

Documents which support the Constitution

Part J

Protocol for the Registration of Residents' Associations, Business Associations and Amenity Societies for the purpose of Public Speaking at Planning Applications Committee.

Background

1. The Council recognises that Residents' Associations, Business Associations and Amenity Societies play an important role in representing groups of residents and businesses in a particular area and encourages the registration of such groups with the Executive Head of Corporate in order for them to participate in the Council's public speaking scheme for Planning Applications Committee.
2. The objective of registering an organisation for the purpose of public speaking at Planning Applications Committee is to allow a group representing a number of local residents to be given preference, on a first come, first served basis, in the allocation of the available slots for speaking at the Committee on a planning application, as an organisation will be able to represent the democratically reached views of a number of residents, not just an individual.
3. The requirements for a previously registered organisation to be eligible to speak on a planning application at a meeting of the Planning Applications Committee, or the Full Council, are set out in further detail at Part 4 of the Constitution.
4. This protocol is designed to provide a framework and guidance to such associations in completing their application to register as a registered organisation for the purposes of public speaking with the Council, whilst ensuring that the Council can be satisfied that the organisation genuinely represents the views of a portion of the community.

Qualification

5. The organisation must be a constituted organisation with voting members and a transparent process for decision making or for reaching a clear view on any particular planning application.
6. The organisation must have a Constitution which sets out the details of its committee or officers, as relevant, and the qualification for membership. Membership should be open to all members of the relevant community. Guidance on the requirements for a Constitution is attached at Appendix 1 to this document.

7. In order to fulfil the objectives at paragraph 2 above, it is expected that an organisation represents a minimum of 10 households or 5 businesses as relevant.

Submission of an application to register

8. In order to be accepted as a registered organisation for the purposes of public speaking, the organisation must complete an application form supplied by the Council, along with the following accompany information:
 - The organisation's Constitution
 - Accounts or relevant financial information of the organisation
 - Details of current membership

Renewal of registration

9. It is recognised that some associations are established in response to a particular issue and that the focus for the organisation can change. It is also recognised that the membership of an organisation will be subject to natural change.
10. In order to ensure that the registered organisation continues to be eligible to be registered with the Council and therefore receive the preferential treatment afforded in the allocation of public speaking spaces, the Council retains a right to ensure that the named organisations continues to meet its qualifying criteria.
11. As a result, the organisation will be asked to provide the signed minutes of its most recent Annual General meeting, which must have been held within the previous 18 month period.
12. However, the Council also has the discretion to ask an organisation to provide further information or evidence relevant to its ongoing registration if it learns that there has been a material change to its status.

**Requirements for Constitutions of
Amenity Societies/ Residents' Associations or Business Associations.**

1. Name of the Organisation

2. Objectives

3. Membership

- Who is permitted to be a member of the society/association?

4. Meetings

- Is there an Annual General Meeting?
- Is there a Committee?
- How are the members of the Committee appointed/vacancies filled?
- Are minutes of the meetings kept?
- How are decisions made? By Committee?
- How are people kept informed of decisions made?
- Please provide details of how and when these meetings are held and called.

5. Rules of the Association

- Are there any rules that are not already outlined?

6. Changes to Constitution /Dissolution

- How may members propose changes to the constitution, including dissolution of the association?
- What happens if the association is dissolved?

7. Finances (including Audit information)

- How are the finances kept?
- Is there a subscription fee?
- Are the books audited, and if yes how often is this done and is it done by an external person/body?

In addition, constitutions should:

- Be signed by all members of the Committee
- Be written as a document and not a letter