



Fermanagh and Omagh

Speaking Rights at Planning Committee Guidance

February 2024



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

+ FOR
- AGAINST
X ABSTAIN

Introduction

Most planning applications are delegated to Planning Officers for decision however certain types of applications must be determined by the Planning Committee. These include major applications, applications made by the Council etc. and other applications which have not been delegated to the Lead Planner, including applications which have been called in by the Planning Committee from the weekly lists.

When planning applications are to be determined by the Planning Committee, there is an opportunity for applicants, agents, members of the public and Councillors or other elected representatives to speak for and against the application. The information that they provide can be material in helping the Committee reach a sound planning decision.

As outlined in the Statement of Community Involvement, the Council is committed to ensuring that communities are empowered and share a sense of effective participation in the decision making process and therefore the Council encourages you to get involved in the planning process at a local level.

Planning Committee Meetings

The Council has determined that the Planning Committee will meet monthly, at 2pm on the third Wednesday of each month (with the exception of August). The Committee reserves the right to schedule alternative or additional meetings as required.

Meetings are held on an alternating basis in the Townhall, Enniskillen and the Grange, Omagh. The Council reserves the right to use an alternative venue if required.

Planning Committee meetings are open to the public and proceedings of the Planning Committee meetings are also audio recorded and streamed live on the Council's YouTube channel.

If you request speaking rights and intend to speak at the Planning Committee this can only be facilitated in person.

How do I know if an application is going to Planning Committee

A detailed agenda will be published on the Council's website and sent to Planning Committee Members five days in advance of the meeting with a list of all the applications to be presented at the meeting and the Officers' recommendations. A report on each application outlining the assessment of the application and the reasons for the recommendation will be included for Committee members.

A copy of the reports will also be uploaded to the new Planning Portal.

Relevant links are;

fermanaghomagh.public-minutes.com

[Northern Ireland Public Register \(planningsystemni.gov.uk\)](http://planningsystemni.gov.uk)

Elected Members

There are 40 councillors representing our constituents' needs, across the seven DEAs in the Fermanagh & Omagh District Council boundary.

[Councillors – Fermanagh & Omagh District Council \(fermanaghomagh.com\)](http://fermanaghomagh.com)

The Planning Committee is made up of 13 members. Members of the public and their advisors are reminded that Members of the Planning Committee are not permitted to advocate for or against or lobby for or against a planning application before the Planning Committee when they are part of the Committee. This is mandated by the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors and binds the Members of the Planning Committee.

Elected Members who are not members of the Planning Committee can attend the Planning Committee meetings and speak for or against an application on your behalf.

Speaking at Planning Committee

How do I submit a request to speak at the Planning Committee?

The deadline for anyone wishing to request 'Speaking Rights' to address the Planning Committee is 5.00 pm on the Monday immediately before the Committee meeting.

In order to request speaking rights for a particular planning application, please email your request to: democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com or telephone 0300 303 1777 extension 20203 or 20207. These are the only contacts through which Speaking Rights may be requested.

Those seeking speaking rights should preferably include the planning application reference number in their request. Individuals can only obtain speaking rights to the Committee if they are the applicant, have submitted a written response to an application or they are listed on the application as the agent / planning consultant acting on behalf of the applicant.

In lieu of speaking, Council members (who are not members of the Planning Committee) and members of the public may submit representations in writing for consideration by the Planning Committee. The deadline for anyone wishing to submit such written representations is 5.00 pm on the second day prior to the meeting. Written representations will be reported to the Committee and any new material considerations not previously addressed in the reports will be highlighted and, if necessary, circulated in a report on the day of the meeting. Councillor(s) and other elected representatives (including MPs and MLAs) may also seek speaking rights for a particular application.

It is important to note the following:

Once the agenda has been issued, there will be no circulation of additional information from any source in respect of planning applications for consideration at the Planning Committee.

On occasion where the consideration of an application is deferred by Members to a subsequent Committee meeting, those who have previously registered to speak on that application will need to register again to speak at any future meeting. Speaking rights do not carry forward.

Procedure for presentation of each application at the meeting:

In presenting planning applications to Committee, the following procedures for each application will apply;

- (i) Introduction by Planning Officer.
- (ii) Representation on behalf of applicant, agent or supporter (10 minutes).
- (iii) Members' questions to applicant, agent or supporter.
- (iv) Representations – Objectors (5 minutes).
- (v) Members' questions to objectors.
- (vi) Representations by Councillor(s) and other elected representatives (including MPs and MLAs) (5 minutes).
- (vii) Planning Officer's comments.
- (viii) Members' debate including advice from officers.
- (ix) Members' decision.

If more than one supporter or objector wants to speak, the Chair may ask the supporters to appoint a spokesperson to represent their views.

How long can I speak at the meeting?

Representations on behalf of the applicant, agent or supporter will have a maximum duration of 10 minutes.

Representations by objectors will have a maximum duration of 5 minutes.

Representations by Councillor(s) and other elected representatives (including MPs and MLAs) will have a maximum of 5 minutes.

The time allocated above is the maximum time permitted, unless the Committee decides on the day of the meeting to extend the time allowed due to unusual or exceptional circumstances. Such an extension would be at the discretion of the Chair of the Planning Committee.

What can I say at the meeting or what arguments can I use?

No documentation should be circulated at the meeting by speakers. Nor should any new information (verbal or written) which has not previously been included as part of the application be introduced or circulated.

Only refer to information relating to planning matters, e.g., appearance of the proposed development, effect on the amenity of the area or your property, access, landscaping, materials, etc. Matters relating to the applicant's personal motives or financial status, views, boundary disputes etc., are not relevant.

You are advised that, in addressing the Committee, your representations must not contain abusive or defamatory opinions. If you do so you may be asked to leave the meeting. Please do not interrupt or ask questions of other speakers or make any comments unless invited to speak.

Can I use visual aids or hand anything to Members?

You can use Powerpoint for your presentation to Planning Committee. The presentation should be provided to Planning Officers before 2pm on the Tuesday immediately before the Committee.

Presentations submitted after this time may not be presented.