

PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

The right to speak

As part of its commitment to openness and improving the level of public participation in local government, Chorley Borough Council offers those affected by development proposals the opportunity to put their case personally and directly to the Development Control Committee when it is considering making decisions on planning and other similar applications.

The opportunity to speak is available to objectors to development proposals which are to be considered by the Development Control Committee. The opportunity to speak is also available to the applicant for development proposals or to their supporters, but not to both. There is no obligation to speak and written representations will always be reported to Committee and given due consideration.

The right to speak does not replace other arrangements for commenting on planning applications. Objectors and supporters should still write to the Council in the usual way. The right to speak only applies to applications which are being determined by Committee. There is no right to speak when Officers make planning decisions under delegated powers.

Procedures prior to the meeting

About one week before the Development Control Committee is to meet, all those with the right to make a request to speak will be informed of their opportunity to do so by the Council.

Anyone who wants to speak at the meeting will need to inform the Council's Democratic Services Section by midday, one working day before the Committee meeting.

This deadline will usually be 5pm on a Monday prior to the Committee meeting to be held on the following Tuesday evening at 6.30pm at the Town Hall, Chorley.

Only one objector or supporter will be allowed to speak on each application. If other people wish to speak on the same application, the objectors/supporters should try to agree before the meeting who will put the case. The Council's Officers will try to help facilitate those agreements. If agreement cannot be reached the first person to register an intention to speak will normally be invited to do so. In the case of any uncertainty, the Chair of the Development Control Committee will adjudicate.

Planning Officers and Democratic Services Officers will be on hand half an hour before the meeting to help the arrangements to run smoothly.

Order of speaking at the meeting

1. The Chair of the Committee or the relevant Planning Officer will describe the proposed development and recommend a decision to the Committee. A presentation on the proposal may also be made.
2. An objector/supporter will be asked to speak, normally for a maximum of three minutes. There will be no second chance to address Committee.
3. A local Councillor who is not a member of the Committee but represents a ward directly affected by the proposal may speak on the proposed development, normally for a maximum of five minutes.
4. The applicant or her/his representative will be invited to respond, again for a maximum of three minutes. As with the objector/supporter, there will be no second chance to address Committee.

5. The Development Control Committee, sometimes with further advice from Officers, will then discuss and come to a decision on the application.

There will be no questioning of speakers by Councillors or Officers, and no questioning of Councillors or Offices by speakers.

These arrangements are necessary to ensure that each application is deal with properly and fairly and that the Committee meeting runs smoothly and in a businesslike way.

Ward Councillor participation

Ward Councillors have a critical role in representing the Communities they serve. For that reason ward Councillors who are not members of the Development Control Committee may speak in respect of planning applications where the development is in their ward or would have a substantial impact on their ward.

Ward Councillors who wish to exercise this right must:

- Advise the Chair in advance of the meeting that they wish to speak.
- Should declare any personal interest they have in the matter.
- Must not exercise this right if their interest is both personal and prejudicial. If the Councillor is present at a meeting of Development Control Committee when an item is under discussion in which they have a personal and prejudicial interest then the Councillor must declare that interest and leave the room while the matter is under discussion. A Councillor in this position may participate as a member of the public either as the applicant or as the one objector allowed to speak but must still formally declare their interest and must withdraw from the meeting having made their representations.
- Restrict their speech to five minutes in length.

Chairs Discretion

The Chair has the discretion to vary the procedures in this protocol but may only do so in very exceptional circumstances where he considers that the interests of fairness or proper local government require it. Any change to the procedures should be the minimum change that the Chair considers is required in the circumstances.