

Milton Keynes City Council

Procedure for Public Participation at Planning Committee Meetings

PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure applies to the Planning Committee and the Planning Panel in relation to public speaking rights when determining planning applications and any other business dealt with at either of these meetings.

2. Members of the Public

- 2.1 Members of the public may request the right to speak at any meeting of the Planning Committee or the Planning Panel to object to a planning application. The number of public speakers (excluding Parish and Town Councils) will be limited to three per application (not including any right of reply). A single objector will be allowed to speak for a maximum of three minutes. Where there is more than one request to speak from persons representing a single group or organisation, they will be limited to a total of three minutes to summarise the group or organisation's objection, but more than one representative may speak on behalf of the group or organisation within the allocated three minutes. Points to note:

- (i) Both the number of speakers and the time limit may be extended at the Chair's discretion.
- (ii) Speaking places will be allocated on a first come first served basis following internet publication of the agenda.
- (iii) Any request to speak must be submitted in accordance with paragraph (6) of this guidance.

- 2.2 If an application is deferred, any speaker heard by the Planning Committee when the application was first received will be permitted to speak again when the application is reconsidered subject to the speaker submitting a further request to speak in accordance with paragraphs (1) and (9) of this guidance.

3. Ward Councillors

- 3.1 Ward Councillors will be granted a speaking slot of up to three minutes on any application within the Borough. A Ward Councillor may speak in objection, support or in a neutral capacity to any application and any request to speak must be submitted in accordance with paragraph (6) of this guidance.

4. Town and Parish Councils

- 4.1 A representative of a Town or Parish Council, nominated by either the Chair or the Clerk of the Town or Parish Council, will be allowed to speak at a meeting of the Planning Committee, or Panel, for a maximum of three minutes on any application for a development within that Parish or where in the view of the Chair, the development would significantly impact the Parish. Any representation will be in addition to the limit on the number of public speakers.

4.2 A Town or Parish Council may speak either in objection or support of an application, however, the request to speak must be submitted in accordance with paragraph (6) of this guidance, and will only be accepted from the Clerk or in the case of a Parish meeting, the Parish Secretary.

5. Applicants

5.1 Applicants will be entitled to speak in favour of a planning application where the planning officer has recommended that the application be refused and there have been no requests from members of the public to speak in objection. The Applicant will be given three minutes in total to speak in support of their application and may invite others to speak on their behalf within the allocated time.

5.2 Any Applicants, or their agents, will be informed when a request to speak in objection has been received and will be invited to exercise a right of reply either in writing or orally at the meeting. Any right of reply will not exceed the cumulative time given to objectors to the specific planning application. Applicants, or their agents, may invite supporters to speak within their allocated time.

6. Requests to Speak

6.1 Any request to speak (other than exercising the right to reply) must be received by Democratic Services (to the contact officer named on the agenda or to planning-speaking-requests@milton-keynes.gov.uk) by noon, **two clear working days** before the meeting.

7. Questions from Objectors

7.1 Objectors registered to speak may submit questions of clarification to officers **no later than twenty four hours before the start time of the meeting** in order that officers can prepare a response for the meeting.

8. Agenda Order

8.1 The Committee shall follow the Agenda and receive all representations / responses to questions as the applications are considered. However, depending on the volume of representations, the Chair shall have the discretion to re-arrange the Agenda as considered appropriate.

9. Questions from Members of the Planning Committee / Panel

9.1 Members of the Planning Committee and the Planning Panel may, with the consent of the Chair of the meeting, ask Officers questions of clarity in respect of the application being determined. Points to note:

- (i) any questions will be asked during the course of the Member debate of the application;
- (ii) if an Officer is unable to provide the clarity required, then a Member may, with the consent of the Chair, seek clarification from the Applicant; and

- (iii) a councillor's 3 minutes for debate (in accordance with Rule 13.4) will be stopped whilst any questions of clarity are asked of the Officer (or Applicant) and responses provided.

10. Remote Participation and Inability to Attend

- 10.1 Anyone who has registered to speak in accordance with paragraph (6) of this guidance will be entitled to do so remotely (usually via Microsoft Teams), but does so at their own risk.
- 10.2 Consideration of a planning application will not usually be deferred because of technical issues which prevent Planning Committee / Panel members being able to see or hear the person addressing the Planning Committee / Panel.
- 10.3 Anyone who has registered to speak in accordance with paragraph (6) of this guidance, but is unable to attend (either in person or online), will at the discretion of the Chair be entitled to have their speech read out by the clerk, provided a copy of their representation / speech is submitted to the clerk in advance of the meeting.

11. Content of Speeches and Accompanying Material

- 11.1 Whilst the content of speeches is a matter for those addressing the Planning Committee / Panel, they should be aware that:
 - (i) members of the Planning Committee / Panel will only be able to consider points raised which are material planning considerations; and
 - (ii) statements that are defamatory, abusive, or discriminatory will be considered an interruption to proceedings and will be subject to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 20 (Disturbance by Public).
- 11.2 No visual aids (i.e. photographs or videos), or handouts intended for circulation to Members of the Planning Committee / Panel, will be permitted when exercising a right to speak at a meeting. Anyone may submit late written representations to the Planning Committee / Panel, by the deadline given on the agenda, however, these representations will not be circulated verbatim, rather addressed in any update paper and published on the Council's public access system for the application in question.
- 11.3 In the interest of probity and transparency, material should not be circulated to Members of the Planning Committee / Panel, by the applicant, objectors, or other interested parties, in advance of a meeting.