

APPENDIX 1: Protocol on Public Speaking at Planning Committee

Public speaking at Planning Committee will be allowed strictly in accordance with this protocol. The right to speak and the conduct of the meeting is at the discretion of the Chair of the Planning Committee and subject to the points set out below.

Who Can Speak

Members of the Public

Speaking will be limited to one member of the public opposing a development and one member of the public supporting a development. Where there is more than one person in opposition or support, the individuals or groups should work together to establish a spokesperson. The Chair of the Committee may exercise discretion to allow a second speaker, but only in exceptional cases where a major application generates divergent views within one 'side' of the argument (e.g. a supermarket application where one spokesperson represents residents and another local retailers). Members of the public may appoint representatives to speak on their behalf. Where no agreement is reached on a spokesperson, the right to speak shall fall to the first person/organisation to register their request.

When an objector has registered to speak the applicant or agent will be allowed the right of reply and the Planning Officer will have the final right of reply.

Applicants

Applicants or their appointed agents will have a right of response where members of the public or a Community Council have registered to address committee in opposition to a major application.

Community Councils - One elected member of the Community Council may speak on major applications within Bedlinog and Trelewis.

When is speaking permitted?

Public speaking will be permitted on one occasion where applications are considered by Planning Committee. When applications are deferred (e.g. for a FFSV) and particularly when re-presented following a committee resolution to determine an application contrary to officer advice, public speaking will not be permitted. Regard will however be had to special circumstances on applications that may justify an exception. The final decision lies with the Chair.

Registering Requests to Speak

Speakers must register their request to speak by 12 noon three working days before the Committee (so if Committee is on Wednesday, requests must be received by the Friday before). To register a request to speak, objectors/supporters must first have made written representations on the application within the 21 day publicity period. There will be no opportunity to speak if the written representations are received after the publication of the committee report.

Anyone wishing to speak must notify the Council's Democratic Services Officers of their request by phoning (01685 725284) or by email to registertospeak@merthyr.gov.uk. Please provide a copy of the points you will be raising in your speech and a daytime telephone number. Any requests to speak that are emailed through will be acknowledged prior to the deadline for registering to speak. If you do not receive an acknowledgement before the

deadline please contact Democratic Services to check that your registration has been received.

Parties are welcome to address the Planning Committee in any language, however if speakers wish to use a language other than English, they are requested to make this clear when registering to speak, and are asked to give at least 5 working days' notice to allow the Council the time to procure a simultaneous translator.

Content of the Speeches

Comments by the speaker should be limited to matters raised in their original representations and be relevant planning issues.

Procedure at the Planning Committee Meeting

- The Officer will present the application to Committee
- The objector/supporter will be invited to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes by the Chair.
- The applicant will be invited to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes by the Chair.
- If applicable, the representative of the Community Council will then be invited to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes by the Chair.
- The Chair or a member of the Committee may, at the Chair's discretion, occasionally seek clarification on a point made.
- Officers will be invited to respond to points raised if necessary.
- Planning Committee members will then debate the application, commencing with the local member of Planning Committee.
- Where an objector/supporter, applicant/agent or Community Council has spoken on an application, no further speaking by or on behalf of that group will be permitted in the event that the application is considered again at a future meeting of the committee unless there has been a material change in the application.