

The Right to Speak Procedure for Planning & Regulatory Board Meetings

Introduction

This right to speak procedure is designed to ensure that for applications being determined by the Council's Planning & Regulatory Board, both the applicant and objectors are able to contribute to the Board's consideration of applications.

To make sure there is a fair hearing for the public and the meeting runs efficiently, it is important that the 'right to speak' procedure is carefully managed, including the order of speaking and the time allowed. This procedure note describes the arrangements which are followed in meetings of the Board.

Summary of the Procedure

- The 'right to speak' applies equally to the person who is applying for planning permission or their agent, and to the general public.
- You may speak only if you have given at least five days' notice to the council beforehand that you want to do so and have confirmed this to the Democratic Support Officer before the meeting starts. Otherwise, the chairperson will decide whether you may speak at the meeting.
- You are allowed five minutes to put your case, which should be concise and deal with planning matters only. Information on what planning considerations are can be found on the Planning Portal.
- If 'both sides' want to speak, the person making the application will speak first and anyone who objects second.
- If there are a few people who want to object, one spokesperson should normally speak for all.
- If the objectors fall into two or more groups, a spokesperson for each group will be allowed to speak if the chairperson agrees.
- The person applying does not have a 'right of reply' to comments by objector.

Planning Board meetings at the Town Hall

Planning Regulatory Board meetings normally take place once a month in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Church Street, Barnsley. If your application is being considered at a meeting in the Town Hall, please read the following:

When you arrive

- If you want to speak in the meeting, please try to arrive at the Town Hall 10 minutes before the meeting starts. The reception staff will give you a visitor badge and tell you where to go.
- In the Council Chamber, please give your name to the Democratic Support Officer (who will have a checklist of speakers names from the agenda). The officer will show you to the seating reserved for people who want to speak.
- The officer will give you a copy of the agenda, so you will be able to read the planning officer's report about the application that concerns you, and see where it comes in the agenda.
- The Council Chamber has microphones, which you can switch on by using a switch on the desk in front of you. When the microphone is 'on' a red light shows.
- Take time to look at the layout the chamber and the procedure of the meeting, before 'your' application.

Please remember that applications can sometimes be withdrawn or delayed at short notice. We will do our best to let the public know beforehand, but occasionally this may not be possible.

Order of business in the meeting

Any applications where people have asked for the right to speak are dealt with first at the Planning Board meeting to allow anyone with an interest to leave promptly after speaking if they want to do so.

When it gets to 'your' application

The chairperson will announce the application and will then invite people to speak. When the first person has spoken the chairperson will invite others to speak in turn.

You will be allowed five minutes to put your case. Please stay seated, so the microphone will pick up your voice. When finished you should return to your seat. You may then listen to the debate. However, you cannot take part in it or vote on the proposal.

After you have Spoken

When everyone who wants to speak has been heard, the planning officer will summarise the information set out in the printed agenda. Officers from other council services (such as highways engineers, environmental health officers or solicitors) may also comment on aspects of the proposal that are relevant to them.

Members of the Board may then ask questions. When these questions have been asked and answered, the members will discuss the application and make their decision by voting on the recommendations in the report to grant or refuse planning permission.

Only the Board can decide on any application, acting on technical advice of officers. However, there are times when, after carefully considering the advice, the board decides not to accept the planning officer's recommendation.

Keeping order in the meeting

It is vital, if the meeting is to be carried out efficiently, that everyone keeps to the rules described in this leaflet and fully respects the authority of the chairperson.

The chairperson of the Planning Board can govern the business of the meeting so they achieve good order and satisfactory progress. In some circumstances, this may include excluding people from the Chamber, or ending a debate.

Virtual Planning Board Meetings

Where it is not possible to hold a meeting at the Town Hall, for example due to social distancing, meetings will be held remotely.

Barnsley MBC conducts remote meetings using Microsoft Teams.

An invite to the meeting will be sent to you by email. This will feature a link to join the meeting at the appropriate time. Clicking the link at this time will open Teams in your internet browser.

Virtual meetings will mirror the procedure outlined above in terms of the running order of the meeting, time allotted to speakers, the order in which speakers are heard and what happens after you have spoken.

You are advised to log on at the start of the meeting but to keep your camera and microphone switched off until it is your turn to speak and if you would like any assistance prior to the meeting with regard to joining a Teams meeting please let us know.