

Public Speaking at Meetings Protocol

Planning and Building Standards Committee

Introduction

Scottish Borders Council will permit public presentations on planning applications in the circumstances and subject to the limitations set out below.

The opportunity to make a verbal presentation applies only to applications that are determined by the Planning and Building Standards Committee. Separate arrangements apply to applications that are determined by Council and applications that are subject to review by the Local Review Body.

1. Speakers

Public speaking at the Planning and Building Standards Committee is at the discretion of the Chairman of the Committee. However, under normal circumstances the following Groups will be allowed to make verbal representations in respect of each planning application:

- Up to 3 objectors, who have already provided written representations during the course of the application process (Group 1)
- Up to 3 supporters, including the applicant or his/her agent who have already provided written representations during the course of the application process (Group 2).
- Any Member of the Council representing the Ward within which the application lies (Group 3).

Only one speaker per household will be permitted.

2. Registration

Parties will be advised of the opportunity to speak through acknowledgement of application and acknowledgement of representation letters.

Anyone who may wish to speak at Committee is required to register that interest in writing with the Planning case officer. Anyone registering such an interest will subsequently be notified when a particular application is due to be considered by Committee. Notification will normally be given one week before the date of the meeting. Parties will then be asked to re-affirm their wish to speak at the meeting to the Committee Clerk no later than 12.00 noon on the working day preceding the meeting.

Where more than the permitted number of speakers have expressed an interest in speaking it is for parties to decide in advance of the Committee meeting who should speak. If agreement cannot be reached it shall be at the sole discretion of the Chairman to decide who should speak.

3. Time Allocation

Each Group of speakers (Group 1, Group 2 and Group 3) will be allowed up to six minutes in which to make their representations. Groups will be encouraged to nominate one speaker. Where this is not possible it will be for each group of speakers to decide in advance how the permitted time is allocated between individual speakers.

The allocation of time should be notified to the Committee Clerk prior to the commencement of the meeting. The allocation of time will be monitored by the Committee Clerk, and will be strictly enforced.

4. Content of Presentations

Presentations should focus on matters that have already been raised in writing. Presentations should not introduce new matters. Speakers should ensure that their statement relates only to relevant planning policies and material considerations directly related to the application under consideration. Speakers will give their presentations to the Committee from a lectern in the Council Chamber. No audio visual material or handouts will be permitted.

Guidance on what does and does not constitute a material planning consideration is available at the undernoted link.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2009/07/03153034/11>

The Chairman may intervene to curb irrelevant or inappropriate comments, repetition of points made by an earlier speaker, or deviation from the matter being discussed. Direct comments or criticisms of a personal nature against any individual involved in the planning process will not be permitted.

5. Questions

There shall be no questioning or cross examination of any parties other than by the Committee Chairman who may question a speaker in order to clarify points he/she has made. At the conclusion of their presentation parties shall return to the public gallery and shall take no further part in the Committee proceedings.

6. Order of Speakers

Following a brief introduction of the item by the Chairman of Committee the order of speaking shall be as follows:

- Elected Member(s) who are not members of the Committee.
- Parties objecting to the application.
- Parties supporting the application.

Officers will present the item and their recommendation at the conclusion of the oral presentations following which the Members of the Committee will debate and determine the application.

7. Deferred Items

If an item has been deferred for a site visit or other reason, parties will not normally be invited to make further presentations unless the proposed development has changed significantly, and a further round of consultation has taken place.

8. Behaviour at Planning and Building Standards Committee Meetings

All those in attendance at Committee meetings must be aware that the purpose of the meeting is for Members of the Committee to make decisions on planning applications. Public Speaking procedures are intended solely to assist this process within the guidance set out above.

Any unreasonable or disruptive behaviour will lead to the removal of those persons from the Chamber and/or the suspension of the meeting.