

The Planning and Licensing Committee usually meets on a monthly basis, on a Tuesday evening at 6pm. From May 2021, under social distancing guidelines, all meetings will be held in the Council Chamber at the District Council offices. The meetings can be watched live at <https://folkestone-hythe.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council wants to make sure that the way it reaches its decisions on planning applications is fair and open. It, therefore, encourages public speaking at the Planning and Licensing Committee. Below are some questions and answers which are designed to help you make the most of this opportunity.

Who can speak at a committee meeting?

As well as members of the committee and council officers:

- A member of the public against the proposal;
- A member of the public in favour of the proposal;
- A representative of the town or parish council;
- A Folkestone & Hythe District ward members; and
- The applicant or his agent

How can I find out whether an application is to be considered by the Committee?

The Council deals with over 1000 applications every year and the Planning department does not have the resources to keep everyone informed about progress on all of them. You will need to find out from the officer dealing with the application (the case officer) whether the application will be considered by the Committee as most applications are determined by the Chief Planning Officer under delegated powers. Some applications are complex and take many months to determine and you will have to keep in regular contact with the case officer to find out whether an application will go to a committee meeting.

How and when do I have to let the Council know that I want to speak?

If the application is to be reported to a committee meeting and you have written to the Council with comments, you will receive a letter giving you details about a week before the meeting. If you would like to speak to one of the Planning and Licensing Committee meetings you will need to give written notice by 5pm on the Thursday before the meeting. Your request MUST be sent to us in writing by either emailing planning@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk or sending a letter to 'Planning Department, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY'.

No late notifications can be accepted.

What happens if more than one local resident wishes to speak?

If local residents have not chosen someone to speak on their behalf, the system operates on the basis of 'first come, first served', although priority can be given to people living closest to the application site. Where there is a dispute, the final decision will be made by the chairman of the committee. You will be notified as soon as possible after we have received your form whether or not you will be able to speak.

What happens at the Committee meeting?

Planning applications where someone has given notice that they wish to speak will be considered first. Brief details of the application will be given by an officer of the council. Each speaker will then be invited in turn to come into the chamber to address the committee. When the speeches have been heard, the Committee will debate the proposal and reach a conclusion. If you do not wish to submit a speech or are unable to for some reason then the Committee will still have to take all the written views into account.

The Laws of Slander

These laws are very strict. If in public you say something about a person which is not true, even if you believe it to be true, you may be sued and have to pay compensation. Therefore you need to be very careful about any criticism you wish to make of people. Councillors are able to speak more freely and bluntly while in Council, Committee or Sub-Committee meetings than members of the public. You, as a member of the public, do not have the same protection.