

**NEW Dates for 2011/12
now included**

Your Voice Your Choice

**A guide to the Council's
Planning Committees**

This leaflet gives advice about our planning Committees. It explains how they are run and how you can take part.

Epping Forest District Council

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk



INTRODUCTION

At Epping Forest District Council we encourage members of the public to be involved in the planning process. We already have procedures to let people know what is planned, including newspaper advertisements and site notices for certain proposals.

Our planning meetings are also webcast over the internet and are available for viewing for six months after the meetings. If you want any further details contact Simon Hill on 01992 564249.

The Council now has three Area Sub Committees to look at planning applications. At these committee meetings there is the opportunity for people to speak at the meetings when applications which affect them are being considered.

This leaflet explains how you can take part in the meeting.

FAQ's

Are the meetings open to the public?

Yes all our meetings are open for you to attend. Only in special circumstances are the public excluded.

When and where is the meeting?

Details of the location, date and time of the meeting are shown at

the top of the front page of the agenda along with the details of the contact officer and members of the Subcommittee.

These are available from our website:

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy.

Can I speak?

If you wish to speak **you must register with Democratic Services by 4.00 p.m. on the day before the meeting.** Ring the number shown on the top of the front page of the agenda. Speaking to a Planning Officer will not register you to speak, you must register with Democratic Service. Speakers are not permitted on Planning Enforcement or legal issues.

Who can speak?

Three classes of speakers are allowed: One objector (maybe on behalf of a group), the local Parish or Town Council and the Applicant or his/her agent.

What can I say?

You will be allowed to have your say about the application but you must bear in mind that you are limited to three minutes and if you are not present by the time your item is considered, the Subcommittee will determine the application in your absence.

Can I give the Councillors more information about my application or my objection?

Yes you can but it must not be presented at the meeting. If you wish to send further information to Councillors, their contact details can be obtained through Democratic Services or our website:

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy. Any information sent to Councillors should be copied to the Planning Officer dealing with your application.

Attending Area Committee Meetings

You may be one of the people who have a right to speak. However, you may merely wish to observe the meeting. If so, all you need to do is turn up or tune into our webcasts.

It is a good idea to arrive a few minutes early to collect any papers. This might enable you to have a word with your Local Councillor or the Committee Officer before the formal meeting starts if you so wish.

Details of dates, times and the venues of the three Area Committees are set out on pages six and seven of this leaflet.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

The agenda

The agenda for each meeting contains reports of officers on planning applications to be considered at each meeting together with recommendations for the grant or refusal of permission.

Agendas are available from the Council Offices and our Information Centres 5 working days before the meeting.

They will also be available at the meeting and on-line at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy.

Advice about the agenda can be obtained by calling the Committee Officer attending the meeting. His/her details are shown on the website and the front cover of the agenda.

WHO'S WHO?

The Chairman

The Chairman controls the meeting to ensure that it is properly run. The Chairman will be the person who calls you to speak and directs the discussion by members of the sub-committee and ensures that decisions are made on each application.

Area Sub Committee Councillors

All the Councillors on the Area Sub Committee are District Councillors elected by the local residents. All of them are representatives for wards within the area. The Councillors can be identified from the nameplates in front of them. These sub-committee members will determine the planning applications.

Other District Councillors who are not on the Sub Committee can attend the meeting and may speak about items on the agenda with the Chairman's agreement. They cannot vote.

Town/parish representatives give the views of their town or parish council and not personal ones.

Council Officers

Council Officers are people who work for the Council. They attend the meetings to advise, answer questions and record what takes place. These officers include the Committee Officer, Planning and Legal Staff. The Officers have nameplates on the table in front of them.

Your Ward Councillor

Your Local Ward Councillor is the person who was elected to represent your area in the District Council. If you feel strongly about a matter due to be discussed you could contact your Councillor to give your point of view.

A Councillor should listen to you and explain the best way to deal with the matter. However, Councillors will have personal views on the issue concerned and do not have to put across the views of any one individual resident. A Councillor will also be mindful of Officers' advice when deciding planning applications.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE MEETING?

- First the item will be introduced.
- Then an objector, the town or parish representatives and the applicant (in that order) will each have up to three minutes to put their views to the Area Sub Committee.
- Having 'made their case', representatives cannot speak again on that item, unless asked a question by the Chairman or a Councillor or the application is put back to another meeting.
- People can only speak at the meeting. Written documents or photographs will not normally be accepted at the meeting.
- Following the speeches, the item will be discussed by the Councillors who are members

of the Area Sub Committee.
Then they make their decision.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO SPEAK TO THE AREA SUB COMMITTEE

If you have a right to speak please keep your comments brief and relevant - remember three minutes is not a long time. Speak slowly but clearly and limit your views to relevant planning issues. These may include:

- external design, appearance and layout;
- highway safety;
- loss of light or overshadowing; or
- planning policy and government guidance.

Avoid matters that have nothing to do with planning such as boundary disputes, loss of property value or things covered by other laws.

However strongly you feel about an issue, keep in mind the need to be polite and to respect the views of others. Avoid personal insults. You are reminded that meetings are now webcast and anything defamatory said by you will be recorded.

HOW MATTERS ARE DECIDED

All items are decided by a simple majority vote of the District Councillors, including the Chairman, serving on the Area Sub Committee after the end of the discussion on each item. As well as his or her ordinary vote, the Chairman has a 'casting vote' to use if voting is equal between those for and against an item.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE DECISION?

Notification of the decisions taken by the Sub-Committee is sent out by Planning Services after the meeting. Some applications may be deferred for further information or a site visit. Others, with wider implications, may be referred to the District Development Control Committee, a main committee of the council which meets at the Civic Offices in Epping and looks at more major planning items.

Anyone who has a right to speak at the first meeting will have a further right to speak when the item is reconsidered, whether by the Area Committee or District Development Control Committee. However, you need to register to speak on each occasion. You can read the minutes of the meeting about ten days later at council offices, local information offices and on the website.

Areas covered by Area Sub Committees

Alternative Venues

Occasionally it is necessary to change the venue for one of the Sub-Committee meetings. Should this be the case, publication of the change of venue(s) will be given at the earliest opportunity.

How To Get To Area Sub Committee South Meetings Roding Valley High School, Loughton

Use the entrance to the School Grounds via Brook Road. Ample car parking provision is available on site and the entrance to the room where the meeting is to be held will be clearly marked.

How To Get To Area Sub Committee East and West Meetings Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, Epping

The Civic Offices are situated at the northern end of the High Street (B1393) in Epping. Some car parking is available within the Civic Offices site. Additional car parking provision can be found at the Bakers Lane car parks, which are signposted from the High Street and are free of charge from 6.00 p.m. onwards.

Area Sub Committee South

Areas covered:

(Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell and Loughton.)

Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m. in the Dining Hall, Roding Valley High School, Loughton on:

18 May 2011
15 June 2011
13 July 2011
10 August 2011
07 September 2011
05 October 2011
02 November 2011
30 November 2011
04 January 2012
01 February 2012
29 February 2012
28 March 2012
25 April 2012
30 May 2012

Venues and Dates for Future Meetings:

Area Sub Committee East

Areas covered:

(Abbess Beauchamp and Berners Roding, Fyfield, Hastingwood, High Ongar, Matching, Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers, Ongar, Sheering, Stanford Rivers, Stapleford Abbots, Stapleford Tawney, Theydon Garnon, Theydon Mount and Willingale.)

(Epping, Lambourne, North Weald and Theydon Bois.)

Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m. at the **Civic Offices, High Street, Epping** on:

25 May 2011
22 June 2011
20 July 2011
17 August 2011
14 September 2011
12 October 2011
09 November 2011
07 December 2011
11 January 2012
08 February 2012
07 March 2012
04 April 2012
09 May 2012

Area Sub Committee West

Areas covered:

(Broadley Common, Epping Upland, Nazeing, Roydon and Waltham Abbey.)

Meetings are held on Wednesdays at 7.30 p.m. at the **Civic Offices, High Street, Epping** on:

11 May 2011
08 June 2011
06 July 2011
03 August 2011
31 August 2011
28 September 2011
26 October 2011
23 November 2011
21 December 2011
25 January 2012
22 February 2012
21 March 2012
18 April 2012
23 May 2012

HOW TO CONTACT US

If you have any comments on planning applications please make them in writing to:

Director of Planning and Economic Development
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

but for planning queries about your Area Committee please telephone the Duty Planner on 01992 564000.

To register your wish to speak at your Area Committee contact Research and Democratic Services on: 01992 564000 or the Committee Officer shown on the front page of the agenda.

Email us at : democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk