

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE:

THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2014

PUBLIC SPEAKING ARRANGEMENTS AT THE FORTHCOMING DC COMMITTEE MEETING WHERE EAST AND WEST CARTERTON APPLICATIONS WILL BE DETERMINED

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

(Contact: Phil Shaw, Tel: (01993) 861687)

I. PURPOSE

To give Members the opportunity to:

- (i) review the public speaking arrangements for the forthcoming meeting where the East and West Carterton applications will be determined; and
- (ii) consider whether modifications to the adopted scheme of public speaking should be made in respect of all such major proposals or on a case by case basis.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That the time for public speaking in each of the allowed speaking categories be extended from three to five minutes in each case with up to five speakers per slot; and
- (b) That given the spatial location of Carterton between the two sites but where the developments would be largely undertaken in adjoining parishes, a representative of Carterton Town Council and ward members for Carterton who are not members of the Committee shall be able to apply to speak to either or both of the applications.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Members will be aware that public speaking at the area sub-committees was relatively recently introduced as part of the Council's procedures dealing with planning applications. The adopted protocols set out that the following individuals or groups of individuals and/or organisations can speak (in the order shown) after the case officer has made a short factual presentation of the proposals:-
 - A representative on behalf of objectors
 - A representative on behalf of the local council (Town or Parish Council or Parish Meeting)
 - A member(s) of the District Council for the Ward in which the application is situated, where the member(s) is/are not a member of the Committee
 - A representative in support of the proposal – the applicant or other supporter
- 3.2. Within each speaking slot, a maximum of three minutes per speaker per allocation is allowed in which to speak. The time is strictly adhered to and speakers are encouraged to practise their presentation in order to use the time constructively. If more than one speaker wishes to contribute within one category of speaker, for example two supporters, the maximum time of three minutes is shared between them up to a maximum of three speakers per slot
- 3.3. There has been a considerable level of representation both for and against both of the proposals that will be considered at the next meeting of this committee. The applications will be of major significance to both the town of Carterton and to the

parishes where the development is to take place. Given this significance your officers are concerned that the level of public interest is likely to be such that in restricting the public speaking to the adopted protocols it might be seen as unduly limiting the opportunity to speak to the meeting and as such run entirely counter to the aim of the process which is to provide such an opportunity. Additionally, the spatial location of the proposed developments in very close proximity to, but outside of, Carterton means that the public speaking scheme - which currently only allows the respective town or parish to speak, should in your officer's opinion be extended in this instance to allow Carterton Town Council to speak as an adjoining parish and a Carterton ward member to similarly contribute. This would be in addition to the "parish" and "ward member" slots available to the parishes in which the development sites largely lie.

- 3.4. Your Officers are thus suggesting that in respect of the two applications being considered that the time limits be extended to a total of five minutes for each category with up to five speakers per category and that Carterton TC and a local ward member for Carterton be advised that should they wish to speak that this will be allowed given the particular circumstances of this case.
- 3.5. Given the large number of contentious /strategic applications currently before the authority Members may also wish to give consideration as to whether such an exemption should be formally adopted as part of the standard procedures or whether it should continue to be considered on a case by case basis. Members views will be sought at the meeting.

4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS

The Committee could choose not to make the changes or to make additional changes. However, it is considered that the changes recommended strike an appropriate balance between ensuring sufficient opportunity for participants to make their key points whilst ensuring that the integrity of the adopted system which has worked very well since its introduction remains intact.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report.

6. RISKS

None additional to the comments in sections 3 and 4 above.

7. REASONS

To ensure that the public and their representative's at local level are given adequate opportunity to engage in public speaking whilst ensuring that the business of the meeting is conducted in a timely and appropriate manner.

Giles Hughes
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Background Papers:
None