PART 4 | SECTION 4A – REMOTE/HYBRID SPEAKING PROCEDURE RULES (DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE)

1. SECTION 4 – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE REMOTE SPEAKING SCHEME

1. Introduction

1.1. When an application has been identified to be considered at a particular Committee meeting, the Development Control Section will inform the Applicant (or their Agent) and any person who has made representations on the application that it is due to be considered by the Committee and to give those persons the opportunity to make verbal representations at the Committee meeting.

1.2. This procedure only relates to applications determined by the Borough Council, and includes details on how to join, observe and speak "virtually" at the Committee meeting through the use of a remote audio-video conferencing platform.

2. When are the Committee Meetings?

2.1. The Development Control Committee meetings are ordinarily held in person every 4 weeks and begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Offices. Such meetings may also be conducted remotely and using hybrid arrangements (i.e. some participants attending in a remote capacity and some are attending the physical meeting space).

2.2. Committee agendas are published at least 5 working days before the Committee meeting and are available to view on our website www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk under the 'Your Council – Meeting Dates, Agenda and Minutes' pages (follow the 'Calendar of Meetings' link).

2.3. Meetings are open to everyone to watch and listen to remotely, whether a person has registered to speak at the Committee meeting itself or not. The meetings' proceedings will be streamed live on the Council's YouTube Channel (search 'Oadby & Wigston Borough Council' at www.youtube.com) from the time the meeting is due to start on the day of the meeting. A direct link to the live stream will also be available on our website (see above).

3. How to Register an Interest to Speak

3.1. Speaking opportunities shall be allocated on a first come, first served basis. If a number of people want to speak for or against a proposal the onus is on them to appoint a speaker. However, the Applicant (or Agent) will always be given the opportunity to address the Committee.

3.2. If objectors/supporters cannot agree on a spokesperson the objector/supporter who registered first will be the ones permitted to speak. The identified speakers may

defer to another at the discretion of the Chair of the Committee and on the condition that the Council's Democratic Services Team is informed by 12:00 pm on the day of the Committee meeting by e-mailing democratic.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk or calling either (0116) 257 2643 or (0116) 257 2605.

3.3.   A registered speaker's contact name/number/address may be disclosed to other persons wishing to address the Committee to assist in the appointment of a spokesperson should there be more persons who wish to address the Committee than allowed under the public speaking protocol.

3.4.   To register a right to speak, speaker must telephone the Planning Administration Team on (0116) 257 2671.

3.5.   Those registered to speak at the Committee meeting will be sent an e-mail invitation from Democratic Services which will contain a unique link to remotely join the meeting from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device etc.

3.6.   For those speakers who do not have access to any of these devices, or do not wish to appear by video link, the e-mail invitation will also include a telephone number for the speaker to call to remotely join the meeting by audio only. If the speaker does not have access to e-mail, joining instructions can be provided over the phone.

3.7.   Speakers must not share their unique joining details/instructions with anyone else.

4.   How many people can address the Committee?

4.1.   There will be a maximum of three public speakers (excluding Ward Councillors not on the Committee or Councillors with prejudicial interests) allowed to speak.

4.2.   These would consist of the Applicant (or Agent), one supporter and one objector.

4.3.   There will be a time limit of five minutes per person and each speaker may only speak once.

5.   Commenting at the Committee Meeting

5.1.   Comments must be completed in five minutes and be a statement of the speaker's objections or support. It is not an opportunity to ask questions.

5.2.   No letters or additional information can be distributed at the Committee meeting and videos, overheads and electronic presentations are only allowed at the Chair's discretion and on the condition that an electronic copy of the shared content is provided to the Democratic Services Team by 12:00 pm on the day of the Committee meeting (see e-mail above).

5.3.   Comments should also be limited to relevant planning considerations. Examples of some relevant planning considerations are as follows (although this list is not exhaustive):

- Layout and density of buildings;
- Overshadowing, overlooking and loss of privacy, noise disturbance or other loss of amenities;
- Appearance and character of the development;
- Traffic generation, highway safety, parking;
- Relevant planning policies.

5.4.   Speakers should avoid references to matters which are not material planning considerations. Examples of matters which are not relevant planning considerations are as follows (although this list is not exhaustive):

- Boundary disputes, covenants or other property rights;
- Personal remarks (for example the applicant's motives);
- Reduction in property values;
- Loss of private view over the land;
- Matters dealt with under other laws (for example licensing).

5.5.   At the Chair's discretion, Members of the Committee may ask a visiting speaker to clarify a point of fact after their statement has been made before the application is debated. However, this is not intended to result in a dialogue between the Committee Members and the speaker.

5.6.   Any issue deemed to be defamatory, derogatory or to relate to a specific Officer or Member will not be permitted and the speaker will be warned accordingly. If the speaker does not follow this warning, they will be immediately removed from the remote meeting and will lose their right to speak any further on an application.

5.7.   Committee meetings are live-steamed (see above) and are otherwise audio-visually recorded. Recording of Committee meetings will be made publically available as part of the public record.

5.8.   If the person chosen to speak would like help preparing their case, Planning Aid may be able to assist them. Planning Aid is a charity run by volunteers and not connected with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. Planning Aid do not provide planning advice via telephone, all requests for advice should be directed to their email advice service, details of which can be found at www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/online-advice-service.

(Continued overleaf)

6. What Happens at the Committee Meeting

6.1. On the day of the Committee meeting, a member of the Democratic Services Team will contact all speakers between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm to give them an opportunity to ask any questions they may have, practice joining the meeting remotely and to ascertain that all speakers have a reliable internet or telephone connection etc.

6.2. On the evening of the Committee meeting, speakers must attempt to join the meeting at least 15-minutes before the meeting is due to start so any technical issues can be resolved to therefore ensure a prompt start to the meeting.

6.3. When speaking, speakers will be required to connect their audio (through their device's microphone or telephone receiver) and, where possible, their video (through their device's camera).

6.4. When speakers first join, and throughout the meeting, their microphone will automatically be set to mute until such time as they are unmuted and invited to speak. Once a speaker has finished speaking, they will be muted once more.

6.5. Furthermore, before and after a speaker has spoken, they will be placed into a "virtual" holding area where they can watch and listen to the meetings proceedings. Speakers will only be taken out of the "virtual" holding area when they are invited to speak, and only after a speaker has finished speaking, they may leave the meeting.

6.6. Generally, the Chair will introduce each item on the agenda and then proceed as follows:-

- Any Councillors with prejudicial interest in the application to address the Committee (if any);
- The Applicant/Agent of the application may then address the Committee;
- Supporters/objectors of the application can address the Committee;
- A Ward Councillor(s) who is not a Committee Member may then address the Committee (if any);
- The Planning Officer or Development Control Manager will present the application and include any information detailed on the Agenda Update, with reference to a electronic presentation; and
- Development Control Committee Members debate and determine the application, involving Officers as and when necessary.

6.7. If an application is deferred until another meeting for further information or negotiations, before or after public speaking, then the process is repeated. The right to speak does not extend to site visits (if any).

6.8.   If speakers need any assistance joining the meeting, or experience any technical difficulties during the meeting, they must contact Democratic Services directly on either (0116) 257 2775. If needed, the meeting will be temporarily suspended to resolve any technical difficulties.

7.   What Happens at the Committee Meeting

7.1   By registering and speaking at the Committee meeting, speakers are confirming that they consent to the Council holding and processing their personal information and using it for the purposes of democratic participation and engagement facilitated by the Council's use of the audio-video conferencing platform to conduct remote access meetings. Their personal information will not be shared or used for any other purpose by the Council. For more information, please see the Council's Privacy Policy: www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/privacy_notices.