

Planning Committee

This guidance leaflet sets out the procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee meetings.

Most planning applications are determined by officers under powers delegated to them by the Council. However, Planning Committee determines significant or controversial applications, and those relating to CBC-owned property or submitted by a CBC staff member. Members can 'call in' an application for determination by Committee, and Parish Councils can also request a Committee decision. The Committee comprises 15 elected Members, reflecting the current political balance of the Council, with officers in attendance at meetings to present items and provide advice to Members. Officers prepare a written report on each application, which assesses the proposal and all material considerations relating to the case, and concludes with a recommendation to permit or refuse. Material considerations include all letters sent in objection or support of the proposal.

The Planning Committee meets every month on a Thursday (forthcoming dates can be found on the CBC website). At the current time, meetings are being held remotely, with members of the public able to 'attend' via a live stream on CBC's YouTube channel. The Chair will review the start time of each meeting on a month-by-month basis, depending on the number of applications to be considered; this will be advertised on the website when the agenda is published.

Members of the public have the opportunity to speak at Committee remotely, to state their views, either supporting or objecting to specific proposals. If you are unable to or uncomfortable about attending the

meeting via telephone, you will have the opportunity to have your speech read out at the meeting if you provide a transcript in advance (*details below*).

How do I know if the application I am interested in is going to Committee?

The agenda and officer reports are published on the Wednesday of the week before the meeting and can be viewed on line at www.cheltenham.gov.uk (About the Council – Meetings and Decisions – Council, cabinet and committee meetings – Planning Committee). Updates are published and uploaded as necessary, with a final update the day before the meeting. If you cannot view the documents on line, please contact 01242 264170 or 264130.

Can I see a copy of the Committee agenda and officer's report prior to the meeting?

Yes – all papers are available to the public - see above. Very occasionally, the Committee deals with sensitive business in 'closed' session - the Chairman will explain the process before the start of the meeting.

Who can speak at a Planning Committee meeting?

Any member of the public, applicant or agent who has registered to speak can address the Committee, either in support of or objection to an application. In addition, there are speaking rights for ward and parish councillors. The Chairman will invite registered speakers to address the Committee at the beginning of each agenda item.

If I want to speak, how do I arrange it?

Please contact us at any time after the publication of the agenda, but not later than 10.00am on the Wednesday prior to Planning Committee (*contact details overleaf*).

How many people can speak on each application?

A maximum of one person is allowed to speak in support and one in objection, plus parish/ward councillors. In the event of more than one request to speak in support or objection being received, we ask that a single speaker represent the group. If no agreement on a spokesperson can be reached, the speaking slot will be given to the first registered speaker. The Chairman has the final decision as to who is allowed to speak.

How long will I be able to speak for?

Members of the public are allowed three minutes to speak, and you should practise in advance to make sure you can say all you want to say in that time. Speeches are timed and the Chairman will indicate when you have 30 seconds left and ask you to stop speaking when your three minutes are up.

What should I say?

No new written material, documents, plans or photos may be presented to the Committee without the Chairman's agreement prior to the start of the meeting. Public speaking allows views to be expressed and facts stated (*see overleaf*). Speakers may not enter into debate with Members, officers or each other, and the Chairman will not allow cross-examination by any party. **You are required to provide a transcript of your speech by 5.00pm on the day prior to the meeting**, so that if connectivity is lost during the meeting, your speech can be read out by a member of the Democratic Services team.

When will I speak at the meeting?

Each agenda item will be considered as follows:

- Officer presentation/introduction
- Public speaker/ward councillor representations
- Member questions
- Member debate
- Officer summing-up
- Legal Officer takes the vote by roll call

How will public speaking work on the day?

You will be provided with the dial-in details no earlier than two hours before the meeting start time.

You will be able to join the meeting up to 30 minutes before the meeting officially starts; once your arrival has been confirmed by Democratic Services, your phone number will be identified on the system and you will be placed in a virtual 'lobby' until the agenda item on which you are speaking is considered. During your time in this virtual lobby, you will be unable to hear proceedings and are strongly advised to watch proceedings via the council's YouTube channel :

<https://www.youtube.com/user/cheltenhamborough>

At the point at which the application on which you are speaking is opened, the host of the meeting will move you out of the virtual lobby and you will then be able to address the committee when invited to do so by the Chair (press *6 to activate your microphone)

As you will have submitted your speech in advance, should there be any issues with connectivity a member of the Democratic Services team will read your speech aloud to Members of the Committee.

After all public speakers have spoken, Members will ask questions, debate and vote on the application. **You will not be able to make any further contribution to the meeting.**

When are the Committee minutes available for members of the public?

Draft minutes are published on the website as soon as they are available.

If you have any queries concerning public speaking at Planning Committee meetings, please contact Democratic Services on 01242 264130 or 264170

Advice for public speakers

- Keep your observations brief and relevant
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Please limit your views to relevant planning issues, such as:
 - ✓ the impact of development on the character of the area;
 - ✓ the external design, appearance and layout;
 - ✓ the impact of development on neighbouring properties;
 - ✓ highway safety;
 - ✓ planning proposals and government guidance.
- The following matters cannot be taken into account when the committee decide on the application:
 - ✗ 'trade' objections such as competition issues;
 - ✗ boundary disputes or other property disputes;
 - ✗ the developer's motives;
 - ✗ 'moral' arguments;
 - ✗ matters covered by other laws;
 - ✗ loss of 'view';
 - ✗ personality issues;
 - ✗ reduction in property value



CHELTENHAM
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Have your say Public speaking at Planning Committee

May 2020

Cheltenham Borough Council