

SEVENOAKS TOWN COUNCIL

Speaking on Planning Applications

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 at its Planning Committee meetings, subject to certain criteria.

How public speaking works

Registering your interest:

If you would like to speak on a particular application, you will need to register your interest by contacting the Town Council Offices (01732 459953).

You can find out if a particular application will be discussed when the agenda has been completed on the Thursday prior to the meeting of the Planning Committee. You can then register your interest. The Planning Committee meets approximately every two weeks.

The right to speak: To make sure the Planning Committee can deal with all its business the Town Council has decided that only one speaker will be allowed to speak for, and one against, a particular application.

If you would like to speak, you need to register your interest with the Town Council by 12.30 pm 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.

There are no facilities for audio-visual display.

Procedure at meetings: Meetings of the Town Council's Planning Committee take place in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks. They start at 7 pm. If you have arranged to speak, please arrive by 6.45 pm and introduce yourself 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.

Each speaker is allowed up to 3 minutes. This time will be strictly enforced and the Chairman will warn you 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.