

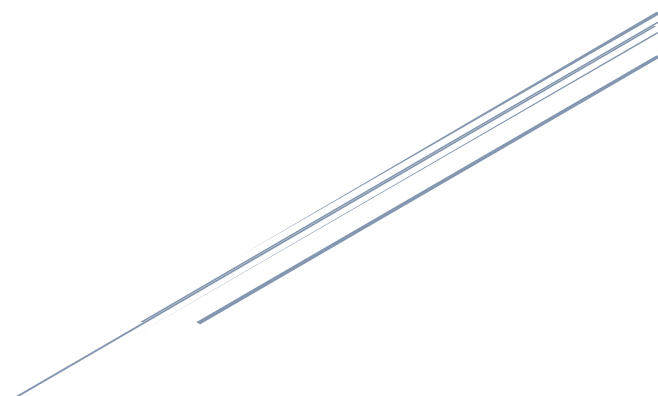


Community Hearings and Public Local Inquiries: A Procedural Guide for Objectors in Scotland

MAY 2025 | FIRST EDITION

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Cover Note:

This document has been prepared as a practical resource for community groups, local residents, and individual objectors participating in public hearings and inquiries held under the Scottish planning system by ObjectNow.

It is intended to demystify the formal procedures involved in **Section 36 and 37 Electricity Act applications**, as well as related cases under the **Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997**, where **community hearings** and **public local inquiries** may be convened by the **Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA)**.

This guide is not an official publication of the Scottish Government or DPEA. Rather, it has been created by and for campaigners and concerned citizens, with reference to official procedures and legislation, to help ensure:

- **More confident and effective participation**
- **Fairer representation of community views**
- **Increased accessibility to technical processes**

We hope this guide will serve as a valuable tool in your efforts to protect your local environment, heritage, and wellbeing through informed and structured engagement with the planning system.

If you would like editable versions of the included templates or support in preparing for a hearing, please contact your campaign coordinator or local advocacy group.

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Intended Audience: Community Objectors, Local Campaign Groups, and Stakeholder Support Organisations

Table Of Contents

Section 1: Overview of Legal and Procedural Frameworks	4
Section 2: When and Why a Public Local Inquiry Is Held	4
2.1 Statutory Triggers for a Public Inquiry	4
2.2 Key Definitions	5
2.3 Notification and Opt-In Procedure	5
2.4 Summary Flow Diagram: Case Escalation to Inquiry	5
Section 3: The Pre-Examination Meeting (PEM)	6
3.1 Purpose and Legal Basis	6
3.2 Attendance and Participation	6
3.3 Procedures Available to the Reporter	6
3.4 Community Hearings: Raising the Proposal at PEM	7
3.5 Outputs from the PEM	7
Section 4: Community Hearings – Format, Preparation and Conduct	8
4.1 Purpose and Principles	8
4.2 Preparation Steps for a Community Hearing	8
4.3 Venue and Format Options	9
4.4 Conduct on the Day	10
Section 5: Role of the Applicant and Fairness Protocols	11
5.1 Applicant Involvement: General Expectations	11
5.2 Fairness Protocols and Procedural Balance	11
5.3 Guidance to Applicants	12
5.4 Handling Disputes or Procedural Concerns	12
Section 6: Post-Hearing Steps and Reporter’s Assessment of Community Evidence	13
6.1 Closure of the Community Hearing	13
6.2 No Automatic Right to Rebuttal or Cross-Submissions	13
6.3 Evaluation of Evidence	13
6.4 Use of Community Evidence in the Reporter’s Report	13
6.5 What Happens Next – Final Stages of the Inquiry	14
6.6 What Community Participants Can Do Post-Hearing	14
Section 7: Strategic Guidance for Community Groups – Organising, Coordinating and Presenting Effective Evidence	16
7.1 Understanding the Goal	16
7.2 Forming a Community Group or Coalition	16
7.3 Drafting Effective Hearing Statements	16
7.4 Evidence Types and Presentation Tips	17
7.5 Rehearsing and Delivering the Statement	17
7.6 Coordinating with Other Groups	18
Section 8: Templates and Tools – Draft Hearing Statement, Coordination Table, and Presentation Checklist	19

8.1 Template: Draft Hearing Statement	19
8.2 Tool: Community Coordination Table.....	20
8.3 Checklist: Community Hearing Preparation	20
8.4 Additional Resources and References	21
In summary	21
NOTES:	22

Community Hearings and Public Local Inquiries: A Step-by-Step Guide for Grassroots Campaigners

Section 1: Overview of Legal and Procedural Frameworks

This guidance outlines the statutory and procedural steps for participating in public local inquiries and community hearings in Scotland, specifically those convened under:

- **Sections 36 and 37 of the Electricity Act 1989**
- **Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997**
- **Scottish Government policy guidance** (including Circular 4/2009 and DPEA procedural rules)

It is structured to reflect how community groups and individuals can most effectively engage with the process.

Note on the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019:

While this guide focuses on public local inquiries related to Section 36/37 energy applications and national planning developments, it's worth noting that the 2019 Act introduced major changes to how **local development appeals and reviews** are handled in Scotland; often through Local Review Bodies or written submissions rather than full inquiries. This guide does **not** apply to those smaller or delegated cases.

Section 2: When and Why a Public Local Inquiry Is Held

2.1 Statutory Triggers for a Public Inquiry

The requirement for a public inquiry under the Electricity Act 1989 arises under the following conditions:

Condition	Description	Legal Source
Local Authority Objection	The planning authority formally objects to the Section 36/37 application within the statutory consultation period and does not withdraw the objection.	Electricity Act 1989, Section 36(4), Section 37(2)
Scottish Ministers' Discretion	Even in the absence of a planning authority objection, Ministers may decide to hold an inquiry if third-party objections are substantial and raise significant material considerations.	Electricity Act 1989, Ministerial powers; Planning Circular 4/2009

If these conditions are met, the Scottish Ministers “cause a public inquiry to be held” and pass the case to the **Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals (DPEA)**.

Note: Where the planning authority has not objected, Scottish Ministers are not automatically required to hold a public inquiry, even if third-party objections have been received. They may decide that the objections do not raise significant new issues, or that those concerns can be addressed through conditions on the consent. This discretion is exercised on a case-by-case basis in line with Planning Circular 4/2009.

2.2 Key Definitions

Term	Definition
DPEA	Directorate for Planning and Environmental Appeals: the executive agency responsible for conducting inquiries on behalf of Scottish Ministers.
Reporter	An independent decision-maker appointed by DPEA to examine the case and make a report with recommendations.
Objector	Any individual, group, or statutory body (e.g., local authority, SEPA, Historic Environment Scotland) that has made a valid representation.
Community Hearing	Community Hearing

2.3 Notification and Opt-In Procedure

After DPEA receives the case:

1. **Initial Notification** – All parties who submitted valid representations are contacted by DPEA with a formal letter/email inviting them to opt in to the inquiry proceedings.
2. **Opt-In Confirmation** – Community members must confirm their intent to participate within a deadline (typically 14–21 days).
3. **Pre-Examination Meeting (PEM)** – Those who opt in are invited to a preliminary meeting to discuss how the inquiry will be managed.

Action	Responsible Party	Deadline
Notification Issued	DPEA	On confirmation of inquiry
Opt-In Response	Objectors/community members	Within deadline set in notification
PEM Agenda Issued	Reporter	At least 7 days before PEM

2.4 Summary Flow Diagram: Case Escalation to Inquiry

Application submitted → Local authority consults →

⇒ **Objection by local authority** → Inquiry mandatory

⇒ **No objection, but substantial public objections** → Inquiry possible at Ministerial discretion

⇒ **Case passed to DPEA** → Participants notified → Opt-in phase → PEM held

Section 3: The Pre-Examination Meeting (PEM)

The **Pre-Examination Meeting (PEM)** is a procedural milestone in the public inquiry process, convened by the Reporter to determine how the case will proceed. It is not a forum for discussing the merits of the proposal. Rather, its sole purpose is to decide on the procedures to be adopted, including whether to hold **community hearings**, **structured hearing sessions**, or **formal inquiry sessions**.

3.1 Purpose and Legal Basis

Objective	Description	Legal/Policy Reference
Procedure Setting	To determine the format of oral proceedings and the management of evidence.	DPEA Inquiry Procedure Rules
Community Engagement	To explore the most appropriate and inclusive way to allow public voices to be heard.	In line with principles of Natural Justice and Planning Circular 4/2009

3.2 Attendance and Participation

Category	Description
Mandatory	The applicant, planning authority (if objecting), statutory consultees, and any party wishing to give evidence.
Voluntary but Strongly Encouraged	Community groups and individuals who opted in. Participation at this stage ensures their voice is included in shaping the format.
Chaired by	The appointed Reporter

All participants may be required to submit a **position statement** in advance, outlining:

- Issues they wish to raise
- Preferred method of presenting evidence (e.g. oral, written)
- Any procedural concerns (e.g. access, translation, digital inclusion)

3.3 Procedures Available to the Reporter

The Reporter may choose one or more of the following procedures:

Procedure Type	Description	Common Uses
No Further Procedure	Decision based solely on existing submissions.	Rare in Section 36/37 cases.
Further Written Submissions	Questions issued by Reporter, answered in writing.	Used to clarify technical details.
Hearing Session	Round-table discussion on defined topics.	Suitable where oral clarification needed.

Inquiry Session	Formal, adversarial setting with cross-examination.	Appropriate for contested expert evidence.
Community Hearing	Informal oral platform for public comment.	Used where there is widespread community interest.
Site Inspection	Reporter visits the proposed development location.	Always included in linear or rural projects.

Note: Community Hearings do not replace formal inquiry sessions but run in parallel as a complementary tool focused on accessibility.

3.4 Community Hearings: Raising the Proposal at PEM

At the PEM, community representatives may:

- Request a **dedicated community hearing**, citing:
 - Number of individual representations received
 - Public feeling in the area
 - Accessibility concerns (e.g. digital exclusion, legal complexity)
- **Propose:**
 - Format (in-person, hybrid, or virtual)
 - Location (e.g., local village hall)
 - Preferred timing (e.g., evenings)
- **Indicate willingness to:**
 - Submit advance hearing statements
 - Nominate spokespersons or coordinate input

The Reporter will take this into account when issuing their **Post-PEM Procedure Notice**, which formally confirms the agreed methods and structure of proceedings.

3.5 Outputs from the PEM

Output Document	Issued By	Description
PEM Agenda	Reporter	Circulated before meeting; lists draft procedure proposals
Post-PEM Note	Reporter	Summarises the meeting and key procedural agreements
Procedure Notice	Reporter	Legally binding confirmation of methods and timescales

This concludes the PEM stage: Once procedures are confirmed, participants begin preparing their written or oral submissions in the agreed format.

Section 4: Community Hearings – Format, Preparation and Conduct

Community Hearings are a recognised procedural tool used by the DPEA to facilitate public engagement in inquiries where there is substantial local interest.

They are specifically designed to create an environment that is more accessible and less formal than traditional hearings or inquiry sessions.

4.1 Purpose and Principles

Community hearings are governed by the principles of:

- **Accessibility** – enabling participation by those without legal or technical expertise.
- **Fairness** – ensuring that all parties are heard and that proceedings remain procedurally sound.
- **Transparency** – providing a structured opportunity for community voices to be officially recorded and considered.

They are not intended to replace formal evidentiary procedures but to complement them by gathering qualitative, localised evidence and perspectives.

Community Hearing Feature	Standard Hearing	Inquiry Session	Community Hearing
Formality	Moderate	High	Low
Cross-examination	Yes (limited)	Yes (full)	No
Public speaking required	Often	Often	Yes
Legal representation	Common	Expected	Rare/Discouraged
Evidence type	Technical/legal	Expert, legal	Personal, lived experience
Agenda set by	Reporter	Reporter	Reporter + Community

4.2 Preparation Steps for a Community Hearing

The organisation of a community hearing follows a structured process involving both the Reporter and the participating community members. Below is a detailed breakdown:

Step 1: Confirmation of Community Hearing (Post-PEM)

- The **Procedure Notice** from the Reporter confirms that a community hearing will take place.
- This notice sets out:
 - **Venue or platform** (in-person or virtual)
 - **Date and time**

- **Statement deadlines**
- Any special procedural notes

Step 2: Hearing Statement Submission

Each participant must submit a **hearing statement**, which:

- Summarises their original representation
- Must not introduce new issues
- Should adhere to any word/time limits imposed by the Reporter
- Is submitted by a fixed deadline (typically 14–21 days prior to the hearing)

Requirement	Details
Format	PDF or DOCX, plain language preferred
Length	Often limited to 1,000–1,500 words or 5–10 minutes speaking time
Attachments	Usually discouraged unless pre-approved
Deadline	Set in the Procedure Notice

Step 3: Circulation of Statements

- DPEA circulates all submitted statements to the applicant and other hearing participants.
- The applicant does **not** submit a counter-statement but may request clarification through the Reporter.

Step 4: Agenda and Running Order

- The Reporter either prepares a formal agenda or invites a coordinating community group to do so.
- The running order ensures all speakers have equal opportunity and avoids duplication.

4.3 Venue and Format Options

The format of the community hearing is tailored based on access needs and geography. During the PEM, community members should indicate preferences.

Format Type	Description	Suitable For
In-person	Held in a local venue (e.g., village hall, community centre)	Rural or digitally excluded communities

Virtual	Conducted via video platform (e.g., MS Teams, Zoom)	Broad geographic spread, convenience
Hybrid	In-person with option for remote attendance	Mixed participant needs
Multi-location	For linear infrastructure projects (e.g., pylons, cables), multiple local hearings may be held.	Widespread impact across regions

DPEA may allow **early evening hearings** to accommodate working participants.

4.4 Conduct on the Day

Stage	Activity
Opening	Reporter welcomes participants, explains ground rules, confirms agenda.
Speaking Order	Each participant or group delivers their hearing statement in turn.
Time Limits	May be enforced (e.g., 5–10 minutes per speaker). Reporter has discretion to adjust.
Questions	Reporter may ask clarifying questions. Applicant may be permitted to request clarifications via the Reporter.
Closing	The Reporter concludes the hearing and outlines next steps in the inquiry process.

Participants do not respond to each other or engage in debate. The tone is respectful, focused, and inclusive.

Section 5: Role of the Applicant and Fairness Protocols

Community hearings are designed primarily to facilitate the **effective and accessible participation of community members** in planning proceedings. However, because the hearing forms part of the formal inquiry process, the role of the **applicant** (i.e. the developer or promoter of the scheme) must also be addressed to ensure that the process remains **procedurally fair**, consistent with the principles of **natural justice** and **Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)**.

5.1 Applicant Involvement: General Expectations

In the context of a **community hearing**, the applicant is generally:

Role Element	Standard Expectation
Attendance	Encouraged to attend as observer
Speaking rights	Typically restricted or excluded
Questioning rights	May request permission to pose questions via the Reporter
Access to statements	Receives all submitted hearing statements in advance
Opportunity to clarify	May be granted a limited opportunity to respond to factual matters or misunderstandings, at Reporter's discretion

The overarching purpose is to **protect the integrity of the community space** while ensuring that the applicant has an opportunity to:

- Identify any significant misunderstandings in the community's evidence
- Assist the Reporter in ensuring a balanced evidential record

Note: Community hearings are not adversarial. They are designed to elicit meaningful community evidence, not to test or refute it through legal means.

5.2 Fairness Protocols and Procedural Balance

The Reporter must ensure that **procedural fairness** is maintained for all parties; community participants, the applicant, and statutory consultees. This is done through the following controls:

1. Equal Access to Evidence

- All parties, including the applicant, receive the same bundle of pre-submitted community hearing statements.
- Statements must not raise new grounds of objection. If they do, the Reporter may exclude them or allow the applicant an opportunity to respond in writing.

2. Controlled Right of Reply

- If the applicant raises concerns about significant misrepresentation or factual error during the hearing:
 - The Reporter may allow them to clarify those points orally or in writing.

- This is managed via the Reporter to avoid intimidating or undermining community members.

3. No Cross-Examination

- Cross-examination is expressly excluded from community hearings.
- The Reporter controls all lines of questioning.

4. Avoidance of Legal Argument

- The applicant's legal representatives (if any) are expected to **refrain from active participation** in the community hearing session.
- Legal arguments and detailed technical rebuttals are reserved for **formal inquiry sessions** or written submissions.

5.3 Guidance to Applicants

Applicants are expected to observe the following principles when attending community hearings:

Guiding Principle	Practical Guidance
Respect	Acknowledge that community members may be emotionally invested and not professionally trained in planning law.
Restraint	Avoid raising technical rebuttals or legal procedural points during the session.
Transparency	If clarification is necessary, request to speak through the Reporter and keep comments factual.
Non-engagement	Do not directly address or challenge speakers.

This ensures the session retains its intended community-centred nature while remaining fair in the broader inquiry context.

5.4 Handling Disputes or Procedural Concerns

If any party ***"applicant or objector"*** believes that the conduct of the hearing has led to **material procedural unfairness**, they may raise this with the Reporter either:

- **At the time**, during the hearing (if appropriate), or
- **Afterwards**, via a formal written procedural note

The Reporter has discretion to:

- Allow further written clarification from any party
- Call an additional hearing or session if necessary

Such steps are rare and only taken when fairness is clearly jeopardised.

Section 6: Post-Hearing Steps and Reporter’s Assessment of Community Evidence

After a community hearing has concluded, the process shifts from participation to analysis and reporting. This section outlines what happens after the hearing session ends, how community evidence is evaluated, and how it influences the Reporter’s recommendation to Scottish Ministers or other determining authorities.

6.1 Closure of the Community Hearing

Once the hearing concludes:

- The **Reporter formally closes the session**, confirming that no further oral statements will be accepted.
- Participants are **not required to submit follow-up material** unless specifically requested by the Reporter.
- A written **summary note** may be prepared by the Reporter outlining the structure of the hearing, participants involved, and any procedural issues observed.

6.2 No Automatic Right to Rebuttal or Cross-Submissions

The community hearing is **not part of an iterative process**; unlike formal inquiry sessions, there is no expectation of rebuttals or closing submissions. The evidence presented is treated as **complete at the point of delivery**.

However, the Reporter retains discretion to:

- Request written clarification on specific points (from community members or the applicant)
- Raise follow-up questions if clarity is needed to inform the final recommendation

6.3 Evaluation of Evidence

The Reporter is responsible for weighing all material evidence and deciding what weight to assign to each submission, in line with established administrative law principles and Scottish planning policy.

Evidence Type	Considered By Reporter	Common Evaluation Criteria
Community Statements	Yes	Relevance to material planning considerations, clarity, credibility
Hearing Statements	Yes	Whether points are new or reiterative, coherence with oral testimony
Applicant Comments	If allowed	Factual accuracy, fairness, procedural balance
Expert Submissions	From formal inquiry sessions	Technical robustness, cross-referenced documents

Material Considerations include environmental effects, socio-economic impact, compliance with national and local planning policy; not subjective opinions unless backed by relevant context or expertise.

6.4 Use of Community Evidence in the Reporter’s Report

The Reporter prepares a **Report of Inquiry (RoI)** or **Recommendation Report**, which includes:

- A summary of community evidence from the hearing
- Any procedural commentary related to the conduct of the hearing
- The Reporter’s analysis of the significance and planning weight of that evidence
- A balanced recommendation to Scottish Ministers or the determining authority

Where community evidence has introduced:

- Site-specific local knowledge
- Public health concerns
- Visual or landscape assessments
- Cultural, heritage, or recreational use evidence

...these are explicitly referenced and, where appropriate, supported by inspection notes or cross-checked with technical documents.

6.5 What Happens Next – Final Stages of the Inquiry

Stage	Description
Site Inspection	Usually follows the hearing; Reporter visits the proposed development area(s) to visually assess issues raised.
Report Completion	Reporter compiles all evidence and prepares a comprehensive report with recommendations.
Ministerial Decision	For Section 36/37 cases, the final decision rests with Scottish Ministers . For others, the relevant local authority or Scottish Government Directorate decides.
Publication	The decision letter and report are published on the DPEA website. All opted-in participants are notified.

6.6 What Community Participants Can Do Post-Hearing

Action	Purpose	How to Do It
Follow DPEA Case Page	Stay updated on timelines and outcomes	DPEA's public website (search by case ref)
Await Outcome	No further input required unless invited	Check for decision notices
Submit Procedural Feedback	Provide feedback to DPEA about the process, not case content	Via DPEA contact email or stakeholder surveys
Judicial Review (exceptional)	Challenge decision-making process (not the merits of the decision)	Must be based on procedural illegality; legal advice required

Important: There is **no right of appeal** for objectors once a decision is made by Scottish Ministers or the determining authority. If you believe the process was procedurally unfair or unlawful, you may seek a **judicial review** in the Court of Session; but this must be based on legal or procedural grounds (not disagreement with the outcome) and brought within three months of the decision. Legal advice is strongly recommended before pursuing this route.

Section 7: Strategic Guidance for Community Groups – Organising, Coordinating and Presenting Effective Evidence

This section provides **technical and tactical guidance** to help grassroots community groups prepare thoroughly and participate effectively in community hearings and related inquiry processes. Although community hearings are designed to be accessible and informal, strategic preparation significantly enhances credibility, clarity, and influence on the Reporter’s final recommendation.

7.1 Understanding the Goal

The primary purpose of community participation is to present **relevant, well-organised, and material evidence** to the Reporter. Unlike campaigning or public protests, a community hearing is a **quasi-judicial process**, and the **Reporter must base their findings on:**

- **Material planning considerations** (e.g., environmental impact, policy compliance)
- **Substantive evidence** (e.g., lived experience, site-specific data)
- **Clarity and structure of presentation**

Key Principle: Evidence is more persuasive than emotion. Structure and relevance are essential.

7.2 Forming a Community Group or Coalition

When a community has multiple participants, it's strategic to:

Task	Action
Form a Core Group	Identify 3–6 people who can coordinate preparation and logistics.
Assign Roles	E.g., lead speaker, research coordinator, writer, technical liaison.
Nominate Spokespersons	Choose individuals comfortable with public speaking.
Share the Workload	Divide topics by expertise (e.g., ecology, tourism, visual impact).

This avoids duplication, improves quality, and shows the Reporter a **coordinated and credible front**.

7.3 Drafting Effective Hearing Statements

Each hearing statement should be **concise, structured, and evidence-led**.

Suggested Format:

Section	Content
1. Introduction	Who you are, your connection to the area, and your interest in the proposal.

2. Summary of Representation	Recap your original objection or concern (as previously submitted).
3. Key Issue(s)	Focus on 1–2 major points (e.g., health risks, landscape impact, community disruption).
4. Evidence	Include factual observations, dates, local incidents, photographs, maps (if allowed).
5. Conclusion	What outcome you seek and why the Reporter should consider your input.

Avoid: new objections not raised in your original submission, hearsay, or unsupported accusations.

7.4 Evidence Types and Presentation Tips

Evidence Type	Usefulness	Presentation Guidance
Photographs	High – especially for landscape, traffic, flood zones	Label clearly with location/date
Diagrams/Maps	High – supports spatial claims	Ensure legibility and scale
Testimonies	Moderate – when based on lived experience	Provide context, avoid speculation
Data (e.g., surveys)	High – especially when showing local impact	Explain methodology and source
Expert Opinion (local professionals)	High – particularly health/environment	Clearly state credentials and independence

If submitting such materials, you may need to do so in advance and obtain the Reporter’s permission (especially for attachments).

7.5 Rehearsing and Delivering the Statement

Preparation Task	Best Practice
Time your statement	Practice aloud and stay within time limits (usually 5–10 minutes)
Use plain language	Avoid jargon; speak as you would to an interested neighbour
Speak slowly and clearly	Especially important in virtual hearings
Bring notes	But don’t read robotically—engage with the Reporter
Anticipate questions	Be ready to clarify points, not defend them

7.6 Coordinating with Other Groups

If multiple community organisations are involved:

- **Communicate in advance** to avoid duplication
- **Submit joint statements** where appropriate
- **Divide presentation topics** so each group covers a different aspect
- **Nominate one group to propose an agenda** if invited by the Reporter

This improves coherence, maximises impact, and demonstrates a **high level of community organisation**, which the Reporter will recognise.

Section 8: Templates and Tools – Draft Hearing Statement, Coordination Table, and Presentation Checklist

This section provides practical tools that community groups can use to prepare for a community hearing or public inquiry session. These templates are designed to save time, promote consistency, and ensure that all submissions are structured and effective.

8.1 Template: Draft Hearing Statement

Template: Community Hearing Statement

[Your Name]

[Your Address / Community Name]

[Case Reference Number]

[Date]

1. Introduction

My name is [Your Name], and I am a resident of [Location]. I have lived here for [X years] and am actively involved in [community group / activity]. I am submitting this statement in relation to the application by [Developer Name] under [Section 36/37 of the Electricity Act 1989 / Planning Act].

2. Summary of My Representation

In my initial representation submitted on [Date], I raised concerns about [briefly list the concerns]. I continue to hold these concerns and wish to expand on the following point(s):

3. Key Issues and Local Impacts

I will focus on [one or two issues only].

For example:

- The proposed substation would have a significant visual impact on [local landmark].
- My home lies within [X metres] of the proposed cable trench route, which crosses an area known to contain deep peat.

4. Supporting Evidence

- Attached: Two photographs showing the existing condition of [location] taken on [date].
- Reference to Scottish Natural Heritage Peat Map (2020), showing carbon-rich soils in the vicinity.
- Local traffic survey conducted by [community group], indicating baseline road use.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, I respectfully request that the Reporter take full account of the local impact described above, and that Scottish Ministers do not approve the proposal in its current form.

[Signed, Name]

Note: Always check if attachments (e.g., photos, maps) are allowed with hearing statements in your specific case. If not, describe the evidence clearly in the statement text.

8.2 Tool: Community Coordination Table

Use this table to plan your group's participation and avoid repetition:

Participant (example names)	Topic Focus	Role	Statement Deadline	Spoken Contribution?
Jane Fraser	Visual impact on heritage sites	Speaker	10 December	Yes
Peter Singh	Health risks from substation proximity	Statement only	10 December	No
Glenview Residents Assoc.	Shared traffic survey results	Group statement	10 December	Yes – speaker: Mark T.
Sheila McLean	Emotional and psychological impact	Speaker	10 December	Yes

This helps ensure:

- Everyone submits by the deadline
- Topics are covered once only
- Speakers are designated in advance

8.3 Checklist: Community Hearing Preparation

Use this checklist 2–3 weeks before the hearing date.

Task	Status (✓ / ✗ / /)
Have you received the Reporter's Procedure Notice confirming the hearing?	
Have all participants submitted their hearing statements?	
Have all statements adhered to the word/time limit?	
Are speakers confirmed and briefed?	
Have you reviewed other community statements to avoid duplication?	
Do speakers understand the order and speaking time?	
Do you have the meeting link or venue address?	
Have you practiced your delivery (if speaking)?	
Are any exhibits (photos/maps) printed or submitted if allowed?	
Are all statements saved in accessible formats (PDF)?	

8.4 Additional Resources and References

Resource	Link / Source
DPEA Case Portal	https://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk
Planning Circular 4/2009	Scottish Government Planning Circulars
Peatland Maps (SNH)	https://soils.environment.gov.scot
ECHR Article 6 (Right to a Fair Hearing)	https://www.echr.coe.int
National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4)	https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/

Next Steps and Companion Materials

You may wish to compile these templates into a **campaign toolkit**, including:

- Print-ready PDFs
- Shared editable documents for your group (Google Docs or Word templates)
- Standard email/letter formats for contact with DPEA

In summary

Engaging with Scotland's planning and inquiry system can feel complex and unfamiliar, especially when the issues at stake are deeply personal and tied to your community. This guide is intended to equip you with the knowledge, structure, and confidence needed to ensure that your voice is heard clearly and constructively.

By preparing effectively, presenting credible and focused evidence, and working collaboratively, communities can play a vital role in shaping decisions that affect their landscapes, environment, and future.

Your contribution matters; not just to the outcome of a single case, but to the integrity and inclusivity of the planning system as a whole.

END

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