

## **Public speaking at Regulatory Committee meetings**

Currently, the planning process allows neighbours and other interested parties to make their views known on any planning application by writing to us. To help us make the fairest possible decisions, we carefully consider the points residents raise, whether they are for or against the proposal. The planning officer dealing with the application summarises these comments and responds to them in their report.

At South Staffordshire Council, we believe that this interaction with residents is vital to the planning process. To further improve this relationship, we operate a 'public speaking' scheme. This sheet explains how the scheme works.

### **What is the public speaking scheme?**

Anyone who has written to us about an application being heard at committee has the opportunity to explain their views directly to the councillors. The person applying for planning permission, or their representative, may also speak in support of the proposal.

If you have written to us about an application, you will be notified by email or post if the application is going to Planning Committee.

### **Can everyone who wants to speak do so?**

Due to time constraints, only one resident may speak about each application. If more than one person wishes to do so, residents must appoint a spokesperson in advance.

### **What happens at the meeting?**

We ask that speakers arrive at our offices for 6.15 p.m. When you arrive, an officer will explain the procedure and show you where to go.

The chairman of the committee will first announce the application, after which the planning officer may provide a brief summary of the proposal.

The resident (or the residents' spokesperson) will then address the committee, followed by the applicant or their representative. Each will have three minutes to state their views, or five minutes for a major application. The chairman will only extend these time limits in exceptional circumstances.

Planning Committee is also live streamed online via Microsoft Teams for anyone to observe.

## **What can you say?**

Essentially, this is an opportunity for you to explain or expand upon the issues raised by your application or written comments. It is not a debate and you will not be interrupted. You should use the time to draw the councillors' attention to planning matters that you feel should influence their decision, such as:

- highways and traffic;
- amenity and character;
- conservation;
- wildlife and environment;
- disabled access;
- local, regional and national planning policy;
- privacy;
- pollution; and
- historic assets.

You will not be able to hand out or discuss additional material, such as photographs or plans.

We recognise that planning applications can sometimes be surrounded by other issues and disagreements that can be frustrating and upsetting for all involved. However, if they are not planning matters, they cannot affect our decision and the planning process is not designed to resolve them, so it will not help to mention them at the committee meeting. Examples include:

- personal disputes;
- the motives, morals or conduct of the applicant(s);
- land ownership issues;
- views over land owned by others;
- the effect on property values; and
- rights, covenants and agreements under civil law.

## **How do you take part?**

Any person wishing to speak must confirm their intention to speak in writing to Development Management by 5pm on the Thursday before Planning Committee.

- Email: [SpeakingatPlanningCommittee@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:SpeakingatPlanningCommittee@sstaffs.gov.uk)
- Telephone: (01902) 696000
- Write to: Development Management Team  
South Staffordshire Council  
Wolverhampton Road  
Codsall  
Wolverhampton  
WV8 1PX

Finally, if you have any questions or suggestions about the public speaking process, please let us know.