

Select Committee on Health and Adult Social Care Public Involvement Protocol

Public Involvement Protocol

1. Who can raise an issue?

Any individual or organisation that is within the borough or uses facilities in the borough can contact any member of the Select Committee with a service related issue falling within the remit of the Committee. 14 days notice is normally required but can be waived at the discretion of the Chair.

Employees of the Council wishing to make representations as private citizens can do so as long as representations do not relate to issues connected with their employment.

The opportunities for participation are:-

- To make a statement expressing views on a matter on the meeting agenda or on the Committee's work programme or within the Committee's remit.
- To make a written submission of evidence in relation to a matter on the meeting agenda.
- To participate as a witness to assist the committee in its examination of an issue.

2. What should a member of the Select Committee do if contacted?

- Identify that the issue properly falls within the remit of the Committee.
- Check that the matter is directly related to Council policy or a decision. If it doesn't then the Member should either raise it with the relevant officer or refer the person to that officer.
- Ask if it is possible for a summary of the issue to be put in writing or emailed to the Chair, including reasons why they want the Select Committee to research the issue. If it isn't possible for the person to write or e-mail, the Member should take the details and forward them on to the Chair.
- Advise the person that the Chair will be in touch with them to explain the intended proposals for an issue and what the options are.

3. What can the Chair do with the enquiry?

- Decide it does not fall within the remit of the Committee and refer to an appropriate officer asking for a response also to go to the Member who took the enquiry originally.
- Refer the matter direct to an officer asking for a response to be made to the individual with a copy to the Chair and original Member.

- Include on the next agenda so copies are circulated with the Committee papers.
- Ask the person to attend the Committee to put their issue to the Committee.

4. Will there be any limit on the number of public items at a Committee?

A maximum of 3 items with a total allotted time of 30 minutes will be allowed. If there are more than 3 items when the agenda is being finalised, the Chair will be responsible for prioritising which 3 will be dealt with at the Committee.

The agenda for each meeting will provide an opportunity at the beginning of the meeting for items from the public to be heard. However, the Chair of the meeting has the discretion to allow submissions to be made at the beginning of the relevant agenda item.

The Chair will, if necessary, make a judgement at the meeting to try to ensure that those who are making submissions on opposite points of view on the same subject are treated equally.

5. What role will the person have at Committee?

At the Chair's discretion, the person will have the opportunity to ask their question/present their issue (maximum 5 minute slot).

When notifying the person of the date of the Committee the Chair will inform the person that the advantage of them attending is that it will give Members the opportunity to ask them questions, so they have a better understanding of the issue before agreeing how to tackle it.

6. Support for public participants

The prospect of speaking at a meeting may be daunting. Every help and support will be made available to those who wish to use this scheme including the reading out of a submission or statement by the Committee Clerk, if requested. Councillors will welcome members of the public and treat them with courtesy and understanding. To assist understanding, those making statements to meetings may wish to provide a written text or summary of the points mentioned. This should be passed to the Committee clerk.

7. How can the Committee respond to the issue raised?

It is necessary for members to have a complete understanding of the issues raised by the public. Members will be allowed to ask factual questions of a person making a submission. If the subject matter of a submission is already on the agenda for the meeting, it will normally be heard when that item on the agenda is reached, unless the Chair wishes the person to speak at the beginning of the meeting instead. If necessary and convenient to the other business, the Chair or the meeting itself may agree to advance that item in the order of proceedings.

The Committee can ask for a report from the relevant officer or Lead Member to be presented at the next most convenient meeting, subject to the work programme. The Committee can refer the item to one of the working groups that the Committee has agreed to establish. If the submission is made on a

matter of community concern or interest which is not a responsibility of the Council, the matter will be referred to the relevant responsible body for consideration. The person who made the submission will be informed of the outcome of the consideration given. The meeting will decide on the most appropriate course of action.

8. What falls outside the procedure?

There are some matters that need to fall outside the scope of this proposed public participation. These are:-

- An individual's circumstances. It is inappropriate for such details to be aired in public and the relevant Complaints Procedure is the accepted route for ensuring such matters are addressed.
- Contractual matters.
- Matters which are, or should be, subject to established appeals or legal procedures or which have been decided by an appeal or legal hearing.
- Allegations against individual councillors or officers (in such cases the Council's complaints or code of conduct procedures must be used).