



## ***Having your say at Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Planning Committee***

### **PROCEDURE NOTE FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC/ APPLICANTS RIGHT TO SPEAK AT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Planning Committee decide the larger, complex or more controversial planning applications in the County Borough.

The Committee meetings usually take place on Tuesday at 2pm in Committee Rooms 1/2, in the Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ (although this is subject to change), and are open to the public.

**The public have a right to attend the meeting and address the Committee in accordance with the Council's approved protocol.**

#### **Who can speak at Committee?**

A person wishing to speak at a Planning Committee, should be:

- An objector or spokesperson<sup>1</sup> on behalf of a group of objectors who has a genuine interest in expressing a view on the planning merits of a proposal<sup>2</sup>
- A supporter of an application<sup>1</sup>, or spokesperson on behalf of a group of supporters<sup>2</sup>
- An applicant (or the applicant's nominated agent) for the planning application
- A representative of a Town or Community Council<sup>2</sup>

Please note that: -

- Speaking is limited to one person for each of the above categories<sup>3</sup>.
- In the event of more than one person wishing to speak either for or against an application a spokesperson should be nominated. If agreement cannot be reached on nominating a spokesperson then the right to speak shall fall to the first person(s) to register a request to speak for and/or against the proposal.
- In addition, Elected Members who do not sit on the Planning Committee may attend the meeting and exercise their right to speak in accordance with current procedures as specified within the Constitution

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<sup>1</sup> Including any person appointed to act on behalf of a person or group

<sup>2</sup> With the exception of the applicant/agent, any person wishing to speak can only do so if they (or the person they are representing) have submitted written observations to the Planning Authority on the application in question within the accepted Council deadlines.

<sup>3</sup> The Chair of the Committee, however, has the discretion to permit a second speaker to address the Committee on a case by case basis.

## **Registering your request to speak?**

If you would like to speak at Planning Committee on a specific planning application you must contact Democratic Services in writing or via email and:

- request to speak by no later than two working days prior to the meeting date (by 2pm), clearly indicating the item number or application number on which you wish to speak and confirming whether you are supporting or objecting to the application.
- give your name and address which will be publicly available unless there are particular reasons for confidentiality

The Chair of Planning has the discretion on a case by case basis to agree to late requests to speak.

Should an objector register to speak the Applicant/Agent will be notified by the Council of their ability to address committee. Should the applicant/agent wish to exercise that right, it will be necessary to confirm this to the Democratic Services section before 12pm on the day before the meeting.

Contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet.

## **What can I say to the Committee?**

Under planning law, we can only take into account comments on planning issues. For example, these include loss of light or privacy, highway safety, traffic and parking issues, noise, amenity, pollution, conservation, wildlife and the design and appearance of the development (This is not an exhaustive list).

Issues which cannot be taken into account include loss of view, effect on property values, private rights, covenants and boundary disputes.

In addition to its own Planning Policies, Neath Port Talbot County Borough has to take into account Welsh Assembly Government Policies and guidance and you may wish to refer to these as well.

You must not make statements that are personal, slanderous or abusive.

Keep your address short, relevant and to the point.

The use of visual aids, circulation of plans, photographs, or other material at the Committee meeting will not be permitted.

## **What happens at the meeting?**

1. Persons registered to speak should arrive **no later than fifteen minutes** before the meeting starts. A clerk will advise on seating arrangements and answer any queries.
2. The Chairman of the Committee will open the Meeting
3. Items where people have registered to speak, will normally be taken first on the agenda and will strictly follow the procedure set out below.
  - The item will be introduced by the Planning Officer who will give a formal presentation of the item, concluding with a formal recommendation;
  - The local Ward Member, if not on Planning Committee, will be invited to speak for a maximum of five minutes\* by the Chair.
  - The representative of the Community or Town Council (if present) will then be invited to speak for a maximum of five minutes\* by the Chair.
  - The Chairperson will then invite the Supporter (if present) to speak for a maximum of five minutes\*;
  - The Chairperson will then invite the Objector (if present) to speak for a maximum of five minutes\*;
  - The Chairperson will invite the Applicant/Agent (if present) to address Committee for a maximum of five minutes\*;
  - Time limits will be strictly adhered to
  - Response by Officers if necessary to the points raised;
  - Consideration and discussion by Members before reaching a decision;
  - Immediately before the recommendation being put to a vote, the local Member (if present) will be invited to sum up, speaking for no more than 2 minutes.
  - The Objector/Supporter, Applicant/Agent or Community or Town Council representative may not take part in the Members consideration of the application and may not ask or answer questions unless specifically invited to by the Chair.
  - Should any person registered to speak arrive after the fifteen minute cut off time, their opportunity to speak will be lost;
  - In the event of an application being deferred for the Planning Committee to visit the site, persons registered to speak will be allowed the opportunity to speak when the item is re-presented to Committee following the site visit.
  - At the meeting, you should not interrupt another speaker of the Committee debate.
4. Late requests to speak will not normally be accepted, although the Chair of Planning has the discretion on a case by case basis to agree to such requests.
5. An application before committee will not be deferred if any person due to speak is unable to attend. Reserve speakers may be nominated in place of the person unable to attend. If no reserve is appointed then depending whether the person due to speak was for or against the application the opportunity to speak will fall to the next person in that category who has registered their request to speak

### **Please Note:**

The Council Constitution provides for a maximum of 5 minutes for each speaker. The Chair always has discretion as to whether or not a person speaks and has discretion to allow longer speaking times if appropriate.

### **After you have exercised your right to speak**

After your five minutes has expired, you will be asked to return to the public seating area where you will be able to listen to the debate within the Committee Meeting.

Following the cessation of the debate, Members will be presented with a recommendation and will vote on that recommendation.

The decision of the Committee will be clearly conveyed verbally to those in attendance at the Committee.

If you are not a Voting member of the Committee you may leave the Committee meeting at any time.

### **Contact Details**

If you wish to address the Planning Committee, please put your request in writing to **Democratic Services:**

**By Post:** Democratic Services  
Civic Centre  
Port Talbot  
SA13 1PJ

**By Email:** [democratic.services@npt.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@npt.gov.uk)

If you have any questions about the procedures above please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01639 763719

**Website:** [www.npt.gov.uk](http://www.npt.gov.uk)

### **Translation/Special Requirements**

If you would like this information in a different format, for example in large print, please contact Planning Services, Environment Directorate, The Quays, Brunel Way, Baglan Energy Park, SA11 2GG.

This document is also available in Welsh.

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