

Public Participation

During the coronavirus situation the normal rules on public participation (below) may be altered. Please see the relevant meeting agenda for more information.

Wiltshire Council welcomes public attendance and involvement in all its public committee meetings. Public participation can take the form of presenting petitions, making statements or asking questions.

Should you wish to submit a Petition or use the council's ePetition facility, further information is available at the [Petitions Homepage \(link\)](#). Full details of all the public participation rules and procedures are available as part of Part 4 of the Council's constitution: [Part 4 – Council Rules of Procedure](#)

For Council and most other committees of the council the procedure is as listed below

Statements

- Up to three speakers are permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes each on any agenda item although this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion.
- Those wishing to make a statement must register to do so at least 10 minutes prior to the meeting by contacting Democratic Services via the officer listed on the agenda.
- Statements must be relevant to the powers and duties of the Council, be clear and concise. Statements must not be defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper; relate to any non-determined planning or licensing application; or name or identify individual service users, members of staff or members of staff of partner agencies

Questions

- The total time set aside for questions and answers will be limited to 15 minutes which can be extended at the Chairman's discretion
- No person or organisation may submit more than two questions at any one meeting. No question may be sub-divided into more than two related parts
- In order to be guaranteed of receiving a written response prior to the meeting questions must be delivered in writing or by electronic mail to the Proper Officer no later than 5pm four clear working days before the meeting. The period of notice is to allow sufficient time for a response to be formulated. Any question received between that deadline and no later than 5pm two clear working days before the meeting, may only receive a verbal response at the meeting. Any questions received after this date will be received at the next meeting
- In exceptional circumstances and in cases of urgency the Chairman may allow questions without the full period of notice having been given where he or she is satisfied there is sufficient justification. In these circumstances, there is no guarantee that a full reply will be given at the meeting
- Notice of each question must include the name and address of the questioner, (in respect of an organisation, the name of the organisation and the questioner's position within the organisation) and to whom the question is to be put

- The question must be relevant to the powers and duties of the Council and be clear and concise. A question will be rejected where it does not relate to a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the council's administrative area; is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, vexatious, unlawful or otherwise improper; relates to any non determined planning or licensing application; requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information; names or identifies individual service users, members of staff or members of staff of partner agencies; is considered by the Chairman to be inappropriate for the particular meeting
- Where a question is rejected on the above grounds, the questioner shall be advised of the reasons for rejection. The Chairman of a committee's ruling on rejection of a question will be final following consultation with the Monitoring Officer
- For each question submitted, the questioner will be permitted to ask one supplementary question without notice which must be relevant to the original question or arise from the response given. The Chairman may reject the supplementary question on the grounds listed above
- For each question submitted, the questioner will be permitted to ask one supplementary question without notice which must be relevant to the original question or arise from the response given.
- Ordinarily, no debate shall be allowed on questions presented or responses given. In exceptional circumstances only, the Chairman may allow discussion.

Application at Planning Committees, Cabinet, Licensing and Area Boards

- In respect of public participation at the Strategic Planning Committee and Area Planning Committees, please refer to this [Planning Committee Public Speaking Note](#)
- In respect of public participation at Cabinet meetings, please refer to [Part7 - Cabinet Procedure Rules \(link\)](#). Presently, the Leader welcomes any statements from any number of persons at the meeting. For detailed responses, questions should be submitted in writing in advance to the named officer on the agenda.
- Public Participation at area boards is encouraged throughout the meeting, and is governed by guidance issued from time to time by the Leader of the Council
- Where a licensing sub-committee has been convened to consider an application, anyone may attend, but only those who have made a written representation in support or objection to the application may speak. If there are large numbers who have made representations, it is requested a spokesperson be appointed where possible so as to avoid repetition of arguments and questioning at the meeting.