

Truro City Council

Public Speaking at Planning Committee Meetings –

If you wish to speak at a Planning Committee meeting of Truro City Council then please contact the Planning Clerks via info@truro.gov.uk or by writing to Truro City Council, The Municipal Buildings, Boscawen Street, Truro, TR1 2NE. Hand delivered requests will be accepted.

The purpose of this policy is to give the public an opportunity to make their views known in person to Councillors on the Planning Committee. Letters of support or objection will continue to be considered. Please be aware that Truro City Council is only a consultee and that Cornwall Council determines the outcome of all planning applications.

Any questions or requests in respect of the implementation of this guidance will be deferred to the Chairman of the Planning Committee of Truro City Council, acting with advice from the Town Clerk or his/her representatives.

The information below attempts to answer the most likely frequently asked questions:

Who may speak?

A member of the public, either speaking for or against an application on (whether they have made written comments or not) may request to speak on a planning application that appears on Schedule 2 of the planning agenda for a City Council Planning Committee meeting.

Members of the public wishing to speak must register to speak in writing via email or letter to the Planning Clerks, no later than 5pm the Tuesday before the Planning Committee meeting (Thursdays). In the event of more than one objector or supporter/applicant wishing to speak, a spokesman should be agreed between them to speak for all persons in the same category (for or against), prior to the meeting. Professional agents may be used by any party entitled to speak.

If the potential speakers cannot reach an agreement as to who should speak then the person who registered first with the Planning Clerks will be given the opportunity.

If a major application is being considered, the Chairman, at their discretion, may permit an additional speaker for each side.

Public speaking is not an adversarial opportunity. It relates solely to the Committee procedure and decision-making process. The purpose of the speaking opportunity is not to seek to explain all points expressed (as the City Council is already aware of these via Cornwall Council's website) but to emphasise material planning related points before a decision is taken.

Please note that as the City Council is only a consultee, there is no requirement for the opposing side of an application to be notified that someone has registered to speak. Notification via the agenda is considered suitable due notice.

How much time will be allowed for speakers?

A maximum of three minutes per speaker is allotted to each standard planning application, totalling a maximum of six minutes (three for the supporter and three for the objector).

For major developments, the Chairman may, at his or her discretion, increase this time to five minutes per side.

Time limits will be strictly imposed and interruptions will not be allowed. If the time limit expires you will not be allowed to complete your presentation. Speakers should restrict their comments to material planning considerations only.

Can I speak on any planning application?

Only on those which are on Schedule 2 of the agenda for the meeting which are due to be determined by the Planning Committee. Speaking will not be allowed for applications appearing on Schedule 1.

How will I know when an application will be heard at Committee?

The City Council will advertise details of which applications will be determined by the Committee on its website and on the noticeboard outside of the Municipal Buildings in the form of the agenda for the meeting.

The City Council is only a consultee on planning applications; it does not determine their outcome but simply makes recommendations to the Local Planning Authority, Cornwall Council. Due to this (and due to Data Protection), the City Council does not have access to contact details of members of the public who have submitted comments to Cornwall Council and therefore is unable to notify individual commenters that an application is being considered at a Truro City Council Planning Committee meeting.

How do I arrange to speak at the meeting?

Contact the General Office at the City Council and request to speak to one of the Planning Clerks. In the first instance, you may call the office, but all requests to speak must be in writing (either email or letter). All requests must be received by 5pm on the Tuesday prior to the Planning Committee Meeting.

Phone: 01872 274766

Email: info@truro.gov.uk

When and where will the meetings held?

The meetings of the Planning Committee are held in the Municipal Building, Boscawen Street, Truro. They are usually held on a Thursday once a month at 7pm. The schedule of meetings can be requested from the City Council offices in advance but the applications to be determined at the meeting depend on when they are sent to the Planning Clerks from Cornwall Council.

What is the order of business at the meeting and what is the procedure for speaking?

The order of business is printed on the agenda, which is displayed on the website and on the board outside of the Municipal Building. You can obtain a copy by contacting the General Office. The Chairman will start the meeting by explaining the rules of public speaking and will announce each

application as it is to be determined. Each application will also be shown on a PowerPoint presentation.

Once a member of the public has spoken, questions will only be permitted (by Councillors, via the Chairman) if there is a need to clarify a point made during the three minutes – Councillors are not permitted to ask additional questions. Public address is not an opportunity to engage Councillors in dialogue.

Councillors will then discuss the application and make a recommendation which will be forwarded to Cornwall Council.

Who will be at the meeting?

The Committee is made up of 12 Councillors (one of whom is the Chairman, and two of whom are the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in ex-officio capacity). There are also Planning Clerks to advise the Chairman, minute the meeting, and operate the PowerPoint. The applicant and any member of the public may attend to listen to the debate and the media may be present.

What may I speak about?

This would depend on the application but speakers are urged to stick to material planning considerations as only these can be used by the Case Officer to determine the application. Examples may include government guidance and policy, matters of safety, visual impact, loss of privacy or light, conservation (buildings, trees or open land), safeguarding countryside or protected species, planning history, appeal decisions etc.

Please see Cornwall Council's Planning section of their website for more information – www.cornwall.gov.uk

Matters that are not normally considered include private property rights, individual morals, impact on property value, neighbourly disputes, that development may have already commenced, or loss of a private view.

May I ask any questions or provide additional information?

No. Questions are not permitted. Third party documentation is not allowed to be displayed or distributed.

How will my representations be recorded?

In the minutes, the Planning Clerks will note the names of speakers, the application they spoke on, and whether they spoke for or against. The minutes will not record the content of the speaker's dialogue. Minutes for the previous meeting are available on the website (or by request) at the time of the next agenda's publication.

What happens if an application is deferred?

If the Planning Committee decides to defer an application after hearing any speakers and discussing the application, then the next course of action will be determined by the Case Officer's deadline. If permitted, the application will be considered at the next meeting, however if the Case Officer's deadline does not permit this (and as the City Council is only a consultee), the application will be

determined by the Chairman under delegated powers, considering what has already been said by the speakers and the information given with the application.

If an application is deferred to another meeting, then the original speakers will have first refusal to speak at the subsequent meeting. If they do not wish to speak again, the usual process of determining a speaker will apply.

What happens if an application is withdrawn prior to being heard?

Applications are seldom withdrawn, however if an application is withdrawn before being presented at the meeting, those who have already expressed a wish to speak will be notified before the meeting, if sufficient time has been given for the Clerks to notify those involved of the withdrawal.

Can I make representations on more than one application?

Yes

How do I see the progress of the application after the City Council has made its recommendation?

Progress can be tracked via Cornwall Council's website (www.cornwall.gov.uk) through the planning portal. The PA number of an application or the street address can be typed into the planning portal's search function, which will then display the application as well as its status.

Once an application has been determined, a Case Officer's report is uploaded to the application on Cornwall Council's website.