



THE PLANNING PROCESS

How to Influence Planning Decisions

OBJECTIVE

To participate in a simulation of the planning process. To understand some of the roles undertaken by various bodies and their interaction in this process.

KEY QUESTIONS

- > What is 'land use'?
- > Who decides how land is used? (a committee of Borough Councillors)
- > How is the decision arrived at?
- > How can the public influence that decision?
- > What is an 'interest group'? What is 'bias' and how might it help an interest group?
- > What can be done once a decision has been made?

SUGGESTED APPROACH

This lesson will have to be brisk, or, in preference, spread across two lessons!

Timing

Introduction	5-10 minutes
Group preparation	10-15 minutes (or the remainder of the first lesson)
Group presentations	4 x 2 minutes = 8 minutes (or longer, if second lesson)
Planners' recommendation	2-5 minutes
Committee consideration	5 minutes
Committee decision	2-5 minutes
What next?	5 minutes

Introduction

Optional link to last lesson, where pupils may have played 'The House that Jack and Jill Built'. This explored some of the challenges involved in a personal planning issue regarding an individual's house. Establish this part of the lesson quickly: 5 minutes only to introduce the task!

This session considers the wider planning issues of local land use. What does this term mean? (prompt: how any area of land is used and how it affects people. The decision is usually made within the Borough Council, which is made up of a committee of Borough Councillors, who have been elected by the people in that Borough). Today's session will focus upon one piece of land and all of the class will have a part to play in deciding how that piece of land is used, or influencing that decision, based on issues relevant to a real planning committee. The teacher should divide class up into five groups, preferably by numbering pupils from one to five. The grouping can always be predetermined!

Resources

6 x Pupil Instruction Sheets; pen and paper per group; props for each group if desired e.g. rosettes, caps, etc.

TASK

In your groups, open the envelope and follow the instructions contained inside. The time limit allowed for the decision making process is tight, just this lesson, so all members of each group must play a full part in discussions, cooperate with each other and work swiftly.

Once the five groups have read their instruction card, one member of each group should be chosen to be a Councillor in the COMMITTEE. This person will leave their group to form the Committee, who have been elected by the people. They may wish to remember that they may want to promote the views of their own interest group? The teacher should choose an additional member of the committee from any of the groups who is likely to be a strong member and help the group forward. However, the pupils themselves should elect their own group leaders/spokespersons.

The final six groups are

- COMMITTEE** > made up of a panel of elected Borough councillors;
- PLANNERS** > made up of local government officers (planning professionals who have jobs working for local government);

- NEEDIES** > local residents who have young families or are elderly;
- TEENAGERS** > local residents who are teenagers;
- NATURALISTS** > local residents who are middle-aged, with children who have left home;
- DINKIES** > local residents who are young adults.

A copy of the different instructions and prompts received by each group is included after this lesson plan. **The teacher should read this carefully prior to the lesson** and, whilst preparation is being undertaken, provide any necessary prompts to assist struggling or poorly focused groups. Whilst the residents are discussing their arguments and preparing their presentations, one member of their group should visit the planners and the committee, ensuring that some of their arguments have been heard by both groups before the presentation. The interest groups may wish to speak to the committee member who was originally part of their group. Having spent between ten and fifteen minutes developing a brief argument for the Planning Committee meeting, each of the four interest groups should present their case. They may address issues raised by other groups if there is time.

The planners and the committee meanwhile should consider the arguments and rank the proposals in their preferred order. A spokesperson for the planners should then recommend one proposal (or two as a maximum, although this may slow up the procedure) to the committee, although all groups should listen to this section. The committee should then reach their decision, which the spokesperson should briefly explain. Show of hands to say whether they agreed with decision in the public interest?

To close the session, consider whether any of the committee members were biased towards the group they had originally come from. How can interest groups make sure that their views are heard by the public, the planners and the committee and what, if anything, can be done when a decision goes against an interest group? The four residents' groups will have been working on this whilst the planners and the committee were considering their proposals.

NEXT SESSION

How to make your voice heard will be the focus of the next session: it is sufficient to briefly introduce the idea here.

Prompts: there are many ways to influence and raise the profile of an issue, including letters to newspapers, contributions to local phone-in radio shows, letters to or responses to requests for opinions from, planners and signed petitions to appeal to the Borough council. Contact with the media would be useful to apply pressure! Organise residents assoc. Provide evidence e.g. photos etc.

If the decision made by the Borough council committee is to refuse a planning proposal, the people who put the planning application in can make an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate although this may not be successful. Here are some details about the interest groups taking part in the planning process.

NAME	PROPOSAL	PROFILE OF GROUP
NEEDIES	Supermarket	Adults with young families, elderly people who are not mobile
TEENAGERS	Fast-food outlet or recreation centre / park	Teenagers
NATURALISTS	Nature / wildlife reserve or keep it as it is	Middle aged people with grown up children
DINKIES	New office blocks to encourage new businesses, especially ICT	Young adults

PUPIL INSTRUCTION SHEET 1

COUNCILLORS OF THE COMMITTEE



You have been elected by the residents of the area to help to run local services and make some decisions which affect local people. Your job today is to listen to the recommendation of your planners, who are specialists in considering the issues involved in local land use, and to be careful to make a decision which is good for the local area AND will make sure that the residents are happy enough to vote for you in the next election.

10 - 15 minutes Quickly Vote for a Leader and a Spokesperson

Look at the outline of the proposals for the land use and the details of the area of land.

Before any of the other groups approaches you, try to decide which proposals you would favour as a group and why.

One or more members of your group should listen to the people who approach you, then consider the new points made. It will not be possible to keep everybody happy!

Consider which proposal you favour at the moment and why.

8 minutes Public Meeting

During the public meeting listen carefully to each of the presentations. Reconsider your favourite proposal

5 minutes Listen carefully to the recommendation from the planners: they are professionals who have a good knowledge of which issues are important for you to consider. However, you do not have to follow their advice, but remember they are specialists.

5 minutes Consider all the proposals for one last time and decide upon your favourite. Make sure your reasons are clear.

2 - 5 minutes Decision Time

Your spokesperson should announce the decision, and the reasons behind it, to the residents. The planners will be listening to see if you have followed their recommendation.

PUPIL INSTRUCTION SHEET 2 THE PLANNERS



You are planners who work in Borough or District councils, making decisions about small planning issues and making recommendations to the planning committee about larger schemes. You consider issues such as how land use will affect transport, the environment, people and businesses in the area and whether the land use is sustainable in the future. Your job today is to consider the various proposals for the use of land and make a recommendation to the committee based upon your specialist knowledge.

10 - 15 minutes **Quickly Vote for a Leader and a Spokesperson**

Look at the outline of the proposals for the land use and details of the area of land. Consider the policies below:

- 1] **ENVIRONMENT** > new buildings should be put in towns to keep the countryside free from development. Concentrate shops in one place to serve lots of people; save our countryside to enjoy for future generations
- 2] **APPROPRIATE USE** > do not put development next to others that might be badly affected by it. A scrapyard next to an old people's home is not a good idea!
- 3] **TRANSPORT / SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** > reduce the need to travel. Use less petrol but make services accessible to everybody, whether or not they have a car.

You must also consider the views of the public, as expressed by the interest groups. Interest groups may approach a member of your group at any time, which may affect your decision. One or more members of your group should listen to the representative and may offer **one** piece of advice. Draft your recommendation which will be presented to the committee after the public meeting.

8 minutes **Public Meeting**

During the public meeting listen carefully to each of the presentations, if necessary revise your recommendation.

5 minutes Your spokesperson now has up to five minutes to present your recommendation to the committee.

5 minutes Whilst the committee are reaching their final decision make a list of ways in which interest groups could encourage other people to join them. How could they ensure that as many people as possible hear their message? You could begin to work on a draft of one of these ways.

Decision Time

2 - 5 minutes A spokesperson from the committee will announce their decision. Listen carefully to see if they have followed your recommendation.

PUPIL INSTRUCTION SHEET 3 THE NEEDIES



Your interest group is made up of local residents who are elderly people who are past retirement age and may have difficulty in getting about and young couples or single parents with young children. You would like to see the land used as a supermarket and you know that a well-known supermarket group, Valuebringers, has expressed an interest in buying the land and has requested planning permission. Your job today is to prepare a two minute speech to be delivered by a member of your group to persuade the Borough councillors to support your recommendation. Remember that the councillors need your votes and will be interested in making a decision which will do most good for the public and keep the maximum number of voters happy.

10 - 15 minutes **Quickly Vote for a Leader and a Spokesperson**

Look at the outline of the proposals for the land use and the details of the area of land.

Work together to gather ideas to **support** your development idea and to **defeat** the other interest groups: why is your idea better than the others? Why shouldn't the other groups' ideas be considered?

Your spokesperson will have two minutes to present your argument to the planning committee in the public meeting.

Whilst you are working on this as a group, you could send one member to the committee and/or the planners to try to convince them to back you BEFORE the public meeting.

8 minutes **Public Meeting**

Your spokesperson will need to present your ideas. Listen carefully to the other presentations.

10 minutes Whilst the committee are reaching their final decision make a list of ways in which you could encourage other people to join in your interest group. How would you ensure that as many people as possible would hear you? You could begin to work on a draft of one of these ways.

2 - 5 minutes **Decision Time**

A spokesperson from the committee will announce their decision. Listen carefully to the decision and decide whether you agree with it. If the decision has not gone your way, what can you do about it?



PUPIL INSTRUCTION SHEET 4 THE TEENAGERS

Your interest group is made up of local teenage residents. As a group, you will need to make a decision about whether to support the plan to use the land for a fast-food outlet or the plan to use the land as a recreation park. Whichever plan you support, you know that a company is ready to buy the land and is looking for planning permission. Your job today is to prepare a two minute speech to be delivered by a member of your group to persuade the Borough councillors to support your recommendation. Remember that the councillors need your votes and will be interested in making a decision which will do most good for the public and keep the maximum number of voters happy.

10 - 15 minutes **Quickly Vote for a Leader and a Spokesperson**

Look at the outline of the proposals for the land use and the details of the area of land.

Work together to gather ideas to support your development idea and to defeat the other interest groups. Your spokesperson will have **two minutes** to present these ideas to the planning committee in the public meeting.

Whilst you are working on this as a group, you could send one member to the committee and/or the planners to try to convince them to back you BEFORE the public meeting.

8 minutes **Public Meeting**

Your spokesperson will need to present your ideas. Listen carefully to the other presentations.

10 minutes Whilst the committee are reaching their final decision make a list of ways in which you could encourage other people to join in your interest group. How would you ensure that as many people as possible would hear you? You could begin to work on a draft of one of these ways.

2 - 5 minutes **Decision Time**

A spokesperson from the committee will announce their decision. Listen carefully to the decision and decide whether you agree with it. If the decision has not gone your way, what can you do about it?



PUPIL INSTRUCTION SHEET 5 THE NATURALISTS

Your interest group is made up of local residents who are middle aged couples or individuals with grown-up children who have left home. You are members of the local wildlife and nature protection campaign and would like to see the land turned into a nature reserve which would allow visitors to enjoy the space. Your job today is to prepare a two minute speech to be delivered by a member of your group to persuade the Borough councillors to support your recommendation. Remember that the councillors need your votes and will be interested in making a decision which will do most good for the public and keep the maximum number of voters happy.

10 - 15 minutes **Quickly Vote for a Leader and a Spokesperson**

Look at the outline of the proposals for the land use and the details of the area of land.

Work together to gather ideas to support your development idea and to defeat the other interest groups.

Your spokesperson will have two minutes to present these ideas to the planning committee in the public meeting.

Whilst you are working on this as a group, you could send one member to the committee and/or the planners to try to convince them to back you BEFORE the public meeting.

8 minutes **Public Meeting**

Your spokesperson will need to present your ideas. Listen carefully to the other presentations.

10 minutes

Whilst the committee are reaching their final decision make a list of ways in which you could encourage other people to join in your interest group. How would you ensure that as many people as possible would hear you? You could begin to work on a draft of one of these ways.

2 - 5 minutes **Decision Time**

A spokesperson from the committee will announce their decision. Listen carefully to the decision and decide whether you agree with it. If the decision has not gone your way, what can you do about it?



PUPIL INSTRUCTION SHEET 6 THE DINKIES

Your interest group is made up of young adults. You would like to see the land turned into office blocks to encourage new businesses, such as ICT companies, to provide jobs for you now and in the future. Your job today is to prepare a two minute speech to be delivered by a member of your group to persuade the Borough councillors to support your recommendation. Remember that the councillors need your votes and will be interested in making a decision which will do most good for the public and keep the maximum number of voters happy.

10 - 15 minutes **Quickly Vote for a Leader and a Spokesperson**

Look at the outline of the proposals for the land use and the details of the area of land.

Work together to gather ideas to support your development idea and to defeat the other interest groups.

Your spokesperson will have **two minutes** to present these ideas to the planning committee in the public meeting.

Whilst you are working on this as a group, you could send one member to the committee and/or the planners to try to convince them to back you BEFORE the public meeting.

8 minutes **Public Meeting**

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