

Public Participation at Public Meetings (Have Your Say!)

Introduction

As part of its aim to be an effective community leader in touch with what really matters to local people, North Norfolk District Council encourages public engagement at Council meetings.

Please read this guidance to find out how you can make your voice heard at Council meetings.

How can I find out about Committee meetings?

A programme of meetings for the year May to April is published early in January and can be viewed on the Council's website at: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/democratic-services/committee-meeting-dates/>

An agenda for each meeting is published five working days in advance of the meeting. Paper copies may be obtained by calling 01263 516010 or by email: democratic services@north-norfolk.gov.uk. They can also be viewed at the Council Offices. Most meetings are held in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer.

What items can I speak on?

If you live in, or have a business interest in the District Council area you may ask one question or address a meeting on a matter which is on the public agenda for the meeting, or within the terms of reference of the Cabinet, Working Party or Committee. There are some exceptions to this; for example if the business is private or if the Committee is making a quasi-legal decision.

Please note that separate advice has been produced for the Development Committee – please see the leaflet 'Have your say on Planning Applications and Tree Preservation Orders' – available on the website at: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/info/democracy/have-your-say-at-development-committee-meetings/>

How does it work?

If you to speak at a committee meeting you should notify the committee administrator of your intention to speak at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. If you wish to ask a question then it should be submitted in writing so that a response can be prepared. If you are making a statement then a brief summary should be provided.

Subject to the discretion of the Chairman to extend or limit the time available for public participation, a period of up to 30 minutes will be available at the start of the meeting for public participation on issues within the remit of the meeting.

If you wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item you are requested to arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. This is to allow time for the Committee Chairman to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. You will be asked to give your name and contact details before the meeting starts.

The Committee clerk will show you where to sit when you are addressing the meeting. You will be allowed 3 minutes to speak, so please aim to be concise. A bell will sound at the end of the 3 minutes. If an answer is provided at the meeting you will have the opportunity to ask one supplementary question, which must relate to the subject matter. The time allowed for this is one minute, after which the bell will be sounded again and you will be asked to return to your seat whether or not you have finished.

The Chairman will disallow any comment if it is inappropriate, abusive or refers to confidential matters.

What happens next?

Where you are present to put a question, this will be answered straight away, if possible. If not, a written answer will be given within 7 working days and the reply reported to the next meeting of that committee.

Members of the public have statutory rights to attend council committee meetings and you are welcome to stay for the rest of the meeting if you wish to. There is a presumption of openness but on occasion it may be necessary for the Council or Committee to go into closed session. This will relate to a particular item and be for a specific reason, as defined by statute. If this is likely to happen it will usually have been indicated on the agenda.

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