

## **South Downs National Park Authority**

# **PLANNING COMMITTEE PUBLIC SPEAKING PROTOCOL**

## **Public Participation at Meetings of the Planning Committee**

The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) has been the local planning authority for the South Downs National Park (SDNP) from 1 April 2011. While the great majority of planning decisions are made by the 15 Local Authorities in the South Downs National Park on behalf of SDNPA, some of the more significant decisions will also be made by the SDNPA Planning Committee.

This protocol provides an opportunity for public representations to be made to the Planning Committee in relation to those planning matters that it determines. Decisions on other applications will be made by the constituent local authorities and all 15 SDNP local authorities have their own public speaking schemes. You may, therefore, wish to make representations to the appropriate local authority on such applications. The SDNPA can provide advice on the appropriate determining authority on a case by case basis.

### **What is Public Speaking at the Planning Committee?**

The SDNPA Planning Committee is a meeting held in public. The purpose of the committee is for the committee members to debate and decide the matters on the agenda. The SDNPA's invitation to speak at its Planning Committee provides an opportunity for members of the public to directly address the committee with issues of concern to them.

All aspects of public speaking at SDNPA Planning Committee meetings are subject to the discretion of the Planning Committee Chair. Normally, a maximum of six public speakers may be invited to speak on each planning application or related matter on the agenda (a maximum of three in support and three against). This number includes the applicants and/or their agents. Each speaker will be allowed up to three minutes to speak. Multiple agenda items related to a single site are considered to be a single subject, and therefore public speakers may address the committee once, regardless of how many agenda items the matter comprises.

### **What matters can I speak on?**

You can ask to speak on any planning application that the SDNPA is proposing to determine and on any other matters that are being considered by the Committee. This might include its views on any potential enforcement action or matters relating to the development of planning policy or related supplementary advice.

You can only speak on items that are on the agenda of the meeting at which you ask to speak. You should not attempt to surprise the Committee with new information, photographs or additional written material. This should have already been given to the planning officers in time for them to evaluate it professionally. Where possible, this should be at least 7 days before the meeting so that officers and Members have adequate time to properly consider it.

### **Who can speak at the Planning Committee?**

To speak at an SDNPA Planning Committee you should normally have made written representations on the planning matter in question and you should notify the SDNPA beforehand, so please let the SDNPA know that you wish to speak, as soon as possible. You may approach a local Parish, Town, District, Unitary or County Councillor to speak on your behalf, if you prefer.

The people who can speak at the Planning Committee, and the order in which they will be invited to speak, are:

- Up to three individuals or group representatives, including any County, Unitary, District, Town or Parish Council representatives, who are opposing the application.

- Up to three individuals or group representatives, including any County, Unitary, District, Town or Parish Council representatives, who are supporting the application. This includes the applicant or agents, who have the right of reply to any points made.
- Any other Member of the South Downs National Park Authority (not time limited)

If more than three individuals or representatives wish to raise similar points, then they will be asked to agree amongst themselves who should speak on their behalf. If necessary, the Chair of the Planning Committee will make any final decision on which members of the public may speak on an issue. The Chair may use his/her discretion to increase the number of people who may speak.

### **How will I know if and when the item I am interested in is going to Committee?**

If you are interested in a planning matter within the SDNP and you are considering making representations to the SDNPA about it, you should first approach the relevant local authority, and establish whether it has been referred to the SDNPA for determination. If it has, you should then contact the SDNPA to establish whether the matter is being reported to the SDNPA Planning Committee, and if so, when it is to be considered.

The Member Services Team has details of all future Planning Committee dates and 8 days before the Committee will know which items are to be included on the agenda. Details of forthcoming meeting dates and agenda and minutes can be found on our website.

Copies of reports are normally available on our website at least 7 days before the meeting or they can be obtained from the Member Services Officer. In addition, a copy of the agenda for the meeting can be posted to speakers, on written request.

### **How do I register my interest in speaking?**

You will need to telephone or email the Member Services Officer on **01730 814810** no later than 12 noon, 3 working days before the meeting. (if the meeting is held on a Thursday, this would be 12 noon the previous Monday). The email address is as follows: [public.speaking@southdowns.gov.uk](mailto:public.speaking@southdowns.gov.uk)

When you call or email, please be ready to provide:

- Your name, address and daytime telephone number (and email address, if available)
- The application number and details of the proposed development to which it refers or details of the other matters that you wish to speak about
- Confirmation of whether you wish to speak in support or against an application or other matter
- Confirmation of whether you are representing yourself or anyone else
- Confirmation that we can provide your details to other people also wishing to speak so that you can agree who will speak, in the event of their being more than 3 potential speakers.
- Details of any special access or other arrangements that you may require.

### **What if I am unable to turn up on the day?**

You may nominate a substitute, giving details to the Member Services Officer by no later than 4.00pm on the last working day before the Planning Committee meeting.

### **Arriving at the Planning Committee meeting**

If you are invited to speak to the Planning Committee, then you should arrive at the appropriate venue at least 15 minutes before the meeting begins. A member of the SDNPA staff will be there to meet you and to explain the procedures.

### **What will happen in the meeting?**

This document has been taken from Appendix 3 of the SDNPA Standing Orders with effect from March 2015  
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The Chair will ask the appropriate officer to introduce and, if necessary, update the report. Each speaker will then be allowed up to three minutes to address the Committee about the proposal or matter in question.

### **Good practice on speaking at Planning Committee**

Please read the appropriate report carefully before deciding what you want to say. The Committee Members will have read the report and you do not need to repeat report contents at the meeting. What you can add is information on points you have submitted that you may feel are missing from or are not adequately covered in the report - or you might wish to make a particular emphasis that you feel is not being adequately made. Some points to consider are:

- The Committee will listen to what you say, **but will not debate your opinions with you**
- The Chair will invite you to start speaking and your three minutes will be timed by the Member Services Officer
- Concentrate on explaining the points that you (or the group you are representing) have already made in writing and what the most important of those are
- You should not attempt to surprise the Committee with new information, photographs or additional written material. This should have already been given to the SDNPA planning officers in time for them to evaluate it professionally. Where possible, this should be at least 7 days before the meeting
- The Planning Committee can and will only consider a planning application or other planning matters on what are sound and proper planning grounds
- You should not discuss the applicant's past behaviour, nor speculate about what you think their possible future intentions may be
- You may not discuss boundary disputes, covenants, reduction in property values or matters dealt with by other law (e.g. licensing).

### **What happens after I have spoken?**

After public speaking is complete, the Planning Committee will consider the application or other matter. This will normally be debated in public **and there will be no further opportunities for non committee members to speak.**

For further information and advice about the public speaking arrangements, please contact:

Member Services  
South Downs National Park Authority  
South Downs Centre  
North Street  
Midhurst  
West Sussex GU29 9DH  
Tel: 01730 814810