

Southampton City Council Planning & Rights of Way panel overview



What is the panel?

The Panel is made up of elected members of the council who have delegated powers to make decisions regarding planning permission. They meet periodically to consider planning applications which are large or complex, controversial or have many objectors. Members of the public are invited to attend meetings of the Planning and the Rights of Way Panel but should be aware of the protocol for dealing with planning matters that is available from the documents listed below.

Procedure at the panel meeting

If you wish to speak at the meeting on a particular application you need to register as a speaker for that item. You should put your name on the relevant sheet then please wait in the seats provided until the Chair announces that application you are interested in. It will be dealt with usually in the order it appears on the Agenda. Applications for which members of the public are in attendance are dealt with as soon as possible.

Members of the public can only address the Panel at the invitation of the Chair. Representations by members of the public including appellants should not exceed the time limits agreed by the panel. In the case of a major application (large scale) there are 20 minutes in total for all objectors collectively and 20 minutes for the Applicant or their Agent. In the case of a major application (small scale) these are 15 minutes in total for all objectors collectively and 15 minutes for the Applicant or their Agent. In the case of a minor other applications, these are 5 minutes in total for all objectors collectively and 5 minutes for applicants or their agents. You should ask the clerk if other objectors have arrived so that you can arrange for a spokesperson to speak, or allocate the time available equally between speakers.

The Chair is unlikely to accept representations which repeat points that have already been made. The Chair will introduce each item, inviting interested parties to come forward. A Planning Officer will summarise the report and the Chair may then invite you to approach the Panel Table and to speak. Once you have finished please move away from the Panel Table. When representations have finished, the Chair will ask for further comments from the Planning Officer and advice from the Highway Advisor and Legal Advisor, although it is unusual for all these to make comments.

The Panel Members will then debate the item. Once this debate has started, there is no further opportunity for members of the public to speak. The Panel will conclude their debate with a vote, and the Chair will announce the decision. If the vote is tied then the Chair will use a casting vote.

Information for speakers

Members of the public may only speak at the invitation of the Chair.

When speaking, always address your comments and questions to the Chair - not to planning officers, applicants, or other people at the meeting.

You will normally be allowed no more than 5 minutes to speak.

Prepare what you want to say beforehand. Make your points as clearly and concisely as possible to ensure that you cover all the points you wish to make in the time you have available.

People with similar interests may want to organise themselves in a group and select a spokesperson. This will help to avoid repetition and co-ordinate the points that individuals want to address.

If you are representing an organisation or other people who are not present, you should provide evidence that you are speaking on their behalf.

Members of the Panel will listen carefully to what you have to say. They may ask for points to be clarified after you have spoken, although generally Members will wait to raise questions until all members of the public have finished their submissions.

Members of the public can speak only at the Chair's discretion. The Chair may intervene or refuse to allow members of the public to speak if she/he considers that:

- Speakers have exceeded the time generally allowed.
- The points being made have been adequately covered by earlier speakers.
- The points being made are not relevant to any planning considerations.
- Speakers are abusing or harassing other people at the meeting