

Participation at Planning Committee Meetings

Revised May 2023

West Lindsey District Council is committed to extending public involvement in the planning process. There are already extensive consultation and neighbour notification procedures for all planning applications. This leaflet explains how you can speak directly to Councillors at Planning Committee meetings.

The advice in this leaflet applies equally to applicants, their agents, supporters, objectors and local council representatives.

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q Can I get a copy of the agenda before the meeting?

A The agenda, containing details of each application, will be available on the Council's website, at the meeting and will be available for inspection at the council's offices five clear days before the meeting.

Q Does "public participation" alter the existing arrangements for the publicity of planning applications?

A No. Planning application will continue to be publicised as at present. The Council's Planning Committee generally consider applications which are of wider significance or of major importance to the district as a whole, while decisions on simple or straightforward applications are usually delegated to officers. You may need to check with Planning & Development Services on 01427 676676 (following Options for the Planning Team), or email: planning.customer.care@west-lindsey.gov.uk if you are not sure if the application in which you are interested is to be considered at a Planning Committee meeting.

Applicants, agents and town or parish councils will be informed approximately five days before the meeting if an application in which they are interested is on the agenda for that meeting. All other interested parties (i.e., anyone else that has commented/local residents) need to view dates and agendas for forthcoming committee meetings on the council's website.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to notify interested parties (other than the parish council) directly. Where a planning application is dealt with by officers under delegated powers, clearly public participation at a Planning Committee will not apply.

Q If I object to a proposal, do I have to speak at the committee meeting?

A No. Details of all objections, if received in time, are reported to the committee anyway. It is entirely at your own discretion whether you ask to speak at committee. Objections are available to view using the application tracker pages of the council's website (<https://www.west-lindsey.gov.uk>).

Q If I am the applicant or agent, do I have to speak at the committee meeting?

A No. If the recommendation to the committee is to approve the proposal, you may decide not to take up committee time. If the recommendation is for refusal, you may wish to present your case. Please note, however, that a recommendation is not always accepted by the committee.

Q If I wish to speak, how do I arrange it?

A You will need to telephone or e-mail the Democratic Services team on: **01427 676594, 676595** or **676606**, or email committeeadmin@west-lindsey.gov.uk to register your request.

All speakers, including members of the public, visiting Ward Members and County Councillors are **required to comply with the requirement to register in advance of the meeting (by 5pm two working days before the meeting)**. I.e., on the Monday for a Wednesday meeting or the Friday if the Monday is a Bank Holiday.

You can register as soon as you become aware of the application even if you do not know at that stage whether the application will be dealt with by officers or submitted to committee. **Late requests to speak will not be accepted, unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Q What if I would like to speak but cannot attend the meeting?

A Please email at committeeadmin@west-lindsey.gov.uk, or contact by phone **01427 676594/595/606** at your earliest possible convenience to discuss further. Please note alternative speaking requests will only be accepted where there are exceptional circumstances and will be for the Chairman's final decision.

Q Where and when are the committee meetings held?

A Meetings of the Planning Committee are generally held every four weeks on Wednesdays at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA.

Q When will the application be considered?

A Applications on which the public wish to speak may be considered before other applications. If you make arrangements to speak, you should endeavour to be present at the start of the meeting. Applications will not be deferred or delayed in the event of late or non-attendance. Specific times for the discussion of particular applications cannot be given.

Q What is the order of speaking on each application?

A Speakers will be invited to speak in the following order:

- Town/Parish Council/Meeting representative
- Supporters (including the applicant(s) and/or agent(s))
- Objectors
- Ward and/or County Councillors (for the Ward being dealt with as part of the application)

Please ensure that you make it clear in what capacity you wish to speak: objector; supporter; Parish/District/County Councillor.

The committee will then consider the application and reach a decision. If at the meeting a deferral or site visit is agreed arising from comments made during public participation, you may speak again at the meeting when the application is next considered.

Q How long will I be able to speak for?

A There is a time limit of five minutes for each category of the speakers. You are encouraged to get together and arrange a single spokesperson, no matter which category you fall under.

A maximum of three speakers will be allowed in each category, sharing the time equally, if agreement cannot be reached. If more than three still wish to speak, time will be allocated on the basis of the first three who registered with the Committee Administration team.

Q Can I ask questions of other speakers?

A No. Comments should be in the form of statements rather than questions. It is important to focus comments on material planning matters that have not otherwise been raised by other speakers.

Q Can I use photographs or plans or circulate supporting documents?

A Documentation in support of oral representations is permitted provided a copy is submitted to Democratic Services by no later than 12 noon on the day preceding the committee meeting.

Q What are the relevant issues in considering proposals?

A The relevant issues will vary with the nature of the proposal and the site, but may include the following:

- Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies
- Government planning guidance
- Planning law and previous decisions
- Highways safety and traffic issues
- Noise, disturbance and smells
- Design, appearance and layout
- Conservation of historic buildings, trees etc.
- Residential amenities and Environmental impact
- The current Minerals and Waste Plan for the area

Q What issues are usually not relevant in considering proposals?

A They will also vary from case to case, but the following are examples:

- Matters covered by other laws (*e.g., alcohol licensing*)
- Private property rights (*e.g., boundary or access disputes*)
- The applicant's morals or motives
- Suspected future development
- Loss of view
- Effect on value of property

Allegations of factual errors in the report are not to be the subject of oral representations. If you believe this to be the case, you must take this up in writing with the Development Management Team Manager prior to the meeting. You should particularly note that you should not make derogatory or defamatory remarks about other people. Any such comments may leave you open to legal action.

Q Can I speak more than once on the same application?

A The Planning Committee may seek points of clarification from participants. If a motion for deferral/a site visit arises from listening to the comments made during the public participation

period and is duly agreed, public participation arrangements will apply to that item when it is next considered.

Q Whom do I ask if I have any other queries?

A If you have any questions not answered by this leaflet, you are welcome to contact:

**Democratic Services, West Lindsey District Council, Guildhall,
Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 2NA**

Telephone: 01427 676594/595/606

Email: CommitteeAdmin@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Notes:

- Councillors are elected to represent you on the District Council. You might like to contact your Councillor about the application concerned, but he/she will not be able to commit him/herself to a decision before hearing all the evidence and debate at the meeting. Councillors must take into account the laws and planning guidance as well as public opinion.
- The Chairman of the Planning Committee has absolute discretion regarding the interpretation of this scheme and its temporary suspension, variance or withdrawal at a particular meeting if it would be conducive to the debate or in the event that it becomes, or threatens to become disruptive to the conduct of the meeting or the proper and lawful exercise of the council's statutory powers and duties.
- Minutes of Committee Meetings are published on the website and may also be viewed at council offices. Copies can be provided on request. There is a charge to cover printing and postage costs.

Other Leaflets in this Series:

Public Participation at Committee Meetings and
Public Question Time at Council Meetings

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this in large, clear print,
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