



A Guide to Speaking at a Multi-Locational Planning Committee Meeting





A GUIDE TO SPEAKING AT A MULTI-LOCATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

INTRODUCTION

As of May 2022, and in accordance with the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Planning Committee meetings are now multi-locational, which means that participants and observers may attend the meeting either in person or online.

This leaflet explains how you can participate in a Planning Committee meeting and answers some of the questions you may have about procedures and what to expect at the meeting. It is based on simple rules that make the system as fair and easy to operate as possible, so please read the entire leaflet.

1. How does the Planning Committee work?

The Planning Committee does not determine all applications. The majority of applications are determined by the Council's Officers under the Council's scheme of delegation and are not subject to the procedures described in this leaflet. However, if a Member has any concerns about an application then they can request that it be placed before the Planning Committee for them to determine. It is only the applications that are to be decided by the Committee that you are able to speak on.

Please telephone the Case Officer dealing with the application to see whether the application in which you are interested is to be considered by the Planning Committee and the date of the meeting. The name of the Case Officer and their contact details will be found on correspondence dealing with the application.

The Planning Committee is made up of a Chair, Vice Chair and 14 other Councillors. Members of the Committee receive written reports on planning applications to be considered. The report will contain recommendations, in most cases either to grant permission subject to conditions or to refuse for reasons that are set out in the report. However, it is the Members of the Planning Committee who will make the final decision, after considering the officer report and taking into account all material planning considerations.



2. Where are the meetings held and who can attend?

The meetings are held in the Council Chamber at Penallta House, Tredomen and online. As the meetings are open to the public, the press and the general public may attend and listen to the debate, except where the discussions involve confidential or exempt items. The Chamber is fully accessible to wheelchair users and is fitted with an induction loop facility for people with impaired hearing.

Planning Committee meetings are also live-streamed, so any member of the public or press wishing to view the proceedings online may do so via the following link: <https://civico.net/caerphilly>

At each meeting the Chair will remind all attendees that the meeting will be live-streamed and a recording made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items.

It is therefore important to note that if you attend the meeting to view proceedings or if you are participating in the meeting as a speaker your image/audio will be publicly available to all during the live webcast and via the recording archived on the Council website.

3. Do I need to attend the meeting to make any comments known to the Committee?

NO – your written comments will have been summarised in the Officer's report (subject to submission to the Planning Department within the consultation period) or will be verbally outlined for consideration by the Committee.

4. How can I find out when an application will be considered?

The Planning Committee meets every month at 5.00pm in the Council Chamber. The Committee agenda is normally published by the Wednesday in the week before the Committee meeting, and can be obtained via our website [Browse meetings - Planning Committee \(caerphilly.gov.uk\)](http://caerphilly.gov.uk) or by telephoning Committee Services on 01443 864245.



The dates and times of the latest meetings and a list of Members on the Committee can be viewed on the Council's website through the following link: [Browse meetings - Planning Committee \(caerphilly.gov.uk\)](http://caerphilly.gov.uk)

You are welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, a simultaneous translation can be provided on request, a minimum notice period of 3 working days is required should you wish to do so.

5. How do I arrange to speak at a multi-locational meeting?

Applicants and objectors who wish to speak must notify Committee Services (Tel: 01443 864245 or e-mail committeeservices@caerphilly.gov.uk) by 5.00pm on the Monday before the Committee meeting where the application is to be decided.

This allows the other party an opportunity to speak and lets the Chair know how many members of the public wish to speak. You will need to tell us the address and reference number of the application you wish to speak on, together with your contact details.

If you wish to join the meeting remotely, please provide your email address so that you can be sent a link to join the meeting online. If you are joining remotely, we will also ask that you send us a written version of your statement in advance of the meeting, which will ensure that should you experience connection issues, your comments or concerns can still be presented to the Committee by the Chair.

If you wish to address the meeting in Welsh or another language, or if you require the services of a British Sign Language interpreter, please let Committee Services know beforehand so that arrangements can be made to meet your requirements. Every effort will be made, but please inform us as soon as possible or there may not be sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.

If for any reason an applicant or objector is unable to attend the meeting at which the application is to be considered, they may appoint a representative to speak on their behalf or submit their representations in writing.

Only one representative of the objector(s) and one for the applicant will be allowed to speak. If there are several objectors or supporters who wish to speak on an application a spokesperson should be nominated.



To assist you in deciding who should speak, we will ask you if we can pass your name and telephone number to other objectors (or supporters), so that you can agree amongst yourselves who will be the spokesperson. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair may allow more than one person to speak.

Even if you have given notice that you wish to speak at the meeting you can change your mind and decide not to, but we would ask that if you do change your mind, that you confirm this with us as soon as possible as this will help us to avoid any unnecessary delays.

6. What happens at the meeting?

On arrival

If you are attending the meeting in person and have requested to speak, on the day of the Committee meeting, please arrive at Reception in Penallta House, Tredomen by 4.30pm. You should make yourself known to the Committee Services Officer, who will guide you to a seat in the Chamber. Please note that all other attendees (non-speaking) will be asked to take a seat in the public gallery at the back of the Council Chamber. Please be aware that it may be difficult to accommodate late arrivals, and any person not present when an application is considered will lose the opportunity to address the Committee.

If you are attending the meeting remotely and have requested to speak, you will be sent an invitation email by Committee Services that contains a link for the remote meeting, which you will only be able to use on the day of the meeting. The email will contain all the instructions that you will need to join the meeting via our online platform and the Committee Clerk will provide all the support you need to participate remotely.

Approximately 15 minutes before the meeting start time the link will be active, and you can join the meeting.

While the meeting is in progress, you will need to 'mute' your device and turn your camera off until the Chair calls on you to speak, you will be able to see and/or listen to the debate and if you access the meeting via laptop/pc or smart device you will also be able to see the Officer's presentation.



Meeting proceedings

The Chair will introduce each planning application and invite the Planning Case Officer to present the details of the application. Following this, the Chair will then invite each speaker to address the Committee.

Members of the public speak in the following order:

- Objector (or their representative)
- Applicant (or their agent)

Both speakers must address the same meeting of the Committee. All persons wishing to speak on an application are limited to five minutes each. The Chair will strictly apply this maximum address time.

Speakers will not be allowed to ask questions of the Councillors or Officers. If you are joining remotely, this rule also applies to the meeting “Chat” function, and public speakers should not make any comments about an application via the Chat facility.

Committee Members are not able to question speakers directly but can seek points of clarification through the Chair with responses delivered by Officers.

Members of the Planning Committee will then debate the matter and arrive at a decision. If following its consideration an application is deferred to a future meeting of the Planning Committee for a decision, then there will be no further opportunity to address the Committee.

Having listened to the debate on your particular application you may wish to leave the Chamber, if you decide to leave, please do so as quietly as possible. If you wish to stay, please remain quiet for the duration of the meeting.

If you are participating remotely and having listened to the debate and decision on your application, the meeting organiser will close the link and you will be disconnected from the meeting. Please note that you will not be able to return to the meeting via this link, but if you wish to view the remainder of the proceedings you may do so via the live stream link: [Caerphilly Council - Civico](#)

Please note that the Chair has the discretion to remove persons from the meeting, if that is necessary.



A decision notice from the meeting will be published on the Council's website within 7 working days, which will detail those in attendance, any apologies, any declarations of interest, the decision and vote taken. Minutes of the meeting will also be taken and these will be published in the agenda pack for the next Planning Committee meeting.

Please note that the laws of slander are very strict. If you say something defamatory in public or should you enter something in the meeting 'chat' about a person that is untrue, you may be at risk of legal action. Similarly, you should ensure your comments are not discriminatory. You should be aware that a note of your oral comments may be taken and will be publicly available under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

7. What happens if a site visit is called for?

Councillors are able to request a site visit prior to the application being considered in accordance with Caerphilly Council's Constitution.

All site visits will take place on the Monday before Planning Committee for applications being reported to that meeting.

The purpose of the site visit is to look at the application site enabling Members present to question/clarify points of the planning application with Officers. Representation(s) from third parties will not be heard.

If a site visit has been arranged, objectors and applicants should check with Committee Services by telephoning 01443 864245 or email committeeservices@caerphilly.gov.uk

8. Can I use presentations such as PowerPoint, video presentations or circulate supporting documents?

NO – speakers whether joining remotely or in person are not permitted to make any visual presentations, display slides or video presentations at the meeting.

If an applicant or objector wishes the Committee to consider any supporting evidence, correspondence or other documentation that has become available after publication of the Officer's report, and is not contained in that report, copies must be provided to the Planning Services Manager and Committee



Services at least 48 hours before the Committee meeting at which the application is to be considered. Please note that this information will also be shared with the appropriate Officers.

9. What should I say at the meeting?

It is best to prepare what you want to say in advance and time yourself to make sure you can fit it into 5 minutes. You are likely to have the greatest impact if you:

- Are brief and to the point,
- Limit your view to the planning application,
- Focus on the relevant planning issues.

10. What are the relevant issues in considering proposals?

The relevant issues will vary with the nature of the proposal, but examples will include the following:

- The Development Plan,
- Welsh Government guidance,
- Sustainability issues,
- Previous planning decisions,
- Noise, disturbance, smells,
- Residential amenity,
- Traffic generation, highway safety and parking,
- Design, appearance, materials, density and layout,
- Impact on trees, ecology, listed buildings and conservation areas,
- Public open space.

11. What issues are usually irrelevant in considering proposals?

These will vary from case to case but the following are usually irrelevant:

- Those controlled by other legislation (e.g. Building Regulations),
- Boundary or private land ownership disputes,
- The developer's morals or motives,
- Suspected further development,



- Loss of view over other people's land,
- Effects on property value,
- Covenants,
- Private rights of way,
- The potential behaviour of future occupiers.

Although such comments may be of importance to you, they are not necessarily planning issues and will carry little weight when the Committee make a decision on the application.

12. The role of the County Borough Councillors

Councillors are elected to represent you on the County Borough Council. You may wish to contact your Councillor to discuss the planning application. However, if they are a member of the Planning Committee, they will not be able to commit themselves to a decision before hearing all the evidence and debate at the relevant Committee meeting. If you wish a Councillor to represent your views at the Planning Committee then it is advisable to contact a Councillor who is not on the Committee.

Councillors who wish to address the Planning Committee must notify Committee Services by 5.00pm on the Tuesday before the Committee meeting where the application is to be decided, so please speak to your local ward Members as soon as possible if you wish them to represent your views at the meeting. They are also limited to a five minute address period and will speak after the objector and/or applicant.

13. Who do I ask if I have any other queries?

If you have any questions not answered by this leaflet, or any other comments please contact Committee Services on **01443 864245** or email committeeservices@caerphilly.gov.uk.

This guide is available in Welsh, other languages or formats on request.

Mae'r canllaw hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg ac mewn ieithoedd neu fformatau eraill ar gais.