

	Planning Committee 8 December 2015	Agenda Item No. 21
Title	Public Speaking at Planning Committee	
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1. Summary

- 1.1 The report brings forward proposals to amend the public speaking rights at Warwick District Planning Committee.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That public speaking at Planning Committee be amended to read as follows:

"There is a time limit of three minutes for each category of speaker, excluding District Councillors, on all applications.

If there is more than one speaker in the same category for an item, the three minutes will be shared among them.

This is with the exception of major applications where up to four speakers will be permitted to address the committee in both the Objectors and Applicants/Supporters categories for a maximum of three minutes each.

That the times allocated may be varied at the discretion of the Chairman of the Planning Committee, when they believe there is significant public interest in an application, for example, regional developments such as the former gateway proposal and the passenger terminal at Coventry Airport."

- 2.2 That Planning Committee recommends to Council that:

- (i) it amends Council procedure rules so that Councillors are not permitted to address the Planning Committee for more than five minutes on any application and that unless they are providing contrary views, no more than one Councillor will be permitted to address the Committee on any application;
- (ii) the public speaking rights as set out above are included in Council procedure rules.

- 2.3 That Public Speaking be permitted on the determination of Tree Preservation Orders at Planning Committee.

3. Reasons for the Recommendation

- 3.1 Following discussions with the Chairman of the Planning Committee it was considered there was a need to update the guidance offered to Planning Committee and clarify the public speaking rights at Planning Committee.
- 3.2 The work to review the guidance document is ongoing and it has been considered that the information regarding public speaking should be updated and clarified first.

- 3.3 Public speaking at Planning Committee was introduced, in early 2003, as a result of the Planning Delivery Grant which is no longer in existence. However public speaking at Planning Committee is recognised as good practice and a good way to engage with the community on challenging applications.
- 3.4 The Chairman of the Planning Committee has concerns about the clarity of speaking rights at Committee and also the impact this can have on the length of the meeting when determining a significant number of applications.
- 3.5 Table 1 below sets out the current public speaking rights for applications (apart from major applications) alongside that proposed

Category	Current	Proposed
Parish/Town Council	3	3
CAF	3	3
Objector	3	3
Applicant/Supporter	3	3
Warwick District Councillor	10	5

- 3.6 Table 2 below sets out the current speaking rights for major applications alongside the proposed:

Category	Current	Proposed
Parish/Town Council	5	3
CAF	5	3
Objector	5 and 15 minutes total speaking time at the discretion of the Chair of Planning Committee (with no person speaking for more than 5 minutes)	A maximum of 12 minutes with no person speaking for more than 3 minutes.
Applicant/Supporter	Equal time as the objectors category but with no person speaking for more than 5 minutes.	Equal time as the objectors category but with no person speaking for more than 3 minutes.
Warwick District Councillor	10	5

- 3.7 The Chairman of the Planning Committee has had informal conversations with the Committee and other Councillors and found strong agreement that for the applications there was only a need for one Councillor to address the Committee on behalf of residents and that this could be completed in under five minutes. This has been tested over the last Planning Committee meetings where the Chairman has used his discretion to restrict the time available to Councillors addressing the Committee.
- 3.8 It is considered the public speaking should be permitted when the Committee determine Tree Preservation Orders. This is because public speaking was permitted when the confirmation of orders were considered by the TPO Sub-Committee. This was found to be beneficial to members in understanding the matters of the case. However this right was not picked up into the main Committee when the work came back to full committee after the TPO-Sub Committee ceased to exist.

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 **Policy Framework** – The report does not impact on the Council's Policy Framework.
- 4.2 **Fit for the Future** – The report does not impact on the Council's Fit for the Future Policy
- 4.3 **Impact Assessments** – There are no significant changes to the

5. Budgetary Framework

- 5.1 The report does not impact on the Budget Framework of this Council or its budget.

6. Risks

- 6.1 There are no significant risks associated with the proposals.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 A number of alternative options were discussed with the Chairman of the Planning Committee regarding the length of public speaking at Planning Committee. The Committee could choose to amend the proposal or retain its current arrangement. However any such amendments need to be considered to be fair and equal to all parties in terms of opportunity to address the Committee.
- 7.2 There is a further discussion point in terms of the potential length of time a side of the argument could have compared to another. For example if the Parish/Town Council, CAF, Objectors and Warwick District Councillor all spoke against an application they could speak in total for 14 minutes. This is compared to Applicants/Supporters who would have three minutes. However this is has always been considered reasonable based on the anticipation that many of the points of objection would be repeated and/or the applicant/supporter is a professional person who can respond within the allocated time.