



# **POLICY ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS**

**Version Control:**

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## Policy on Public Participation in Meetings

The format of the public session should be ordered by the Chairman of the Council *or Planning* Committee as part of his/her role in presiding over the meeting, and in accordance with adopted Standing Orders.

### **Public open session at the beginning of each Council and Planning Committee Meeting:**

- A 15 minute session is set aside at the commencement of each Council meeting, and at each meeting of the *Planning Committee*, for people to address Councillors (*Standing Orders 3e and 3f*). This open session must be brought to a close after the 15 minute period. *Public Open Sessions will only be held at the beginning of other Committee meetings by agreement of the Council (Standing Order 4d (ix))*.
- If an issue is specified on the agenda, the Council or Committee may take comments/suggestions raised in the public session into consideration when formally debating the issue.
- If an issue raised during the public session is not already specified on the agenda, such comments/suggestions will be considered formally at the next appropriate Council or Committee meeting, but no decision can be taken by the Council or Committee at the meeting at which the issue is raised (*Standing Order 3h*).
- If detailed issues are to be raised, it would be helpful if they were put in writing to the Council to be raised as agenda items at the appropriate Committee meeting, rather than part of the public session.
- The public session will be minuted in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders.
- Good manners and respect are expected during the session.
- Councillors should not engage in discussion with members of the public; members of the public should not expect to have questions posed to them by Members of the Council.
- The Council or Committee should separate information-gathering from decision-taking – ie decisions on issues take place during consideration of specific items on the agenda; it is up to the Chairman of the Council or Committee to draw a line between interaction with the public and the Council or Committee making decisions.
- Members of the public are permitted to speak during this session, but may not participate in any other part of the meeting without a formal resolution of the Council or Committee.
- Groups should appoint a spokesperson to represent the group – the spokesperson, or individuals, will be allowed to speak for three minutes only – it is up to the Chairman of the meeting to control this, and bring a contribution to a close (*Standing Order 3k*).
- When a spokesperson, or individual, has spoken, he or she should not speak again.

### **Planning Committee - open session at the beginning of each meeting:**

- Ground rules apply as for the open session at Council or Committee meetings.
- A 15 minute session is set aside at the commencement of a meeting for people to address Councillors in relation to any planning application. This open session must be brought to a close after the 15 minute period.
- The Clerk will liaise with the persons/groups to obtain information for the Chairman of Planning Committee prior to the commencement of the open session.
- Having put a case applicants/objectors may, if they wish, wait until the Planning Committee is ready to consider planning applications on the agenda. Usually, should members of the public be present then the relevant planning application is brought forward on the List of Applications to be considered. Members of the public are allowed to listen to the debate at this stage but there is no opportunity for further discussion between the public and Members.
- Members of the public may leave the meeting if they so wish, having heard the discussion on the planning application and the comments made; equally, they are entitled to observe the whole meeting.
- The representatives of the local Civic Societies are allowed to address the Committee on concerns regarding planning applications; this is at the direction of the Chairman of the Planning Committee.

This guidance will be on public display at meetings.