

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

HEARINGS PROCEDURE FOR THE PLANNING AND AREA COMMITTEES

The following procedure shall be adopted for the conduct of all meetings of the Planning Committee or Area Planning Committees involving the "hearings process" whether or not in relation to an application departing from the provisions of a Local Plan and whether undertaken in the Council Chamber, Committee Room or on site:-

Order of Business

- (1) Officials will introduce the application with a brief description of the proposed development and the site together with a summary of the relevant Development Plan provisions;
- (2) The applicants will have the opportunity to present their case for approval including a response to any matters raised in third-party representations. The Applicants may, if they so wish, allot part of their overall time to supporters of the application who have submitted timeous representations in support of the application (this may include a Community Council). Thereafter members of the Committee may ask questions of the applicants for clarification;
- (3) Where a Community Council has objected to the proposal they will have the opportunity to present their case. Members of the Committee will then have the opportunity to ask questions of the Community Council representative(s) for clarification;
- (4) Third parties who have submitted timeous written objections to the proposal will have the opportunity to make presentations; again, Members of the Committee will have the opportunity to ask questions of the objectors for clarification;
- (5) The Chairman will ask whether there are any other members of the public present who have made timeous representations and have given notice that they wish to speak, who have not yet been called. Any such members of the public will have the opportunity to speak, and Members of the Committee will have the opportunity to ask questions of them for clarification;
- (6) The applicants will then have the opportunity to respond to matters raised by Members, officials or objectors which were not covered in their original presentation;
- (7) Members of the Committee will then have the opportunity to ask any final questions.

Thereafter, the "Hearings Process" will be complete. Officials will present their recommendation after which the Committee Members will decide how they wish to determine the application.

Further Notes for Guidance and Information

For the proper disposal of business, the Committee will normally deal with applications subject to the "Hearings Process" at the commencement of the Development Control section of the Agenda to minimise waiting time by the parties involved.

The applicants and objectors will be allotted **10 minutes** to make their presentations - the ten minute period is the total time available to each side and must be divided amongst those wishing to speak for that side. Community Councils presenting their objections will be allotted 5 minutes. In exceptional circumstances and **at the discretion of the Chairman**, these periods may be extended depending, for example, on whether the applications are of a particularly complex nature or where there are a large number of objectors.

Objectors who wish a hearing are encouraged to appoint one or a small number of spokespersons to present their views, to concentrate on the matters of main concern to them and to avoid repetition.

Finally, it should be noted that the "Hearings Process" will only operate if there are objectors present who wish to be heard and who have submitted timeous representations; otherwise, the Committee will simply proceed to determine the application as they see fit.