

REPORT FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19 September 2002

1 PUBLIC SPEAKING AT THE PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE (Minute 435)

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 19 September to Council. Members agreed on a show of hands that a decision on whether to proceed with the introduction of public speaking at meetings of the Planning Services Committee should be referred to Council.
- 1.2 The introduction of public speaking had been agreed by Council as part of the action plan for improving planning services as agreed through the Best Value Review of Development Control and Building Control.
- 1.3 Members of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee raised the following concerns:-
- The decision to implement public speaking at Planning meetings had been taken during the previous municipal year.
 - Public speaking at these meetings might prolong the planning process.
 - Members of the public may consider that speaking at a meeting would necessarily influence the decision.
 - People who are not comfortable with making an initial written representation could feel disadvantaged by this process.
 - Some people may find it difficult to register their attention to speak on the actual afternoon of the meeting or to arrive well in advance of the commencement of the meeting.
- 1.4 In support of the proposal, the following was noted:-
- Parish/Town Councils would be provided with an additional opportunity to give their views.
 - Ward Members would become more approachable to local residents.
 - People should be encouraged and given the confidence to submit questions.
 - It is not likely that the introduction of public speaking at Planning Committees would lead to a significant increase in either the length of Planning meetings or the planning process.
 - Public questions can be posed at all other Committees.

1.5 It is proposed that Council **Reconsiders**

Its recommendation to introduce public speaking at meetings of the Planning Services Committee. (HPS)

Sarah Fowler

Head of Administrative & Member Services

Background Papers:

None

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