

1. The current procedure for allocating slots for public speaking is stated on the Councils website

“For the opportunity to speak, you must have submitted a written representation to the Planning Applications Section on a planning application by the close of the consultation period applicable to that application.

Not all planning applications go to the Planning Committee for decision; some are decided by Planning Officers under delegated powers. However, if an application is to be decided by Planning Committee, the Council will write to you to invite you to book a slot to speak. Only upon receipt of that letter may you make contact with the Committee Clerk who will be happy to book you in and offer you any help or advice that you may require.

One person is permitted to speak 'for' the application and (other than in respect of major applications), **one** against' (residents of Thanet only) as well as one Parish Council representative (where appropriate).

In the case of **major applications** there is the opportunity for up to **three** people to speak against the application.

Slots are allocated on a first come, first served basis.”

2. At the last meeting of the CRWP members requested that Officers review the procedure for allocating slots for public speaking (minute 39). The CRWP were concerned that with a “first come first served” procedure it is not necessarily the people most affected by the planning application that would speak.
3. The advice from the monitoring officer was that whereas the rule could be open to a certain degree of manipulation on part of the developers and objectors, this method of selection appeared as fair as any other and did not require officers to make difficult decisions regarding the priority of applicants to speak.
4. In the Officers experience there have not been any significant concerns raised by members of the public regarding this system, which has worked effectively during the time that it has been in place. The more recent change to include 3 speakers on a major application has increased the opportunity for local people as well as interest groups such as the Conservation area advisory Groups and civic Societies to speak.
5. It is considered that the current arrangements are working well. However, should members wish to refine the procedure the following priority options may be considered:

1. Priority will be given to people who were written to and invited to make comment as part of the Council's initial notification process. This will generally be the occupiers of properties that abut the application site.
6. This will not include anyone who has not been written to originally but has seen the application advertised in the newspaper or by means of a site notice, or has found the application by an internet search. For this reason the view of Officers is that such a priority system would potentially exclude a person who considers that they are affected.
 2. Priority will be given to people who have previously made their comments in writing to the council in respect of the application and where their residential amenity or that of members of their family is likely to be affected
7. In effect the person would need to justify their request to speak by showing that they or their family's residential amenity e.g. privacy, noise, outlook etc would be prejudiced by the proposed development. This would however give priority to people with concerns regarding their personal circumstances over and above those with wider public interest e.g. visual impact of a building within a street.
8. On balance it is recommended that the Council retains the existing selection criteria but conducts a further review after one year taking into account any feedback and comments from members of the public