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Your ref: N/A
Our Ref:
Date: 20th May 2011

Mr T Ewing

Dear Mr Ewing

**Re: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) ACT 2000
INFORMATION REQUEST REF 7077**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information (FOI) request of 28th April 2011 inquiring about the following:

1. At hearings of the Planning Applications Committees and their sub committees, are individual third party objectors to planning applications permitted to orally address the Committee, and if so, for how long?
2. If so, is this under Standing Orders and if so, which provision of those Standing Orders permits this?
3. If not, what are the reasons why individual third party objectors to planning applications are not permitted to orally address the Committees and their sub committees?

Please find below the relevant standing order that relates to members of the public speaking at formally constituted meetings.

"Part III

33. *Deputations at Meetings of the Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees*

- (1) *Except as provided in Standing Order 7 (Deputations at meetings of the Council) a request for the reception of a deputation shall be referred by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services for consideration by the*

Cabinet or the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee which may agree to receive the deputation.

- (2) *When the Cabinet, a Committee or Sub-Committee agrees to receive a deputation it shall specify: the number of persons to be received; the number of persons who may address the meeting; and the time to be allocated for speeches by those members of the deputation whom it agrees to hear."*

There is a very long standing practice at Planning Committees not to agree to hear from third parties. So while members of the public can submit requests to make deputations we rarely receive any. The reasons previously given not to hear from the public are that the Council provides for members of the public to submit written representations up to and including the day of the meeting. These are all submitted to the Members. Those received in time are provided to members at the time of the Officers report. A further batch of any late representations are issued to Members the day before the meeting and those received later are handed to them at the meeting. It is not considered that hearing members of the public make the same points verbally would add greatly to members' consideration of the issues, given that they also receive a presentation of a professional planning officer in addition to a detailed report.

Yours sincerely



Rozana Perera
Executive Assistant to Strategic Director
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