

GUIDANCE NOTES ON PLANS PANEL PROCEDURES

The Plans Panel

There are three Plans Panels, one which deals with the east side of the city, one the west side and one for the city centre.

Each planning application to be considered will have a written report and an Officer recommendation (normally for Approval with planning conditions, to Defer for approval once a Legal agreement has been completed or a Refusal with reasons). The reports are available for you to see five working days before the meeting. Copies can be viewed, at: www.leeds.gov.uk/planspanel .

The Plans Panel usually considers applications which are major or sensitive and have wider significance to local communities and are important to Leeds. Officers have delegated powers to deal with most minor and householder applications. These arrangements are set out in full in the Council's Constitution. Once Officers are aware that an application is ready to be considered by a Plans Panel, people who have made representations in writing, and the applicant or their agent, are informed by letter or email of their right to speak. Whilst we aim to give as much notice as possible the time period is often quite short, but this is the same for everyone.

Who sits on the Plans Panel?

The East and West Plans Panels are each made up of 10 Councillors and the City Centre Panel has 8 Councillors.

Who attends the meetings?

In addition to the Councillors who sit on the Panel, there will usually be a number of Planning Officers, a Highway's Officer and a Legal Officer present. The local press also often attend.

Venue

Plans Panel meetings are held in Committee Room 6/7 in the Civic Hall. On arriving the porter will direct you to the room. Please register with a member of staff on arrival.

Please note that mobile phones must be switched off before entering the room.

Public Speaking

When the application in which you have an interest is reached, the Planning Officer will explain the proposal and show a site plan on screen. The Officer may include other details such as photographs or plans. If the application is recommended for approval any objector registered to speak will be asked to address the Panel first by coming forward to the table with a microphone so everyone can hear. The applicant/agent will speak after this. The order is reversed if the application is recommended for refusal i.e. applicant/agent will be asked to speak first.

Members of the Panel may ask questions and seek clarification of the speakers on any points arising from their presentations. Once this has been completed the objector/supporter will take no further part in the debate.

Who can speak?

One objector (or spokesperson for a group of objectors) may speak against the application, and one person (usually the applicant or their agent) may speak in reply in support of the application. You can ask someone to speak for you if you wish, such as your local councillor or a professional advisor. Please note that a total of three minutes is allowed for speaking against the application with the same amount of time being allowed for speaking in support. Anyone wishing to speak must notify us of their wish to do so at least two clear days prior to the date of the Plans Panel. Regrettably, if you do not let us know by then, you will not be allowed to speak. However, you are encouraged to register as early as possible. The Chair of the Panel has the right to decide who will speak and whether in exceptional circumstances more than one person can speak. In these instances, the allocated speaking time (three minutes) will be split between the speakers, with the same amount of speaking time allowed for the other side.

Please note that there is only one opportunity for applicants, supporters or objectors to address the Panel, so that, in the event of the application not being decided and returning to Panel at a later date, there will be no further opportunity to speak, unless the application has been significantly changed or amended. In these circumstances, speakers will only be able to speak about new matters or the amended details and not about matters which have been previously considered by the Panel.

Making your case

As the total time allowed for speaking is **three minutes** you need to prepare what you wish to say carefully. You must concentrate on the 'planning matters' of the case and emphasise or expand the information you have already submitted. Please refer to the leaflet on 'Commenting on an Application' for more details.

The Planning Officer's report will outline what are the key planning considerations. The Panel does not simply decide which applications it likes and dislikes on a subjective basis. Its powers operate within a general framework, laid down in legislation, which, broadly is that applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In coming to their decision the Panel will take into account all relevant national, regional and local planning policies and all other 'material planning considerations'.

The Decision

The Plans Panel will then ask any questions of officers they want to and discuss the application until they reach a decision. This will be set out in the official minutes of the Panel meeting, which are published after the meeting. In some cases the Panel will decide to defer a decision until further information is obtained or for further negotiation. If the Panel do not accept the officer's recommendation they can resolve to overturn it and ask for reasons for refusal or conditions of approval as appropriate, to be brought back to the next meeting.

All applicants have the right to appeal to the Secretary of State if their application is refused or conditions are attached to an approval that they think are unreasonable.

Please contact Planning Services on 0113 2478047 or 2478048 if you require any further information.