

PLANNING COMMITTEE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHO SITS ON THE PLANNING COMMITTEE?

The Council's Planning Committee consists of eight Councillors (elected Members) and is Chaired by Councillor Charles Smith. The Vice-Chair is Councillor Chris Turley. Officers who are employed by the Council to advise on Planning, Legal and Administrative matters will also sit at the Committee table but their role is advisory only and they do not take part in decision making or vote on applications.

WHERE AND WHEN DO PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS TAKE PLACE?

The Planning Committee normally meets every 3 weeks on Wednesdays at 6.00pm. Venue details for each meeting are available from Democratic Services. Meeting rooms are accessible. Meeting dates are listed on the Council's calendar of meetings. A copy of the calendar is published on the Council's website [here](#).

CAN I ATTEND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS?

Yes. All Planning Committee meetings are open to the press and public, although on rare occasions the Committee may discuss a particular matter in private.

HOW CAN I GET A COPY OF ANY REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED BY PLANNING COMMITTEE?

You can monitor the progress of planning applications, submit your comments, view application forms, plans, supporting documentation and consultation comments using the Council's [Planning online service](#).

Reports on applications to be considered are circulated to Planning Committee Members and published on the Council's website a week before the meeting. Papers for meetings can be viewed on the Council's website [here](#). A limited number of hard copies are also available at the meeting together with any updates to be tabled. Update reports normally detail any outstanding information or consultee responses and further representations received after the main report was written.

CAN I SPEAK AT PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS?

Yes, but only if you have registered with Democratic Services in advance of the meeting and only on planning grounds. The Council has a published scheme for speaking at Planning Committee and further guidance can be downloaded from our website [here](#). On each application, a representative of the relevant Parish or Town Council, the relevant Borough Ward Councillor, an objector (or spokesman for a number of objectors), and the applicant or their agent may address the meeting for a maximum of 3 minutes each. Speakers do not have to speak for the whole of the 3 minutes' allocated and succinct presentations are welcomed. Speakers will usually be provided with a microphone and are requested to speak clearly as the Committee Members may wish to take notes.

Speakers are able to see a countdown timer during their address to the Committee. This consists of a classic number timer and also a white control bar which gradually fills green as time runs out, changing to amber (one minute remaining), then red when no more time remains. In addition, a bell will sound when one minute of speaking time remains, and again at the end of the 3 minutes. When the allocated time runs out, the Chair will thank the speaker for their contribution and ask them to retake their seat in the gallery.

Speakers may not hand out documents or display photographs during their address. Any additional material must be submitted to Democratic Services at least 48 hours before the meeting. The meetings are normally on a Wednesday, so the deadline would be the Monday before the meeting.

DOES THE PLANNING COMMITTEE CONSIDER APPLICATIONS IN THE ORDER LISTED ON THE AGENDA?

Not necessarily. The order of business is determined by the Chair taking into consideration:

- Whether an application has been withdrawn or officers are recommending deferral
- Whether an application has been deferred from a previous meeting or has been the subject of a site visit
- The level of interest on an application
- Whether applicants/supporters/objectors/Ward Members have indicated any special requirements.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING AN APPLICATION AT THE MEETING?

The Chair will announce each item. There is normally a comprehensive written report circulated with the agenda which Members receive and read in advance. The Planning Officer will introduce each application with a brief verbal presentation and the Chair will invite public speakers to the table to address the Committee. The Planning Officer will then be invited to give a more detailed overview of the application, which will usually include the display of plans, drawings and photographs of the application site. There is a projection screen in the room so that everyone can see the display. The Committee will then debate the merits of the application. During the debate, Planning Committee Members may question or seek clarification from Planning Officers and/or the Legal Adviser but speakers and members of the public are not allowed to participate at this stage. At the end of the debate, a vote (by a show of hands) is taken on the recommendation in the Officer's report. In the event of a tie, the Chair has a second or casting vote. If the vote is to approve or refuse contrary to the Planning Officer's recommendation, the Committee will be asked to give their planning reasons and these will be minuted. Once the application you are interested in has been heard and decided, you may leave the meeting room but please exit the venue considerately.

WHAT TIME DOES THE MEETING END?

The meeting will be conducted in a business like fashion and the Planning Committee will endeavour to deal with reports as quickly as possible. Business is normally concluded by 8.30pm but on rare occasions may continue longer.

WHAT ARE SITE VISITS?

Site visits are arranged by Planning Officers to allow the Planning Committee to attend and view an application site and its surroundings and to seek clarification. The Planning Committee may seek to undertake a site visit on applications when:

- inspecting the site will mitigate difficulties in assessing significant factors and/or what weight should be placed on them in relation to other factors; or
- there are significant policy or precedent implications and specific site factors need to be carefully addressed.

When attending site visits, Planning Committee Members are not able to hear or consider representations or discuss the merits of the application.

WHEN DO SITE VISITS TAKE PLACE?

Site visits usually take place on the afternoon immediately preceding the Planning Committee meeting at which the application is to be considered. Times for site visits are generally agreed with the Chairman following publication of the agenda. You can contact Democratic Services 48 hours before the meeting to check whether a site visit has been arranged for the application you are interested in. Site visits can also be requested by Committee Members during the meeting, in which case consideration of the application will be deferred until the next meeting*.

*** IF I HAD REGISTERED TO SPEAK ON AN APPLICATION THAT IS DEFERRED FOR A SITE VISIT, CAN I SPEAK AGAIN AT THE NEXT MEETING?**

Yes, but you must re-register your interest in doing so. Please note that in some cases, Members may agree to defer an application for a site visit at the start of the meeting without hearing representations from speakers or the Planning Officer's presentation. If this happens, please do not be offended that you have not had an opportunity to speak on this occasion as you do have the opportunity to re-register to speak at the next meeting when the Members have benefitted from viewing the site and its surroundings. You can contact Democratic Services the day after the meeting to check the details of the time and date for the site visit.

IF I AM UNABLE TO ATTEND THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING, HOW CAN I FIND OUT THE DECISION?

You can find out the decision by contacting Democratic Services the day after the meeting. The minutes from the meeting will also be available on the Council's website 5 clear working days before the next meeting.

WHEN CAN I SEE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING?

The minutes of each meeting are published with the agenda and paperwork for the next meeting of the Committee, 5 clear working days before the meeting date.

WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER INFORMATION OR ADVICE?

Public Speaking & Meeting Procedure Queries:
Democratic Services
☎ 01952 383205

✉ publicspeaking@telford.gov.uk

Planning Application Queries:
Development Management
☎ 01952 380380

✉ planning.control@telford.gov.uk

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