

Appendix 2 of Part 6Q: Roles and Responsibilities at Planning Meetings

(Sub-)Committee Members

All Members of planning (sub-)committees are responsible for ensuring that they abide by the Code of Conduct and the rules within the Council's Constitution, including the Members Planning Code of Good Practice and rules on interests and pre-determination.

Members of planning (sub-)committees should ensure that they act with the whole district's interest in mind, and not solely in the interest of their ward. If Members wish to speak in their capacity as a Ward Member, they should do so utilising their separate speaking right as a Ward Member. If speaking as a Ward Member and expressing a view supporting or objecting to an application, the Member should then leave the room for the remainder of the item and should not take part in the decision on the application. This is to ensure that there can be no perception that the Ward Member has influenced the decision after exercising their speaking right as a Ward Member, including through their presence in the room.

Members should not come to the planning (sub-)committee with prepared speeches and seek to be a voting member of the planning (sub-)committee. Instead, they should step down for the item, as the appearance and perception is clearly that of pre-determination (i.e. that the Member has made up their mind on the matter prior to attending the meeting and hearing the presentation, representations and debate). The only exception is if the Member is wishing to exercise their separate speaking rights as a Ward Member, in which case they should then leave the room for the remainder of the item and will not participate in or vote on the matter after exercising their speaking rights.

Under no circumstances should planning (sub-)committee Members meet with developers/landowners (or their advisors) without the presence of a Planning Officer.

Ward Members

Ward members have a central role in helping to represent the views of local people and other stakeholders within the planning process. Ward members bring strong community leadership and extensive local knowledge to the planning system. However, when they are also Committee Members, Ward Members must take great care to ensure that it is clear in which capacity they are acting and that they do not risk being perceived as having predetermined an application.

Ward members are at liberty to express opinions in support or opposition for the proposals at the meeting if they wish, unless they are also a Member of the planning (sub-)committee, in which case they need to take extra care as doing so may mean that they can be perceived to have pre-determined the application and may need to leave the room.

If a planning (sub-)committee Member is the Ward Member on the application, they need to ensure that they are acting in the whole district's interest, and not just their ward. If a Member wishes to take part in the meeting and is the Ward Member, they should be clear in stating that they are approaching the matter with an open mind. Otherwise, the Member

can speak in their separate capacity as the Ward Member but must then leave the room for the remainder of the item.

Before a planning (sub-)committee meeting Members are encouraged to consider which approach they will take to any applications within their ward (i.e. whether to speak as the Ward Member or attend as a voting planning (sub-)committee Member), and to seek advice from Officers if necessary.

Chair and Vice-Chair

As well as being ordinary Members of the planning (sub-)committee and following the responsibilities above, the Chair and Vice-Chair have additional responsibilities.

The Chair is responsible for presiding at all meetings of the planning (sub-)committee that they are in attendance for.

The Chair of the meeting shall preside over the business of the meeting and ensure that there is absolute clarity over the business being discussed including the following;

- That the Process for Determining Planning Applications in Appendix I of the Planning Code of Good Practice is followed
- The Chair is to clearly set out the Motion that is to be voted upon;
- If comments are made or questions asked by Members of the planning (sub-)committee before the vote, the Chair clearly sets out what is included in the Motion and what is not, and repeats the Motion immediately before the vote; and
- For absolute clarity for those in attendance or viewing the meeting including members of the public, after the vote is taken, the Chair clearly states what has been voted on and the decision that has been made.

The Vice-Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair. When the Chair is present, the Vice-Chair may assist the Chair e.g. by alerting the Chair when Members indicate a wish to speak.

Where meetings are webcast, the Chair and Vice-Chair shall ensure that the Protocol for Webcasting Meetings at Part 6N of the Constitution is followed.

The Chair and Vice-Chair are expected to attend pre-meetings with Planning Officers and/or Democratic Services in advance of meeting dates as required. Pre meetings to take place at least two working days in advance of the planning (sub) committee to enable the Chair and Vice Chair to raise concerns with the information provided in the report or need for additional information to be identified and provided to the planning (sub) committee to aid their decision making.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be expected to attend specific 'chairing skills' training sessions in addition to being signposted to relevant externally provided courses.