
PROCEDURE FOR THE PUBLIC AND APPLICANTS WHO WISH TO SPEAK AT THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS THAT MIGHT AFFECT THEM

The Council wants to improve the opportunity given to people in West Lancashire to have their say about planning applications that affect them.

Writing in with your comments is still the most effective way of ensuring that your views are known and that they are considered before a decision is taken. The Council have decided that people should also have the opportunity to reinforce their views by talking to the Councillors who make the decision at Planning Committee. This leaflet tells you how to go about it.

1. Development Management - what it is and why we need it

Development Management is a way of facilitating building or other work that affects the environment. In this way we can make sure that developments are suitable for the location they are in.

The Council deals with most planning applications, but there are some - usually those involving quarrying and waste treatment and disposal, or for County Council buildings - that the County Council handles.

We have a Committee of 18 Councillors who meet approximately once a month at the Council Offices in Ormskirk to look at planning applications. Meetings commence at 7.00 p.m.

The Planning Committee do not consider all applications – only those of wider public interest.

2. How can I have my say on Planning Applications that affect me?

(a) Writing to us

Any comments you wish to make should be sent by e-mail to plan.apps@westlancs.gov.uk or can be made online at www.westlancs.gov.uk or you can write to the Corporate Director of Place and Community, Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DF or e mail us on

(b) Informing your Borough Councillor

You may also wish to inform your Borough Councillor.

(c) Speaking at Committee

In those cases where applications are to be considered by the Planning Committee and if you fall into one of the 3 categories of persons listed at paragraph 3 below you may also request to speak to the Committee at the relevant meeting

You will firstly need to find out whether or not the application on which you wish to speak is to be considered by the Planning Committee. You can do this by ringing the Planning Division on 01695 585115.

You will need to give at least 3 working days' notice prior to the day of the Committee meeting that you want to address the Committee (i.e. by 5pm on the Monday of the week of the Committee meeting) (contact details are at the end of this leaflet). Please also give a brief outline of the points you wish to make. A pro-forma is available for your assistance.

3. Who can speak at meetings - and what can I say?

The people who can request to speak at meetings are:

- anyone who has written objecting to the planning application and who has been consulted under the neighbour notification process by the Council, or his/her representative;

Note: Consultees/Organisations that have been formally consulted on the application will not be invited to speak, as their views will be set out clearly in the Committee reports.

- the Clerk to a Parish Council, or his/her representative where the Clerk is unavailable, to express the view of the Parish Council;
- the applicant or his/her representative but only where it has been agreed that a third party objecting to the proposal may speak.

Note: The minimum age for people to address the Committee under this procedure is 16 years.

If there is more than one speaker in any category then the Chairman of the Committee will decide how many can speak. This will be done the day before the meeting and the Member Services Officer will notify you of the Chairman's decision. Groups (e.g. of residents) are asked to nominate one person to speak on their behalf.

Each person will be limited to three minutes. This may not seem very long, but the Chairman has to get through the whole Agenda and give

everyone a fair hearing. Speakers should not circulate any supporting documentation at the Committee meeting.

What you say must be relevant to the planning application only - nothing damaging or personal. You are asked to avoid duplicating points made by other speakers. You should address the meeting, please do not enter into a debate with Councillors.

4. What will happen at the meeting?

If you feel nervous or uncomfortable at speaking in public, then you can ask someone else to do it for you. You can also bring an interpreter if you need one.

When you get to the meeting, the Member Services Officer will show you where to sit and let you know when you will be able to speak. There may be others speaking as well. After you have spoken the Committee may ask you questions and may discuss what you have said along with all other information, and make a decision.

5. General Information

- If you have made a written objection to a planning application after receiving notification under the Neighbour Notification Procedure, and if the application is to be considered by the Planning Committee, we will write and tell you when it is likely to go before the Committee. You can go to the Council's Website www.westlancs.gov.uk and look at the Committee Agenda. This will be available five working days before the Committee sits.
- The Committee may postpone a decision to gather more information or make a site visit. No decision is taken at site visits - they are purely to help Councillors understand the issues better. If the Committee postpones a decision, you will not be allowed to address the meeting again, or address Members at their site visit, but your views will still be considered.
- In some cases planning applications are withdrawn from the Agenda on the day of the meeting. We will try to notify you as soon as possible if this happens.
- After a decision has been made the Council's website will be updated and we will write to those who contacted us about the application and requested notification of that decision. If we have turned down a development, the applicant can appeal against our decision. If this happens, we will tell you how you can make your view known at the

appeal. If we grant planning permission, there is no right of appeal for objectors.

6. Who to contact

If you wish to request to speak to the Committee about an application, (see paragraph 3), Member Services will help you with arranging this. Don't forget you need at least 3 working days' notice. Please contact:-

Member Services, West Lancashire Borough Council, Council Offices, 52 Derby Street, Ormskirk, Lancashire, L39 2DF

Telephone: 01695 585017

E Mail: memberservices@westlancs.gov.uk