

The Planning Committee doesn't make a decision on all planning applications. Most applications are straightforward and are decided by the Head of Regulatory and Housing Services. The procedures described in this leaflet do not apply to these delegated applications. Please contact us to find out whether the application you're interested in is expected to be decided by the Planning Committee or by the Head of Regulatory and Housing Services.

This leaflet explains what to do if you want to speak for or against a planning application at a meeting of the Planning Committee. You can speak at a meeting if you have applied for planning permission, or if you are a member of the public who wants to speak for or against a planning application.

This leaflet aims to answer some of the questions you may have about what to do and what to expect at the meeting. It also explains the simple rules we have agreed to make the system as fair and easy to use as possible, so please read all of this leaflet. If you have any more questions, please contact us using the contact information at the end of this leaflet.

How does the Planning Committee work?

The Planning Committee is made up of a chairperson, a vice-chairperson and councillors. Other councillors, who are not members of the committee, may also attend and may speak on items that affect their electoral division (ward). The press and other members of the public may also attend the meetings.

The committee members receive written reports on all planning applications being considered by the Planning Committee. These reports are available to the public three working days before the day of the Planning Committee meeting.

Who can speak at a Planning Committee meeting?

You or your representative can ask to speak at a Planning Committee meeting about a planning application you have made. You can also speak (or ask a representative to speak for you) if you either support or object to a planning application and have written to us with your comments. However, if the person who made the application or their representative wants to speak, then no other supporter of the application will be allowed to speak. You will be allowed to speak as long as you keep to the rules explained in this leaflet.

Normally only **one** person can speak for and **one** person can speak against an application. The chairperson of the committee will only allow a second speaker in exceptional cases, where there are clearly different arguments to be heard for the same 'side' - for example, a planning application for a new superstore where one person represents retailers and the other represents local residents, but both are against the scheme. When this is the case, two people who are against the proposal will be allowed to speak, or one person can speak for twice the normal time.

How and when do I have to let you know that I want to speak?

You cannot demand to speak at the Planning Committee, it is not a legal right.

You can only speak if the planning application is on the committee's agenda.

You can only speak on applications for planning permission or other similar types of application (listed building consent, advertisement consent, agricultural prior approval, demolition prior approval, certificate of lawfulness).

You must let us know if you want to speak and give us your contact details. You must do this as soon as possible and, at the latest, by **4.30pm on the Monday before the committee meeting**. If you don't let us know in time, you won't be able to speak at the meeting.

If more than one person contacts us to speak for or against an application, you must choose one person to speak for your group and let us know. We will give your contact details to anyone who has the same view, so that you can decide between you who will speak. If you can't agree, only the first person to tell us they want to speak will be allowed to.

If you ask to speak at the committee meeting, we will contact you by phone, in writing or by e-mail to let you know when the application you want to speak about will be considered. If you have not given us a phone number, we may contact you as late as the day of the meeting. You may inspect the reports on the committee's agenda three working days before the meeting. Please contact us to find out how.

What do I do on the day of the meeting?

The committee meeting is held at **Bodlondeb, Conwy**. This is within walking distance of a bus stop and Conwy railway station, and parking is available.

The meeting begins at **2pm**. You should introduce yourself to the Committee Officer between **1.30pm and 1.45pm**.

When will I speak in the meeting?

Planning applications where there will be speakers from the public will normally be considered first. The chairperson will introduce each application by giving the application number and details of the proposal. An officer will usually then provide an update on the written report.

Members of the public will then be invited to speak in the following order:

- The person who objects or their representative.
- The person applying for planning permission or their representative, or a supporter of the application.

When the chairperson invites you to speak, you will be asked to move to a particular place within the council chamber where you can be seen and heard. You will be allowed three minutes to put your case.

- You may speak to the Planning Committee in either Welsh or English (translation facilities are available).
- You may speak once and for up to **three minutes**.
- Once you start speaking, the Committee Officer will start a clock that makes a noise that everyone in the room can hear. Once the three minutes are up, the clock will make another noise.
- If a speaker is still talking after three minutes, the chairperson will usually wait for them to finish their sentence and then will let them know that their time is up. We do not let speakers go over time to be fair to the other speakers. But in exceptional circumstances, the chairperson may allow them a few seconds more and then allow the speaker for the 'other side' to have same amount of extra time.
- Once you've spoken the chairperson will not normally allow councillors to ask you questions. You must not enter into a debate with the committee members.

You will then return to your seat in the public gallery. The committee members will then discuss the application and normally make a decision to approve or refuse it. Sometimes they decide to wait until another meeting to allow them to receive further information or to make a site visit. They may also delegate the decision to the Head of Regulatory Services & Housing, for example, following negotiations and amendments to the application. Public speaking is normally only allowed when an application is on the initial scheduled agenda/date, and not when applications are referred back to Committee following a site visit or decision contrary to Officer recommendation.

What can I say at the meeting?

You are likely to have the greatest effect if you:

- are brief and to the point;
- limit your views to the planning application;
- focus on the relevant planning issues which may help the committee reach its decision. In preparing for this, remember that you do not need to repeat all the points in any letters sent in as these will be summarised in the committee report.

What are the relevant planning issues I can raise?

Planning issues you could raise include:

- development plan policies, such as policies about providing land for housing;
- planning advice from the Government such as 'Planning Policy Wales' or 'Technical Advice Notes';
- planning law, decisions we have made in the past, or in previous appeals;
- how a proposal would affect the character and appearance of the area, such as the site, layout, scale, height or appearance of the development;
- how a proposal would affect a residential area, for example, will noise, traffic or the hours of use spoil the area, or will other properties be overlooked; and
- how a proposal would affect highway safety, for example, will the development affect pedestrian safety, cause parking problems, or prevent drivers from seeing clearly.

Issues you shouldn't raise, because they aren't planning matters, are:

- fire precautions, hygiene and internal space (these are dealt with under other legislation, such as the Building Regulations);
- the personal details of the applicant, for example, if they are elderly, disabled and so on;
- disputes over boundaries or who owns the land;
- private rights of way, private drains or other private legal issues;
- how a proposal would affect property values;
- the loss of views; and
- competition between rival businesses

The chairperson of the committee will refuse to hear you if you behave improperly, offensively or try to prevent the committee from doing their work. You should also remember that the laws of slander are very strict. If you say something about a person that is untrue, even if you believe it to be true, you may be sued and have to pay compensation. You should consider your comments carefully.

Can I hand out supporting documents or use visual aids?

You can't hand out supporting documents at the meeting or use visual aids such as photographs or diagrams. You may send information direct to councillors before the meeting. There is a list of council members on our website (www.conwy.gov.uk/councillors) or you can get one from the Member Services office (phone 01492 576069). Please do not send documents to us to hand out.

When can I leave the meeting?

You can leave the meeting at any time after you have spoken.

How to contact us

Phone: 01492 575471, 01492 575185 or 01492 575121

E-mail: cynllunioplanning@conwy.gov.uk

Website: www.conwy.gov.uk/planning

Postal Address: Development Management, PO Box 1, Conwy, LL30 9GN