

How a member of the public can ask a questions Committee Meetings

General

Members of the public may put questions directly to the Full Council, Executive, Overview & Scrutiny Committees, Audit Scrutiny Committee, and Standards Committee. These will usually be taken at the beginning of each Committee.

A meeting of 15 minutes will be allowed with a maximum period of three minutes per questioner.

Order of questions

Questions will be asked in the order in which notice was received but the Chair may group together similar questions.

Notice of questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given. You can email send your question to comsec@teignbridge.gov.uk no later than two working days before the day of the meeting.

Number of questions

At any one meeting no person may submit more than three questions and no more than three such questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

Scope of questions

The question must relate to a matter to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the district.

The Democratic Services Team Leader may reject a question if it:

- is a planning matter;
- is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the District;
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been previously put in the past six months; or

- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The Chair has discretion to reject a public question subject to consultation with the Independent person, to assess the appropriateness of this discretion being exercised, given the circumstances and nature of the question.

Record of questions

When a question is submitted a copy will be sent to the Chair and the councillor to whom it is put if that is not the Chair. The person submitting the question will be advised that it has been accepted and when and where it may be asked. If the question is rejected the reasons for this will be given.

Copies of all questions will be circulated to all Committee Members and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

Asking the question at the meeting

The Chair will invite the questioner to put the question. If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the Chair to put the question on their behalf.

Response to questions

The committee may debate the issue for up to 10 minutes and may respond in one of the following ways:

- A verbal response made at the meeting; or
- An officer will be asked to respond to the questioner in writing with a copy being sent to all Committee members; or
- The committee may decide to place the item on the agenda for a future meeting for further consideration and request a written report on the matter.

Right to respond

A questioner who has put a question in person may also put one supplementary question without notice.

A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original question or the reply. The Chair may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds outlined above in *Scope of Questions*. The member of the public asking the question shall have the opportunity to respond for a maximum of two minutes. No further debate will be permitted.

Answers at the meeting

Responses may be given verbally by the Chair, Leader, other Councillor, e.g. Portfolio Holder or Council officer, invited to do so by the Chair of the meeting, or in certain circumstances questions may be referred to another Committee at the discretion of the Chair. In exceptional circumstances answers may be dealt with by written answer.

After the meeting

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 Members to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by a written answer.

Members of the public who submit a question or a request to speak at a committee will have their name published within the minutes and they will be recorded where a meeting is broadcast live. Should members of the public wish to remain anonymous then they should contact comsec@teignbridge.gov.uk in order to make this request.

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