

TO: PLANNING COMMITTEE – JUNE 21st 2006

**SUBJECT: REQUEST BY CAAF FOR SEPARATE SPEAKING RIGHTS AT
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

FROM: PLANNING AND ENGINEERING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider whether CAAF should have separate speaking rights as part of the arrangements for public speaking at Planning Committee.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At their meeting when the annual report was discussed, CAAF considered the effectiveness of current processes for taking into account the views of the forum in the decision making process on planning applications and requested that the possibility of addressing the Planning Committee be considered further by the appropriate committees.

- 2.2 The matter was then considered by the Economic and Environment Policy Committee on March 22nd who supported the matter in principle and resolved that this matter should be considered by Planning Committee. The relevant minute stated:-

“a report be submitted to the Planning Committee (including comments from the Head of Planning and Engineering and Assistant Chief Executive (Members' Services) requesting that a public speaking category be established solely for the Advisory Forum to address the Planning Committee when they have significant concerns”.

- 2.3 A review of the arrangements for public speaking took place in 2005, with the arrangements introduced in 2004 being largely retained but with additional speaking rights for applicants/supporters of applications where the recommendation was one of refusal. This was seen as helping to secure additional “equity” in the process.
- 2.4 A key feature of the arrangements is to try and achieve a balance between the rights of applicants/supporters and objectors, with a three minute time slot available for each category, and with applicants/supporters only having a right to address the committee if an objector is speaking (except for cases where the recommendation is for refusal).
- 2.5 Public speaking has proved very popular with over 650 speaker registrations during the year the review took place. Most meetings now extend to two nights with a common pattern being items with speakers on night 1 and non- speaker items on night 2.

- 2.6 The existing arrangements would permit CAAF to appoint a spokesperson to register as an “objector”. Where there is more than one registration, objectors are encouraged to put forward one speaker although it is not unknown for sharing of the three minute slot to take place. In addition; there is a separate speaking right for Parish/Town Councils and for Ward Councillors, which would enable a Councillor on CAAF to register and act as a conduit for their views. In total, therefore, there are four categories of speaker.
- 2.7 The introduction of a separate speaking right for CAAF would confer a special status onto one of the consultees in the development control process which currently doesn't exist for other individual consultees. There have already been requests from other organizations to speak at Planning Committee and if a separate right is conferred on CAAF, then it could open up the prospect of other organizations requesting their own separate time slots.
- 2.8 The key question is whether the existing arrangements give adequate opportunity for CAAF views to be considered by Planning Committee. In this context, the option exists for CAAF to email their views to Planning Committee after the end of each CAAF meeting and for any individual members of CAAF to request a ward Councillor to call in any planning application for committee consideration. It is considered that overall there are adequate existing mechanisms for CAAF views to be considered by Planning Committee and that the further introduction of a separate category of speaker in addition to the four categories which currently exist would not be justified.

3. **POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK**

- 3.1 The issues covered by this report have no policy or budgetary implications. .

4. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 That the current arrangements for public speaking rights remain unchanged.

John Edwards
Group Leader: Development Control

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report of Head of Planning and Engineering to Economic and Environment Policy Committee –
March 22nd 2006 Item 5

Areas in District Affected: Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth Conservation Areas.

Key Decision: No

Included in Forward Plan: No

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