

Public Participation at Area Planning Committees

The Council has established a separate scheme of public participation to allow interested parties to comment at meetings which consider and determine those planning applications and development control matters, including Tree Preservation Order objections, which are not delegated to officers.

This scheme, which is separate to the public participation scheme in place for Council meetings and some other committees makes specific provision for applicants/ supporters, objectors and the relevant Parish Council or Town Council to make their views known to councillors before they determine the applications before them at that meeting.

Members of the public are also entitled to attend meetings of the Committees to observe the decision making process without registering to speak. This scheme does not allow members of the public to participate in the debate by the committee and they are reminded not to interrupt the proceedings of the committee and to observe the rules of good behaviour at all times. Whilst councillors are elected to represent the views of their local communities they are also required to take into account the law and planning guidance. They are also required by law not to predetermine their views on a planning application. This means that they are not allowed to commit themselves to a decision before hearing all of the evidence or debate at the meeting and it would be inappropriate for them to be asked to express a voting intention in advance of the meeting.

Most applications which come before councillors are determined at one of two Area Planning Committees which are split on a geographical basis, one covering the North of the District and one covering the South of the District.

For the avoidance of doubt, this public participation scheme covers planning applications and development control matters, including Tree Preservation Order objections only which are determined at an Area Planning Committee. The alternative public participation scheme does not apply to meetings of the Area Planning Committee in relation to the consideration of planning and planning related applications.

Area Planning Committee meetings take place monthly, normally on a Wednesday evening. Full details of dates, times and venues of the meetings are published on the Council's website. Details of items on the agenda of each meeting are published on the Tuesday of the week before the meeting and are available on the website.

If you wish to speak as a registered objector or as the applicant/ agent in support of an application at a meeting, you may register to do so as soon as the agenda has been published. You can only do so by telephoning Democratic Services on 01684 862449 or by e-mailing public.speaking@malvern hills.gov.uk. Registration as an objector is on a first come, first served basis. It is possible for more than one objector to share the time available but this must be agreed between the objectors in advance of registration. Registration to speak will close at 12 noon on the day before the meeting.

Registered speakers are reminded that a statement of fact or opinion will have the greatest impact if they are brief and to the point and focus on relevant planning issues or material

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considerations. They will not be allowed to use additional slides or overhead transparencies but may refer to the application plans on display at the meeting.

All representatives of Town and Parish Councils must be authorised to represent the Council's views in advance of the meeting and an authorised representative of the affected Town or Parish Council may attend and speak if registered to do so beforehand.

Proceedings of the meeting or part of the meeting may be recorded and anyone wishing to do so should also notify the Democratic Services Officer in advance of the meeting. S(he) will be able to advise on the arrangements that will be necessary.

All members of the public present must be seated in an allocated area of the meeting room. When the meeting reaches the point at which the relevant application is to be considered the following procedure will apply:

- The Chairman of the Committee will ask a planning officer to introduce the agenda item.
- The Chairman of the Committee will invite the authorised representative (if there is one present) of the affected Town or Parish Council to move to a designated seat and to speak for a maximum of three minutes.
- The Chairman of the Committee will invite a registered objector (or objectors) to move to a designated seat and to speak for a maximum of three minutes in total.
- The Chairman of the Committee will invite the applicant or agent to move to a designated seat and to speak for a maximum of three minutes.
- The Chairman of the Committee will invite any member who has declared an interest and the intention to leave the room during the debate to move to a designated seat and to speak for a maximum of three minutes, if they wish to do so.
- The Chairman of the Committee will invite Planning Officer(s) to add any extra comments
- The Chairman of the Committee will invite the local councillor(s) to speak for a maximum of five minutes.
- The Chairman of the Committee will invite the committee members to debate the application and invite the Planning Officers and/or consultees to answer questions or provide advice/ clarification as necessary, before bringing the debate to a close with a call for a proposer and seconder of a motion and then a vote on the matter.

If the application is deferred the same public speaking arrangements and procedures will apply at the next meeting at which the application is discussed.