



**Forest of Dean**  
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —



**Have your say**

**A guide for the public when speaking at  
Planning Committee meetings**

## **A guide for the public when speaking at Planning Committee Meetings**

The Forest of Dean District Council allows members of the public and parish and town councils to speak at meetings of the Planning Committee. The committee usually meets at 2.00pm on the second Tuesday of each month in the council chamber, and a meeting agenda including a list of applications is published at least five clear working days in advance.

Most planning applications are decided by professional planning officers and normally only the most significant, such as large housing developments, department stores or factories, are decided by the committee. However district councillors and officers can refer a smaller application to the committee if they feel that there are good reasons for the committee to discuss it.

Anyone who has written in regarding an application that is presented to the Planning Committee will be notified of the committee date and advised of their right to address the committee in accordance with this protocol. This guidance aims to provide information on the procedure which applies to public speaking.

Members of the public or of a parish or town council will not be permitted to address the committee unless they have submitted their views in writing to the planning section before the publication of the agenda for the meeting. Sometimes, owing to the amount of business, it may not be possible for everyone with an interest to speak on the day. Applications may be carried over to a later date to ensure the opportunity to speak is afforded in accordance with this protocol.

## How will the scheme work?

**Three minutes is allocated for each of the following groups to address the committee:**

Those objecting to the application

The relevant parish or town council

Those supporting the application, including the applicant

The time limit will be strictly applied. This means that the total time allocated for all representations on any application is nine minutes.

## **The following rules apply when addressing the committee:**

- Anyone wishing to speak must register their request in writing to Democratic Services, Forest of Dean District Council, High Street, Coleford Glos GL16 8HG email: [democratic.services@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@fdean.gov.uk) telephone: 01594 812625 by noon on the last working day before the Planning Committee meeting.
- The Council recommends the selection of a spokesperson where more than one person wishes to be present a particular view. The spokesperson should be registered as the speaker.
- Where a spokesperson is not selected, and several people wish to express a similar viewpoint, the Council will allocate the opportunity to speak to the first person who registered a request.
- Speakers should attend the council chamber 30mins before the meeting is due to start in order to familiarise themselves with committee procedures. A Council officer will be available to advise you.
- Planning applications for which a speaker or speakers have been registered will, whenever possible, be heard first. This may involve some re-ordering of the applications compared to how they appear on the committee agenda.

- No new information may be presented to the committee. Any written or illustrative material you wish to rely on must have been submitted with your written representations.
- The order in which speakers will be called shall be:
  - Objectors to the application
  - Parish or town council
  - Supporters to the application
- Speakers will not be permitted to enter into debate with members, officers or each other. The chairman will not allow cross examination of either the applicant, objectors or supporters by any other party or by a councillor.
- Any speaker who makes a statement which, in the opinion of the chairman, is defamatory, abusive, racially motivated or discriminatory will be required to stop speaking and leave the meeting. The committee will be instructed to disregard any such comments.
- Should an application be referred to a meeting of the full council, the above procedures will apply.
- The chairman's ruling is final

## Some advice for people wishing to address the planning committee

- Prepare what you want to say in advance of the committee meeting.
- Be brief and to the point, covering only those items you have raised in your written submissions.
- Speak clearly, using the microphone.
- Limit your views to relevant planning issues, for example:

Compliance with policies

Impact on the character of the area

Noise, disturbance, smells and loss of amenity

Design, appearance and layout

Impact on neighbouring properties

Highway safety and traffic generation

Planning policies and government guidance

- Avoid referring to non-planning issues as these cannot be taken into account when the committee decides an application. Examples of non-planning issues are:

‘Trade’ objections and competition

Previous planning contraventions

Boundary disputes or other property disputes

The developer’s motives or ‘moral’ arguments

Matters covered by other laws

Loss of ‘view’

Personality issues

Reduction in property values.

For guidance on procedure at meetings contact Democratic Services (tel: 01594 812625 email: [democratic.services@fdean.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@fdean.gov.uk))

Finally please remember that you are addressing members of the planning committee, not the public gallery.

This document can be made available on audio tape, in Braille, large print, a range of languages and in other formats if required.

Democratic Services

Tel: 01594 812625 Email:  
democratic.services@fdean.gov.uk



**Forest of Dean District Council,**  
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Visit the council website at [www.fdean.gov.uk](http://www.fdean.gov.uk)