

# **SCHEME FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANS BOARD MEETINGS**

## **1. Introduction**

The Council is responsible for determining applications for planning permission. The vast majority of planning applications are dealt with under delegated powers by officers. Major, complex and contentious proposals will be determined in detail by elected Councillors at Plans Board meetings.

Public speaking at Plans Board meetings is not a legal requirement. However, it is regarded as good practice, provided it is properly regulated.

The purpose of allowing the public and applicants to address the Plans Board is to allow both applicants and potential supporters or objectors from the public to give their views on planning applications in person, before a decision is made. In addition Town or Parish Councils can send a representative to speak to the Board and the Borough Ward Councillor or nominee may also speak.

Allowing public speaking at Plans Board is beneficial in that it can increase public confidence in the openness and fairness of the Planning process as well as engaging the public in the decision making process.

### **How do I arrange to speak at Plans Board?**

A person wishing to speak must contact the Democratic Services team by no later than 5 pm, 2 working days before the meeting, by e mail to [publicspeaking@telford.gov.uk](mailto:publicspeaking@telford.gov.uk), by telephone on 01952 383214, or by letter to:

Democratic Services  
Telford & Wrekin Council  
Civic Offices  
Po Box 215  
Telford  
TF3 4LD

Meetings are normally held on Wednesdays at the Civic Offices in Telford. Wherever possible, items where the public wish to speak will normally be considered earlier on the agenda..

Speakers must register to speak and no-one will be allowed to speak if they have not registered.

## **2. Who can speak at Plans Board Meetings**

Any of the following can speak:

- The person applying for planning permission (or his or her agent or other representative) is entitled to speak in support of their application.
- Any other member of the public (or his or her agent or other representative) is entitled to speak either in favour or against the application.
- A representative of a Parish or Town Council is entitled to speak either in favour or against the application, providing that the property is situated within that Parish or Town Council area.
- Borough Ward councillors, providing that the property is located within their ward. A Borough councillors may also speak as a stand in for the Ward councillor

## **3. How long is allowed for speaking?**

A maximum of 5 minutes each is allocated for those who:

- Wish to speak in favour of the application
- Wish to oppose the application

and 5 minutes each is allocated for:

- The Parish or Town Council Representative for the area \*
- The Borough Ward Councillor (if not a member of Plans Board).

These time limits will be strictly adhered to. In certain circumstances the Chairman may agree to extend these time limits in the interests of a balanced debate.

In the case of multi member Borough wards, the Chairman may, at his discretion, allow more than one Borough Member to speak.

An applicant in favour of the application can speak even though an objector does not and vice-versa.

\* The Parish or Town Council representative must be authorised by the Parish or Town Council and speak on behalf of the Parish and not as an individual. A Parish or Town Council representative can only speak in relation to an application within the Parish/Town Council boundary.

## **4. What if more than one person wishes to speak?**

If more than one person wishes to speak, either in favour or against a proposal there are two options:

- A spokesman, usually the first person requesting to speak, may be appointed on behalf of all those either in favour or against a proposal
- The speakers can agree to share the 5 minutes between them

## **5. What is the Procedure for Speaking?**

The Chairman will announce the application and a Planning Officer will give a presentation of the application. Speakers will then be invited to address the Board in the following order:

1. Parish/Town Council representative
2. Borough Ward councillor
3. Objector (or agent/spokesperson on behalf of objectors)
4. Applicant or their agent/spokesperson

The Chairman will have the discretion to halt the Speaker should they begin to stray from the discussion of planning grounds or make inappropriate or offensive comments. Speakers may read from prepared statements. Once speakers have finished they will be asked to retake their seats in the public gallery and may take no further part in the meeting.

## **6. What can I say?**

Comments must be based on planning issues.

Speakers must not:

- Make statements of a personal or slanderous nature
- Be abusive; or
- Interrupt other Speakers or the debate of the Plans Board

Additional material such as plans or photographs must be provided to the Democratic Services Team at least 48 hours before the meeting