

PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1 DEFINITION

To encourage participation in Council and Committee Meetings, members of the public are invited to ask questions of or make statements to:

- The Mayor
- Deputy Mayor or
- Chairman of a Committee

The time allocated for public speaking will be restricted to fifteen minutes for each meeting with a maximum speaking time of three minutes per person.

2 SCOPE

Questions at meetings of the Town Council must be relevant to matters in relation to which the Town Council has powers or duties or matters relating to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the town.

Questions posed at Committee Meetings must be relevant to the Terms of Reference of that Committee.

The Council will not permit public speaking that is abusive or libellous, relates to a specific or identifiable person, that involves personal or prejudicial issues nor matters associated with political parties or organisations where there is recourse to the courts, a tribunal or to a Government Minister. The interpretation of the above criteria by the Town Clerk is final. Persons participating in public speaking must be on the electoral roll for one of the Council's three wards.

3 NOTICE

Although it is not necessary to give notice in the case of several residents wishing to speak priority will be given to those who have provided advance notice of their intention to the Town Clerk.

No person may submit more than one question but one supplementary question may be asked provided that this can be completed within the allocated three minute period.

4 PROCEDURE

Anyone who wishes to speak is asked to make themselves known to the Town Clerk or the Committee Clerk before the start of the meeting. In the case of a number of residents wishing to speak on the same item/topic they might, due to time constraints, be asked to appoint a 'spokesperson' to represent their collective views.

5 ANSWERS

An answer can take any of the following forms:

- A direct verbal answer;
- A reference to one of the Council's publications if it answers the question; or
- If it would not be practical or appropriate to answer a question verbally, the Member will supply a written answer to the questioner within seven days.

Any question which cannot be dealt with during public question time either because of lack of time or because of the non-attendance of the Member to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer.

Unless the Mayor decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question but any Member may move that a matter raised by a question be referred to the full Council or the appropriate Committee. Once seconded, such a Motion will be voted on without discussion.

Responsible Officer	Town Clerk	Date effective from	Nov 2009	Review date	March 2017
Author	Town Clerk	Date last amended	May 2016		