

Planning Applications Committee Procedures Guidance

This is the procedure for the Planning Applications Committee to ensure that it operates in an efficient, fair and transparent way. It covers:

- the order of business
- speaking rights at the committee
- circulation of material to committee members
- how the meeting is run
- notification of the decision.

Background

The Planning Applications Committee currently has seven members. Its main purpose is to determine planning applications in accordance with **the council's constitution** (see '**Terms of Reference of Planning Applications Committee**'). Not all planning applications are considered by the committee. Some decisions are delegated to planning officers within the terms set out in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

This procedure is to help ensure that applications for planning permission are dealt with legally and honestly and that there is effective public participation in the process.

The committee is involved in making decisions at the end of the process, which normally begins with the submission of an application for planning permission.

On receiving an application, the council consults neighbouring properties, community groups and statutory bodies. The normal minimum time for consultation is **21 days**. In addition, developers are encouraged to consult the local community as widely as possible and it is often useful, especially for large developments, to make a presentation to local groups and adjoining occupiers before submitting their application. It is also recommended that developers meet these people after the responses to consultation have been received.

Anyone wanting to make comments about the application should write to the relevant Planning Officer using the pro-forma with the consultation letters. They can also write a separate letter, email or fax; in these cases the reference number on the original consultation letter sent by us should be quoted (the number will look like this: 16/01234/FUL/DC_AB). Details can also be found on the [**planning applications database**](#)

Committee members will not enter into correspondence or discussion with applicants, their agents or representatives, or with objectors, about the application or applications they are deciding. Where possible, committee members will make all reasonable efforts to let the officers know of any relevant information passed to them.

Where an application is to be decided by the Planning Applications Committee, those who have written in response to consultation will automatically be invited to attend

the committee, as will the applicant. These letters of invitation will also set out the protocol for addressing the committee.

The agenda

The agenda containing the officer reports on the applications is circulated to members of the committee one week ahead of the meeting. A copy is posted on the [Planning Applications Committee page](#), and access can also be gained to this at any of our libraries. You can also obtain a copy from Democratic Services by calling 020 7926 2170.

Requests to speak

Applicants and those who have written in connection with the application will be notified in writing prior to the meeting, advising them that the application is to be considered by the committee.

Anyone wishing to address the committee must let us know in advance by contacting Democratic Services (details below) before 12 noon on the working day before the committee meeting together with an outline of the points they wish to raise at the meeting. A maximum of three objectors and three supporters are allowed up to **two** minutes each to address the committee. Where the number of requests to speak exceeds three, and/or it is clear the speakers wish to make similar points, speakers will be asked to liaise so that all the points can be raised succinctly. The Chair may, at his/her discretion, allow people to address the committee who have not complied with this requirement. Ward Members may also address the committee (for up to two minutes each).

Circulating written material to the committee

Any additional written material (including photos and drawings), letters or petitions for circulation to members of the committee should be submitted to the relevant Planning Officer listed on the front page of the report, preferably by email, by 12 noon 2 clear working days before the meeting (that is on the Thursday if the meeting is on a Tuesday). Material should NOT be circulated directly to members of the committee.

Site visits

Sometimes site visits are arranged prior to the committee meeting, or an application might be deferred for a site visit to take place. They normally take place on the Saturday immediately before the committee which will consider the matter. Site visits allow committee members and Ward Councillors an opportunity to view the site and its surroundings and to seek information, but not to debate the merits of the application.

Further discussion will occur at the next committee meeting to consider the matter. If you have responded to the original consultation you will be notified of the date. All interested parties are invited to the site visit. It is important for people to draw the committee members' attention to particular aspects of the site or its surroundings

which they think are important. At the site visit members may visit properties of objectors present.

Members can ask officers questions at the site inspection and seek clarification from them on matters which are relevant to the inspection. Members of the public should not make representations to members on the planning merits of the application. Where members are approached by the applicant or a third party they should be advised to make representations in writing to the authority.

Where a site visit has taken place on the Saturday prior to the committee meeting any further written material and requests to speak will be accepted up to 12 noon on the Monday prior to the meeting.

Please note that other than for reasons of access, the arrangements for site visits will not normally be publicised or made known to applicants, agents or third parties except in exceptional circumstances. Objectors are not invited to site visits except in exceptional circumstances.

The meeting

Meetings usually take place at 7pm on a Tuesday in the Town Hall, Brixton Hill, SW2 1RW. However, whilst the Town Hall is closed for refurbishment, PAC may take place in a range of locations across the borough. You should check the council's website and committee agenda to confirm the venue of a specific meeting.

The order of business at the meeting is at the discretion of the chair. For normal meetings, the order will usually be decided according to the amount of interest by members of the public in items on the agenda.

The following criteria are used in ordering the agenda:

1. Applications which are withdrawn or which officers recommend should be deferred
2. Applications where there are no notified speakers present wishing to address the committee and members have no questions to ask the applicant or officers.
3. Applications which have been deferred from a previous meeting or have been the subject of a site visit.
4. Applications for developments which would be in receipt of public funding and which are subject to deadlines affecting delivery and other applications subject to specific deadlines.
5. Applications regarded as a priority due to the large number of people present, or where applicants, objectors or other members of the public have special requirements.

When the relevant item is reached on the agenda, those requesting to speak will be invited to the microphones at the committee meeting table. If the application is recommended for approval then objectors speak first with applicants having the right of reply. A maximum of three objectors and three supporters are allowed up to two

minutes each to address the committee. However this is at the discretion of the chair of the committee who may allow a longer or shorter time according to the circumstances. In addition Ward Councillors will be permitted to address the meeting for two minutes each.

If there are more than three objectors or supporters they should decide on the three representatives to speak and ensure that all the points are covered.

- After making their two minute submission, members of the public, objectors and applicants can not normally speak again about their original submission, but may only answer specific questions from the committee seeking clarification or information.
- Once the Committee has heard from officers, objectors and/or applicants, Ward Councillors and has had answers to its questions and debated the merits of the proposals, it makes a decision on the application. The Chair or another member of the Committee proposes a motion which has to be seconded.
- The Committee then votes on the proposal and the Chair will confirm the decision.
- A member may propose an amendment to the motion. If it is seconded the amendment will be dealt with before the original motion.
- Every Committee will be attended by a legal officer to give advice. Other officers will be invited to attend as appropriate.
- The meeting has to finish by 10.45 pm and any business not reached by that time will be deferred to the next meeting.

The decision

The decision is recorded in the minutes of the meeting. These are usually circulated and made available on this website six working days after the meeting. Applicants are sent a decision letter by the Planning department shortly after the meeting outlining the decision and any conditions which are attached to the application. In addition a final letter is sent to all those who wrote in connection with the application which confirms the decision made and any conditions or reasons attached.

Appeals

If an application is refused, the applicant has a right of appeal to the Secretary of State. The applicant may also appeal against any condition imposed on the grant of planning permission. Central government has decided that objectors and other third parties have no right of appeal against the decision.

Details of how to make an appeal and the processes involved as either an appellant or interested party are available from the Planning Inspectorate.

Contact details for the Inspectorate and other useful information are available via the [Planning Portal website](#) or from

The Planning Inspectorate,
Temple Quay House,

2 The Square,
Temple Quay,
Bristol, BS1 6PN.
Tel: 0303 444 5000
Email: enquiries@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Complaints

Any complaint about the way that the application was dealt with by the council can be made under the council's complaints procedure. Please note that before considering any complaint, the Local Government Ombudsman would normally expect the matter to have been considered first through the council's own complaints system.

Local Government Ombudsman

PO Box 4771
Coventry
CV4 0EH
Tel: 0300 061 0614
Fax: 024 7682 0001
Email: advice@lgo.org.uk
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

Contacts

Democratic Services

For information about the meeting, requests to speak, agendas, minutes etc:

Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, SW2 1RW
Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.00 pm
Tel: 020 7926 2170
Email: democracy@lambeth.gov.uk

[Democratic Services web pages](#)

Lambeth Planning

Information about the planning application itself can be viewed online on the [planning applications database](#) or in local libraries.

Lambeth Planning
Tel: 020 7926 1180
Fax: 020 7926 1171
Email: planning@lambeth.gov.uk
[Planning web pages](#)