

YOUR PLANNING SERVICE

Public
Speaking at
Planning
Committee



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

The District Council is committed to extending public involvement in the planning process. As part of that process Planning Committee meetings are usually held on the first Wednesday of the month, although other meetings can be arranged, as required.

How does the Planning Committee work?

The majority of applications are determined by officers under delegated powers. Only a small proportion of applications are debated by the Planning Committee and these will usually be applications which are more controversial, or where there are significant implications that might result from the proposed development. Committee members must consider each planning application on its own individual merits, taking into account current legislation and national/ local planning policy. Details of the committee members can be found on our website.

What issues are considered at Planning Committee?

The issues considered at Planning Committee must be relevant planning considerations and may include the following:

- National and local planning policy;
- Government planning guidance;
- Planning law and previous decisions;
- Highways safety and traffic;
- Noise, disturbances and smells;
- Residential amenity
- Design, appearance and layout;
- Impact on trees, listed buildings and conservation areas.

The following issues are not valid planning considerations and will not be considered at committee.

- Matters covered by other laws and legislation;
- Boundaries or land disputes;
- Developer morals or motives;
- Suspected future development;
- Loss of views over other people's land;
- Effects on property values;
- Personal matters.

How can I find out when or if an application will be considered at committee?

The Planning Committee usually meets on the first Wednesday of each month, although this does not prevent an extraordinary meeting taking place if required. The agenda is published at least five working days before the meeting (normally Tuesday of the week before the meeting), and copies will be available from the main reception at the Grange and at public libraries. The agenda will also be available on the Council's website, on the day of publication. It is up to you to check whether a particular application is on the agenda.

What happens at Planning Committee?

Normally on the morning of Planning Committee, the Committee Members will visit the application sites on the agenda. Members are there to look at the site and its surroundings and may not engage with the public during the visit. (Please note: not the case during covid-19 restrictions).

During the committee meeting, Planning Officers will present their reports to the Planning Committee. This normally consists of a short presentation outlining the main considerations, any issues and their recommendation.

After each presentation, members of the public can speak for or against the application in the following order:

- Objectors (5 minutes)
- Applicant/agent or supporters (5 minutes)
- Local Parish/Town Council (5 minutes)
- National/Statutory bodies (5 minutes per body)

Members will then debate the merits of the application, weighing up the proposal and any issues and a decision is made whether to approve or refuse an application. Each decision is made on a majority basis, with the Chairman casting the deciding vote in the event of a tie.

Can I speak at Planning Committee?

If you would like to speak at Planning Committee you must register in advance. You can do this by contacting The Democratic Services Officer for the committee, Caroline Evans, email caroline.evans@eastcambes.gov.uk.

N.B. If more than one person wishes to speak for or against an application the allocated time may be split between them.

LATE SUBMISSIONS

Late submissions of additional/ supporting information and comments for officers and Councillors can only be accepted up until 2 working days, i.e. 48 hours, before the relevant Planning Committee meeting (usually 1pm on the Monday for a Wednesday meeting). Any submissions received after this will not be considered by the Planning Committee.

How are Parish and Town councils involved?

Parish and town councils are consulted on all planning applications and copies of planning applications are usually available to view with the local councils as well as at the District Council offices. For details of your local Parish Council Clerk please contact Customer Services on 01353 665555.

The role of District Councillors...

Councillors are elected to represent you on the District Council. You may want to contact your local Councillor to discuss a planning application. However, if a Councillor is a Member of the Planning Committee, he or she will not be able to commit him or herself to a decision before hearing all the evidence and debate at the relevant Planning Committee meeting. They will need to take into account current planning law and planning guidance, as well as public opinion.

Councillors also have the right to speak at Planning Committee where they have a personal and prejudicial interest, to make representations and answer questions or give evidence – but then must leave the meeting before the committee starts to discuss and make a decision on the application.

If you require this document in different formats (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape/CD or other languages please contact the Council's main reception or email translate@eastcambs.gov.uk

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