Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Implementation Date: 01 September 2023

Template for Requesting Speaking Rights at the Planning Committee

The Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee provides for interested person(s) to register to speak on a planning application that is scheduled to be determined at the next meeting of the Planning Committee. This request must be received by the Planning Department no later than 10am on the Monday before the Planning Committee meeting via email account planning@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk.

Planning Reference	LA01/2023/1276/F
Name	Alderman Aaron Callan
Contact Details	Tel: Email:
We are committed to ensuring our meetings are accessible and inclusive. **Please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments to support your participation (e.g. accessible formats, changes to agenda timing, or other requirements).**	
Support or Objection – please tick relevant box	X Support Objection
Written representation summarising key points to be addressed and supplementary information in support of your case (minimum font size 10 and maximum length two sides of A4 page). Chair and Members, As elected representatives, we have a responsibility to scrutinise development proposals carefully. We also have a responsibility to recognise opportunities that could deliver something worthwhile for our area.	

I believe this proposal presents such an opportunity.

These former mill buildings are part of the Roe Valley's working history. They tell a story of industry, history, enterprise and of the people whose livelihoods depended on this landscape. Their restoration would preserve something tangible for future generations.

But buildings need more than recognition of their historical importance. They need investment, maintenance and a sustainable purpose, and the proposed community facility offers a means of securing all three.

The officer's report, accepts that these buildings are locally important, suitable for conversion and capable of sympathetic restoration. It also accepts that the design would integrate without significant adverse visual impact.

Those are substantial positive findings. I would ask Members to give them proper weight.

There is an obvious difficulty with suggesting that this project should instead take place in a town centre. Community activities can take place elsewhere, but the restoration of these mills can only happen here. Their relationship with the river and the industrial landscape is precisely what makes the project valuable.

That does not remove the need to consider relevant policy. It does mean that policy must be applied with a proper understanding of what this application is trying to achieve. I also believe we should distinguish between objections to the principle and matters requiring a practical solution.

Parking, controlled access, pedestrian safety and arrangements with park management are important. They need clear and workable agreements. We should expect the applicant, landowner and relevant public bodies to work together to achieve them.

Ecology and flood risk must, of course, be properly addressed. I am asking for clarity about what remains outstanding and whether there is a reasonable route to resolving it, but it is evident visually that water escaping from the historical layde structures must be resolved.

There is a wider question of stewardship here. Continued deterioration carries a cost: a loss of heritage, a greater future repair burden and the possibility that these buildings will eventually be beyond economic rescue.

A managed community use could help turn that liability into an asset, supporting education, practical skills and the visitor experience within the Roe Valley, and I understand that some grant bodies have already expressed an interest in the project.

Chair, I support this proposal and want to see a constructive route to approval.
We should give a worthwhile restoration project a fair opportunity to succeed.

Thank you.

