

Remote Planning Committee Meeting Procedure and Public Participation

Background

1. The standard procedure for all planning committee meetings is included at paragraph 8 of Protocol 4 to the Constitution.
2. As a result of Government guidance on social distancing and other restrictions on public gatherings during the Covid-19 emergency standard operation of planning committees cannot proceed.
3. *The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020* (the Regulations) provide for remote attendance at local authority meetings by elected Members to enable the continued operation of committees during Covid-19 restrictions.
4. This document sets out the alternative procedure that will apply for Planning Committee meetings that are held remotely in accordance with the Regulations. These provisions will apply for the period permitted under the Coronavirus Act 2020 and the Regulations and apply notwithstanding any prohibition or other restrictions contained within the Council's Constitution relating to attendance and participation at meetings. This procedure will be kept under review and may be varied by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chief Executive Officers and Group Leaders at any time.

Pre-meeting

6. All who have made representations on an application to be determined by the relevant Planning Committee will be contacted by Wiltshire Council and provided with the following details:
 - Date and time of the committee meeting;
 - A link to the agenda for the meeting;
 - A link from which they will be able to view the meeting as it occurs
7. Those who have made representations will be advised that they may contact the Democratic Services Officer for the meeting, as listed with the agenda, and provide a statement that they would like to be read out at the meeting.
8. Any such statements must:
 - State whom the statement is from (including if representing another person or organisation)
 - State clearly whether the statement is in objection to or support of the application
 - If read aloud, be readable in approximately 3 minutes
 - Be provided no later than 5pm two working days before the meeting.

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9. All statements will be included in an agenda supplement published before the meeting. Longer representations should be provided to the Planning Officer listed for the application.

Agenda Order

10. Applications will be determined in the order they appear on the agenda unless the Chairman, with the agreement of the Committee, considers there are reasons for changing the order.
11. Officers will seek to ensure that applications which are likely to attract significant viewership or interest appear earlier in the agenda.
12. If the order is changed, this will be announced at the start of the meeting.

Meeting Procedure

13. In the interests of fairness, consistency and transparency, the procedure below must be followed at each meeting. Members of the public should note that it is not permissible during meetings to communicate with members debating the proposal by any means as this may give the appearance of bias. Any participation in the meeting should be as set out below.
14. For each application the Planning Officer will introduce the application and the key issues involved, as well as the reasoning behind the recommendation as set out in their report. They will also set out any representations, amended plans or material considerations which have been received or come to light in the period between the publication of the agenda and the committee meeting, including those contained within any agenda supplement.
15. Committee Members may then ask the officer to clarify any points/ask technical questions.
16. Statements in opposition to the application will then be read out by the Democratic Services Officer. Up to three statements of up to three minutes each may be read.
17. Statements in support of the application will then be read out by the Democratic Services Officer. Up to three statements of up to three minutes each may be read.
18. Statements from any statutory consultees, except for parish councils, of up to three minutes in length may then be read out by the Democratic Services Officer, whether in support or in objection to the application.
19. A statement from the parish council for the area in which the applications sits, if provided, will then be read out by the Democratic Services Officer for a length of up to four minutes. This must be the formal view of the parish council not an individual representation. If the application is on the edge of several parishes which are directly affected, the Chairman may allow the reading out of statements from other parishes, to a maximum of three in total, for up to four minutes each. Individual members of a parish council may send statements to be read out, whether in agreement or

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disagreement with the formal view of the parish council, but would need to use a public statement slot.

20. The Unitary Division Member for the application, or nominated substitute, if present, will then be invited to make a representation. The Chairman may allow a neighbouring or any other Member of the Council to make a representation at this time if they consider it appropriate. Non-committee members should give prior notification if they wish to speak.
21. The Planning Officer will then have an opportunity to respond to comments or provide clarification of any points raised by the public or Members.
22. The Committee will then debate the application. The first Member to speak will be expected to move a proposal for deliberation. The rules of debate as detailed in Part 4 of the Constitution will apply, except where these are inconsistent with the Regulations and the Wiltshire Council Temporary Protocol on Remote Meeting Procedures in which case the latter will apply.
23. When speaking, each Member must introduce themselves for the benefit of anyone listening who may or may not have access to video.
24. At the beginning of each item each Member of the Committee will confirm that they are able to see or hear all relevant information. This will also be confirmed immediately prior to any vote.
25. For each vote, the Democratic Services Officer will call each Member of the Committee in turn to indicate their vote. This will not count as a recorded vote for the purposes of the minutes, which would need to be specifically requested by three members of the committee.

General Public Participation

26. In the case of all public speaking categories, as stated above, those who wish to have a statement read out at the meeting must contact the Democratic Services Officer for the meeting no later than 5pm two working days prior to the committee meeting.
27. Statements will be read out by the Democratic Services Officer in order of submission, with any further statements received beyond the three to be read out in objection or support to be included in the agenda supplement. Exceptionally, the Chairman may direct statements to be read in a different order, for instance if the first three statements submitted were all from the same organisation or household, or repetitive, in order to ensure the broadest inclusion of views.
28. While the Chairman of a committee has discretion over the timings and number of statements to be read out in the case of controversial or large-scale applications, in the interests of natural justice any increase should be applied equally between those speaking for and against the application.
29. No contributions from the public will be accepted outside the public statement slots detailed above.

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Questions and Petitions

30. Submitted questions and petitions on non-determined planning applications are excluded from the usual Council procedures at Part 4 of the Constitution. This means that any questions or petitions in relation to an agenda item at a meeting will be logged by Planning Officers as a representation and addressed in their introduction of the item.