



Public Participation at Full Council Meetings

Dorset Council welcomes public attendance and involvement at all of its Full Council meetings. You can participate in a meeting by attending and listening to councillors debate and make decisions or by asking a question or making a statement. A period of 15 minutes is set aside at the start of each meeting to receive public questions and statements.

How does public participation work?

Any member of the public living or working in the Dorset Council area, or any appointed representative of any organisation operating within the council's area may ask a question or make a statement. Petitions can also be presented at Full Council in line with the procedure set out in the council's petition scheme.

Dorset Council also welcomes the attendance of Town and Parish Council representatives at Full Council meetings.

How will I know what is on the agenda for a meeting?

Agendas are published 5 working days before the meeting and are available to view at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk. Agendas are also available to view by downloading a free app called **modern.gov** onto your personal laptop or tablet and on some smartphones.



How do I submit a question or statement?

Question or statements must be submitted to the council at least **3 working days** before the meeting. Full Council meetings are held on a Thursday, the deadline for the receipt of questions and statements is **8.30am on the Monday** prior the meeting.

The full text of the question or statement can be emailed to: democraticservicesteamb@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk.

Or you can phone the council (01305 251000) and ask to speak to a member of the Democratic Services Team.

When registering your request to speak please provide the following information:

- Your name, address and contact details;
- The name of the councillor to whom the question is directed (Leader or Portfolio Holder);
- The full text of the question or statement in plain English.

How many questions and statements can I submit?

A person or organisation can submit either 2 questions, or 2 statements or 1 question and 1 statement.

You will have 3 minutes to read out a statement at the meeting.

If you are submitting a question you will also have 3 minutes to read out your question, this enables you to have a short pre-amble, to put the question into context, but the question itself must be a single question, any sub-divided questions will count towards the maximum of 2 questions.

The question or statement that you submit prior to the meeting must be the same as the text that you read out in the meeting. This is because the response that you receive will be based on the text of the question that you have submitted. Only the text of the statement that you submit in advance will be recorded in the minutes.

What happens at the meeting?

The Chairman will invite you to read out your question or statement at the appropriate point in the meeting, usually at the beginning of the meeting. Representatives from Town and parish Councils will normally be invited to speak first followed by members of the public; councillors will listen to all of the questions and statements made. The most appropriate Portfolio Holder or the Leader will read out a response to the question at the meeting. Statements will not receive a response from a councillor. Once you have received the response to your question or have read out your statement you are free to leave the meeting.

Is there a limit on the number of people allowed to speak?

There is no limit on the number of people able to submit a question or statement however a maximum of 15 minutes is set aside for public questions and statements. Occasionally this time may be extended by the Chairman if it is appropriate to do so. If the time runs out before you have the opportunity to ask your question the response will be sent directly to you.