



Fermanagh and Omagh

Speaking Rights at Planning Committee Guidance

May 2026



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



Introduction

Most planning applications are delegated to Planning Officers for decision however certain types of applications must be determined by the Planning Committee. The details of these are outlined in the Council's Scheme of Delegation and/or Planning Committee Protocol.

When planning applications or other 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 10am 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 or via WebEx. The Council recommends that you attend in person, to minimise the risk of any disruption caused by internet connectivity issues.

Please be aware that if there are internet connectivity issues the meeting will still proceed and so you may wish to consider submitting speaking notes in writing in line with the protocol which can then be read to the Planning Committee.

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://NorthernIrelandPublicRegister.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://Councillors-Fermanagh-Omagh-District-Council.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) Representations by **Councillor(s) and other elected representatives** (including House of Lords, MPs and MLAs)
- (iii) Representations – **Objectors**
- (iv) Members' questions to Objectors.
- (v) Representation on behalf of **Applicant, Agent or Supporter**.
- (vi) Members' questions to Applicant, Agent or Supporter.
- (vii) Planning Officer's comments.
- (viii) Members' debate including advice from Officers.
- (ix) Members' decision.

Following representations in support or against an application, the Chair, may ask the relevant party to provide clarification in respect of a specific query raised by a Member, when this cannot be addressed by the Planning Officer.

This will not be an opportunity for further representations to be made on the merits of the proposal, and any response must only address the point of clarification required.

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 by elected representatives (i.e. MLA's, MPs, House Of Lords etc) will have a maximum of 5 minutes.

Representations by Objectors will have a maximum of 5 minutes.

Representations on behalf of the Applicant, Agent, Supporter including Planning Consultants will have a maximum duration of:

- Local application (5 minutes or 7 minutes if representations are made on behalf of objectors), or
- Major application (10 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.

Whilst it is a matter for each speaker, how they use their allocated time, the Council would suggest that speakers focus on the relevant legislative, policy or other material considerations. This may include the reasons for refusal, or your reasons for objecting to an application.

It is important that you 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.

Focusing on these key matters will ensure that your time is used effectively.

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 at:

planning@fermanaghmagh.com, before 3pm on the Tuesday immediately before the Committee meeting by emailing: democratic.services@fermanaghmagh.com

Presentations submitted after this time may not be presented.

Guidance on delivering a good presentation at Planning Committee

Whilst it is a matter for each speaker as to how they deliver their presentation, there is a wide range of guidance available online that can assist with delivering an effective presentation. The Council would suggest Speakers;

- Review the Planning Officer's Report and recommendation .
- Prepare what you are going to say in advance of the meeting.
- Understand your time limit – if you are including a presentation then a maximum of 5 to 7 slides is suggested.
- Focus on the material planning considerations, including any refusal reasons or material issues that are important to you.
- Do not introduce any new matters that have not already been raised before.
- Speak slowly and confidently into the microphone.
- Avoid directing Members to take a particular decision .
- Avoid personal attacks on Officers, Members or any other parties.