

PUBLIC SPEAKING
AT THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE

GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS
OF THE PUBLIC AND
APPLICANTS

1. If at least three people have written to the Council to object to a planning application, and you are one of them, Runnymede Borough Council allows you to ask to address the Planning Committee. These notes tell you how you can exercise this right and the conditions which apply to it.

2. **If you are one of the objectors:**

a) You must make a written request to the Director of Technical Services (who is in charge of the Planning Division of the Council). Your request must arrive at his office after the agenda has been published but at the latest by noon two working days before the meeting.

Planning Committee meetings are normally on a Wednesday. If so, the agenda will be published on the previous Tuesday, and thus the deadline for asking to speak will be noon on the Monday before the meeting.

You must state which planning application you want to speak about (ideally by giving the application number, but you can give the address), and your name and address. The Council will not necessarily be able to acknowledge your request to speak.

b) please remember you can only speak about a single application for planning permission. You cannot normally speak about more than one application, and you may not speak about any other planning matter such as applications for Certificates of Lawfulness, a breach of planning control or a planning policy

decision. You may get a representative to speak on your behalf (see also (c) below).

c) because the Planning Committee will have a number of applications to consider, only one objector is allowed to speak about each one. If several of you have asked to do so, you can decide which one of you should speak and make this known before or at the meeting.

If you cannot agree who should speak the Chairman will call whoever lodged the first written request to speak. In this case, no-one else will be allowed to speak unless that first person waives his or her right in favour of the next in line.

d) if you are called to speak, you must only speak about the planning application the Committee is considering, and you must say what you have to say within 3 minutes. You cannot ask questions or get the Committee or Officers into discussion.

The Chairman might ask for clarification of something you have said but will not otherwise comment. You will not be allowed to speak on any other application at the same meeting, unless the Chairman allows you to because it is linked to the first application.

e) once you have spoken, the Chairman will give the applicant for planning permission (if present) a chance to speak. He or she will also be restricted to 3 minutes.

The Members of the Planning Committee will then consider the application and only Councillors will be able to participate (advised by staff if necessary).

- f) please bear in mind that by law the Council can only take into account certain matters when considering applications. It cannot, for example, pay any attention to the fact that a proposed building may be in breach of a restrictive covenant or might be thought to devalue somebody else's property.

When they are discussing the application, the Councillors will normally try to restrict their remarks to the "planning considerations", although they will realise that there may be other matters which also concern people.

3. **If you are the applicant:**

- a) if any requests are received to speak about your application, the Council's planning staff will try to contact you or your agent to tell you. To do this they will use the contact details given on your planning application. It is very important, therefore, that the address or contact person named on your application is likely to be available if you want to know about this.
- b) if the person who has asked to speak to the Committee about your application appears and speaks (see procedure above), or if the Council's Officers recommend refusal of your application, the Chairman of the meeting will give you or a person on your behalf the opportunity to speak.

You do not have to take this opportunity. You can get a representative to speak on your behalf. If nobody turns up to speak about your application, even though they have registered a request to do so, you

will be able to speak to the Committee only if the Planning Officers are recommending that your application be refused.

- c) like the earlier speaker, you too will have a maximum of 3 minutes.

Documentation, in the form of letters, notes, plans, diagrams or photographs should not be circulated at the meeting. It is disruptive, does not give Members of the Committee time to absorb the material and does not give the opportunity for other interested parties to comment. Any such material should be circulated well in advance of the meeting.

The Planning Committee is held in the Council Chamber in the Runnymede Civic Centre at Addlestone, commencing at 7.30pm.

It consists of 15 Councillors, details of whom can be obtained by telephoning 01932 425153.

A Calendar of Committee meetings and Agendas can be viewed on the 'Committees' webpage at www.runnymede.gov.uk

Normally when interested parties attend, those items of interest are taken first to avoid the public having to wait through a long agenda. This is not however possible for those who arrive after the meeting has begun.

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