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A GUIDE TO SPEAKING AT AN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

Introduction

Members of the public can speak at Tonbridge and Malling's Area Planning Committees as part of the process for determining a planning application and provides an opportunity for residents and communities to voice their opinions. This leaflet provides all the information you need to present your views.

Who can speak?

Everyone has the chance to make their views known on a specific planning application directly to the Councillors at the relevant Area Planning Committee where decisions will be made. If you wish to speak to the Committee, you must already have sent in a written comment about the application.

The right to speak applies equally to all members of the public including applicants and their agents, supporters, objectors and also representatives of the Town and Parish Councils within the Borough of Tonbridge & Malling.

Speaking is an extra procedure and you should firstly ensure that you comment on a particular planning issue or application, by sending your views in writing as soon as possible to the Case Officer so that they are considered when recommendations or decisions are being made.

How will I know when the committee is meeting?

There are 3 Area Planning Committees covering different geographical locations within Tonbridge Malling. Area 2 meets on a Wednesday, Area 1 and Area 3 meet on a Thursday. All Planning Committees meet at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber at Kings Hill and are scheduled to meet approximately every 6 weeks.

Not all applications are reported to Committee. If you have made written comments on an application we will write/email and tell you if it is to be considered by an Area Planning Committee and at what time and venue. Our letter will explain the date, time and location of the meeting.

Agendas and reports are published 5 clear working days before the meeting and will be available on tmbc.gov.uk under '[democracy](#)'.

Please read reports carefully before deciding whether or not you want to speak. The Committee Members will have read the report. What you can add is information that may be missing from the report or a particular emphasis you feel is not being made.

If after reading the report, you decide you do want to speak to the meeting, then please contact Democratic Services by no later than 5pm on the working day before the relevant meeting. We will have details of other potential speakers and you may wish to consider whether a single spokesperson could represent shared views.

How many people can speak?

In the parished area of the Borough (normally covered by Area 2 and Area 3) up to 7 people can speak on each application. They are:

- 1 Parish/Town Council representative;
- 5 Members of the Public or community group representatives;

- The applicant/agent who has the right of reply to any points made

In the non-parished area of the Borough (normally covered by Area 1) up to 7 people can speak on each application: They are

- 6 Members of the Public or community group representatives;
- The applicant/agent who has the right of reply to any points made

Members of the public and representatives of community groups are registered on a first-come, first-served basis. Spaces for speakers cannot be reserved unless individuals register directly with Democratic Services, as these are allocated according to this policy to ensure fairness for all potential participants.

If more than two individuals or representatives wish to raise similar points, speakers should consider nominating a single spokesperson.

What happens on the day?

If you have registered to speak to the Committee you should aim to arrive at Gibson Building, Kings Hill, at least a quarter of an hour before the meeting begins (i.e. normally by 7.15pm). A member of staff will meet you and explain the procedures and answer any questions you may have.

What will happen in the meeting?

The Chair will ask the planning officer to introduce the report and explain the reason for the recommendations.

Each speaker will be allowed up to 3 minutes to address the Committee about the application. It is, of course, up to you what you decide to say, but it might be useful to bear in mind the following:

- The Committee will listen to what you say but will not debate the merit of your opinions with you.

- Concentrate on explaining the points that you have already made in writing. You should not attempt to surprise the Committee by raising issues you have not raised before with the planning officer.
- The Committee must consider the application on planning grounds. You should not discuss the applicant's past behaviour nor speculate about what you think their possible future intentions may be. The Committee can only consider the application that is before them.
- The Chair will let you know when you have half a minute left to speak and will also tell you when your three minutes is finished.
- Please note that you will NOT be able to circulate written materials, notes or photographs at the meeting. Any such material should accompany your written comments on the application.

What happens after I have spoken?

After the speeches by the public and the applicant, the Committee will consider the application. Although this will be done in public, there will be no further opportunities for the public to speak. If there is any disruption from the public you may be asked to leave.

Democratic Services can be contacted on committee.services@tmhc.gov.uk or 01732 876025/876045

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