



## **Development Control Committee**

### **Public Speaking Scheme**

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**[www.sholland.gov.uk](http://www.sholland.gov.uk)**

## Introduction

The District Council operates a scheme which allows a limited right for the public to speak at the Development Control Committee. This information explains the scheme and how and when the public can speak. The scheme relates to planning and related applications only.

## Who can speak at Committee?

- Two people in support of an application and two people opposed to an application may speak.
- The two slots for speakers in support are reserved for the applicant (or someone on their behalf) and the agent.
- The two slots for speakers in objection are reserved for a member of the public and a statutory body such as a Parish Council, Highways or Environmental Agency. Only one member of the public may speak in objection, the second slot can not be used by an additional member of the public.
- An applicant (or his/her representative) can speak even though an objector does not, and vice-versa.

## How are speakers selected?

- Objectors and applicants (or their representatives) wishing to speak should register by telephone with the Public Speaking Officer (contact details on back page).
- Any speaker representing the applicant must have the permission of the applicant to represent him/her and the applicant will be advised of their interest.
- Where more than two speakers wish to attend the Committee as an objector, the Council will contact the people who first registered their intention to speak and provide a contact name and telephone number of the other persons, to give that person the opportunity to combine their comments and select a single spokesperson. The Council will only permit the first two people to register to speak.
- All speakers must register their wish to speak by 4.30 pm on the day of the Committee meeting. All speakers who have registered will be informed of the actual Committee date when the agenda is finalised. Speakers cannot 'turn up' to speak at Committee without the due notice being given.

## What can speakers say?

- Speakers have 3 minutes to state their views. Information already given to Members in the Officer's report or in letters of objection need not be repeated by speakers.
- Speakers should confine their comments to matters relevant to the planning application. The following is a brief summary of matters which would not/will not influence a decision on whether to grant planning permission.
  - Civil disputes between neighbours
  - Alleged increase or decrease in property values
  - Loss of a private view
  - A developer's character, morals, motives or financial circumstances
  - Matters covered by other legislation (public health, licensing etc)
  - Restrictive covenants
- Speakers should not introduce new information, make new "promises" and verbally amend the application or attempt to negotiate with the Committee. If an applicant introduces this type of information, the Chairman may stop the speaker and/or recommend that the Committee defer the application until the next meeting, or invite the Committee to consider the application on the basis of existing information.
- Speakers should not criticise officers by name.
- The Chairman reserves the right to stop or eject the speaker.

## What Happens At Committee?

- Speakers should arrive at the Council Chamber shortly before the start of the meeting to register with the Committee Clerk. They will be asked to sit in a reserved area in the Council Chamber.
- A Planning Officer will introduce the application and provide a verbal recommendation. The Chairman will first ask the speaker for the application (if applicable) to come forward to the public speaking seat and to present their case. The Chairman will ask the speaker to stop precisely on 3 minutes. The speaker should then return to the reserved seating area and the Chairman will ask the speaker against the application (if applicable) to come forward and similarly present their case. The speaker should then return to the reserved seating area.
- Speakers and Members of the Committee cannot interrupt or cross-examine/question each other. Once the public speakers have presented their cases the Committee will then debate the application.
- Speakers should not hand in or circulate written materials or photographs at the Committee meeting as this cannot be taken into account.

## When does an application go to Committee?

- Approximately 10% of all planning and related applications are considered by the Council's Development Control Committee. The remaining 90% are determined by officers under delegated powers and these applications are not subject to the public speaking scheme. An application that would normally be determined under delegated powers will not be referred to the Committee on the grounds that someone wishes to public speak.
- During the processing of a planning application the applicant or third parties can ask the Case Officer if the application is likely to be considered by the Development Control Committee. Committee reports are publicly available 5 clear working days before the Committee.
- On occasion speakers may arrive at Committee to be told that they cannot speak, because the application has changed and is to be deferred to the next meeting or has been withdrawn by the applicant. Regrettably this is unavoidable.

## Which Committees have public speaking?

- The Public Speaking Scheme will apply to the Development Control Committee. This meets at the Priory Road Offices of South Holland District Council. A schedule of meeting dates is available on the Council's web-site.

## Is public speaking compulsory?

No one is obliged to speak at Committee. Speaking at Committee supplements and does not replace written comments. Persons wishing to speak should always submit their views in writing within the statutory consultation period for the particular planning application.

## Information about the scheme

Information on the Public Speaking Scheme will be included in all consultation and acknowledgement letters to the public. Applicants or their agents will be informed of the scheme when the application is registered. The Public Speaking Officer will inform the applicant if there is to be a speaker against the application.

## Who can help?

All enquiries about public speaking should be made to The Public Speaking Officer, tel 01775 761161, between 8.30am and 4.45pm Monday–Friday. When he/she is absent, enquiries about public speaking will be dealt with by administrative staff in the Development Control Team. When contacting staff, please make it clear that you wish to register to speak at Committee.