

North Hertfordshire District Council

Having your say on planning applications at Planning Control Committee meetings

There is an opportunity for members of the public to speak on planning applications at the meetings of the Council's Planning Control Committee. The purpose is to allow applicants, their agents, objectors and supporters to make their views known in person. The scheme only applies to those applications made under the planning legislation which are reported to the Planning Control Committee for decision and not to those dealt with under the powers delegated by the Council to the Strategic Director of Planning, Housing and Enterprise.

Q. Who can speak?

A. Applicants and their agents as well as persons who have made written comments on the application either objecting to or supporting the proposal.

Q. When and where does the Planning Control Committee meet?

A. There is one Planning Control Committee that meets a minimum of 12 times during the civic year. The meetings normally start at 7.30 pm. Dates of forthcoming meetings are included with this leaflet and the venue is the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City unless otherwise advertised. This information can also be confirmed from the Council's Committee and Member Services Section on 01462-474000 or from the Planning Control and Conservation Service on 01462-474000.

Q. What planning applications can I speak on?

A. You can speak on all applications, made to the Council under the Town and Country Planning Acts, including those for Listed Building and Conservation Area consents, which are on the Committee agenda and which, if you are not the applicant or their agent, you have already commented on in writing to the Council.

Q. When is the Planning Control Committee agenda available?

A. Agendas are available, on request, from the Committee and Member Services Section 5 working days before the date of the meeting, and the North Hertfordshire District Council website http://www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/council_and_democracy/democracy/council_and_committee_meetings.htm

Q. How do I make arrangements for speaking at the meeting?

A. If you wish to speak at a Planning Control Committee meeting, you should contact the Council's Committee and Member Services Section by telephone, fax, e-mail or post not later than 12.00 noon on the working day of the meeting in order to register your intention to speak. On the evening of the Committee, you should arrive at least 10 minutes before the commencement of the meeting and inform the Committee Administrator of your arrival and confirm your intention to speak.

Q. What time is available for speakers to address the Committee?

A. A maximum of 5 minutes is available for each group of speakers i.e. 5 minutes for objectors, 5 minutes for the applicant/agent and supporters. In the interests of equity, the time limit will be strictly adhered to. Those persons wishing to speak for or against an application are strongly encouraged to get together to make a joint presentation, perhaps by one spokesperson, so as to make best use of the allotted time. If no spokesperson is appointed, speakers will need to agree how to share their 5 minutes. You can find out if other persons have registered to speak by contacting the Committee and Member Services Section.

Q. What can I say?

A. You should bear in mind that the assessment of the application by the Committee will have regard to the planning issues relevant to the particular case, such as adopted planning policies, government advice, the design and appearance of proposed buildings, highway safety and traffic generation, impact on visual and residential amenity etc. You should, therefore, avoid including in your presentation matters which cannot be taken into account by the Committee in reaching a decision on the application. These would include allegations of trespass and boundary disputes, questioning the applicant's motives, effect on property value, loss of view over land not under your control, and other matters of a civil nature or more properly dealt with under other legislation e.g. Building Regulations, Environmental Health Acts.

Q. When do I speak?

A. The Chairman of the Planning Control Committee will announce the item and then:-

- Ask the planning officer to present the planning application, drawing attention to significant issues and, if necessary, updating the written agenda report.
- The representative(s) of those persons objecting to the application will then be invited to address the Committee for a total of 5 minutes.
- The applicant and/or their agent and any person(s) supporting the application will have the opportunity to speak, again for up to 5 minutes in total.
- The planning officer will be invited, by the Chairman or Members, to comment on any issue raised.
- The Committee will discuss the planning application and make its decision.

Q. Can I ask questions?

A. No, you will not be able to put questions to the Members of the Planning Control Committee or to the officers. Likewise, persons who have addressed the Committee would not, normally, be questioned by Members. The reason for this is that it could, unfairly, extend one party's presentation beyond the time available to others.

If you require more information please contact :-

Committee and Member Services, Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City, SG6 3JF - telephone 01462-474000
or,
Development and Conservation, PO Box 480, M33, 0DE.
telephone 01462-474000