

# **NOTES ON THE PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING AT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

## **Introduction**

The following notes are designed to help you to decide if you are eligible to speak at Committee and if so how to go about it, should you wish to do so (please note some 95% of all applications are dealt with under delegated powers and are not reported to Committee).

## **The Meetings**

The Development Control Committee is normally held at the Civic Offices Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB every sixth Thursday. The applications that are to be discussed at Committee are set out on a report which is available beforehand (the Monday before the committee meeting). You are advised to arrive no later than 20 minutes before the meeting which starts at 10am. A committee clerk will advise on seating and answer any other queries.

**Speakers should advise the Council in advance if they have any special needs.**

## **Webcasting of meetings**

Speakers should be aware that some meetings will be webcast live on the Council's website and your voice will be heard as part of the live webcast of the meeting. .

## **Are you eligible?**

You should be one of the following:-

- A County Borough Councillor not on the Development Control Committee within whose ward the application is situated, or a Cabinet member;
- An objector against the application or their representative who has submitted an objection in writing detailing your concerns and expressed an interest to speak at committee (an 'anonymous' objector would not qualify);
- A representative of a Town or Community Council;
- The applicant or their agent/advisor (if an objector or a Town or Community Council or a County Borough Councillor not on Committee speaks against your proposal)

## **How do I go about it?**

It is your responsibility to check whether the application is to be considered by Committee by reviewing the Council's website. Whilst notification letters are sent out before committee, I am unable to guarantee an efficient postal service. Please note that you will only have a short period in which to confirm that you want to speak once notified.

## **When can I see the Officer's report?**

The report is available for public inspection from the Monday before the meeting at the Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend or on the following website: [www.bridgend.gov.uk/planning](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/planning)

## **How can I register my desire to speak?**

If you wish to speak at Committee you should confirm your interest in your initial observations and include your day time telephone number.

You must then confirm between 11.00am and 11.30am on the day before the Committee that you still intend to speak by phoning the Cabinet and Committee Officer on (01656) 643148.

## **How is the speaking organised?**

Where more than one objector registers to speak, they will be encouraged to appoint a spokesperson and only one objector can speak per application. This could be a representative of the relevant action group, Town or Community Council or County Borough Councillor not on the DC Committee. Where no agreement can be reached by the objectors, the Chairman will allocate the time to the first person to register an interest to speak. The County Borough Councillor not on Committee speaks first and the objector speaks next.

### **How will the scheme work for Applicants/Agents?**

Once it is known that an objector has registered to speak against an application the applicant or agent will be notified by the Planning Department. If the applicant or agent wish to exercise the right of reply they must notify the cabinet and committee officer on tel (01656) 643148 between 11.30am and 12.00pm the day before committee.

No guarantee will be given that an application will be determined at any particular Committee nor that an objector will actually speak, in which event the applicant or agent will not be able to speak.

### **How the scheme will work for Town and Community Councils?**

Town and Community Councils will continue to be notified as at present of the receipt of all planning applications in their area. If the Town/Community Council object to any application and notify the Planning Department as above, they will be entitled to address the Development Control Committee.

### **How long can I speak?**

Objector, Applicant, Agent or County Borough Councillor not on Committee or Cabinet Member - **three minutes maximum**. This limit will be strictly observed.

### **Extraordinary Applications**

In the case of extraordinary applications, the DC Committee will consider whether public speaking rights need to be extended.

If Committee members agree, objectors and applicants will each have up to a maximum of 10 minutes to address Committee.

This time can be shared amongst different objectors or representatives on behalf of the applicant. County Borough Councillors not on Committee and the representatives of a Town/Community Council will continue to have 3 minutes to address Committee.

### **What can be said at Committee?**

Comments should be limited to relevant Planning issues and material planning considerations already raised in the written representations. These may include:-

- Planning policies, including those in the Development Plan;
- Appearance and character of development, layout and density;
- Traffic generation, highway safety and parking;
- Overshadowing, overlooking, noise disturbance or other loss of amenity.

Matters that cannot be considered by DC Committee include:-

- Boundary disputes, covenants and other property rights;
- Personal remarks (e.g. The applicant's motives);
- Rights to a view or potential devaluation of property.

The presentation of plans, drawings or other visual aids, the taking of photographs or the use of voice recording equipment will not be permitted. Speakers may not ask questions of others at the meeting, nor will others be allowed to ask questions of them unless the Chairman wishes to seek clarification on any particular matter raised by the speaker.

### **Who else can speak?**

**Officers of the Council** - to present report recommendation and provide advice.

**Members of the DC Committee** - to consider and reach a decision.

### **When is the decision made?**

Usually immediately after the discussion by a majority vote of the DC Committee Members. Sometimes a decision will be deferred for further information, revised plans or a Members' site visit. Deferred cases are normally brought back to the following meeting and if you did not get

the opportunity to speak at the first meeting, you will need to follow the above procedure to speak at the next meeting. Please be aware that DC Committee Members have to balance different factors and come to an objective decision based on planning considerations. If they refuse an application contrary to the Officer's recommendation, they will need to be able to support that decision at any subsequent appeal.

**Can I appeal against the decision?**

Only if you are the applicant. There are no third party rights of appeal.

**What happens after the Committee?**

The DC Committee's decision, and the reasons for it, will be confirmed to applicants in writing. Normally, applicants (or their agents) will be notified of the decision within three working days (unless it is subject to a Planning Obligation). The decision will be uploaded to the application on the council's website.

**Development Group ~ Communities Directorate**