



## **PUBLIC SPEAKING AT A PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council recognises that its residents can make an important contribution to its decision making and be a valuable source of information.

This Guide provides information on what members of the public can expect when attending a Planning and Development Committee meeting.





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## **1. What is Planning and Development?**

The Council's Planning and Development Committee meets regularly to determine applications for planning permission, and consider matters relating to the preservation of trees and hedgerows and planning enforcement.

Not all planning applications are considered by the Planning and Development Committees. Minor applications are usually determined at officer level under delegated powers. The National Assembly for Wales encourages Councils to determine at least 70% of all applications under delegated powers, particularly where they comply with local plans previously agreed by the Council.

The Planning and Development Committee considers all planning applications which require determination by Elected Members of the Council, in its role as the Local Planning Authority (See pages 66-68 of Council Constitution, [Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions](#), which details the instances where applications require determination by the Planning and Development Committee).

The Planning and Development Committee may vote in line with, or against Officer recommendation. Where Members of the Planning and Development Committee are minded to take a decision against Officer Recommendation, Members should defer consideration of that matter to the next meeting of the Committee in order to receive a further report from the Director of Prosperity and Development, if necessary, in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, upon the strengths and weaknesses of any proposed or possible planning reasons for such a decision.

Alternatively, the Committee may defer determination of an application to a subsequent meeting of the Committee for a given reason, or may defer determination for a site inspection to be undertaken.

Whilst Planning and Development Committee meetings are held in public, they are **not** public meetings.

## **2. Where and when does the Committee meet?**

The Planning and Development Committee meets twice per month. Meetings are convened on Thursdays at 3pm and undertaken on a hybrid basis. Participants can join meetings in person by attendance to the Council chamber, or virtually via Zoom. Meetings are live-streamed and the recording subsequently available to view following the meeting, details of which can be accessed [here](#). Meetings may be conducted via Zoom only, at the Chair's discretion.



A schedule of Planning and Development Committee meetings for the current municipal year is available via the Council's website [here](#).

### **3. How do I get my "voice" heard?**

The most simple and appropriate way for members of the public and other interested parties to comment on a planning application is by expressing any views they may have in writing. Comments must be submitted within a specified time period, typically 21 days from the date of the consultation letter. This will ensure that any comments received can be fully considered before a decision on the application is made. Further guidance on such can be found [here](#).

Should an application require determination by the Council's Planning and Development Committee, you can address the Committee on the relevant application as it is presented during the meeting. You can address the Committee in person by attendance to the Council Chamber, or virtually via Zoom. You will be provided with clear instructions on how to join the meeting in either capacity following submission of your request to speak (See section 13 'How do I register to speak?').

Alternatively, should you be unable to attend the relevant Planning and Development Committee meeting to address the Committee on an application, a written representation can be submitted (See section 15 'Written Representations').

### **4. Who can speak?**

Applicants, professional advisors or agents, and members of the public are entitled to speak at a scheduled meeting of the Planning and Development Committee, providing they have registered their intention to address the Committee by the specified deadline.

In order to keep the meeting to a reasonable length, if a number of people wish to speak either for or against a particular planning application on similar grounds, they should seek to combine their representations and nominate one spokesperson to speak on their behalf. This will avoid unnecessary repetition at the Committee meeting.

Should a person aged under 16 years of age wish to address a Planning and Development Committee meeting, arrangements will be made for them to be accompanied by an adult.

Consideration of an item will not be delayed because a public speaker is not present, providing they have been appropriately informed of the date of the meeting and of their right to speak at that meeting.



## **5. How long do I have to speak?**

Public speakers are afforded a maximum of 5 minutes to address the Committee on an application. It should be noted that a further 5 minutes is offered for response by the applicant or their professional advisor to new material or detail introduced by the objector(s) or by their professional advisor(s) (See section 9 'When will I speak at the meeting?' for details of the order of public speaking).

The Chair has the discretion to stop the speaker before their allotted time has concluded, if, in the Chair's view, the speaker is making any comments that are, or appear to be, defamatory, offensive, or unrelated to the agenda item under discussion.

## **6. What can I speak on at the meeting?**

Public Speakers must address the application to which they have registered to speak and will not be permitted to address other agenda items or unrelated business.

We ask you ensure that:

- Refer only to material planning considerations
- Your comments are clear and concise and are directly related to the report on which you have requested to speak;
- You avoid repeating points made previously by other public speakers;
- Your views are limited to the report, and you highlight how the report could affect the delivery of services to specific user groups of citizens in Rhondda Cynon Taf; and
- Your comments are not defamatory, discriminating or contain offensive language.

Public speakers may be asked to clarify any of the comments they make and asked questions by Members. It is important that public speakers do not enter into debate with the Committee Members.

## **7. Preparing your comments for Committee**

The right of the public to speak applies to all items on the agenda with the exception of the following:

- Declaration of Interest; Human Rights Act 1998 And Development Control Decisions; Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; Minutes and Information Report.
- An agenda item which has been withdrawn.
- Any agenda item that is not accompanied by a written report.



- An agenda item where the Chair has exercised his or her discretion to withdraw the right of public speaking; and
- When confidential or exempt items are under consideration, the Chair will ask all members of the press and public to vacate the physical and/or virtual meeting.

The right to speak does not include the right to ask any questions of any Elected Member, Officer of the Council, invited attendees or any other speaker.

## **8. Attendance at the Meeting**

Public speakers are asked to present themselves in person, or online, at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of the meeting and should make themselves known to the Democratic Services Officer.

For attendance at the Council chamber, the Democratic Services Officer will meet you and seat you accordingly. When it is time to speak you will be asked by the Chair to make your address.

For attendance online, the Democratic Services Officer will contact you via email to provide you with the necessary meeting log in details. The meeting ID and password must not be shared with anyone else. Only one person will be able to participate with these details and sharing these details may result in you being unable to join the meeting.

Please note that should you choose either option, you are consenting to being included in the recording of the meeting for publication on the Council website. The meeting recording will capture your sound and image of you and other participants in the meeting (See link to [Council's Corporate Privacy Notice](#)).

## **9. When will I speak during the meeting?**

The order of the agenda may be amended to best facilitate the business of the Committee. Typically, applications with public speakers will be prioritised and the meeting agenda re-ordered accordingly. Public speakers will be introduced by the Chair at the relevant time and encouraged to make their address.

The order for public speaking typically takes the following format:

1. The applicant(s)
2. The applicant's professional adviser(s)
3. Supporters for the Applicant(s)
4. Professional advisers of the objector(s)



5. Objector(s)
6. Response by the applicant(s) or their professional advisors to new material or detail introduced by the objector(s) or by their professional advisor(s)
7. County Borough Councillors or Local Members
8. Presentation of the Council Officer's report

Members will then consider and debate the application and will determine the decision to be made on it.

Should the Committee resolve to defer the determination of an application for a site inspection to be undertaken, there will be no further discussion on the application at the meeting, and public speakers will **not** be invited to make their address.

Should the Committee vote against recommendation of the Planning Officer, the application will not be decided at this stage. The application will be reported back to a subsequent meeting of the Committee with a further report of the implications of resolving against the recommendation of the Planning Officer. Public Speakers will not be permitted to speak when the application is reported back to the subsequent Committee meeting.

#### **10. Supporting documents or visual aids**

Use of visual aids and other supporting evidence by Public Speakers will not be permitted, unless under exceptional circumstances (to be determined by the Legal Services Officer in consultation with the Chair of the Planning and Development Committee).

Applications to submit visual aids or other supporting evidence to Planning and Development Committee will need to be made to the Planning Department in advance of committee meetings in order for their appropriateness to be assessed.

#### **11. Following my address to the Committee**

After you have finished speaking, please be aware that you may be asked questions by the Chair of the Committee and/or Members of the Committee.

The Committee will then consider the comments made and thereafter determine whether to make any recommendations arising from those comments or issues raised to the Cabinet or Senior Officer with delegated responsibility as deemed appropriate.

Public speakers are permitted to observe the proceedings of the relevant application and may leave the meeting once the application is decided.





## **12. How do I register to speak?**

Agendas for Planning and Development Committee meetings are published onto the Council's website, 5 clear days before the meeting date.

Non-committee members and members of the public may request the facility to address the committee at their meeting on the business listed. [To register interest to address the committee a form is available here. \(LINK: https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Committees/PublicSpeakingatPlanningDevelopmentCommitteeMeetings.aspx\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/CouncillorsCommitteesandMeetings/Committees/PublicSpeakingatPlanningDevelopmentCommitteeMeetings.aspx) It is kindly asked that such notification is made ~~to [planningservices@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:planningservices@rctcbc.gov.uk)~~ by 5pm, on the penultimate working day preceding the relevant Planning and Development Committee meeting.

## **13. How do I register to speak in Welsh?**

We welcome any correspondence in Welsh and in accordance with the guidance (as shown in section 13 above), should you wish to address Members of the Committee in Welsh the same process applies, including stipulating whether the address is to be conducted in Welsh or English. Simultaneous translation facilities are available at the meeting should you wish to make your address through the medium of Welsh.

## **14. How do I register to speak if I have a disability or additional needs?**

If you have a disability or any additional needs and require assistance to participate in our Scrutiny process please contact us on the email address below by no later than 5.00 p.m. on the penultimate working day preceding the relevant Scrutiny Committee meeting. A member of our team will be pleased to contact you to discuss your specific needs and facilitate your request to speak.

## **15. Written representations**

Should you be unable to attend the Planning and Development Committee to verbalise your address, you may submit a written representation. Written submissions should be received no later than 10am on the day of the relevant Committee meeting, for circulation to the Planning and Development Committee Members in advance of the meeting.

Please submit written representations to:

Email: [planningservices@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:planningservices@rctcbc.gov.uk)

Or to the following postal address:





Planning Services, RCT CBC, Sardis House, Sardis Road, Pontypridd CF37 1DU.

## **16. Site Visits**

Should the Planning and Development Committee resolve to defer the determination of an application for a site inspection to be undertaken, there will be no further discussion on the application at the meeting, and public speakers will not be invited to make their address.

Committee Members will be subsequently invited to a formal visit to the application site, details of which are published onto the Council's website [here](#). It is important to note that no decisions are made at site visit meetings. Whilst members of the public may attend the site visit, you will not be able to make representations to Committee Members.

The application will be reported back to a subsequent meeting of the Planning and Development Committee, with a site visit report. If you still wish to address the Committee, you must again register to speak, regardless of whether you registered to speak at a previous meeting.

## **17. Additional Information**

Filming and recording of meetings is not permitted by members of the public and we also politely request that the joining details for the meetings are not shared.

Speakers should advise Democratic Services in advance if they have any additional needs or requirements.

If you have any questions concerning public speaking at a meeting then please do not hesitate to contact [ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:ExecutiveandRegulatoryBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk).

**Please note that, should you address the Planning and Development Committee, you are consenting to your inclusion within the livestream and recording of the meeting, for publication on the Council website. The meeting recording will capture images and sound of you and all other participants within the meeting.**