

We recommend you look at the plans before addressing a committee, as well as the officer's report, available at least five working days before the meeting. In this way, you can reassure yourself that you fully understand what is being proposed.

### **What are the relevant planning issues I can raise?**

Planning issues you could raise include:

- development plan policies, such as policies about sustainability or housing provision;
- planning advice from the Government such as set out within the 'National Planning Policy Framework';
- planning law, decisions we have made in the past, or in previous appeals;
- how a proposal would affect the character and appearance of the area, such as the site, scale, height or design of the development;
- how a proposal would affect a residential area, for example, will noise, traffic or the hours of use spoil the area, or will other properties be overlooked; and
- how a proposal would affect highway safety, for example, will the development affect pedestrian safety, cause parking problems, or prevent drivers from seeing clearly.

Examples of issues you shouldn't raise, because they aren't material planning matters, are:

- private drainage rights, fire precautions, hygiene and internal space (these are dealt with under other legislation, such as the Building Regulations);
- the personal details of the applicant, for example, if they are elderly, disabled and so on;
- disputes over boundaries or who owns the land;
- private rights of way, private drains or other private legal issues;
- how a proposal would affect property values; and
- competition between rival businesses.

The chairperson of the committee will refuse to hear you if you behave improperly, offensively or try to prevent the committee from doing their work. You should also remember that the laws of slander are very strict. If you say something about a person that is untrue, even if you believe it to be true, you may be sued and have to pay compensation. You should consider your comments carefully.

### **Can I hand out supporting documents or use visual aids?**

You can't hand out supporting documents at the meeting or use visual aids such as photographs or diagrams.

### **General Information**

**Hertsmere Main Office:** Civic Offices, Elstree Way Borehamwood, Herts WD6 1WA

Telephone: 020 8207 2277

Email: [customer.services@hertsmere.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@hertsmere.gov.uk)

Opening hours: Monday to Thursday - 8.30am to 5.15pm, Friday - 8.30am to 5pm

**Website:** [www.hertsmere.gov.uk](http://www.hertsmere.gov.uk)

**Out of Hours Emergency Telephone Number:** 0845 300 0021

# Guidance notes for speaking at Planning Committees

Hertsmere  
Borough Council 

**The Planning Committee doesn't make a decision on all planning applications. Most applications are not of a widely contentious nature and are relatively straightforward. Such applications are decided under delegated powers. The procedures described in this leaflet do not apply to these delegated applications but rather those that are to be heard by the Planning Committee. About 10% of all planning applications submitted to Hertsmere Borough Council are decided by Planning Committee.**

This leaflet explains what to do if you want to speak for or against a planning application at a meeting of the Planning Committee. You can speak at a meeting if you have applied for planning permission, or if you are a member of the public who wants to speak for or against a planning application.

This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you may have about what to do and what to expect at the meeting. It also explains the simple rules we have agreed to make the system as fair and easy to use as possible, so please read all of this leaflet. If you have any more questions, please contact us using the contact information at the end of this leaflet.

## How does the Planning Committee work?

The Planning Committee is made up of a chairperson, two vice-chairpersons and 10 other councillors. Other councillors, who are not members of the committee, may also attend and speak in the capacity of a Community Advocate. The press and other members of the public may also attend the meetings.

The committee members receive written reports on all planning applications being considered by the Planning Committee. These reports are available to the public at least five working days before the day of the Planning Committee meeting.

## Who can speak at a Planning Committee meeting?

You or your representative can ask to speak at a Planning Committee meeting about a planning application you have made. You can also speak (or ask a representative to speak for you) if you support or object to a planning application and have written to us with your comments. However, if the person who made the application or their representative wants to speak, then no other supporter of the application will be allowed to speak. You will be allowed to speak as long as you keep to the rules explained in this leaflet.

Only **one** person can speak for and **one** person can speak against an application. You may speak to the committee for up to three minutes on any planning matter on the agenda, with the exception of any confidential matters.

## How and when do I have to let you know that I want to speak?

You cannot demand to speak at the Planning Committee, it is not a legal right. You can only speak if the planning application is on the committee's agenda.

Should you wish to speak at the Planning Committee you must register to do so between 10am and 4pm on the day of the meeting on the following number: **0500 400 160 (020 8970 2740 if using a mobile)**. The line is open on meeting days only. If the line is busy, please call back. Requests are dealt with on this number only on the day of the meeting.

We will need to know certain details so please have the following information when you call:

- the application/item that you want to talk about;
- your full name, address and telephone number;
- whether you are in favour or against the application or recommendation in respect of enforcement matters;
- whether you also represent anyone else.

Requests to speak are dealt with on a first come, first served basis. This means that if you have registered to speak, we will ask you if we may pass your details on to anyone else who telephones in with a similar point of view, so that you may take account of any issues they would have liked to raise. We will only put others in touch with you before the meeting if you give us permission to do so.

If you are speaking on behalf of others, for example, neighbours, you will need to bring with you a letter (or similar) signed by them authorising you to do so.

## What do I do on the day of the meeting?

The committee meeting is held at the Council's Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood. This is within walking distance of a bus stop whilst parking is available in the adjacent public car park. Elstree

and Borehamwood Train Station is approximately 1 mile from the Civic Offices.

The meeting will begin promptly at 6pm and you are kindly requested to arrive before this start time.

## What happens at the meeting and when will I speak?

Planning applications where there will be speakers from the public will normally be considered early into the agenda. The chairperson will introduce each application by giving the application number and details of the proposal. An officer will then make a short presentation (using slides) for the application as well as provide any updates to the written report. Following the officer's presentation

1. The Chairperson will ask the representative supporting the application to speak once for up to three minutes.
2. The Chairperson will ask the representative making objections to speak once for up to three minutes.
3. The Chairperson will ask the Community Advocate (if any) to speak for a maximum of five minutes.
4. The Planning Officer will be invited to comment on any views expressed during stages 1, 2 or 3 if required.
5. The Chairperson will then enable the Committee to discuss the application and its members may ask questions.
6. Officers will sum up the issues if this is necessary.
7. The Committee will reach its decision.

When the chairperson invites you to speak, you will be asked to move to a particular place within the council chamber where you can be seen and heard. At the end of your three minutes if you are still in the process of speaking the chairperson will usually allow you to finish your sentence and then will let you know that your time is up. We do not let speakers go over time to be fair and equitable to the other speakers. Before returning to the main gallery, the chairperson may, if deemed necessary, allow councillors to ask you questions to make clear any facts. However, you must not enter into a debate with the committee members.

Please note that at the meeting, your details (not your telephone number) may be given to the members of the committee, the press and any other members of the public present. This is because planning committees are public meetings and we cannot legally refuse this information.

Please be aware that the committee meeting is web cast so your comments will be filmed.

## What can I say at the meeting?

To maximise your three minutes and have the greatest impact you should:

- prepare what you wish to say in advance - it is advised that you time your speech to accord with the three minute allowance;
- be brief and to the point;
- limit your views to the planning application;
- focus on the relevant planning issues which may help the committee reach its decision. In preparing for this, remember that you do not need to repeat all the points in any letters sent in as these will be summarised in the committee report.