



GUILDFORD  
BOROUGH

## Guide to Planning Committee meetings



A guide for anyone who would like to:

- **know** how the committee process works;
- **attend** a Planning Committee meeting; or
- **speak** about an application at a Planning Committee meeting.

[www.guildford.gov.uk](http://www.guildford.gov.uk)

## **Introducing this guide**

This guide explains what you need to know if you want to speak at or attend a Planning Committee meeting. You will find this guide useful if you:

- have applied for planning permission and your application is being considered by the committee;
- are the neighbour of someone whose planning application is being considered by the committee; or
- are interested in planning and how the Planning Committee makes decisions.

## **Attending a Planning Committee meeting**

### **Where do Planning Committee meetings take place?**

Our Planning Committee meetings are held in the Council Chamber, which is in the civic suite of Millmead House. The public entrance to the Council Chamber is signposted in the front car park at Millmead House.

### **Accessibility at Planning Committee Meetings**

Planning Committee meetings are held in the Council Chambers which are accessed from the main reception up one flight of stairs. The main reception can be accessed via a disability ramp. Council Chambers is accessible, a wheelchair accessible lift is in situ to provide assistance to people in wheelchairs or who are unable to manage the stairs fully.

A hearing loop is also installed in the Council Chamber for those who are hard of hearing and use hearing aids. Please note that your hearing aid should be set to 'T'.

### **How often does the Planning Committee meet?**

Planning Committee meetings normally take place every three weeks. Meetings are on Wednesday evenings and start at 7pm. Occasionally there are special meetings to discuss major applications.

For a list of meeting dates please view our website at the following address:

<http://www2.guildford.gov.uk/councilmeetings/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=130>

### **Who can attend a Planning Committee meeting?**

Any member of the public can attend our Planning Committee meetings and listen to the discussions about applications and other matters on the public part of the meeting agenda.

In certain situations, you can speak at a committee meeting about a planning application you're interested in. If you would like to speak, you will need to arrange this with us before the meeting.

More information about speaking at Planning Committee meetings is given from page 3.

There may be times when the Planning Committee needs to discuss matters that are not on the public part of the agenda. The Chairman will explain this at the meeting and end the public part of the meeting.

The public seating area is at the back of the Council Chamber, next to the public entrance. If this seating area is full, public seating is also available in Committee Room 1. A layout plan of the Council Chamber is given on the back page of this guide showing the public seating area and where councillors and officers sit.

## **What does the Planning Committee do?**

Our Planning Committee makes decisions on about 10% of the planning applications we receive. All other applications are decided by the Director of Planning and Regeneration under delegated powers.

The Planning Committee will make a decision on applications:

- where we have received 10 or more letters or emails that disagree with the officer's recommendation for the application;
- large scale applications submitted by Guildford Borough Council, for example redevelopment of an existing site or provision of new housing. Small scale schemes will be dealt with under delegated powers;
- that a councillor or a council employee has made, or when the applicant is related to a councillor or council employee;
- that the Director of Planning and Regeneration asks the committee to decide; or
- that a councillor asks the committee to decide for planning reasons.

The agenda contains reports on each item referred compiled by officers which will include the recommendation along with any conditions or reasons for refusal. The reports are available for Members to review prior to the meeting along with the relevant plans and other information within the file.

Officers will carry out a brief presentation for each item which may include relevant plans of the development and photographs of the site.

Agendas are published five working days before each meeting. The agenda can be viewed on our website or copies are available at the committee meeting.

## **Who is on the committee?**

The Planning Committee is made up of 23 borough councillors. A further 11 councillors are named as substitute members of the committee.

Visit our website at [www.guildford.gov.uk](http://www.guildford.gov.uk) for the names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of the members of the Planning Committee.

## **Webcasting Arrangements**

Planning Committee meetings are recorded live and/or subsequently broadcast on the Council's website. The whole of the meeting will be recorded, except where there are confidential or exempt items, and the footage will be on the website for six months.

If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being recorded. By entering the Council Chamber, you are also consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

If you have any queries regarding the webcasting of meetings, please contact Committee Services by email on: [committeeservices@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:committeeservices@guildford.gov.uk)

## **The Public's Responsibilities**

Members of the public must not be violent, abusive or threatening to councillors or officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, councillors or officers. The public are entitled to attend public meetings of the Planning Committee, but must comply with the ruling of the Chairman. They may not disrupt the meeting or cause undue disturbance or they may be removed from the meeting. The use of written signs or placards are not permitted in Council Chamber and are strictly prohibited.

## **Speaking at Planning Committee meetings**

The diagram on the following page explains the process for deciding whether public speaking will take place on a planning application being presented to the Planning Committee.

We receive, register and start to process a valid planning application.

We generally set a **21-day consultation period** during which anyone can send us written comments about the application.

We decide that the application will go to Planning Committee and it is put on the next available agenda (see page 2 for details of which applications go to committee).

**The agenda is published five working days before the date of the meeting.**

**Situation A**

**When the agenda is published, we have received 10 or more letters or emails about the application.**

**Situation B**

**When the agenda is published, we have received less than 10 letters or emails about the application.**

**There will be public speaking on the application at Planning Committee.**

A maximum of four speakers can speak on each application – two supporting it and two objecting to it. These four places are allocated on a first come first served basis.

**There will not be public speaking on the application at Planning Committee**

**Public speaking registration period**

**From the day the agenda is published until the deadline of 12 noon on the working day before the day of the meeting, anyone can register to speak about the application. We will write to everyone who has written to us about the application to ask if they would like to register to speak.**

**If you would like to speak, we must receive your letter or email asking to register by the deadline.**

**We will contact everyone who has written to register to speak to let them know if they will be one of the four public speakers at the committee.**

**Petitions**

A petition submitted to us in relation to a particular planning application only counts as one written representation. We don't allow members of the public to speak on petitions presented at Planning Committee.

**Writing to us**

We always recommend that you phone us to check that we have received your letter or email about public speaking **before** the deadline. We cannot take responsibility for letters or emails that are sent but do not arrive in time.

## Registering to speak

If you would like to register to speak on a public speaking item, you must write to us or email us by **12 noon on the working day before the day of the meeting**. You must send your letter or email to:

Sophie Butcher  
Committee Officer  
Guildford Borough Council  
Millmead House  
Guildford  
GU2 4BB

Email: [sophie.butcher@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.butcher@guildford.gov.uk)

Phone: 01483 444056

### Your letter or email must contain:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your daytime phone number
- The planning application number
- The name of the development
- Whether you want to speak to support or object to the application

### If I write to you about an application, do I have to speak at a meeting?

No, you don't. If we receive a letter or email from you within the 21-day consultation period for the application, we will include a summary of your comments in the Planning Officer's report.

If we receive your letter or email **after the agenda is published but before noon on the working day before the day of the meeting**, the Committee Officer will include a summary of your comments in a document known as the 'Late Sheet'. This is given to councillors and the public at the meeting.

If we receive your letter after noon on the working day before the day of the meeting, your comments will be put on a file for committee members to read.

### How many people can speak about each application?

Up to **four** people can speak about an application.

- Two speakers who **object** to the application.
- Two speakers who **support** the application.

As there can be no more than four speakers, we will only invite the first two people who write to us objecting to an application, and the first two people who write to us supporting an application to speak at the meeting.

A person can speak to the committee on behalf of others who support or object to an application. If we have written to tell you that you can speak at a meeting, we may pass your details to others who object to or support the application so that they can contact you. If you would prefer us not to pass your details on to others, please let us know.

### **How long can I speak for?**

Each speaker has three minutes to speak. The Chairman will let you know when your three minutes are almost finished. You must make sure you cover all of your points in those three minutes. You cannot ask councillors, officers or other speakers any questions.

You are not allowed to use any presentation equipment when you speak at the meeting. For example, you cannot give a computer presentation or use an overhead projector or a slide projector.

### **Can I hand out information at the meeting?**

No, you cannot hand out any documents (such as plans and photographs) at the meeting and you cannot display any models.

### **If I am speaking at a meeting, when should I arrive?**

You should arrive in the Council Chamber by 6.45pm. The Committee Officer will introduce herself and sign you in.

### **What will happen at the meeting?**

- Everyone who attends the meeting will be given a list of people who have registered to speak at the meeting.
- The committee will first consider the applications for which there is public speaking, in the order on the list of speakers.
- When the Chairman calls out the name and number of the application you are interested in a planning officer will give a presentation on it.
- The Chairman will call each of the speakers in turn to go to the public speaking desk at the front of the Council Chamber to have their say.
- When you have finished your speech, you will be asked to return to your seat in the public seating area.
- When all of the speakers have been heard, the committee will discuss the application. The public cannot take part in the discussion.

- The committee will make a decision on the application.

**If you have registered to speak and you arrive late or don't turn up to the meeting, the committee will still make a decision on the application.**

### **What happens if the committee put off making a decision on an application until a future committee meeting?**

The Planning Committee might sometimes decide to put off making a decision on an application. This is known as 'deferring an application'. They will do this if they run out of time to discuss it fully, if members feel additional information is required, or if they would like to make a formal committee site visit. In most situations, they will not defer an application until all speakers have spoken about it at a meeting.

If the committee defers an application, and there has already been public speaking on this item at a meeting, there will be **no further public speaking** on it when it is discussed again at committee.

### **What issues should I speak about?**

The Planning Committee's decision on an application can be based only on planning issues. These planning issues can include:

- local, regional and national policies and government guidance;
- the design, appearance and layout of a proposed development;
- road safety and traffic issues;
- the effect on the local area and local properties;
- loss of light and overlooking;
- nuisance caused by noise, disturbance and smell; and
- protecting buildings and trees.

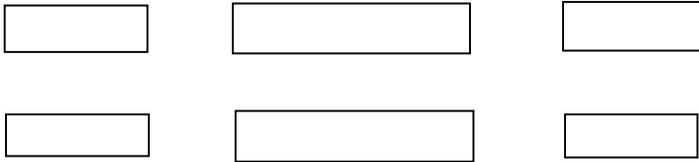
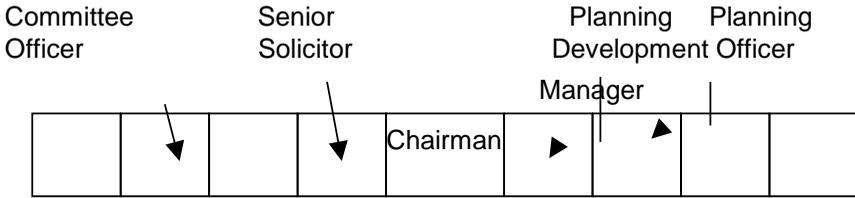
When you speak at a meeting, you should talk about these issues and explain how the proposed development will affect you personally.

The Planning Committee cannot consider issues that are not planning issues. These include:

- any disagreements between you and your neighbours about boundary lines or access;
- the developer's morals or motives;
- your loss of view across a neighbour's land; and
- how the development may affect the value of your property.

If you would like more advice on what is a planning issue, please email [planningenquiries@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:planningenquiries@guildford.gov.uk) or phone planning enquiries on 01483 444609. For more information about committee meetings and speaking at a Planning Committee, contact Sophie Butcher, Committee Officer, by emailing [sophie.butcher@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.butcher@guildford.gov.uk) or by phoning 01483 444056.

# The council chamber layout for a Planning Committee meeting



**Planning Committee members**

**Committee Room 1 public seating**

Any other councillors who attend the meeting will sit here.



Public entrance to the Council Chamber, accessed from the car park →

**Please contact us to request this document in an alternative format or language.**

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 Millmead House  
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 Surrey  
 GU2 4BB

**Contact us**

01483 444609 for planning enquiries  
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 01483 444056 for committee services  
 email: [sophie.butcher@guildford.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.butcher@guildford.gov.uk)  
 website: <http://www2.guildford.gov.uk/councilmeetings/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=130>