

Decisions on planning applications

Planning Committee meetings – how they work

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How can I find out when an application will be considered?

Decisions on certain planning applications are taken at the Council's Planning Committee. These Committee Meetings are open to the public. To find out whether an application will be heard by Planning Committee you can [view the application details here](#). Meetings are usually held on the first Tuesday of the month in the Council Chamber of the Council Offices at the Symington Building, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG. [A full Committee calendar and all documentation can be found here](#). The meetings follow an agenda which is published on the website 5 working days before the meeting is scheduled to take place.

Public Speaking at the Planning Committee

The Council is committed to open government and public involvement in the planning process. There are 2 ways you can participate in Planning Committee meetings:

- You can present petitions on all general items reported to the Planning Committee

You can address the Planning Committee for up to 3 minutes as a representative of the following

- An objector to a proposal (Maximum of 3 Speakers or the same amount of time as allowed for supporters, whichever is the greater);
- A supporter of a proposal (including the applicant/agent) (Maximum of 3 Speakers or the same amount of time as allowed for objectors, whichever is the greater);
- A representative of the Parish Council / Parish Meeting / Town Council / ~~another~~ ~~other~~ body within which the site is located;
- ~~A Ward Councillor Member(s) (maximum of 5 minutes (maximum of one speaker for and / or against the proposal);~~
- ~~A County Councillor (Does not apply if also Ward Member).~~

If you would like to speak at a Planning Committee meeting or present a petition **you must request to do so in writing by 12noon not less than 2 working days before the meeting** (for example, if the Planning Committee is on a Tuesday and the day before is a bank holiday you must submit your request by 12noon on the previous Thursday). You can email planning@harborough.gov.uk ensuring that your email contains the application number, your name and contact details and an indication of the topic area you wish to discuss. Requests to speak will not be accepted until the date of publication of the relevant Planning Committee agenda and request will be accepted on a first come first served basis. **Requests to speak will not be accepted after this deadline.**

If more than the allocated number of speakers register to speak, a representative of the relevant group needs to be chosen and nominated to address the Committee on behalf of the group. In order to facilitate this, contact details will need to be provided at the stage of registration. Failure to arrange this beforehand may forfeit the right to speak and speaking slots will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

If you can not attend the meeting to speak

The Planning Committee is under no obligation to defer making a decision on an application because a particular speaker is not available to attend the meeting. A proxy speaker may be nominated if you are unable to attend (their details should be provided in advance). Do not submit written speeches as there is no obligation for these to be presented to the committee.

Site Visits

Please note that Members of the Planning Committee will, in some cases, carry out a site visit prior to the Planning Committee meeting. Site visits usually take place on the Monday prior to the Planning Committee meeting. The Members of the Planning Committee will be accompanied on these site visits by Planning Officers who will talk through the proposals for the site in question with the Councillors of the Committee. Members of the public are not permitted to address the Committee at these site visits.

Receipt of Late Correspondence

Please note that any correspondence received after the publication of the agenda must be received by the Planning Department before 17.00 the last working day before the meeting. If it is not received by this time we cannot guarantee that it will be taken into account when the application is considered.

Process of Planning Committee meetings

Planning Committee meetings use the following process:

1. The Planning Committee agenda papers are published online 5 working days before the planning committee meeting.
2. A Supplementary Information List is often made available on the evening of the planning committee meeting, this will contain information received after publication of the planning committee agenda papers.
3. Meetings will may be recorded in accordance with the Council's guide for audio recording of meetings.

4. The Planning Committee Chairman will open the meeting and make introductions.
5. If necessary, the Committee will be given time at the meeting to consider supplementary information.
6. Planning Applications are usually taken in agenda order; however, items relating to which public are registered to speak are normally brought forward.
7. The Planning Officer introduces a report.
8. Any public speaking will be heard.
9. Planning Committee members can ask points of clarification of speakers.
10. Public speaking is complete, and the public cannot take part in further debate of the application.
11. Planning Committee members then debate the application before them.
12. The Planning Officer, or others in attendance (e.g. solicitor) will provide clarification and advise if asked by a Planning Committee member.
13. ~~The Planning Committee~~ decisions are on a majority of votes taken by a show of hands .A recorded vote can be requested by members in accordance with the Constitution.~~take a vote on a show of hands to make a decision – the vote is normally recorded.~~
14. The Chairman has a second or casting vote in the event that there is a ~~does not vote but~~an equal number of votes for and against.~~does have a casting vote if needed.~~

What can I say?

The Chairman of the Committee will invite you to speak **It should be noted that the 3 minute period allowed for speakers to address the Committee must be adhered to and will be strictly enforced by the Chairman of the Committee.** This period may be followed by questions of clarification from Committee members. **Submission of further graphic or written information and the use of visual aids by speakers at the meeting will not be permitted.**

You can only speak about issues which you, or the other objectors/supporters, have already raised in written comments to the Council. It will help if you are clear and concise and confine your points to relevant planning issues and, where possible, avoid repetition of points already raised.

You may not:

- Enter into any discussion or debate on the proposal;
- Ask any questions of Councillors, the other party or anyone else at the meeting;
- Use any equipment, however, documents which are already before the Council (e.g. site plan) can be displayed for you to refer to.

~~Questions~~At the Chairman's discretion, questions of clarification may be put to you by Members after you have spoken.

Please remember that the Committee can only take into account planning matters when it makes its decision, and that it is bound by law to make a decision in accordance with currently adopted and up to date development plan policy the Development Plan for the area, unless other material factors are so important they justify departing from it.

Do I have to speak to the Committee for my views to be considered?

No. If you have written to the Council regarding a planning application your views will be summarised in the published report and taken into consideration. You can therefore simply attend the Committee Meeting and listen to the debate if you wish. You may also consider contacting your Ward Councillor who, (even if not a member of the Planning Committee), can explain the issues you are raising to the meeting. However, the Councillor is not your representative and may also express other views.

Reconvened Meetings

The Council's Constitution states that the Committee must take a vote as to whether to extend business beyond 21:30. In cases whereby it is decided to continue, the meeting will progress until its conclusion. In cases whereby it is decided not to continue with business, a date will be agreed for a reconvened meeting. This meeting will be a continuation of the original meeting, and as such, no further representations can be made and no additional speakers can be registered. There is no requirement for speakers who are already registered to re-register for the reconvened meeting.

What if I have further queries?

The Council has attempted to make this procedure as fair and as easy to operate as possible within the guidelines which the Government sets out for determining planning applications. If you have any questions that have not been answered by the information given here, please contact us (planning@harborough.gov.uk).