

# Planning Application Forum Guidelines

The following guidelines have been drawn up for a Planning Application Forum at which petitions relating to planning applications may be presented.

## Receipt of Petitions and Notification of Planning Application Forum

1. Neighbour consultation letters on major planning applications include the leaflet "A Planning Application Forum", which draws attention to the Forum.
2. Petitions should be sent to Support Services, Planning.
3. The Support Service will:

(a) Liaise with the Planning case officer to obtain the following information:

- The expiry date of the 21-day consultation period;
- The addresses of the applicant and agent.

(b) Check whether the petition meets the criteria established in the scheme - i.e.:

- It contains at least 25 signatures of residents of the Borough;
- It includes the addresses of those who have signed it;

It has been received within the 21 days consultation period (in the case of petitions of objection) and no later than 6 working days before a Forum meeting (in the case of petitions of support);

### **Note:**

If any of these criteria are not met, the petitioners should be informed in writing that their petition will be reported to the Planning Committee, and that a Planning Application Forum will not be held.

Normally, a Forum will not be convened in the case of petitions relating to amendments to applications, or to applications, which have already been the subject of a Forum. However, the Head of Planning will whether significant new issues are raised, making a Forum appropriate.

A Forum will not be held to hear a petition of support alone, except where an application, which has not already been subject to a Forum meeting, is resubmitted following an earlier refusal of planning permission.

(c) Liaise with the Planning case officer about the date of the Planning Application Forum, if the conditions in (b) are met. It will normally be on the next available reserved Wednesday.

(d) Send written invitations to:

- The lead petitioner;
- The applicants and agents;

- Planning Committee councillors;
- Ward councillors;
- Planning officers;

The invitations to the meeting should include:

- The case officer as a contact point for planning enquiries and the Support Services in Planning for queries about the petition process;
- An explanation of the fact that up to three representatives of the petitioners and up to three representatives of the applicants may attend and speak;
- Petitioners to be invited to contact the officers for a briefing on the procedures at the Forum.

4. If two or more petitions are received relating to the same planning application, the following procedure should be applied:

- In the case of two or more petitions opposed to the application, or two or more petitions in support of the application, the petitioners will be encouraged to make a joint presentation. If agreement on this were not possible between the petitioners, they would share the time allocations given in paragraph 9.

### **Planning Application Forum Meetings**

5. The Public are entitled to attend meetings as observers.

6. The Head of Planning will chair the meeting.

7. The style of the Forum will be informal, but the authority of the Chair must be recognised. The decision of the Chair on any question of procedure will be final. No votes will be taken.

8. The main purpose of Forum meetings is to enable petitioners and applicants to give their views and to provide the means by which consensus can be built between the parties.

9. The format of the Forum will be as follows for each application:

- Presentation by the case officer - up to 10 minutes;
- Presentation of the application by the applicant/agent (up to three representatives) - up to 20 minutes;
- Presentation of the views of the petitioners against the application (up to three representatives) - up to 20 minutes;
- Presentation of the views of the petitioners in support of the application (where applicable) (up to three representatives) - up to 20 minutes;
- Member questions and issues arising - up to 30 minutes;
- Summing up by the applicants/agents - up to 5 minutes;
- Summing up by the petitioners against the application - up to 5 minutes;
- Summing up by the petitioners in support of the application - up to 5 minutes;
- Final comments of the Chair.

## **After the Meeting of the Forum**

10. The Support Services representative will take minutes of the meeting. The minutes will be a summary of the issues raised and should not be taken to express a view or decision, which is in any way binding on the Planning Committee, which will subsequently meet to determine the application. The minutes will be circulated in draft to the Chair of the Forum, the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the case officer and finalised within 5 working days of the Forum. Copies of the finalised minutes will be sent, for information, to:

- The petitioners representatives at the meeting;
- The applicants representatives at the meeting;
- Ward councillors;
- Area Planning Committee Councillors.

The minutes, and the text of the petition, will also be appended to the Committee report to the Area Planning Committee.

11. The case officer should contact the applicants/agent after the meeting to discuss whether a meeting would be helpful to discuss the issues raised at the Forum and to discuss any changes that may be necessary to the application. The applicant will be encouraged to keep in direct contact with the petitioners and to seek their views on any amendment/s.

12. The case officer will inform the petitioners representatives of any amendments to the application. Normally, no further Planning Application Forum will be held if the planning application is amended - see paragraph 3 (b) (ii).

13. The lead petitioner will be informed of the date of the meeting at which the application is to be considered by the Area Planning Committee.