

**Public Speaking Protocol for
Remote Meetings of the Planning Committee – Updated December 2025**

Public speaking at remote meetings of the Planning Committee will be allowed in line with the protocol set out below.

1. Process for Speakers

- 1.1 Speakers must register with the Democratic Services Team by no later than 12 noon on the day before the meeting.
- 1.2 The following categories of speakers will be permitted and invited to speak in the order set out below:
 - Objector(s)
 - Supporter(s)
 - Applicant/Agent
 - Parish Councillor / BTAC representative
 - Ward Member
- 1.3 Each category of speaker, with the exception of Ward Member, will be limited to 3 minutes of speaking time. Ward Members speaking time will be limited to 5 minutes, but may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman. Ward Members must register their intention to speak with the Democratic Services Team.
- 1.4 Where more than one person registers to speak as an objector or supporter agreement should be reached between those parties before the meeting that one person will speak for all. If this is not possible the first person registered in the category will be allocated the 3 minutes of speaking time. The first registered speaker will be asked to provide a contact number and agree to it being shared with any subsequent person who wishes to also speak in that category.
- 1.5 The Applicant/Agent will automatically be allocated the 3 minutes of speaking time, but only one will be permitted to speak
- 1.6 Any Parish Councillor may speak on any application within the area of their parish as either an objector or supporter for a maximum of 3 minutes.

2. Supporting Documentation

- 2.1 Supporting documentation and/or photographic evidence may be submitted but must be received by 12 noon 2 clear working days prior to the meeting. Lobbying of Members of the Planning Committee either in objection or support of an application is not acceptable.

3. Public Participation at a meeting of the Planning Committee

- 3.1 Once registered the joining link for the meeting will be forwarded to the speakers. The link should not be shared with any other parties. Speakers should ensure their username is clear and reflects them. Only usernames which reflect those people registered to speak will be allowed access to the meeting.
- 3.2 It is the speaker's responsibility to ensure they can connect to the remote meeting via the internet. Failure to connect to the meeting due to technical difficulties will not prevent a decision being reached on a committee item or a decision notice issued.
- 3.3 Speakers may only speak when invited to do so and must keep their microphones muted at all other times.
- 3.4 Speakers should focus their comments on the planning application under consideration and matters relevant to planning issues, examples of which are:
 - Planning policy, e.g. the Local Plan, other local planning policy, Government guidance, case law, previous decisions of the Council.
 - Design, appearance and layout.
 - Impact on visual or residential amenity, including loss of privacy, noise, disturbance, smell or nuisance
 - Impact on trees, listed buildings or a conservation area.
 - Highway safety and traffic.

Examples of issues which cannot be taken into account:

- Private property rights – boundary or access disputes; restrictive covenants; rights of way; ancient rights to light
- Effect on property values
- Personalities or an individual's motives
- Matters covered by other legislation such as Environmental Health or Licensing laws.

- 3.5 Registered speakers may provide a copy of their verbal presentation:
 - The statement must be provided by 12 noon on the day before the meeting to the Democratic Services Team.
 - It must not exceed the allocated time for verbal presentation.
 - In the event that a registered speaker has internet connection difficulties their statement will be read out to the Committee.
 - Failure to provide a statement or attend the meeting would not prevent a decision being reached on a committee item and a planning decision issued.
 - Any statement considered to contain aggressive or abusive language, or that makes personal remarks regarding any Member, officer or third party will be rejected.

3.6 Speakers must observe appropriate behaviour whilst participating in virtual meetings. No comments of a personal, slanderous, defamatory or otherwise offensive nature should be made. If any disruption is caused to the meeting the person will be removed.

4. Order of Proceedings

4.1 The Planning Officer will introduce their report, adding to, updating and illustrating the published written report.

4.2 Registered speakers will then be invited to address the Committee in the following order:

- Objector(s)
- Supporter(s)
- Applicant/Agent
- Parish Councillor / BTAC representative
- Ward Member

4.3 The Committee will then debate the matter (and may request further information from the Planning Officer) before reaching a decision.

4.4 Once consideration of the item has concluded and the committee has voted, the registered speakers on that application will be removed from the meeting, but may continue to view the meeting on the Council's YouTube channel if they so wish [Boston Borough Council - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/c/BostonBoroughCouncil)