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## **PLANNING ADVICE NOTE 1**

### **PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Where and when does Planning Committee meet?** -- Planning Committee usually meets on the morning of the first Thursday of each month at 10am. The meeting is in most circumstances held remotely via Microsoft Teams. You are advised to check the arrangements in advance including whether the application you are interested in has already been decided by planning officers.

**Who can attend?** -- Planning Committee is a public meeting. It is not broadcast live but anyone can attend, including the press. A recording of each meeting is usually hosted on the Council website afterwards.

Some items on the agenda such as the enforcement report are confidential and you will not have access to view these exempt parts of the meeting.

**Who may speak?** -- The Chairman will allow one party to speak to put each side of the case. The order of speakers will be...

- The Chairman will introduce the item.
- A planning officer will present the case and address any late correspondence.
- One objector. If there is more than one objector, the first person to register the speaking slot will be allowed to speak
- One supporter of the scheme. If there is more than one supporter, the first person to register the speaking slot will be allowed to speak
- One representative of the Town or Community Council.
- The Ward member who sits on Planning Committee in whose ward the application falls. They may not take part in the debate or vote but can address Planning Committee for up to 5 minutes.
- Where they are not on Planning Committee, a Ward Member in whose ward the application falls (but not have a vote).
- The applicant or his / her agent.

*In exceptional cases, more than one person may be allowed to speak either for or against a proposal. This will be at the discretion of the Chair but will be limited to major planning applications or schemes that have generated significant public interest.*

**How do I register to speak?** -- You can book a speaking slot by emailing [planning@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:planning@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk) This must be at least 48 hours before the meeting. The deadline is therefore usually 10.00am on the Tuesday of the week of Committee. Failure to register your wish to speak by the deadline will result in your right to speak being lost. You must state in your email whether you are supporting or objecting to the application so that the slot is allocated to the correct person.

**How long will I have to speak?** -- Each speaker will be allotted a maximum of 5 minutes. You are not allowed to distribute plans/maps, photos or other papers.

**What can I say?** -- You must limit what you say to relevant planning issues such as the Development Plan, government policy/guidance, visual impact or appearance and highway considerations. Issues such as devaluation of property, land disputes and competition between businesses are not relevant to the planning system and must be disregarded by the Planning Committee. A further PAN is available that provides more guidance on this topic.

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## **At Planning Committee**

- Planning Committee must make its decision in accordance with strict legal rules. It cannot approve an application simply because a lot of people are in support or refuse planning permission because a lot of people object. Each decision must be made based on sound and defensible planning reasons.
- Speakers are advised that they are personally accountable for what they say. You should be aware that the meetings are recorded and published on the Blaenau Gwent CBC website so are publicly available.
- You do not need to repeat any points that you may have raised in any written objections. They will be included in the officer's report.
- At the discretion of the Chair, you may be asked to answer questions raised by members of the Planning Committee.
- Applicants are advised that it is their responsibility to check when an application is to appear before Planning Committee.
- The Council will not notify applicants or their agents that a person has registered their right to speak for or against their application.
- You should log on to Microsoft Teams with the link you have been provided with 10 minutes before the meeting starts. You will enter a waiting lobby and admitted prior to the meeting starting.
- An item will not be deferred if a person who has registered to speak fails to attend.
- The Council operates a policy of conducting and meetings in the medium of English. If you wish to address Planning Committee in Welsh, please notify the Council when you register your wish to speak so that translation arrangements can be made.

**What happens if the application is deferred?** -- This policy only applies to the first hearing of the application at Planning Committee. If a site visit of the Planning Committee is arranged, further speakers will not normally be allowed unless the Chair, under advice from the Chief Legal Officer, considers it is necessary in order to come to an informed decision.

## **Contact Details**

To register to speak at Planning Committee, email [planning@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:planning@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)  
For a link to attend Planning Committee, email [committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk)

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