



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

Guidance for applicants/agents and
objectors/supporters on getting involved in
the Planning Committee meetings

Introduction

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council encourages you to get involved in the planning process at a local level. We believe that there should be more public involvement in determining certain planning applications. The following notes are designed to help you to decide if you are eligible to speak and if so how to go about it.

The meetings

The Planning Committee of the Council meets once a month. A full meeting schedule is available on the Council's website at:

[Timetable of Meetings - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council \(causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk\)](https://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

Currently, meetings are held using a hybrid format, with some officers and elected members attending in person at the Council Offices, Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine, BT52 1EY and others including members of the public by the online communications platform MS Teams App. Meetings commence at 10.30am (unless otherwise stated). On occasion, where virtual meetings are unable to be held, it may be necessary to hold meetings solely in physical format. Details will be published on our website and via social media channels.

What applications are decided by the Planning Committee

- Applications which fall within the Major category of development.
- An application for planning permission where the application is made by the Council or an elected member of the Council, and
- The application relates to land in which the Council has an interest.
- Applications attracting more than 5 objections from separate postal addresses, or, a petition from more than 5 separate postal addresses raising material planning considerations, where the officer's recommendation is to approve. The objection must include the postal address for the objector to be considered under this exception.
- Applications where the Head of Planning considers that the proposal merits consideration by the Planning Committee.
- Applications included on the 'Contentious* Delegated Decisions to Issue' list where an Elected Member of Council has requested the application be referred to the Planning Committee. The request must be accompanied with a statement outlining the material planning reasons for the referral and be received prior to 10am on the Monday following the issue of the weekly list on which the application is listed. This contentious application list and referral process excludes Pre-Application Notices,

Applications for Works to Trees, Discharge of Conditions, Non-Material Changes, Certificates of Lawful Development and those applications where the refusal relates to road safety, flooding, or where additional information or amendments have been requested but not submitted in full within the timeframe provided.

* A contentious application is one where the decision is to refuse permission or consent. An authorised officer will liaise with the Chairperson and/or Vice Chairperson of the Planning Committee to determine whether the reasons which have been provided constitute material planning reasons so as to merit referral to Planning Committee. The requesting Member will be advised if the request has been successful or rejected.

- Applications submitted by or on behalf of the Chief Executive, a chief officer, a planning officer or elected member of the Council, or their immediate families (spouse, partner, children).
- A legal agreement is required.

How do I know if an application is going to Planning Committee

The applications to be determined by the Planning Committee are published one week prior to the Planning Committee meeting. The schedule is available on the Council's website at:

[Schedule of Applications for Planning Committee - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council \(causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk\)](http://causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

The agenda and Planning Committee Reports (recommendation of the Planning Department) are published one week prior the Planning Committee meeting on the Council's website at:

[Timetable of Meetings - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council \(causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk\)](http://causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

The Planning Committee Report is also available on the Northern Ireland Planning Portal (NIPP) one week prior to the Planning Committee meeting at:

[Simple Search \(planningni.gov.uk\)](http://planningni.gov.uk)

Elected Members

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council has 40 elected members representing 7 district electoral areas. Of these 16 members comprise the Planning Committee. You may wish to contact a member to discuss a planning application. However, it is advised that you do not approach a member of the Planning Committee as they cannot commit themselves to a decision before hearing all the evidence at the Planning Committee meeting. This is to avoid them compromising their position which

could lead to them not being able to take part in the determination of that application at the meeting.

Members not on the Planning Committee can attend the Planning Committee meetings and speak for or against an application on your behalf. Members of the public and their advisors are reminded that Members of the Planning Committee are not permitted to advocate for or against or lobby for or against a planning application before the Planning Committee when they are part of the Committee. This is mandated by the Northern Ireland Local Government Code of Conduct for Councillors and binds the Members of the Planning Committee.

A List of all Causeway Coast and Glens members is available on the Council's website at:

[Councillors - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council](http://causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)
(causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

A list of Causeway Coast and Glens members who are on the Planning Committee is available on the Council's website at:

[Planning Committee Members - Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council](http://causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)
(causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk)

How can I register my desire to speak?

All parties wishing to address the Committee on a planning application must register their wish to do so with the Planning Department either in writing to Planning Department, Cloonavin, 66 Portstewart Road, Coleraine BT52 1EY or by emailing planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk. All requests to address the Committee on a planning application must be received by **10am on the Monday immediately prior to the Planning Committee meeting** and must provide their name, whether they are speaking in support or objecting to the application and the planning reference number of the application on which they wish to speak. Only those registered to speak within the timeframe will be allowed to address the Committee either to speak or answer questions.

It is important to note the following:

- Speakers cannot circulate any documentation, including the use of PowerPoint presentation, at the meeting.
- Speakers will have a total of 5 minutes for those objecting to the proposal
- The applicant/agent/supporters for the application will also have a total of 5 minutes speaking rights

On occasion where the consideration of an application is deferred by Members to a subsequent Committee meeting, those who have previously registered to speak on that application will be allowed to address the Committee at the subsequent meeting without the need to register to speak again. Those who did not register to speak when the application was previously before Committee cannot register to speak at any subsequent meeting that the application is being considered.

How long can I speak?

The total time allowed for representations from objectors and those speaking will be a maximum of 5 minutes. Therefore if 2 objectors or more wish to address the Committee the 5 minutes will be divided between those speakers. The Chair will ask speakers if they have agreed the allocation of the speaking time. If no agreement is reached, the time will be allocated equally against each speaker. A spokesperson for the objectors may address the Committee on behalf of all objectors. The Chair of the Committee may decide on the day of the meeting to extend the time allowed due to unusual or exceptional circumstances. The maximum time allowed will be an additional 3 minutes. The same provisions will apply to those wishing to speak in support of the application.

The total time allowed for representations by Elected Members of Council, MLA and/or MP will be 5 minutes in support and in objection to an application. Therefore, if 2 elected member speakers or more wish to address the Committee one in support and one in objection to the application, they will each have 5 minutes. If 2 or more Elected Members wish to address the Committee in support of the application, or 2 or more in objection to the application, the 5 minutes shall be divided between those speakers.

What happens at the meeting?

The order in which the applications are considered is set down in the agenda. At the discretion of the Committee, a particular application may be brought forward early, especially if there are many members of the public present for that item. The application shall be presented by the Planning Department and then you will be invited to speak in the following order:

1. Objectors.
2. Supporters including the Applicant or their Agent
3. Elected Members of Council, MLA and/or MP

Can I use visual aids or hand anything to Members?

No, your comments must be made orally.

What arguments can I use?

Only those relating to planning matters, e.g., appearance of the proposed development, effect on the amenity of the area or your property, access, landscaping, materials, etc. Matters relating to the applicant's personal motives or financial status, views, boundary disputes etc., are not relevant.

You are advised that anything you say should not contain abuse or defamatory opinions. If you do so you may be asked to leave the meeting. Please do not interrupt or ask questions of other speakers or make any comments unless invited to speak.

When is the decision made?

A decision by the Planning Committee is usually made immediately after the discussion by a majority vote of the Planning Committee Members. Sometimes a decision is deferred for further information, revised plans or a Planning Committee site visit. Deferred cases are brought back to a future meeting and, as set out above, your previous speaking rights request carries forward to the next meeting. You do not need to register to speak again. Please be aware that the members balance different factors and come to an objective decision based on planning considerations. If the Planning Committee refuses an application contrary to the Officers' recommendation, that decision will need supported on appeal should this situation arise.

Can I appeal against the decision?

Only the applicant can appeal against the decision, if the application has been refused, or against conditions, to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC).

If you wish to challenge the lawfulness of a decision, you can apply for a judicial review of the decision in the High Court. Details of judicial review procedures are available on the Judiciary NI website <https://www.judiciaryni.uk/>.

What happens once a decision is made?

Persons who have written to the Council shall be notified of the outcome in writing. The Council acknowledges that on some occasions the outcome of an application may be different to what you had hoped for. However, you should be aware that the Planning Committee balances a range of factors and determines applications on what it considers to be in the public interest.

Links to other Guidance which you may find useful?

[Revised Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee 02 March 2022](#)

[Scheme of Delegation for the Planning Department](#)

[Making a Representation on a Planning Application](#)



news letter

NEW PORTAL

The new Planning Portal will be launched on 5 December 2022. This will allow customers to:

- submit planning applications online
- view, comment on and track live planning applications
- report breaches of planning control (enforcement complaints)
- submit requests for regional property certificates

A public register where customers can search for and view historical applications across Northern Ireland (excluding Mid Ulster) will also be provided.

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Transition Arrangements

As part of the preparations for this, the current portal will close over the weekend of 18th – 20th November 2022 to facilitate data extraction and all users must be logged out of the system by 1pm on 18th November 2022. It will become available again on Monday 21st November but will be limited to read only access for most users. This includes most Planning staff and Consultees and means that there will be reduced capacity to process planning applications during the transition period as no updates will be permitted to the current system unless there are urgent and exceptional circumstances which senior management have authorised.

Any new planning applications received during the transition period must be held and checked offline. These will not be advertised, neighbour notified or new consultations issued until the new Planning Portal is up and running in December.

The current Public Access website will continue to be available during the transition period so that citizens can view applications but it will no longer accept online comments or track applications. Instead customers can submit comments to the Councils or Department via e-mail or by post. Contact details for the authorities are available on the nidirect website at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/contacts/planning-offices-ni>

In addition, Public Access user details will not be transferred. Therefore, if you currently have a Public Access account for tracking or commenting on applications, this will close and the details will be deleted when the website is taken offline. Should you wish to use the features on the new Planning Portal or to submit applications online, you will need to create a new user account upon first use of the system after it launches.

PREPARING FOR CHANGE

Work continues on preparing for change and each Planning Authority has their own local change plan to take account of the impact of the switchover to the new Planning Portal on their business processes. If you have any concerns or queries regarding the specific arrangements in a particular office, please contact the local Change Lead concerned.



TRAINING

The rollout of end user Training has commenced and will continue up to and beyond the system launch on 5 December. A number of support materials, such as user guides and demo videos, are available to users.



planning portal news letter

PLANNING CONSULTATIONS

In preparation for the current system closing, it is important that all Consultees try to close out as many planning application consultations as possible by close of business on 17th November so as to reduce the number of open cases to transfer.

A list of any remaining open cases must then be collated by the Consultee so that these can be compared to the cases on the new system when it goes live. In addition, if a Consultee completes any urgent consultations offline during the 2 week transition period a record of these must be kept so they can be closed on the new system by the Consultee. Consultees should continue to liaise with the relevant Planning Authority if they have queries about particular cases or to request extensions to deadlines.

Consultees will be given early access to the new Consultee Hub week commencing 28 November so that they can set up team members. A user manual is being finalised and will be made available before go live. A brief overview of the Consultee Hub is available on YouTube (link below).

PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS

A brief overview of the online services are available on YouTube

1. Submit an application online
https://youtu.be/xLRev_sgJCA
2. View, comment on and track applications
<https://youtu.be/m-NIQ3N1Oto>
3. Consultee Hub
<https://youtube/DLSWdNvQWJk>

REGIONAL PROPERTY CERTIFICATES

The cut-off date for the receipt of property certificate requests by the Regional Property Certificates Unit in Enniskillen is 5pm on 16th November

Any requests submitted after this point, will be held offline and will not be uploaded or consultations issued until the new Planning Portal is up and running in December.

Any requests entered onto the current system by close of business on 17th November will continue to be processed until the work queue is cleared. Therefore those Planning staff and Consultees who currently answer property certificate consultations should continue to do so on the current system until all requests are answered. It is expected that most Property Certificate consultations will be completed by 30 November.

Keep Informed

 @Departmentforinfrastructure

 @deptinfra

Contact Info

Programme Management Office on:

 028 90 541 058

 Planning.Portal@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

