

SECTION 19

19. GUIDES TO PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COMMITTEES

19.1 Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee

Representations on Planning Applications

Wherever possible, objections or representations to planning applications should be made in writing. Written representations on planning applications received up until 12.00 noon on the day before Planning Committee will be accepted and made available for public inspection. Those representations received too late to be referred to in the committee report will be circulated to Planning Committee Members the evening before the Committee and hard copies will be distributed at the meeting

Public Speaking

There will be occasions when applicants or objectors, or both, may wish to make representations in person to the Planning Committee. In such circumstances, the following procedure will apply:

Notification to Speak

It is necessary to have sufficient advance warning of speakers to gauge the likely overall public attendance, to prepare enough copies of agendas and to offer support and advice to those unsure of how to proceed. It may also be necessary to resolve any issues regarding nominating a lead speaker and those persons will need a reasonable timeframe to co-ordinate their response.

Unless you specifically notify us otherwise, in registering to speak, you consent to the Council forwarding your contact details to others (of the same opinion) who wish to speak in order to assist you to nominate a single spokesperson.

The neighbour notification letters and the planning application acknowledgement letter will both advise respondents and applicants of the right to speak at committee and it will be the responsibility of those wishing to speak to register to speak.

Therefore, requests to speak must be received no later than 5.00 pm, two clear working days (the Tuesday of Committee week where meetings are held on Thursday) prior to the committee.

To register your interest you should complete the online form, which can be found at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/planningcommittee

It is recognised that there will be individuals who will not have access to an electronic facility. Those individuals will be able to register to speak by telephone on 01446 709144 (they will be asked to provide the same information required in the online form).

Procedure

Each individual speaker will be allowed no more than three minutes to address the Committee, provided that (regardless of the number of speakers) those speaking for **and** against will be allocated the same amount of time in total. For example, in the event that two or more persons are registered to speak against an application, where there is only one person registered to speak in favour, he/she will be allocated six minutes to speak. This is to ensure that there is equality of time afforded to those speaking for and against any application.

A maximum period of six minutes will be allowed for those registered to speak for **or** against an application to address the Committee. If more than one person is registered to speak for or against, they are encouraged to nominate one spokesperson. Otherwise, the six minutes allocated will be split evenly between those persons registered to speak. The time limits will be strictly observed.

Those persons addressing the Committee will not be allowed to hand out any documentation to Members at Committee, and no facilities will be provided or available for presentations.

N.B. This procedure applies equally to Town and Community Councillors, who must also register to speak in accordance with the guidance.

Who can speak?

Subject to compliance with the registration and procedural requirements set out in this guidance, the following persons are eligible to speak:-

Objectors to the application or their representative;

The applicant or their representative;

A representative of a Town or Community Council;

Any Councillor elected to the Vale of Glamorgan Council not on Planning Committee

(N.B. Vale of Glamorgan Council Members are not required to register to speak.)

Matters Considered Relevant

Planning decisions should be made based on material planning considerations and should not be based on immaterial considerations. Speakers should have regard to this and can find further relevant information at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/planningcommittee

Running Order of Committee

The running order will be as follows (subject to the provisions set out above applying in the event of there being more than one person registered to speak for or against the application):

- At the meeting, the Planning Officer will present the report.

- Those objecting to the applications will be asked to make their representations. Those speaking will not be allowed to ask any questions of Officers or the Committee. Members of the Committee who wish to ask questions of clarification may do so at the end of the allocated period, however, they should not interrupt or otherwise question the speaker(s) in any way.
- Any Councillors of the Vale of Glamorgan Council not on Planning Committee will then be entitled to address the Committee, subject to a time limit of three minutes per Councillor.
- Those supporting the application will then be asked to make their representations. Those speaking will not be allowed to ask any questions of Officers or the Committee. Members of the Committee who wish to ask questions of clarification may do so at the end of the allocated period, however, they should not interrupt or otherwise question the speaker(s) in any way.
- The Council's Officers may then comment on the representations made and the merits of the application.
- The Committee will proceed to debate the application and make a decision. The Planning Officer may be asked by the Chairman to address any issues raised during the debate. The minutes of the meeting will include the reasons for the decision.
- There will be no right of reply and no requirement for speaking to be "balanced" if there is no registered speaker in a certain slot.

Deferred Applications

If an application is deferred at a committee meeting on the basis that further information and/or analysis is required, the same procedure for public speaking will apply when the application is considered at the subsequent Committee meeting(s).

Other information

All parties who have registered to speak must arrive at the committee meeting by 5.45 pm and inform the Democratic Services Officer of their arrival.

Please note that all Planning Committee Meetings are the subject of live web transmission ("webcasting").

This procedure does not apply to Planning Committee site visits, where no public speaking is allowed.

19.2 Guide to Public Speaking at a Scrutiny Committee Meeting

The Vale of Glamorgan Council recognises that members of the public can make an important contribution and be a valuable source of information. The Council therefore encourages the active participation of all residents within the Scrutiny process in the Vale.

This Guide provides information on what members of the public can expect when attending a Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Please note this Guide only covers general business items under consideration by the Scrutiny Committees.

Where an issue of major public concern/interest arises, separate arrangements will apply.

1. What is Scrutiny?

The Council's Scrutiny process provides an opportunity for Elected Members ("Councillors") to examine the services that the Council provides and to ask questions on how decisions have been made. Scrutiny Committees must also make arrangements to listen to the views of the public and the community. One of the roles of the Scrutiny Committee is to take account of those views when considering the relevant issue and, if considered appropriate, to pass those views on to the Council's Cabinet for their consideration.

It is important to be aware that the Scrutiny Committees do not deal with individual queries, concerns or complaints. You should also bear in mind that a Scrutiny Committee meeting is a meeting held in public but it is not a Public Meeting.

The Council has five Scrutiny Committees:

- **Corporate Performance and Resources**
This Scrutiny Committee deals with the internal working of the Council and its finances.
- **Environment and Regeneration**
This Scrutiny Committee deals with Waste Management, Highway Maintenance, Planning (but not matters such as planning applications), Transportation and Economic Development.
- **Homes and Safe Communities**
This Scrutiny Committee deals with Council Housing and related maintenance, Private Sector Housing, Community Safety and Crime and Disorder (including Youth Offending Services) and Shared Regulatory Services functions.

- **Learning and Culture**

This Scrutiny Committee deals with all School matters, (which includes School Improvement, Post-16 Education, Community Education, Youth Services), the Library Service and Training.

- **Healthy Living and Social Care**

This Scrutiny Committee deals with Adult Services, such as Care Homes, Children and Young People Services (e.g. Adoption Service) and Healthy Living and Leisure.

2. **Where and When do the Committees Meet?**

Each of the Council's five Scrutiny Committees meet approximately 10-12 times a year. Meetings usually commence at 6:00 pm and are normally held in the Council Chamber of the Civic Offices in Barry. However, on occasions, an alternative venue may be used (e.g. the Scrutiny Committee (Lifelong Learning) may meet at a school). A schedule of all the Scrutiny Committee meetings for the current Municipal Year is available on the Council website at the following link:

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/minutes,_agendas_and_reports/minutes,_agendas_and_reports.aspx#agendas

3. **How do I get my "Voice" Heard?**

Your "voice" at a Scrutiny Committee can be heard via two ways. If you choose, you can request to speak at a Scrutiny Committee or alternatively, you can send in your written representations. The procedure for submitting written representations can be found in paragraph 14 of this Guide.

4. **Who Can Speak?**

Anyone who lives or works in the Vale of Glamorgan and who has registered, is entitled to speak at a scheduled meeting of one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

The meeting is not a question and answer session and speakers will be asked to make statements relevant to the topic and to avoid repetition.

The number of public speakers will be limited and this will be dependent on the number of requests made.

In the event that a person aged under 16 years of age wishes to speak to a Scrutiny Committee meeting, they must be accompanied by an adult.

5. **How Long do I Have to Speak?**

For each agenda item, there will be a **maximum of fifteen minutes** speaking time **in total** for members of the public (provided they have registered to speak). In the event of multiple requests to speak, the Chairman will usually allow up to a maximum of **five** individual speakers per agenda item (i.e. **three** minutes per speaker). Individual

speakers who have registered to speak will be limited to **three** minutes in respect of an agenda item.

This Guide does not apply to Vale of Glamorgan Elected Members, as they are subject to the procedures of the Council's Constitution, which entitles them to speak with the permission of the Committee.

6. **What Can I Speak on at the Meeting?**

A member of the public, speaking on an agenda item must address their speech to the item they have registered to speak upon on the agenda and cannot address other agenda items or unrelated business. You should ensure that:

- Your comments are clear and concise and are directly related to the report on which you have requested to speak;
- You avoid repeating points made previously by any earlier public speakers;
- Your views are limited to the advantages or disadvantages of the report and that you highlight how the report could affect the delivery of services to specific user groups of citizens in the Vale; and
- Your comments are not defamatory, discriminatory or contain offensive language.

7. **What Can't I Speak on at the Meeting?**

The right of the public to speak applies to all items on the agenda with the exception of the following:

- Apologies; Declarations of Interest and Minutes;
- If an agenda item has been withdrawn;
- Any agenda item that is not accompanied by a written report or any agenda item for which the Chairman has exercised her or his discretion to withdraw the right of public speaking, e.g. a presentation; and
- When confidential items are under consideration by the Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman will ask all members of the public and the press to vacate the meeting room.

The right to speak does not include the right to ask any questions of any Elected Member, Officer of the Council, invited attendees or any other speaker.

The Chairman of the Committee will have the discretion to stop a speaker before their allotted time has concluded if, in the Chairman's view, the speaker is making any comments that are, or appear to be, defamatory, discriminatory, contain offensive language, are contrary to the procedures laid out in the public speaking protocol, are unrelated to the agenda item under consideration, or constitute behaviour otherwise not appropriate for a Scrutiny Committee meeting.

8. **Attendance at the Meeting**

Members of the public who have registered to speak, are asked to arrive fifteen minutes before the scheduled start time of the meeting and should inform the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer of their arrival.

9. **Where Do I Sit?**

The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer will seat you accordingly and, at the appropriate time, the Chairman will ask you to move to a particular place within the Council Chamber where you can be clearly seen and heard.

10. **When Will I Speak During the Meeting?**

Normally, agenda items with public speaking will usually be considered first and will take the following format:

- (a) Responsible Officer from the Council to present the report;
- (b) If applicable, the Cabinet Member portfolio holder to address the Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) Members of the public who have registered to speak;
- (d) Other Elected Members (i.e. not members of the Scrutiny Committee); and
- (e) Scrutiny Committee Members.

11. **Can I Hand Out Supporting Documents or Use Visual Aids?**

You cannot hand out any supporting documents at the meeting or use any form of visual aid, such as photographs or diagrams. The deadline for registering to speak or to make written submissions is designed to provide information to the Scrutiny Committee in advance of the meeting in order to allow Members to give full consideration to the points raised.

12. **Once I Have Spoken**

After you have finished speaking, please be aware that you may be asked questions by the Committee Chairman and/or Committee Members to clarify some of your comments. You must not enter into a debate with the Committee Members, as this is not a public inquiry; but rather a meeting of the Council. You will then be asked to return to your seat.

The Committee will then discuss the issue further before making any recommendation(s) to the Cabinet (or Senior Officer with delegated responsibility) they deem appropriate.

If the Chairman advises that there are no further queries and if you wish, you are free to leave the meeting.

N.B. While a Scrutiny Committee will consider the comments made by public speakers and other elected Members when considering matters and forming recommendations, it has a duty to form its own conclusion as it sees appropriate.

13. **How Do I Register to Speak?**

The agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings are published on the Council's website, five clear days before the date of the meeting. Hard copies are also available for public inspection at the Civic Offices.

The appropriate application form to register to speak will be available on the Council's website from 8:30 am the following day. Members of the public who wish to register to speak at a meeting of one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees should apply by completing the appropriate application form by no later than 4.00 pm on the working day preceding the meeting.

(For example, if the meeting falls on a Monday, requests to speak should be received by 4.00 pm on the preceding Friday. If the meeting falls on a Tuesday, requests to speak should be received by 4.00 pm on the Monday.)

To register your interest you should complete the appropriate application form, which can be found at the following web link:

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/more_about_scrutiny.aspx

However, should you not have access to the internet, you can telephone Democratic and Scrutiny Services on 01446 709413 to register your interest or ask to inspect the papers.

Requests must include details of the agenda item and the relevant Scrutiny Committee at which you would like to speak.

Accepted applications will normally be dealt with in the order that they have been received.

All those registered to speak will be advised prior to the meeting, either by e-mail or through their contact telephone number, if their request to speak has been accepted.

14. **Written Representations**

We appreciate that you may find it difficult to address the Committee in person. If this is the case, we welcome written submissions of your views/opinions and these can be sent to:

Via Email: Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Or to the following postal address:

Democratic and Scrutiny Services
The Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices

Holton Road
BARRY
CF63 4RU

Written representations should be received by Democratic and Scrutiny Services by no later than 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

(For example, if the meeting falls on a Monday, representations should be received by 4.00 pm on the preceding Friday. If the meeting falls on a Tuesday, representations should be received by 4.00 pm on the Monday.)

15. **Additional Information**

Filming and recording of meetings will only be allowed if prior permission is sought in writing from, and granted by, the Managing Director in advance of the meeting.

Speakers should advise Democratic and Scrutiny Services in advance if they have any special needs or requirements.

If you have any questions concerning public speaking at a meeting of one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees, or the submission of written representations, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Team on the telephone number or e-mail address below.

Democratic Services
01446 709413
Email: Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk