



Public Speaking at Remote Planning Committee Meetings

We are facing an unprecedented situation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and this has inevitably had an impact on a number of the District Council's functions and services including how we deliver Planning Committee Meetings.

For the safety of all, and in line with current guidance from government, Planning Committee meetings are currently being held remotely online, hosted via Zoom. As a result of this, the public speaking scheme has been amended. This note provides guidance on the new rules for public speaking at remote planning committee meetings including how to register to speak.

For all other planning related enquiries please contact development.control@e-lindsey.gov.uk or telephone 01507 613175 or 01507 613176

What items can I speak on?

Applications for planning permission, and similar applications, e.g. those for listed building consent, which are considered at Remote Planning Committee Meetings.

How can I find out if an application is going to be considered by the Planning Committee?

Details of all planning applications, including if an application is due to be considered by the Planning Committee, can be viewed online at <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/applications>

Alternatively, you can contact the relevant case Officer or the Planning Team on the contact details provided in this guidance note.

Details of all Planning Committee Meetings including agendas and reports can also be viewed online at <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/4987/Committees-Meetings-and-Councillors->

Who can register to speak at the meeting?

- Applicants and their agents or supporters of an application - one speaker per application for up to 3 minutes.
- Objectors to an application - one speaker per application for up to 3 minutes.

- Representatives of Town or Parish Councils – one speaker per Town/Parish Council per application for up to 3 minutes.
- Ward Members and other interested District Councillors – up to 5 minutes per Councillor per application but longer at the Chairman's discretion.

How do I register to speak at the meeting?

You can register to speak via Planning.Speaking@e-lindsey.gov.uk from the Thursday the week before the Planning Committee Meeting - until 12 noon the Tuesday before the Planning Committee meeting. Please provide your name, a contact number, the application you wish to speak on and whether you are registering as an applicant/agent, supporter, objector, Town/Parish Council representative or District Councillor.

In deciding who should speak in favour of the application, the applicant/agent will be given precedence over supporters.

All other speakers will be registered on a 'first come, first served' basis.

You will be asked for permission to share your contact details with other people who wish to speak, but this is not a requirement.

A reserve list will be kept in case any of the registered speakers de-register.

Registered speakers will be contacted in advance by the Democratic Services Team with the joining instructions for the remote meeting on Zoom.

It is the speaker's responsibility to ensure that he/she is able to connect to join the remote meeting on Zoom.

What happens if I have connectivity problems on the day?

As a back-up option registered speakers may provide a typed up statement of their verbal presentation in advance of the meeting.

The statement must be provided by 12 noon on the Wednesday the day before the meeting to Planning.Speaking@e-lindsey.gov.uk

The statement must not exceed the allocated time for the verbal presentation (e.g. a statement for 3 minute verbal presentation should contain a maximum of 390 words).

In the event that a registered speaker cannot remotely connect to the meeting or loses connectivity in the meeting, then the meeting will continue, taking account of their statement which will be read out to the Committee.

Any statement considered to contain aggressive or abusive language, or that makes personal remarks regarding any Member, officer or third party will be rejected.

Can I use photographs or other materials to illustrate my points?

No, as this will tend to disrupt proceedings, and you will not be allowed to circulate materials at the same time as you speak.

What will happen when my item is considered?

1. The Planning Officer makes his or her report, adding to, updating and illustrating the written report already circulated to Committee Members.

The following order will then usually apply:

2. An objector is allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes – please note we can only allow one person to speak.
3. The Town/Parish Council is allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes. If more than one Town/Parish Council wish to speak, they each have up to 3 minutes and will present in alphabetical order, but are encouraged to put their points as one.
4. The applicant (or representative) or supporter can speak - also for up to 3 minutes.
5. The Ward Councillor or other interested District Councillors in addition to those on the Planning Committee be allowed to speak usually for a maximum of 5 minutes, but longer at the Chairman's discretion.
6. Members of the Planning Committee then be given 10 minutes to ask questions to the speakers.
7. The Councillors who make up the Committee debate the matter (and may request further information of the Planning Officer) before reaching a decision.

Please Note:

- You will be asked to say who you represent.
- You will be required to stop speaking if you exceed the time allowed.
- Speakers will not be permitted to ask questions.

The consideration of an application will not be delayed simply because someone who wishes to speak is unable to attend the meeting.

What can I say at the meeting?

You can say whatever you like provided it is a statement of fact or opinion, but your words are likely to have the greatest impact if you:

- Are brief and to the point
- Limit your views to the planning application
- Confine yourself to relevant planning issues

Examples of relevant planning issues.

- Planning policy, e.g. the local and structure plans, other local planning policy, Government guidance, case law, previous decisions of the Council.
- Design, appearance and layout.
- Impact on visual or residential amenity, including possible loss of light or over-shadowing, loss of privacy, noise disturbance, or smell or nuisance.
- Impact on trees, listed buildings or a conservation area.
- Highway safety and traffic.

Examples of issues which cannot be taken into account:

- Private property rights - boundary or access disputes, restrictive covenants, rights of way, ancient rights to light.
- Effect on property values.
- Personalities, or an individual's motives.
- Matters covered by other legislation for example Environmental Health or Licensing laws.

You should not make derogatory or defamatory statements as there is no legal protection for comments made by the public.

Will a decision be made at the meeting?

Most applications considered by the Planning Committee are decided at the first Committee meeting. However, some could be:

- Deferred to a future meeting for more information to be obtained or for negotiations to take place;
- Deferred to a future meeting for decision if the application is contrary to the Council's planning policies but is supported by the Committee.

In both cases, you will be entitled to speak at the second or subsequent Planning Committee Meeting, but you must give notice of your intention to do so in line with these Speaking Procedure Rules.

Will the Meeting be recorded and made available to the public?

Yes, all remote Planning Committee meetings are livestreamed (Video and Audio) and recordings made available to the public via the Council's YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8Vp5Ds-RK3SIk95IIMpgXQ>

Further details of how we process personal data can be found in the ELDC Public Speaking and Public Questions at Council Meetings Privacy Notice.