

**CHIEF OFFICER
NEIGHBOURHOODS, PLANNING & PUBLIC PROTECTION /
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CYMDOGAETH, CYNLLUNIO A DIOGELU'R CYHOEDD
Rachel Jowitt**



HOW TO MAKE COMMENTS ON A PLANNING APPLICATION

Listening to peoples' views is a vital part of the planning applications process. Torfaen County Borough Council welcomes representations on planning applications that are to be considered by the Planning Committee.

This guidance note explains how to make comments on a planning application, how those comments are taken into account and, how to make those comments in person to the Planning Committee.

How planning application details are publicised

Once a planning application has been registered, the details of the application are made available to view on our website by clicking [Planning Public Access Service](#) or at the Council's offices in Ty Blaen, New Inn. Applications are also publicised by sending letters directly to neighbours living closest to the application address, by displaying a notice at or near the site, by placing a notice in the 'Press' or a combination of all three.

How do I make comments on an application?

You can comment to support or object to any application that is currently open for consultation. Anyone who wishes to comment may do so by:

- ❖ Submitting comments online by clicking [Planning Public Access Service](#) using the application number or part of the address., alternatively you may comment in writing or by email
- ❖ By writing to Head of Planning and Development, Torfaen County Borough Council, Neighbourhoods Planning & Public Protection, Tŷ Blaen Torfaen, Panteg Way, New Inn, Pontypool, NP4 0LS. Please quote the reference number of the planning application on your correspondence.
- ❖ By emailing: planning@torfaen.gov.uk Please quote the reference number of the planning application on your correspondence.

Please note, you don't need to have received a letter from us notifying you of the application to be able to make a comment.

Any comments must be received by us within 21 days of the notification. Please note that all comments received will be open to public inspection. Please remember to quote the reference number.

Please also include your name and address with your comments (we accept email addresses) so the Council has a way of contacting you regarding your comments if required.

The decision on the application will be recorded on the Council's Public Access system.

Will my comments be made public?

Yes. Your comments will be published on our public access website but your name, address, signature and contact details will be removed. They will also be available at our Council offices for the public and the applicant to view.

You are responsible for any statements you make, so please ensure that your comments are not offensive, inflammatory or libellous. If they are they will not be published on the Council's website.

Who makes the decision on the planning application?

The majority of planning applications are decided by officers under delegated powers. However some applications are reported to the Planning Committee, for example, because of their complexity or there is significant public interest. The Planning Committee, which consists of elected Council Members from throughout the County Borough, makes the final decision on these applications, following a report and recommendation by the Head of Planning and Development.

Where and when is the Planning Committee held?

The meeting is held usually every 4 weeks, on a Tuesday, in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Pontypool at 4:00pm. However, it is **essential** that you check the date and time if you wish to attend as these could change. There is limited room in the Public Gallery due to Fire Regulations, so places are available on a first come, first served basis. People who are addressing the committee will be given priority. There is an Induction Loop within the Chamber and all speakers use microphones. It is possible to address the committee in Welsh or English, but 2 clear working days notice will be required for instantaneous translation facilities.

The agenda for the Committee is published at least 3 clear working days before the date of the Planning Committee.

All the agendas and committee dates can be found on the Council's website by clicking on the following link: <http://moderngov.torfaen.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=136&LLL=0> or by emailing Rachel.Beale@torfaen.gov.uk. If you do not have access to the internet you can contact Democratic Services on Tel: 01495 742018 and we would be pleased to help you access the information you need.

Can I make my comments in person to the Planning Committee?

You should note that the vast majority of planning applications are decided by an appropriate officer in accordance with the Council's delegated procedure. Public speaking rights do not

apply to delegated applications. The expected decision level (committee or delegated) of an application can be found on the Council's Public Access website or by contacting the Case Officer.

To address the Planning Committee personally you will need to have:

- (a) previously submitted written representations on the application within 21 days of the date of the notice in which the application was publicised and;
- (b) contacted Democratic Services (see contact details below) to tell us that you wish to speak. You must give your **name, address, contact telephone number and/or email address** and the **application number**. As the meetings are usually held on a Tuesday, you would need to register to speak by 4.00pm on the Friday before Planning Committee is due to be held. If you would prefer, you can nominate someone else can speak on your behalf.

PLEASE NOTE YOU WILL NOT BE INFORMED OF THE DATE OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE SO THE ONUS IS ON YOU TO CHECK DATES OF PLANNING COMMITTEES VIA THE WEBSITE.

The Council's public access website displays the status of applications. The committee date appears once the status changes to '*PENDING DECISION (RECOMMENDATION MADE)*.' By registering your details you can be alerted to changes in the status of an application.

If you do not have access to the internet you can contact Democratic Services on Tel: 01495 742018 and we would be pleased to help you access the information you need.

The applicant will be given the opportunity to speak **only** if someone has registered to speak on his or her application.

Can I speak on any item on the agenda?

You will not be entitled to speak on applications for 'Lawful Development Certificates' and any item which is for information only.

How long can I speak for and what can I say?

Each speaker will be allowed to speak for up to **five minutes**. If there are more than three people wishing to speak on one planning application, a nominated spokesperson must be appointed to speak on their behalf. This spokesperson will be able to speak for up to **ten minutes**. Please call Democratic Services the day before of the Committee to find out how many people wish to speak. If there are more than three speakers, we will make a room available before the Committee so that potential speakers can meet to elect a spokesperson.

You will be **timed** during your speech, so please be aware that you will be stopped if you overrun your time.

The Applicant will be allowed to speak for up to five minutes (or 10 minutes if there is a spokesperson representing a number of people).

Please note that the Chair of the Planning Committee has discretion to extend or curtail Speaking Rights at the Committee Meeting.

What issues can I raise when I speak?

You should only refer to the comments that you raised in your original correspondence to Planning or something that is contained in the Planning Officer's report. These speaking rights are designed to allow you to explain the importance of your previous written comments more fully. The Chair of the meeting may stop you speaking if you do not follow this guideline.

Can I use visual aids or circulate information directly to Committee Members?

If you wish to use visual aids to illustrate points you wish to make, you may do so provided the material is submitted the day before the date of the Planning Committee. The material will be checked by planning officers. The Chair of the Planning Committee has absolute discretion over whether to allow the illustrative material to be used. You will not be able to hand out illustrations, photos or other documentation to Members at the Committee.

Will the meeting be public?

Yes, the Committee meeting will be open to the press and public whilst you are speaking and your name and address and a brief summary of your comments will be included in the minutes, which will be made public and published on our website.

All Planning Committees are broadcast live over the internet.

What happens at the Planning Committee?

- The Planning Officer introduces the application.
- The Chair will then ask the speakers to come into the chamber to address the members.
- The Chair will call upon the Ward Councillor(s) to speak (if they want to)
- The Chair will give the applicant/agent an opportunity to respond to the comments.
- Officers will comment on any remarks made, if necessary.
- There is no opportunity for members to question the speakers.
- Members of the Committee will debate the application, taking on board the comments made and advice from officers, and make a decision. Members may decide to defer the application for further information or to carry out a site visit to clarify details on site. The application will usually be decided at the next meeting.
- You can only address the Planning Committee once unless, following a deferral, the application is amended in a substantive manner or further information is submitted.

How to contact us and give notice that you wish to speak

If you wish to speak at the Planning Committee or have any questions about your rights to speak please contact:
Rachel Beale, Senior Business Support Officer (Democratic Services) on
Tel: 01495 742018, Email: Rachel.Beale@torfaen.gov.uk
Or write to Rachel Beale at
Torfaen County Borough Council,
Civic Centre,

Pontypool,
Torfaen
NP4 6YB.

PLEASE QUOTE THE APPLICATION NUMBER ON ALL CORRESPONDENCE

PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY QUESTIONS SPECIFICALLY ABOUT A PLANNING APPLICATION SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE CASE OFFICER

Web site address: www.torfaen.gov.uk

Public Access: <https://planningonline.torfaen.gov.uk/online-applications/>