jurisdiction of the County Council (i.e. highways, education).

After the public session, Members will debate the detail and merits of the application and reach a final decision.

Do I need to speak at Planning Committee?

Not always. If you have written to the Council expressing a view on an application, whether in support or objection, then this will be captured within the committee papers on the day.

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Who is allowed to speak?

You **must** register your interest to speak at the Planning Committee at least 1 working day prior to the meeting. Within this registration, you must provide your name, contact details, the application you wish to speak on (application number and address), and the capacity in which you wish to speak in. By registering your interest, you agree to the personal data that you are providing being used by the Council to facilitate and record public speaking arrangements.

You should not expect to speak unless you have registered your interest with the Clerk prior to the meeting. This can be done by way of email to committee@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk or by calling 01473 296376.

The public can speak in the following capacities, and will be called up to address the committee in the following order:

- Parish Clerk / Councillor for the location of the planning app;
- Objector;
- Supporter;
- The Applicant / Agent / Professional Representative;
- Ward Member

Public speakers in each capacity will be allowed 3 minutes to address the Committee. Ward Members are allowed additional time.

The key principle behind public speaking arrangements is to ensure that each representative has a balanced opportunity, by time allowed per capacity, to make their presentation.

In the interest of committee efficiency, normally only one individual will be allowed to speak in each capacity. Multiple individuals wishing to speak under the same capacity will have the 3 minutes split between them, rather than 3 minutes each. Public speakers wishing to speak under the same capacity may find it useful to get together and agree a spokesperson to present all of their views.

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What is the procedure for public speaking?

On the day of the meeting, please arrive as requested by the Clerk of the committee and make yourself known to officers, who will go through the appropriate domestic arrangements with you.

Be aware that the order of the applications may differ to that listed on the agenda, depending on the decision of the Chair.

Ensure that your representation is kept to a 3 minute limit, and do not expect to be allowed to go over this limit. The Chair reserves the right to draw your representation to a close at this time, even if you have not said everything you intended. Be ready to answer any questions put to you by Councillors on the committee based on your representation.

Do not expect to be given a right to address the committee past your designated representation. The Councillors who make up the committee will debate the planning application once all public speakers have made their representations. Members of the committee *may* seek further factual information from a public speaker to discuss within the debate. If so, it is at the Chair's discretion to enable that public speaker to do so in a way that safeguards the overall time balance.

As part of your representation, you must speak about relevant planning considerations. Some topics to raise, and key ones to avoid, are:

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous decisions by the Council;• Design, layout, appearance;• Effects on amenity, loss of light, overshadowing, loss of privacy, noise;• Listed buildings and heritage matters;• Highways safety;• Planning policy and case law.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effect on property values;• Potential motivations behind an application;• Loss of view;• Covenants;• Defamatory or personal comments;• Matters covered by other legislation.

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Key Committee Information

Do not expect to be able to circulate your own photographs and/or drawings at the committee meeting. This will only be allowed under exceptional circumstances by the Chair's discretion if they consider it will significantly help to clarify the committee's understanding of the application. You are welcome to email committee members with representations, but do be advised that this will be recorded as lobbying and will be declared as such by Members in the public meeting.

As a public speaker, you will also not be allowed to upload any photographs, videos, or presentations onto the Council's IT system. This includes Ward Members.

Ensure to keep your representation related to the application which is being discussed. Members cannot take any information related to planning matters which are not on the agenda into consideration when reaching a determination.

Depending on the meeting venue the Council may be able to support hybrid attendance at meetings, allowing you to make your representation from home / work. Please contact the Clerk in the Committee Services team to discuss the possibility of hybrid arrangements.

If you have any queries or require more information, please contact:

Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX
committees@baberghmidsuffolk.gov.uk

