



B O S T O N

B O R O U G H C O U N C I L

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PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Effective from 1st November 2007 – updated July 2017

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking will be allowed on any application on the agenda to be considered by the planning committee. Public speaking will not be permitted on items within the agenda such as potential enforcement action, tree preservation orders etc

1. WHO CAN SPEAK AT A PLANNING MEETING?

The policy allows public speaking in each of the following categories:

THE OBJECTOR

(A person/persons who have applied to speak in line with the procedure in point 5)

The objector(s) will be allowed a maximum of five minutes to make their representation to the Committee. The objector(s) will be timed by the Committee Officer and will be advised when they have 30 seconds remaining in order to allow them to conclude their representation. When more than one speaker is to address the Committee within the 5 minute allocation period, the Committee Officer will advise the speaker when there are 2 minutes and 30 seconds remaining and then when the final 30 seconds are remaining.

The role of spokesperson for objector(s) on a planning application will be granted to the first person who registers to speak with the Democratic Services Section (see point 5)

When more than one person registers to speak the following procedure will apply:

- A contact number supplied by the first registered speaker (a condition agreed to, on the application form, by all people registering to speak), will be passed on to any subsequent speaker, whose responsibility it is to contact the registered speaker.
- The subsequent speaker can request that either:
 - the registered speaker agree to share the speaking time with them, or that
 - the registered speaker incorporates the objections of the second speaker within their own.

Should the first registered speaker decline to share the speaking time, they alone will be allowed to speak.

- Where agreement is reached with more than one speaker in a particular category, it is the responsibility of the speakers to divide the allocated five minutes speaking time between the number of speakers. Notification of the names of each speaker should then be forwarded to the Democratic Services Section.

THE SUPPORTER

(Other than the applicant/agent)

The same procedures apply as for the objector – please see the previous paragraph.

THE APPLICANT/AGENT

The applicant / agent will automatically be given the allocation of five minutes speaking time. Should the applicant and agent wish to speak it is their responsibility to divide the allocated time between them. The Committee Officer will advise when there are 30 seconds remaining.

THE PARISH COUNCILLOR

Any Parish Councillor may address the Planning Committee in respect of any application within their Parish. They may speak either in favour of / or against the application. Parish Councillors are allowed a maximum of five minutes to make their representation.

THE WARD MEMBER

A Ward Councillor may address the Committee. There is no time limit but the Ward Member must register his intent to speak with the Committee Officer.

Note: The Chairman of the Planning Committee has the discretion to allow, in exceptional circumstances, an extension to the time allowed to a public speaker. This however, is agreed between the Chairman and Speaker, prior to the Committee Meeting and in line with consultation of other Members.

2. HOW MUCH TIME IS ALLOWED?

As stated above, a maximum of 5 minutes will be allowed in total for objectors, 5 minutes in total for supporters and 5 minutes for the Parish Councillor. This time limit applies if only one person is speaking or if there are multiple speakers.

3. CAN DOCUMENTATION BE CIRCULATED TO THE COMMITTEE?

Yes. Documentation and/or photographic evidence may be submitted. All documentation and / or photographic evidence must be submitted in line with the registration procedure. It must be with the Democratic Services Section by 12 noon at the latest on the Thursday before the Planning Meeting. This will allow distribution of all documentation to Members of the Committee on before the meeting.

Any documentation and / or photographic evidence received after 12 noon on the Thursday will not be submitted to the committee.

Under NO circumstances will the Chairman permit any new documentation to be submitted to Members of the Committee at the meeting.

4. MAY I ASK QUESTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE?

No. Once a speaker has made their representation to the Committee, they must return to their seat in the public gallery.

However, Member(s) of the Committee may question the content of the speakers' observations. The Member(s) will direct their question through the Chairman. The Chairman will then address the speaker for clarification or information in line with the content of the Members request.

The Chairman will not allow open discussion between Members and Speakers.

5. HOW DO I REGISTER TO SPEAK?

The application form to speak must be received by the Democratic Service Section NO LATER than 12 noon on the day before the meeting.

However, please note that any speaker wishing to produce substantiating evidence, MUST ensure that all documentation / photographs are received by the Democratic Service Section no later than 12 noon on the Thursday prior to the meeting. This will enable Committee Members to be presented with the documentation ahead of the meeting and allow them sufficient time to consider the evidence prior to the meeting.

6. WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE AT THE COMMITTEE MEETING?

The procedure will be the same for all applications:-

- The application will be introduced by the Chairman.
- A presentation of the application will be given by the Planning Officer.
- The Chairman will call upon those registered to speak to make their representations in the following order:
 - Objector(s)
 - Applicant/Agent/Supporter
 - Parish Councillor
 - Ward Member
- The Committee will ask questions of clarification if necessary
- The Planning Officer will comment on any factual matters raised by the speakers.
- The Committee will debate the application and make a decision to agree or refuse the application and in some cases, may defer the application.

7. WHAT ARE SPEAKERS ALLOWED TO SAY?

All comments must be restricted to the applications being considered and to Planning Policy, Listed Building and Conservation Area issues upon which the decision will be made. It should be remembered that the meetings are held in public session and that, therefore, no comments of a personal, slanderous, defamatory or otherwise offensive or abusive nature should be made. The Chairman has the right and duty to stop anyone speaking if such comments begin to be made and the speaker may then forfeit their opportunity to continue to speak.

Contact Details:

For further information in respect of any of the procedures within this policy please contact the Democratic Services Section on 01205 314226.

All applications to speak should be marked for the attention of the Democratic Services Section.

All applications to speak must provide a contact telephone number.

To email any documentation and / or photographic evidence for the Planning Committee please use the following email address: democratic@boston.gov.uk

