

THE RIGHT TO SPEAK AT THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

The Council has decided to give third parties the right to speak at planning committees.

This leaflet outlines the operational arrangement for speaking at committees and the arrangements to be followed when requesting to address the Committee.

WHICH MATTERS CAN BE DRAWN TO THE COMMITTEE'S ATTENTION?

It is up to you what you would like to draw to the committee's attention, but under the Planning Act, decisions regarding planning applications must be in accordance with the development plans and national guidelines, unless other planning considerations are important enough to justify a decision which is contrary. The Council cannot refuse planning permission for the sole reason that objections have been presented, or approve an application because a number of people support it or because there are no objections.

The matters you raise must pertain to relevant planning considerations, e.g.

- The policies in the relevant development plans and national planning guidelines
- The decisions of previous appeals
- The impact on the character, beauty and appearance of the area, e.g. site, scale, size, height and design
- The impact on the amenities of neighbouring residents, e.g. hours of use, overlooking, excessive impairment and traffic noise
- The impact on highway safety, e.g. poor visibility, the safety of pedestrians, parking, density of use.

Little or no attention may be given to matters which are not material planning considerations and which are private matters, e.g.

- Land stability, drainage, fire precautions, hygiene and internal area (these are mainly dealt with under legislation which is separate from Planning, e.g. Building Regulations)
- The applicant's personal character
- Disagreement regarding the ownership of the affected land
- Private rights of way and drainage and private easements and covenants
- The impact of the proposal on property value

- Commercial competition, e.g. between shops, restaurants, garages etc
- Loss of views

Only the applicant, his agent, or those who have already submitted written observations within the 21 day consultation period, may make a request to address the committee.

Only one person may speak in favour or against an application. An objector and an applicant may only speak once in relation to an application. If the matter is deferred and you have spoken at that committee you will not be able to speak when the matter is next before the Committee.

HOW TO MAKE A REQUEST TO SPEAK AT THE COMMITTEE?

The procedure to be followed in making a request is the same for everyone who wishes to speak at a committee. It is your responsibility to find out whether the particular application on which you wish to speak is to be submitted to the committee or considered under delegated powers. You can discover this by contacting the Planning Service or through the Council's website www.gwynedd.gov.uk.

You must submit a written request to speak to the Planning Service or email Planning@gwynedd.gov.uk as soon as possible, and no later than midday on the Friday before the Committee.

You should include in your request, your name and contact details, including a daytime telephone number, details of the particular planning application and reference number if possible.

Only one person can speak, and if a number of people wish to speak, they must decide whom amongst them will be the spokesperson, and inform the Planning Support Service in writing or by e-mail: planning@gwynedd.gov.uk. One condition of this scheme is that you allow this Council to provide your contact details to others (of the same opinion) who wish to speak in order to assist you to nominate a spokesperson. If this does not lead to an agreement, the first individual to inform the Council will be permitted to speak.

You will only be permitted to speak if the application is on the committee's agenda.

Reports on the committee agenda may be inspected at least three working days before the meeting either at the Planning Office or on 'Track and Trace Planning Applications' on the Council's website. The Planning Service will not accept responsibility for failing to contact you by means of the contact details provided by you.

The applicant/agent will be informed, if he has not requested to speak at the committee, should a notice be received from an objector expressing the desire to speak, so that he may exercise his right to respond to him at the committee.

SPEAKING AT THE COMMITTEE

Unless the Chairman of the Committee states otherwise, the planning applications will be considered in the order in which they appear on the agenda, and it will not be possible to defer an application because you can not attend or because you are not ready to speak when the Chairman presents the application. Information regarding the position on the agenda of the application on which you wish to speak is available from the planning office.

You must be present at the Committee meeting between 12.30p.m. – 12.45 p.m. and introduce yourself to the Solicitor. The Committee usually commences at 1.00 p.m. The Solicitor will explain the arrangements and where you will be seated when you speak.

When invited by the Chairman of the Committee, you may speak once, for up to three minutes, and the importance of adhering to the time limit is emphasised. There is no need to repeat all the points made in any letters, as these points will have already been sent to members before the committee. You are advised to focus on the main points of concern, or the points which you support. **You will not be allowed to circulate any written material, photographs or use any presentation equipment.**

After speaking, you must allow the committee to discuss the matter, and you should not join in this discussion. The Chairman may ask a question/questions if further explanation of the points raised will be required.

THE COUNCIL'S DECISION

Decisions are usually made in the meeting, but sometimes it may be deferred until the following meeting in order to arrange a site inspection by the Committee. Should a site visit be held, public speaking will not be allowed, on the site.

The Service will inform the applicant/agent of the decision after the date of the committee

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Should you wish further information regarding what happens at the planning committee and an explanation regarding the types of decisions the committee is able to make, see the separate Planning Committee Procedure leaflet or contact the Planning Office.