

**Extract from Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes
Monday 14 October 2019**

**OSC19/28. PROPOSED CHANGES TO PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING
(5) COMMITTEE**

Members considered the report of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee which had been considered by the Planning Committee at its meeting held on 12 September 2019, detailing a number of proposed changes to public speaking at the Planning Committee.

The Chairman welcomed the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee to the meeting, who led Members through the report.

The proposed revised scheme no longer required the submission of a petition, included a slot for Parish and Town Councils, non-Planning Committee Ward Members and up to three speakers in support or against for major applications (up to two for Minor/Others and one speaker for and against for household applications). It was advised that speakers would be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis; registration would start on the day of the agenda publication and close at 4pm on the Monday of the Committee meeting week.

In order to ensure adherence to the time constraints and for Ward Members to feel that they had sufficient time, non-Planning Committee Ward Members speaking under the scheme would be encouraged to submit a brief summary of the issues they would raise in advance of the meeting which would be circulated to the Planning Committee.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- the maximum speaking time for interested parties per application detailed in Appendix 3 to the report did not include Members of the Planning Committee;
- Ward Members should have the ability to intervene in discussions if they felt misinformation had been given;
- it should be made clear in the Code of Practice at Appendix 4 to the report that presentations made by public speakers were to amplify the submitted written representation;
- Members were concerned that speakers being accepted on a first-come-first-served basis may all come to the Committee with the same information;
- it was suggested that a Member calling-in an application attend the site visit as well as the Committee meeting;
- site visits were intended to give the opportunity for Members to gain a further understanding of the application and to ask questions of the officers. Discussions about the application were to take place in the public forum of the Planning Committee meeting;

- new information should not be brought to the Planning Committee meeting, but be submitted by the Monday of that week;
- it was suggested and agreed that the word 'interspersed' be added in the Ward Member column in the table at Appendix 3 to the report;
- Members raised concerns about Ward Members becoming pre-determined by submitting the issues they planned to raise in writing, if that application was ever referred to full Council for a decision;
- Members requested that the report on Proposed Changes to Public Speaking at the Planning Committee be combined with the previously discussed report on Proposed Operational Changes to the Planning Committee when referred on to the next full Council. The Executive Director advised that the procedures may need to be kept separate, as the changes to public speaking were based on the proposed operational changes being agreed. However, the request was noted;
- if a Ward had more than one Member, the Member with the most relevant information should speak at the meeting, but the Chairman may allow both; and
- a further recommendation was proposed and agreed to review the new scheme after 12 months.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to recommend to Council that:

- 1) the proposed revised public speaking scheme as set out in Appendix 3 to the report and revised Code of Practice document as set out in Appendix 4 to the report be agreed; and thereafter any minor changes to the public speaking system and/or the Code of Practice to be delegated to the Executive Director in consultation with the Chairman of Planning;
- 2) non-Planning Committee Ward Members speaking under the scheme be encouraged to submit a brief summary of the issues they would raise in advance of the meeting to be circulated to the Planning Committee;
- 3) the word 'interspersed' be added in the Ward Member column in the table at Appendix 3 to the report;
- 4) Members calling in an application must attend the relevant Planning Committee, send a Member on their behalf or provide an apology / reason for non-attendance; and
- 5) the revised scheme be reviewed after 12 months.