



## How to Get Involved in Planning Committee Meetings



# Have your say on planning applications:

Procedure for public speaking at Planning Committee meetings of Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council

A guidance leaflet for planning applicants and objectors.

# Introduction

Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council encourages you to get involved in the planning process at a local level. We believe that there should be more public involvement in determining certain planning applications. The following notes are designed to help you to decide if you are eligible to speak and if so how to go about it.

## The meetings

The Planning Committee of the Council meets once a month. A full meeting schedule is available on the Council's website at:

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/committees-meetings/>

Meetings are held at the Council Offices at Mossley Mill, Carnmoney Road North and will commence at 6.00pm (unless otherwise stated). You will also be able to view the meeting via the livestream at:

<https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/committees-meetings/council-meeting-live-stream/>

The Planning Committee is made up of 12 Councillors from the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. It is anticipated that it will determine about 30% of all applications submitted to the Council. The remainder will be decided by Planning Officers through a Scheme of Delegation. A copy of the Scheme is available on our website or a hard copy can be requested from the Planning Administration Team on 0300 123 6677 or email [planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk). The applications to be considered are set out in the agenda which is available beforehand.

## Are you eligible?

You should be one of the following:

- Councillor not on the Planning Committee
- Objectors: an objector against the application or their representative – only those objectors who have made written representations on the application being considered will be permitted to speak at the Committee
- Supporters including Applicants: a supporter of the application including the applicant or their representative

## How do I go about it?

### Which applications go to the Planning Committee?

Those applications set out in the Councils Scheme of Delegation, which is available on the Council website. Should you wish to find out the date of the Planning Committee meeting at which an application is due to be considered please contact the Planning Administration Team on 0300 123 6677 or email [planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk).

40 Councillors are elected to represent you and the rest of their constituents on the Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council. You may wish to contact your local Councillor to discuss a planning application. However, they may not be one of the 12 Councillors who sit on the Planning Committee. Details of the Councillors that sit on the Planning Committee and also those that sit on the full Council are available on the Council's website.

If Councillors sit on the Planning Committee, they **will not** be able to commit themselves to a decision before hearing all the evidence at the meeting. This is to avoid them compromising their position, which can result in them not being able to take part in the determination of that application at the meeting. They need to take into account the law and planning guidance, as well as public opinion.

Please be aware that Councillors may not agree with your views. They can also attend the meetings and speak for or against an application.

### When can I see the Planning Officers' report?

The report is available on the Council's website 3 working days before the Planning Committee meeting <https://antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/council/committees-meetings/planning-committee-minutes/2023/>

Please note that you will only have a short period in which to decide if you want to speak. You do not have to speak at the meetings.

### How can I register my desire to speak?

If you wish to speak you should email or write to the Planning Department (at the addresses below) by 12.00 (noon), 2 working days before the Planning Committee Meeting. A schedule of these dates is listed at Appendix 1 below.

You should state the name of the person who wishes to speak, whether you are a supporter including the applicant/agent, or an objector, and set out the planning reasons which you wish to raise. You must also advise whether you wish to attend the Meeting either in person at Carnmoney Road North, Mossley Mill or remotely via Zoom or telephone.

You must supply any written information which you wish to be brought to the attention of Members of the Planning Committee at the same time as your request to the addresses below. Late requests to speak will not be allowed. You may only speak on the item indicated.

Email: [planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

Address: Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council, Planning Department,  
Mossley Mill, Carnmoney Road North, Newtownabbey, BT36 7QG

You will receive formal confirmation of **approval to speak** from the Council's Member Services team following the close of the deadline.

## How is the speaking organised?

- Councillors not on the Planning Committee, Objectors and Supporters may speak as follows;
- Councillors may speak for 3 minutes each, up to a maximum of 18 minutes.
- Members of the public (including agents / representatives etc.) may speak for 3 minutes each; two people from those objecting to the proposal and two people in support of the proposal (including the applicant) may speak in that order.

## What happens at the meeting?

The order in which the applications are considered is set down in the agenda. At the Chairperson's discretion, a particular application may be brought forward early, especially if there are many members of the public present for that item. The application will be presented and then you will be invited to speak in the following order:

1. Councillor(s) not on the Planning Committee.
2. Objectors.
3. Supporters including the Applicant or their Agent.

## Can I use visual aids or hand anything to Members?

**No**, your comments should be made orally.

## What arguments can I use?

Only those relating to planning matters, e.g. appearance of the proposed development, effect on the amenity of the area or your property, access, landscaping, materials, etc. Matters relating to the applicant's personal motives or financial status, views over the site, etc., are not relevant.

You are advised that anything you do say should not contain abuse or defamatory opinions. If you do so you may be asked to leave the meeting. Please do not interrupt or ask questions of other speakers, or make any comments from the public seating area.

## When is the decision made?

A decision is usually made immediately after the discussion by a majority vote of the Planning Committee Members. Sometimes a decision will be deferred for further information, revised plans or a Councillors site visit. Deferred cases are brought back to a future meeting and if you wish to speak again, or someone else wishes to speak, then you will need to follow the above procedure. Please be aware that the Councillors have to balance different factors and come to an objective decision based on planning considerations. If they refuse an application contrary to the Officers' recommendation, they will need to be able to support that decision on appeal should this situation arise.

## Can I appeal against the decision?

Only if you are the applicant. Please refer to the Planning Appeals Commission website for further information <https://www.pacni.gov.uk/>

## What happens once a decision is made?

Persons who have written to the Council will be notified of the outcome in writing and the decision will be formally issued and made available on the Northern Ireland Planning Register.

## Who do I ask if I have any further questions?

Please contact the Planning Administration Team on 0300 123 6677 or email [planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk](mailto:planning@antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1

### Planning Committee Meeting - Deadline for Requests to Speak at Committee

Date	Time	Location	Deadline for Requests to Speak at Committee
Monday 23 January 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon 20 January 2023
Monday 20 February 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon 17 February 2023
Monday 20 March 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Thursday 16 March 2023*
Monday 17 April 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 14 April 2023
Monday 15 May 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 12 May 2023
Monday 19 June 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 16 June 2023
Monday 17 July 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 14 July 2023
Monday 14 August 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 11 August 2023
Monday 18 September 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 15 September 2023
Monday 16 October 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 13 October 2023
Monday 20 November 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 17 November 2023
Monday 11 December 2023	6.00pm	Mossley Mill	12.00 noon Friday 8 December 2023

You will receive formal confirmation of **approval to speak** from the Council's Member Services team following the close of the deadline.

*\*Denotes change of date due to bank/public holiday.*