

PUBLIC SPEAKING AT SPELTHORNE'S PLANNING COMMITTEE

This leaflet seeks to answer some of the most commonly asked questions about the procedures and what to expect at the meeting itself.

Revised April 2007

Meetings of the Planning Committee commence at 7pm and are held every four weeks in the Council Chamber (on the second floor) of the Council Offices at Knowle Green in Staines. If you would like more details, including the name of your local ward Councillor please contact the Council's main reception desk on 01784 451449 or visit our website on www.spelthorne.gov.uk.

Q1) how will I know when the application I am interested in is going into Committee? Approximately seven days before the date of the Committee meeting we will write to advise the following people that an application is coming forward for consideration:

- The applicant, (or just their agent if one has been appointed).
- All those persons who have written to the Council in response to the planning application in question.

We will send details of the meeting with an accompanying set of guidance notes.

Q2) Will I be able to address the Committee on any application?

Yes, Spelthorne has decided that public speaking will be possible on every application on the public part of the agenda which is, or relates to, a planning or related application. It does not however apply to items which are solely seeking authority to pursue enforcement action, TPOs or Certificates of Lawfulness.

Q3) Who can make representations to the Committee?

There are two categories of speakers:-

- A person speaking against the planning proposal (either individually or on behalf of others).
- A person speaking in support of the planning proposal (usually either the applicant or an agent/architect on their behalf)

Q4) Do I need to contact the Council before turning up to speak?

Yes, if you wish to speak to the Committee you should telephone the Council's Committee section on 01784 446276 **ON THE DAY OF THE MEETING OR THE DAY BEFORE BETWEEN 9am – 4pm ON EITHER DAY.**

We will need to know:

- The application on which you wish to speak.
- Your full name, address and telephone number.
- And whether you are in favour or against the application and whether you also represent anyone else.

Finally we will ask whether we can pass your name and telephone number on to any other caller with a similar point of view in order for views to be co-ordinated. Please note – you cannot register (or assume you have registered) by speaking to any person

other than the Council's Committee Section. Even speaking to the planning officer will not suffice.

Q5) What if somebody has already registered to speak?

Our procedures allow for ONE person to speak in support of the application and ONE against. Requests to speak are dealt with on a "first come first served" basis.

Therefore if someone has already asked to speak, for example against the application and you wish to do likewise, you will not be able to do so.

However, provided the person who first registered to speak gives their consent, we may be able to put you in touch in order that those with a similar point of view can amalgamate their arguments/comments.

Q6) How long will I get to put my case?

Each speaker will be allocated a maximum of three minutes. In the interests of the efficient running of the meeting this time will be strictly followed. You will not be allowed to ask questions of Councillors, Officers or other speakers, neither will you be asked questions.

Q7) Can I circulate photographs or other material at the meeting?

No, not at the meeting. However material can be sent by you direct to individual Councillors before the day of the meeting, and should also be copied to the Planning Section.

Q8) What issues should I cover in my three minutes?

The Committee can only determine applications on planning grounds, therefore your case should only relate to planning issues including:

- Local Plan Policies, Structure plan policies and Government Guidance.
- Design, appearance, layout.
- Highway safety and traffic.
- Loss of light/amenity and overlooking.
- Noise, disturbance, smell.
- Conservation of buildings, trees, etc.

The Committee is not permitted to take into account matters such as:

- Private property rights/boundary disputes.
- Feelings towards neighbours.
- Loss of view or loss of property values.
- The developers morals or motives.

A more comprehensive list of issues will be sent out in our guidance notes (see Question 1)

Q9) What will happen at the meeting?

You should make yourself known to the Committee Administrator 15 minutes before the start of the meeting (i.e. 6.45pm) so that your attendance can be noted and any points of concern can be explained. The meeting will start at 7.30pm. When the application on which you wish to speak has been called by the Chairman, the following protocol will be followed:

- On items where there is public speaking, the planning officer will be asked to present the plans to the Committee and add any further information relevant to the application and the report.
- The Chairman will call upon one person representing all objectors to come forward to speak for a maximum of three minutes. The person will then return to the public gallery.
- The Chairman will call upon one person representing all supporters to come forward to speak for a maximum of three minutes. The person will then return to the public gallery.
- Any non-planning Committee ward Councillor will make representations to the Committee for a maximum of three minutes on cases affecting his/her ward.
- The Planning officer will then comment on any factual matters raised by either speaker.
- Members will then debate the application/ask questions of officers in the usual way and reach a decision, without public involvement.

Q10) What happens if I fail to register to speak or do not turn up at the Committee? If you do not attend the meeting having given notice of your wish to speak, or if you do not arrive at the meeting in time or if you have not registered with the council's Committee Section to speak, the application will be determined without your involvement. If the item is deferred without any discussions then no public speaking will take place. However you will be renotified when the matter goes to a subsequent meeting and be given the opportunity to speak.

In the event of any dispute over these procedures or protocol the Chairman's decision is final.

For further assistance please contact the Council on 01784 451499 or your Ward Councillor (details available from the Council Offices or via our website www.spelthorne.gov.uk).