

## Public Participation

Members of the public are able to ask a question of the Chairman of the Council's Cabinet at meetings of the full Council or at meetings of the Council's Cabinet. A question may also be asked of the Chairman of the Standards Committee. In certain circumstances presentations may be made to the Development Management Committee, the Highways and Traffic Orders Committees or the Public Rights of Way Committee.

To ask a question or make a presentation you must live in the area served by the County Council.

You may also, at any time, deliver or present a petition to the Council. There are various actions which the Council may take (depending upon the numbers of signatures your petition has), such as a senior officer attending a scrutiny committee, consideration of your petition at a Council meeting, holding a public meeting or researching the matter further. For further information you may like to read our Petition Scheme at [www.devon.gov.uk/part\\_4\\_rules\\_of\\_procedure\\_for\\_meetings\\_of\\_the\\_county\\_council\\_the\\_cabinet\\_and\\_committees.pdf](http://www.devon.gov.uk/part_4_rules_of_procedure_for_meetings_of_the_county_council_the_cabinet_and_committees.pdf)

## Questions to Council, Cabinet and Standards Committee

### Are there any restrictions on what questions I may ask?

No, provided the question is not frivolous or defamatory and does not concern a confidential issue which would normally be considered in private. Otherwise you may ask a question about any matter which relates to the responsibilities of the Council, the Cabinet or the Standards Committee. If you are not sure about which meeting is responsible please contact the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Secretariat who will be happy to advise you.

### How do I table my question?

If you wish to submit a question then you must put it in writing (by letter, fax or email) by 12 noon on the fourth working day

before the date of the meeting (i.e. if the meeting is on a Friday then the question must be submitted by the preceding Monday). Our contact details are shown on the back of this leaflet. Where your question relates to a report on an agenda for a meeting and that report is not available by this time you may nonetheless be entitled to ask a question in certain circumstances. Please ring the number referred to above for clarification.

All questions will be printed in the order received and will be circulated to everyone at the meeting together with a written response. You will not be asked to read out your question but you will be entitled to ask one supplementary question arising from the answer you have received.

When you submit a question or request it would be helpful if you could provide a telephone number so that we can contact you if there is any ambiguity in your question or if for some reason no reply can be given.

### How much time is allowed for petitions and/or questions?

A maximum of 30 minutes in total. If there are a lot of questions and yours cannot be dealt with in that time then you will be sent a response by letter.

### How many questions may I ask?

You may only ask one question at any meeting of the Council, the Cabinet or the Standards Committee. If more than one question is received or a single question contains a number of component questions, then only the first question will be accepted.

### If I put in a question do I actually have to be there?

No. If you cannot attend the answer to your question will be published with the minutes of the meeting. If the meeting was webcast the answer will also be available with the archive for that meeting. If you do attend you will be invited to sit at the Committee table while your question is dealt with.

### Is there a limit on the length of any question?

No, but it would be best to keep it as short as possible to avoid any misunderstanding. 50 words are normally sufficient to frame a clear and direct question.

### How will the answer to my question be given?

The answer to your question will be put in writing and will be circulated at the meeting together with the question and published on the web with the minutes of the meeting.

### Once my question has been asked, may I ask another?

Yes, you will be entitled to ask one 'supplementary' question arising from the answer given to your original question.

## Presentations to Development Management, Highways and Traffic Orders and Public Rights of Way Committees

Presentations may also be made to Development Management, Highways and Traffic Orders and Public Rights of Way Committees in relation to certain types of application, Traffic or Footpath Orders respectively, to be considered by those Committees at the meeting at which the Order is to be considered. The rules governing these presentations are set below:-

- the presentation will be strictly limited to 3 minutes;
- participants will be invited to make their presentation from the Committee table where a position will be allocated for their use;
- presentations will be made following a short introduction from the appropriate officer of the County Council;
- there will be no right to participate in the debate;

- there will be no right to ask questions of officers or Members;
- presentations will normally be on the basis of 1) Applicant 2) Objector and 3) Supporter as appropriate but detailed operation of the procedure will be entirely at the discretion of the Chairman;
- there may be presentations from applicants, objectors and supporters. If one decides not to participate the others will not be precluded from making a presentation;
- where a planning application (or ROMP application) Traffic Order or Public Footpath Order arouses a large number of objections or support, those concerned may be asked to nominate a representative to present their views. In such cases the identity of the spokesperson must also be made known to the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Secretariat prior to the start of the meeting. If necessary the Chief Executive will draw this requirement to the attention of the objectors/supporters;
- participants will only be able to make **one** presentation to the Development Management Committee on a particular application - no matter how many times the same application comes before the Committee and participants may not speak when the Committee is only considering the report of a site visit.
- if applicants, objectors or supporters wish to make a presentation to any of these Committees they must give notification to the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Secretariat, County Hall, Exeter (Tel: 01392 382300) by 12 noon on the third working day before the relevant meeting. It will be up to the applicant, objector or supporter to register their wish to make a presentation. The County Council will not invite participation or send reminders. Alternately you may contact us in writing or by fax or email. The contact details are shown below.

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

Agendas are normally published one week in advance of the meeting and are available at the Council's offices at County Hall, and on the Internet ([www.devon.gov.uk/dcc/committee/mingifs.html](http://www.devon.gov.uk/dcc/committee/mingifs.html))

If you need a copy of this document in another format (e.g. large print, audio tape, Braille or other languages), please contact the Information Centre on 01392 380101 or email to: [centre@devon.gov.uk](mailto:centre@devon.gov.uk) or write to the Democratic and Scrutiny Secretariat at County Hall, Exeter EX2 4QD

### Further Information

If you would like any more information, please contact the Democratic Services & Scrutiny Secretariat in the office of the County Solicitor at County Hall, Exeter, EX2 4QD  
Tel: Exeter 382300 or e-mail [committee@devon.gov.uk](mailto:committee@devon.gov.uk)

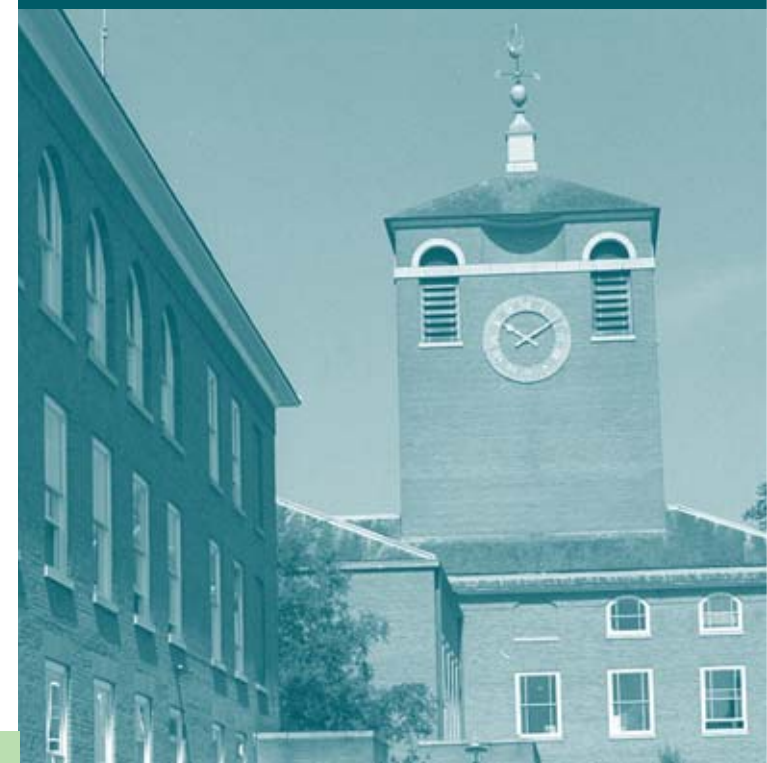
County Hall, Topsham Road, Exeter, Devon EX2 4QD  
[www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk)

Produced by the Democratic Services & Scrutiny Secretariat

September 2011

# Having Your Say Public Participation at Committee Meetings

## County Hall



Devon  
County Council

