

# SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

## Addressing the Planning Committee

The Sevenoaks Town Council is NOT the local Planning Authority, but it does have an important part to play in the planning process as it is consulted on all applications in the Sevenoaks town area. The final responsibility for approving or refusing an application rests with the Sevenoaks District Council.

The Town Council offers local residents the opportunity to comment on planning applications and other items on the Planning Committee Agenda at its Planning Committee meetings, which are held approximately every two weeks. This is subject to certain criteria, outlined below.

### **How public speaking works**

#### **Public Question Time vs Planning Applications:**

Every Planning Committee Agenda has an item prior to the commencement of the meeting allowing for Public Question Time, whereby members of the public may make representation or put questions to the Committee. This may be on a particular Agenda item or any other planning matter, with the exception of individual planning applications which are considered under a later agenda item.

#### **Registering your interest:**

If you would like to speak on a particular application or item on the Planning Committee Agenda, you will need to register your interest by contacting [planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk](mailto:planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk), or calling the Town Council Offices at 01732 459953.

You can find out if a particular application or planning matter will be discussed once the agenda has been published on Sevenoaks Town Council's [Planning Committee webpage](#). Agendas are published on the Tuesday prior to the meeting of the Planning Committee.

You can then register your interest.

#### **The right to speak:**

To make sure the Planning Committee can deal with all its business the Town Council has decided that only one member of the public will be allowed to speak for, and one against, a particular application or Agenda item. Elected members of Sevenoaks District Council and of Kent County Council may register separately under their respective Councils, with one representative from each Council allowed to register to speak for, and one against a particular topic.

If you would like to speak, you need to register your interest with the Town Council by 12noon at the latest on the day of the meeting. Applications to speak will be registered on a "first come, first served" basis.

If there is more than one potential speaker in support of an application, preference will be given to the applicant or their agent.

*Please note that every endeavour will be made to inform the applicant or their agent if someone registers to speak against their application.*

### **Points to remember**

Because of the volume of business at Planning Committee meetings you will only be able to speak for up to 3 minutes and this time limit will be strictly enforced.

It may help to have a note of the main points you wish to cover. You may read from a prepared text if you wish.

Try to be brief and to the point.

Make sure your comments relate to issues the Committee can take into account. These include the District Council's Local Plan, the effect of an application on access, local amenities, neighbours or the character of the area.

Raising non-planning matters such as the impact on property values, competition with existing businesses, and private concerns such as covenants will not influence the Planning Committee's recommendation.

Avoid derogatory or defamatory statements. There is no legal protection for comments made at meetings.

Audio-visual display is available, materials must be submitted to the Planning Committee Clerk ([planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk](mailto:planning@sevenoakstown.gov.uk)) by **12pm the day of the meeting**. These must be approved by the Town Clerk prior to being shared at the meeting.

### **Procedure at meetings:**

Meetings of the Town Council's Planning Committee usually take place in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks. They start at 7 pm. If you have registered to speak please arrive prior to the start of the meeting and make yourself known to the Clerk.

Meetings are recorded and live-streamed via Youtube, however arrangements can be made to halt these during a speaker's addressal, given prior notice to the Committee Clerk.

Planning applications on which members of the public have asked to speak will be given priority in the Planning Applications section of the agenda. However, it is impossible to predict how long it will take to debate each application. It may be some time before the Committee reaches the item on which you have asked to speak.

The Chairman of the Planning Committee will announce when the application on which you wish to speak will be discussed, and request that the Ward Councillor allocated the application give a summary of the proposals.

The meeting will then be adjourned to allow each speaker to speak for up to 3 minutes, in the order of their registration. This time will be strictly enforced and you will be warned when you have only 30 seconds left.

After you have spoken, you are welcome to sit at the rear of the Council Chamber and listen to the debate. You will not be able to take any further part in the debate and you will be asked to remain quiet.

At the end of the discussion, there will be a vote. The majority decision on the recommendation will then be forwarded to the local Planning Authority - Sevenoaks District Council – which is the final arbiter on whether planning consent is granted.