

Thurrock: A place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish

Constitution Working Group

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **31 October 2017**

Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Tony Fish, Tunde Ojetola, Joycelyn Redsell, Graham Snell, Luke Spillman and Martin Kerin

Substitutes:

TBC

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **23 October 2017**

Information for members of the public and councillors

Access to Information and Meetings

Members of the public can attend all meetings of the council and its committees and have the right to see the agenda, which will be published no later than 5 working days before the meeting, and minutes once they are published.

Recording of meetings

This meeting may be recorded for transmission and publication on the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is to be recorded.

Members of the public not wishing any speech or address to be recorded for publication to the Internet should contact Democratic Services to discuss any concerns.

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Guidelines on filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings

The council welcomes the filming, photography, recording and use of social media at council and committee meetings as a means of reporting on its proceedings because it helps to make the council more transparent and accountable to its local communities.

If you wish to film or photograph the proceedings of a meeting and have any special requirements or are intending to bring in large equipment please contact the Communications Team at CommunicationsTeam@thurrock.gov.uk before the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then be consulted and their agreement sought to any specific request made.

Where members of the public use a laptop, tablet device, smart phone or similar devices to use social media, make recordings or take photographs these devices must be set to 'silent' mode to avoid interrupting proceedings of the council or committee.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting may be allowed provided it has been discussed prior to the meeting and agreement reached to ensure that it will not disrupt proceedings.

The Chair of the meeting may terminate or suspend filming, photography, recording and use of social media if any of these activities, in their opinion, are disrupting proceedings at the meeting.

Thurrock Council Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi is available throughout the Civic Offices. You can access Wi-Fi on your device by simply turning on the Wi-Fi on your laptop, Smartphone or tablet.

- You should connect to TBC-CIVIC
- Enter the password **Thurrock** to connect to/join the Wi-Fi network.
- A Terms & Conditions page should appear and you have to accept these before you can begin using Wi-Fi. Some devices require you to access your browser to bring up the Terms & Conditions page, which you must accept.

The ICT department can offer support for council owned devices only.

Evacuation Procedures

In the case of an emergency, you should evacuate the building using the nearest available exit and congregate at the assembly point at Kings Walk.

How to view this agenda on a tablet device



You can view the agenda on your [iPad](#), [Android Device](#) or [Blackberry Playbook](#) with the free modern.gov app.

Members of the Council should ensure that their device is sufficiently charged, although a limited number of charging points will be available in Members Services.

To view any “exempt” information that may be included on the agenda for this meeting, Councillors should:

- Access the modern.gov app
- Enter your username and password

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

Helpful Reminders for Members

- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest *at a meeting*?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

any of your registered interests and in particular any of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests?

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

A detailed description of a disclosable pecuniary interest is included in the Members Code of Conduct at Chapter 7 of the Constitution. **Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer about disclosable pecuniary interests.**

What is a Non-Pecuniary interest? – this is an interest which is not pecuniary (as defined) but is nonetheless so significant that a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard to be so significant that it would materially impact upon your judgement of the public interest.

Pecuniary

If the interest is not already in the register you must (unless the interest has been agreed by the Monitoring Officer to be sensitive) disclose the existence and nature of the interest to the meeting

If the Interest is not entered in the register and is not the subject of a pending notification you must within 28 days notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest for inclusion in the register

Unless you have received dispensation upon previous application from the Monitoring Officer, you must:

- Not participate or participate further in any discussion of the matter at a meeting;
- Not participate in any vote or further vote taken at the meeting; and
- leave the room while the item is being considered/voted upon

If you are a Cabinet Member you may make arrangements for the matter to be dealt with by a third person but take no further steps

Non- pecuniary

Declare the nature and extent of your interest including enough detail to allow a member of the public to understand its nature



You may participate and vote in the usual way but you should seek advice on Predetermination and Bias from the Monitoring Officer.

Vision: Thurrock: A place of **opportunity**, **enterprise** and **excellence**, where **individuals**, **communities** and **businesses** flourish.

To achieve our vision, we have identified five strategic priorities:

1. Create a great place for learning and opportunity

- Ensure that every place of learning is rated “Good” or better
- Raise levels of aspiration and attainment so that residents can take advantage of local job opportunities
- Support families to give children the best possible start in life

2. Encourage and promote job creation and economic prosperity

- Promote Thurrock and encourage inward investment to enable and sustain growth
- Support business and develop the local skilled workforce they require
- Work with partners to secure improved infrastructure and built environment

3. Build pride, responsibility and respect

- Create welcoming, safe, and resilient communities which value fairness
- Work in partnership with communities to help them take responsibility for shaping their quality of life
- Empower residents through choice and independence to improve their health and well-being

4. Improve health and well-being

- Ensure people stay healthy longer, adding years to life and life to years
- Reduce inequalities in health and well-being and safeguard the most vulnerable people with timely intervention and care accessed closer to home
- Enhance quality of life through improved housing, employment and opportunity

5. Promote and protect our clean and green environment

- Enhance access to Thurrock's river frontage, cultural assets and leisure opportunities
- Promote Thurrock's natural environment and biodiversity
- Inspire high quality design and standards in our buildings and public space

Public Participation Review Terms of Reference for the Constitution Working Group	
Aim: To create a responsive review to discuss and make recommendations in relation to public participation at Committee meetings through the Democratic process.	
Membership: 6 elected Members (2 Conservatives, 2 UKIP, 2 Labour)	Stakeholders: Community Groups/ Forums – Chairs Residents Key Officers
Quorum 3 Elected Members	
Chair: The Chair will be elected by the membership of the Constitution Working Group. The election will take place at the first meeting.	Meeting Schedule: To be agreed at the first meeting.
Duration: The group will be expected to complete all business and report back to the relevant committees in due course.	
Activities The Constitution Working Group may wish to undertake all but not exclusively the following activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Receive an information pack from Officers on the current process for Members of the Public to ask questions at Committee meetings; b) Seek information from other comparative Councils to see how they operate questions from Members of the Public and compare, different processes in order to determine best practice; c) To review best practice of Public participation from central government; d) To hold meetings or provide questionnaires with Group Leaders to get their views on the current process. To also provide questionnaires or separate sessions with Monitoring Officer to understand his and Directors' viewpoints; e) To provide questionnaires in order to capture the views from residents in the Borough to seek the view of the Public on speaking at Council meetings. 	

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Are There Additional Ways The Council Can Improve Public Participation?

Summary of Benchmarking Data

A group of 15 Unitary Authority Councils were compared which looked at:

- how each one operates in public participation at Full Council meetings;
- what information is provided on their website to make the public aware of how they can have their say; and
- how easy it is to use their website.

The data gathered from the benchmarking found that many of the councils had a similar process to asking a question at Full Council meetings.

At all councils, members of the public were welcome to attend any meeting unless specified. At Middlesbrough Council, members of the public had to book their seats in advance.

Number of Questions

5 of the councils had a maximum of 1 question per person and 3 of the councils had a maximum of 2 questions per person. 1 of the councils had a maximum of 3 questions to be asked per meeting although it did not state if it was per person or in one meeting.

Number of Supplementary Questions

4 of the councils allowed 1 supplementary question to be asked, 1 of the councils allowed for 1 supplementary question and 1 of the councils did not give the option of supplementary questions. All supplementary questions had to be related to the initial question or given answer from the initial question.

Time Limit for Questions

The time limit for all questions in a Full Council meeting from the benchmarked group ranged from 15 minutes to 30 minutes for all questions, answers and supplementary questions. Slough Council had no time limit but instead had a maximum of 5 questions to be asked per meeting. Some of the councils such as Bristol and Essex included the presentation of petitions into the 30 minute time limit. Petitions were given priority in Bristol Council. Questions that were not answered in the meeting would be sent a written response or added to the next Full Council meeting which was the case in Wiltshire Council.

Deadlines for Questions

The latest submission deadline for questions was 15 minutes before the start of a Full Council meeting which Milton Keynes Council practised. Some of the other councils required 2 clear working days before the day of the meeting. The earliest submission deadline was 7 working days before the day of the meeting. Some of the

councils in the benchmarked group had the dates of Full Council meetings on their website along with the deadline for submitting questions to council.

Essex County Council was less strict with the deadlines for Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings as they gave the public the opportunity to register to speak 15 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Making A Statement

At Thurrock Council, statements were not acceptable at Full Council meetings; however, this was accepted in Milton Keynes, Bristol and Wiltshire Councils. Statements had to be related to an item on the agenda. In Wiltshire, the public could register to speak 10 minutes before the start of the meeting. In Milton Keynes, the Chair would ask if anyone wished to speak at the start of a Council, Cabinet or committee meeting or at the start of an item on the agenda; but each speaker was given a time limit of 4 minutes.

Quality of Information

Most of the councils' website in the benchmarking group did not have a dedicated page to public participation. Some had no clear links to follow and instead had all the information within the Constitution which may not be easy for some members of the public to locate. Almost half of the benchmarked group had no information on call-ins and the few that did, had this information in the Constitution.

A few of the councils which included Hartlepool, Medway and Bristol Councils, had put together a useful booklet for the public on how they could get involved in council meetings. These would include items such as asking a question at meetings and how to submit a petition.

How Thurrock Council is Doing

Overall, the information regarding public participation in Thurrock Council was more informative than the other councils in the benchmarked group. The sections on the website were divided clearly, some sub-sections could be further divided or moved to another section to make it easier to find.

To make deadlines for submitting questions to council clearer, this could be placed on the website along with the dates of Full Council meetings as some of the councils had done. A leaflet or guide for public participation could be provided (attached as appendix D) as well along with a form to fill in for submitting questions for council meetings (attached as appendix E).

Comparison of How Other Councils Operate in Public Participation

Council	Asking Public Questions	Petitions	Call-Ins	Ease of Use
Thurrock	<p>Council & Democracy > How We Work and How You Can Have Your Say > Asking questions at full council meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One question can be asked per person but a supplementary question can be asked relating to the initial question or answer given. • Questions must be submitted by 5pm, six working days before the meeting. • For committee meetings, a question or statement can be made but must be submitted by 5pm, three working days before the meeting. 	<p>Council & Democracy > How We Work and How You Can Have Your Say > Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules for submitting a petition. • Can start petitions online but have to register. • No petition template online but an example is shown in the Constitution. • Explains how petitions will be dealt with. 	<p>Council & Democracy > How We Work and How You Can Have Your Say > Challenging Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and when to make a call-in • Explains what can't be called-in. 	<p>Easy to follow links. Each section was broken down in sub-categories making it easier to follow. However, some sections could be further divided to give a clearer definition of sections.</p>
Swindon	<p>Council & Democracy > Document Library > Guidance for those attending public meetings > Public Question Time document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 minutes time limit for all questions 	<p>Council & Democracy > Constitution > Part 4 Rules of Procedure > Petitions Scheme document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum of 10 signatures are required with names and postal 	<p>Unable to find the procedure for call-in.</p>	<p>Confusing as the sections were not clearly linked. Everything was in the Constitution but in separate documents that weren't clearly named. No dedicated page to how public can get</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written questions, including questions sent by email, must be received by the Proper Officer no later than 3pm two clear working days before the meeting. • Written notice of questions will go first and if there is enough time, other questions can be taken • Someone else can ask on behalf of the questioner • 1 supplementary question is allowed. 	<p>addresses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has 5 different types of petitions – Consultation, Statutory, for Debate, Ordinary and to Hold an Officer to Account. • Petitions are acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt. • Can submit petitions online but have to register as a user. 		involved.
Bristol	<p>Council & Mayor tab > Council Decision Making > Council Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘How to have your say’ document (attached as appendix A) sets out clear guidelines for public participation in Bristol’s council meetings. • A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions can be asked per person. 	<p>Council & Mayor tab > Consultations and Petitions > link to petition guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can start online petition • ‘How to have your say’ document (attached) sets out when petitions can be presented and at what meetings. • Petitions can be presented at Full Council meetings but must be submitted by 12 noon, the working day before the meeting. 	<p>Council & Mayor tab > can be found in Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the process of call-ins but does not specify who can make a call-in or how to. 	Links are clearly marked but no dedicated page to how the public can get involved.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions must be submitted three clear working days before the meeting. • Statements are accepted but only one per person on any topic. • Statements must be submitted by 12 noon, the working day before the meeting. • The time limit for public questions is 30 minutes which also includes presenting petitions and making statements. In Cabinet, it's a one hour time limit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions are given priority in Full Council Meetings. 		
Wiltshire	<p>Council & Democracy > Councillors, committees and decisions > public participation link:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3 speakers can speak for 3 minutes each for statements. • The public can register to make a statement 10 minutes before a meeting via the Democratic Services Officer listed on the 	<p>Council & Democracy > Have Your Say > Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions are acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt. • Signatures are accepted from ages 13 and up provided they work, live or study in Wiltshire. • 25 signatures in a petition can be presented to Full Council and a minimum of 10 to 	<p>Council & Democracy > Overview & Scrutiny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A call-in must be received by 5pm on the final working day of the 5 clear working day period. • Does not state if public can call-in decisions but 10 or more non-executive councillors can request the call-in. 	<p>Easy to follow links. There were lots of information.</p>

	<p>agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two related questions per person can be asked. • A supplementary question relating to the original question or answer can be asked. • Questions must be submitted by 5pm four clear working days before the meeting to guarantee a written response before the meeting. • Any question received after the 4 day deadline and no later than 5pm two clear working days before the meeting, may receive a verbal response at the meeting. Any questions received after this date will be received at the next meeting. • 15 minutes is set aside for questions and answers. 	<p>be presented to the Area Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A petition with signatures equivalent to 1% of the total Wiltshire population would trigger a council debate. • Full guidelines found in Wiltshire Council Petitions Scheme document. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A form must be filled in by the councillor calling for the call-in. 	
<p>Milton Keynes</p>	<p>Your Council & Elections > Councillors and Committees > Have your say at Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings:</p>	<p>Your Council & Elections > Councillors and Committees > Have your say at Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings:</p>	<p>Call-in form found in public documents but no guidelines on call-in.</p>	<p>Links were not easy to follow and sections on the site was too vague. It wasn't straightforward as I had to click on different</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions need to be submitted in writing 15 minutes before the start of a meeting • The time limit for questions from the Public is 30 minutes • The public can speak on up to 2 items at most Council, Cabinet or committee meetings with consent from Council or Committee. Democratic services should be notified in advance but the Chair would usually ask at the beginning of each meeting or item whether anyone wishes to speak. • The speech should not exceed 4 minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public can present a petition before the start of a meeting by notifying Democratic Services before it starts. • The person will be allowed to outline the aims of the petition but has a time limit of 1 minute to do so. 		<p>sections to find the required information. There was an A-Z section.</p>
Reading	<p>Council > Democracy > How We Make Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Council and Committees – up to 3 questions to be submitted by 6pm 4 clear working days before the meeting. Total for questions and 	<p>Council > Democracy > How We Make Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows same timescale as Full Council and Committee questions. 	<p>Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading has adopted a committee system form of governance so has resolved not to appoint any separate Overview and Scrutiny committees, therefore the call-in 	<p>Links are easy to follow although there wasn't much of a section dedicated to the public.</p>

	petitions is 30 minutes for all.		function has ended.	
Essex (County Council but Thurrock is part of Essex).	<p>Your Council tab:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One question can be asked at Full Council which has to be received by 10.30am, seven calendar days before the meeting. • No supplementary questions can be asked. • A petition can be presented. • The time limit for questions is 30 minutes, 3 minutes limit for each speaker and any questions not dealt with in the meeting will receive a written response. • For Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings, the public can register to speak up to 15 minutes before the meeting starts. There is a 3 minute time limit. 	<p>Home > Your Council > Consultations and feedback > Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be submitted directly to the relevant service, as part of a formal consultation exercises or to democratic services. • Residents can ask their local County Councillor to submit on their behalf. • Epetition available. • Petitions can be started on another website but Essex Council can only act upon it when it is closed and submitted but must still conform to the petitions policy. 	<p>Home > How we do scrutiny in Essex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a decision is made by Cabinet, a member of the scrutiny committee has a 3 day window where they can call-in the decision. • The decision is halted for up to 10 days until it is either withdrawn or dealt with. 	<p>The sections were nicely separated with information in the relevant sections. The information provided was detailed. There was an A-Z section.</p>
Medway	Home > The Council and democracy > How to have your say:	Home > The Council and democracy > Councillors and decisions > How to have your say:	No procedure found for call-ins.	Easy to follow the links as sections were well separated. The information provided was

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Ask a Question at Council’ guide (attached as appendix B) outlines how the public can ask a question at Full Council. • Write, email or telephone your local councillor to consider a matter you would like to speak about. • One question is allowed per person. • The public can ask a question at Full Council but must submit questions 7 working days before the day of the meeting. A guide on this is available on the website. • There are dates of Full Council meetings on ‘ask a question’ with submission deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions can be sent in by post or created online. • Detailed guide on presenting a petition at a meeting – can ask a councillor to present on behalf and has dates and times of upcoming meetings. • A template is provided which includes information on what to do. • Petitions are acknowledged within 5 working days. • Details how the council will respond to petitions and what you can do if you feel your petition has not been dealt with properly. 		<p>brief but detailed. There was an A-Z section.</p>
<p>Luton</p>	<p>Unable to find how a member of the public can ask a question at Full Council or committee meetings.</p> <p>The Constitution states members of the public could attend council meetings and</p>	<p>Council & Democracy > Local Democracy > Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PDF guide on the Council’s petition scheme is provided which includes the process and 	<p>Council & Democracy > Local Democracy > Overview & Scrutiny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief section is provided on who can make a call-in which states ‘any two 	<p>The sections were separated well but it wasn’t so easy to follow. There were some sections missing which related to how to ask a question in Council and committee meetings.</p>

	<p>the Mayor was 'to ensure that the Full Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community'.</p>	<p>requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 signatures are required for a petition to be valid. • The page states online petitions are not yet available and only paper based petitions are currently accepted. However, an epetition link can be found through clicking on council meeting dates in the local democracy section. 	<p>members of the council'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-ins must be made within set deadlines and criteria although it is not stated on the website of what they are. • No indication of whether the public can make a call-in. 	<p>There was an A-Z section.</p>
<p>Southend-on-Sea</p>	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two periods of time for questions with 30 minute time limit for each period. • First period is for questions from the public. • Questions must be submitted 5 clear working days before the date of the meeting. • The Chief Executive and Town Clerk selects the questions to be asked and may edit them to bring them into a proper form. • There is a maximum of 2 questions per person. 	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions must be received at least 12 clear working days before a council or committee meeting. • The petition scheme accepts signatures of anyone who lives, works or studies in the borough and includes under 18's. • Epetitions are available on the website. 	<p>No procedure found for call-ins.</p>	<p>There were a lot of clearly titled sections but none of them linked to public participation. The information given in the Constitution was brief and not very detailed. There was an A-Z services bar.</p>

Herefordshire	<p>Your Council > Get Involved > Ask a public question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the public can ask questions at any public meetings. • Only one question can be asked per meeting and up to a maximum of six in any municipal year. • Questions must be submitted two clear working days before the day of the meeting. 	<p>Your Council > Get Involved > File a petition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions must have the support of 15 people to be accepted. • Petitions can be submitted online, by post, by email or handed in to the chairman of the council. • Epetitions can be created but requires registration. • A detail guide on the petition procedure is available via a link on the epetitions page. 	No call-in procedure found.	There wasn't a lot of sections on public participation or democracy but what there was, was easy to find and detailed in information. There was no constitution to be found.
Warrington (currently looking into public questions public at Full Council meetings due to increased interest from the public)	<p>The Council > Council committees and meetings > Access to council meetings for journalists, bloggers and the public > PDF files:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One question may be submitted by person and must be received by 12 noon, five working days before the day of the meeting. • 5 minutes is allocated per question to cover the response and any supplementary questions. 	<p>The Council > Council committees and meetings > Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions can be created online as an epetition or submitted to the Council in the traditional paper based format. • For a petition to be considered, there must be 100 valid signatures (includes children as long as they have signed free from coercion), otherwise the Council would not respond. 	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call-ins need to be made within 5 days of the decision publication date. • Members or co-opted voting Members can call-in decisions but requires three to call-in. • Detailed flowcharts for call-in procedures for council and committees but does not state whether members of the public 	There were separate PDF documents on asking a question at council, a guide to committee meetings and public participation in meetings. The information was short but detailed and clear to understand. It also gave dates of deadlines for question submission. There was an A-Z services bar.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maximum of three questions can be asked per meeting as the time allowed for public questions is 15 minutes. 		can call-in.	
Middlesbrough	<p>The Mayor, council and councillors > Councillors and council meetings > Council meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the public must book a place online to attend Council meetings to ensure the meeting runs smoothly. • The public can ask questions and can submit their question by phone, email or post. • Does not state when questions have to be submitted by. 	<p>Open data, FOI and have your say > Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper or petitions via the Council website can be submitted. • Petitions with over 100 signatures will be invited to be presented to Full Council. • A petition containing more than 750 signatures can request a senior council officer to give evidence at a Scrutiny meeting. • If a petition contains more than 1,500 signatures it will be debated at a meeting of the full council. The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the council meeting and it will then be discussed by councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. 	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions can be called-in within 5 working days of publication. • An elected or co-opted voting Member must request the call-in form and it has to be signed by five Members. • No indication of whether the public can call-in decisions. 	<p>The sections were well separated but was not easy to find the required information. There wasn't much dedicated to public participation and the information provided was brief. There was an A-Z services bar which helped to locate certain sections.</p>

<p>Hartlepool</p>	<p>Council and democracy > Democratic Services > It's Your Council booklet (attached as appendix C):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions must be completed on the Public Question Time form attached to the booklet and submitted by 12 noon on the Thursday of the week before the meeting. • Under 16's must include the name, address and signature of their parent or guardian. • A maximum of two questions can be submitted per person per meeting. • For a period of 30 minutes or longer (at the discretion of the Chair), residents can ask questions at Full Council meetings. 	<p>There was no information found on petitions on the website. In the Constitution, it's stated that residents have the right to sign a petition.</p>	<p>No information was found on the procedure for call-ins.</p>	<p>A handy and detailed guide on called 'It's Your Council' gives information on 'How does Hartlepool Council work and how you can get involved'. It provides in depth information about the types of committees in the council and how to ask a question. A form is attached for members of the public to fill in if they wished to ask a question at Council meetings.</p>
<p>Slough</p>	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One question can be asked per person and a supplementary can be asked relating to the 	<p>Council information > Democratic services > Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions can be submitted via epetition or paper. 	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions can be called-in within 5 working days of publication. 	<p>There was no specific links to provide the public with information on democratic services. Most information was in the Constitution but this</p>

	<p>original question or answer given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions must be received by 5pm, five working days before the day of the meeting. • There is no time limit stated for questions but no more than five questions can be asked at the Council meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a petition to be accepted, a minimum of 10 valid signatures is required. • 750 signatures will require a senior officer to give evidence at a public meeting. • 1500 signatures leads to a debate at Council. • Petitions are acknowledged within 10 working days or receipt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be three elected Members to call-in a decision. • No indication of whether the public can call-in decisions. 	<p>was available in separate documents. Although sections were titled well, it did not indicate what kind of information was in each section.</p>
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How to have your say



A quick reference guide
to council meetings

Page 21



How to have your say

Involving local people in local decisions is the cornerstone of democracy. There are many ways you can contribute and get your voice heard at public meetings.

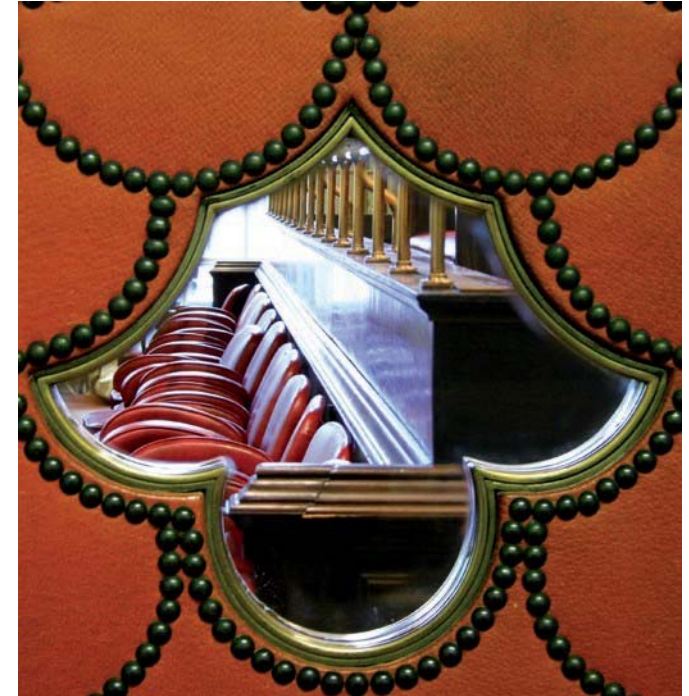
This quick reference guide explains the different public meetings, what they are for and how you can have your say. There are guidelines for presenting a petition, statement or question at a meeting and how you will get a response.

For those unable to attend the public meetings in person, we webcast some of them live and make the recording available after the meeting.

In addition to the public meetings, the Mayor takes part in a number of public question time events – radio phone ins, Mayor’s Question Time events and web chats – with the opportunity for people to ask him any question.

For more information about how the council works and the various meetings www.bristol.gov.uk/council and www.bristol.gov.uk/meetings

Note: questions/statements to meetings will not be permitted if they are about topics/issues which are not within the council’s areas of responsibility or which do not directly affect the city.



Full Council

Who goes?	Mayor plus all 70 councillors. Meetings of Full Council are held in public and chaired by the Lord Mayor
What's the meeting for?	<p>The Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the budget and policy framework proposed by the elected Mayor including the level of council tax • Appoints committees to deal with the scrutiny function, regulatory committees (e.g. development control committees) and other committees • Has powers to adopt byelaws, appointment of Aldermen and giving Freedom of the City. • At the Annual General Meeting in May, the Lord Mayor is appointed.
<p>When do they occur?</p> <p>Page 23</p>	<p>Full Council meets eight times a year. For 2016/17 these dates are Tuesdays @ 6pm unless indicated otherwise at The City Hall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31 May 2016, City Hall (Annual Meeting) @ 2pm • 19 July 2016 • 13 September 2016 • 8 November 2016 • 13 December 2016 • 17 January 2017 • 21 February 2017, (budget meeting) @ 2pm • 7 March 2017, (budget reserve) • 14 March 2017 <p>Before each Council meeting (except the Annual and Budget meetings) there is a Member Forum @5pm where councillors can put questions to the Mayor</p> <p>Please note: there is no public forum at the annual meeting and the budget meeting.</p>
Is it webcast?	Yes View here

Full Council – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Member Forum – one hour prior to the start of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and statements on any issue. • There will be a maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions per councillor. • One statement per councillor (one topic per statement). 	Questions and statements must be submitted by 12 noon on the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maximum of one statement per member and one minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement and they will be referred to the Mayor for consideration. • Replies to questions will be given verbally. • Statements will not be discussed at the meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written reply to questions will be provided within 10 working days. • A written response to statements will be provided within 10 working days if requested. • Answers to questions will be published on the website within 10 working days of the meeting.
Councillor petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions on any topic 	12 noon the working day before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be 10 minutes to receive petitions from Councillors. • Petitions will not be discussed at the meeting. 	A written reply will be provided to the Councillor/lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting.

For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements can be submitted on any topic. • One statement per person (one topic per statement). 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes are set aside to deal with petitions, statements and questions. Priority is given to petitions. • One minute to present statements. • Statements will not be discussed at the meeting. 	Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions can be submitted on any topic. • One petition per person. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead petitioner to present the petition if they wish (one minute allowed). • Petitions will not be discussed at the meeting. 	A written reply will be provided to the lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting.

How to have your say

A quick reference guide to council meetings

<p>Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On any issue for which the Council has responsibility or which directly affects the city• A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions may be asked per member of the public.	<p>Three clear working days before the meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 minutes are set aside to deal with petitions, statements and questions. Priority is given to petitions.• Replies to questions will be given verbally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written confirmation of the verbal response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested, or if a response could not be given at the meeting.• Answers to questions will be published on the website within 10 working days of the meeting
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Cabinet

Who goes?	<p><u>Mayor plus 5 Assistant Mayors – his Cabinet.</u></p> <p>Meetings of Full Cabinet are held in public and chaired by the Mayor.</p> <p>Assistant Mayors each have a portfolio of services to oversee and advise the Mayor on.</p>
What's the meeting for?	<p>The Mayor assumes ultimate responsibility for all major policy decisions at Cabinet following consultation with his Assistant Mayors.</p>
When do they occur?	<p>Cabinet meets monthly. For 2016/17 the regular dates are (Tuesdays @6pm unless indicated otherwise):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 June 2016 @ 4.00pm• 4 July 2016• 11 August 2016• 6 September 2016• 4 October 2016• 1 November 2016• 6 December 2016• 17 January 2017• 7 February 2017• 7 March 2017• 4 April 2017
Is it webcast?	<p><u>Yes – View here</u></p>

Cabinet – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Councillor Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One statement per councillor on agenda items only. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One minute to present statement The content of the statement will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. 	Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
Councillor petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One petition per councillor on agenda items only. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One minute to present petition The content of the petition will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. 	Petitions will receive a written reply provided to the Councillor / lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting.
Councillor Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions on agenda items only. Two questions per councillor maximum. 	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions per councillor. Replies to questions will be given verbally. 	Written confirmation of the response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements must be about agenda items. One statement per person. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One hour for petitions, statements and question. One minute to present statement The content of the statement will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. 	Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petitions must be about agenda items. One petition per person. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One minute for lead petitioner to present petition The content of the petition will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. 	Petitions will receive a written reply to the lead petitioner within 10 working days.
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions submitted must be about agenda items. Two questions per person maximum. 	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One hour for petitions, statements and question. A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions may be asked per member of the public Replies to questions will be given verbally. 	Written confirmation of the verbal response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.

Scrutiny meetings

Who goes?	Each committee is made up of councillors, reflecting the political proportionality of the council.
What's the meeting for?	<p>Scrutiny is a function that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that Councillors play a pivotal role in influencing council policy and service improvements. • Delivers local accountability, transparency and involvement in decision-making and improving outcomes for the people of Bristol. • Acts as a 'critical friend', providing support to ensure decisions are carried out correctly and sometimes recommending alternative or additional courses of action.
When do they occur? Page 28	<p>There are five committees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) • Place Scrutiny Commission • People Scrutiny Commission • Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission • Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission <p>For 2016/17 these dates are available www.bristol.gov.uk/scrutiny</p>
Is it webcast?	Some are – please refer to the website for which meetings will be webcast.

Scrutiny meetings – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Councillor Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement and petitions are about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. Statements will be copied and circulated to all members of the committee. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. Petitions and statements will be noted/considered when the item is debated or referred on (e.g. for the Mayor’s consideration) as appropriate. 	Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor’s consideration) where appropriate.
Councillor Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions should be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. 	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting. A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or the reply. 	Questions and answers are included on the official minute book which is available for public inspection
For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements and petitions must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. Statements will be copied and circulated to all members of the committee. Petitions and statements will be noted / considered when the item is debated or referred on (e.g. for the Mayor’s consideration) as appropriate. 	<p>Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor’s consideration) where appropriate.</p> <p>Questions and answers are included on the official minute book which is available for public inspection</p>
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions submitted must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. 	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or reply. 	

Development Control meetings

Who goes?	Each committee is made up of councillors, reflecting the political proportionality of the council.
What's the meeting for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determination of significant planning applications
When do they occur?	There are two committees – Development Control A and Development Control B For 2016/17 these dates are available on the website
Is it webcast?	Some are – please refer to the website for which meetings will be webcast.

Development Control meetings – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Councillor Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement and petitions are about a matter for which the committee has responsibility Statements will be copied and circulated to all members of the committee. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Petitions and statements will be received prior to the item being discussed and noted / considered as the item is debated. 	Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor’s consideration) where appropriate.
Councillor Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions should be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. 	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting. A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or the reply. 	Questions and answers are included in the minutes.
For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements and petitions must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. 	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Petitions and statements will be received prior to the item being discussed and noted / considered as the item is debated. 	Copies held on the public Minute Book.
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions submitted must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. 	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or reply. 	Questions and answers are included in the minutes.

Further information

What's a statement?

- Statements should be short and limited to one side of A4 paper. Statements will be circulated before the meeting and will have been read by councillors by the time the meeting starts.
- You'll be invited to present your statement to the meeting. You should focus on the main points and avoid reading it out word for word.
- Groups can nominate a representative to speak on their behalf.
- All statements are compiled in the order they're received.

For copyright reasons, we're unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles attached to statements as supporting documentation.

Questions

- Full Council or Cabinet meetings – questions should be addressed to the Mayor or an Assistant Mayor who has responsibility for responding.
- Committee meetings – questions are normally addressed to the chair.

See our [councillor finder](#) for the names and roles of councillors or contact Democratic Services.

What happens to your personal information received with representations

By taking part in public forum business, it's assumed that your consent is given to the recording of your name and the details of your submission in the documents circulated to committee and made available at the meeting and on the Council website.

The information will also be placed in the official minute book as a public record. This is available for inspection on request with the other documents for the meeting concerned.

Where appropriate, we'll try to remove other personal details like contact details. However, we cannot guarantee this and you may wish to consider what your statement contains.

Webcasting of meetings

Full Council, Cabinet meetings and some other committee meetings are filmed for live or later broadcast via our webcasting pages.

The whole of the meeting is filmed (except where there are confidential or exempt items). The footage will be available for two years.

If you ask a question or make a representation, then you're likely to be filmed. It will be assumed that you've given your consent.

Where to send your questions, statements and petitions.

Please send them to:
democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

Asking a question at a Council meeting

Can I ask a question at a Council meeting?

You can ask one question of a Member of the Cabinet or a Chairman of a Committee at ordinary meetings of the Council. Public questions cannot be asked at special Council meetings.

How soon before the meeting should I submit my question?

The Chief Executive must receive your question by noon, seven working days before the day of the meeting. The deadlines for submitting questions are set out on the Council's website under the heading *How to have your say*:

www.medway.gov.uk/democracy

What information should I include?

You must give your name, address, and the name of the Member of the Council the question is for. If you are unsure please ask Democratic Services for advice using the e-form (please see section below entitled "How do I submit my question" for further information).

Is there a time limit?

There is a **30 minute** time limit for taking and answering questions. Any questions not dealt with in the time limit will receive a written reply as soon as possible after the meeting.

How do I submit my question?

Please send your question to the Chief Executive of Medway Council. Post it to:

**Chief Executive
c/o Democratic Services
Medway Council
Gun Wharf
Dock Road
Chatham
Kent ME4 4TR**

Or please use the e-form which is set out on the Council's website under the heading *How to have your say*: **www.medway.gov.uk/democracy**

If your question is accepted for consideration, it will be sent immediately to the Member who is expected to answer.

Is there any reason for my question to be rejected?

The Chief Executive may reject a question if it:

- is not about a matter for which the Council has responsibility or which does not affect the area;
- is frivolous, defamatory, offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise improper;
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;
- requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

We will explain why, if your question is rejected.

Will my question be published?

Yes. The Chief Executive will enter each question in a book open to public inspection and will immediately send a copy of the question to the member to whom it is put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. If the question has been rejected because it is considered frivolous, defamatory, offensive, racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise improper then only the fact that a question was received and that it was considered so, will be entered.

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

Both your question and a summary of the response will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting unless you do not attend to ask your question.

The agenda and minutes of the meeting are published on the Council's website www.medway.gov.uk/democracy

When and where are Council meetings held?

Council meetings are usually held at 7pm on a Thursday at the St George's Centre, Pembroke Road, Chatham Maritime.

An up to date schedule of meetings is available on the Council's website www.medway.gov.uk/democracy

If you are unable to attend the meeting, you will receive a written response to your question as soon as possible after the meeting.

What time should I arrive?

Please arrive at 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. You will be met by a member of staff and shown to your seat.

What will happen at the meeting?

At the appropriate time, the Mayor will invite you to put your question to the Member named.

What will happen after the meeting?

After the meeting you will receive a written summary of the response to your question.

It's your Council!

How does Hartlepool Council work and how you can get involved



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Introduction

Hartlepool Borough Council has 33 elected councillors who are each elected for a four year term. Each councillor represents an area of the town called a ward. There are 11 wards, with three councillors for each ward.

The system of elections in the Borough operates on a four-year cycle; three years of Councillor elections and no elections in the fourth year. In each election year a third of the places on the Council come up for election.

Following a referendum in November 2012, the way Hartlepool Borough Council is run has changed from an Elected Mayor and Cabinet system to one made up of committees of councillors. The majority of day-to-day decisions will now be undertaken by five policy committees.

Everybody who is over 18 years old and is a British or Commonwealth citizen is entitled to vote to elect their local councillors. Please use your vote when it's election time. You can register to vote at:
www.hartlepool.gov.uk/elections

The Full Council

Full Council meetings are the main 'debating chamber' of the Council and are open meetings for all to attend. The Full Council also approves the Council's budget, the annual Council Tax and the Council's main policy documents.

At most of these Full Council meetings there is a specific 30 minute section to enable Hartlepool residents to put questions to the Leader of the Council and the Chairs of the committees and to receive answers at the meeting. Councillors also have an opportunity to ask questions of the Leader and Chairs of committees at the meeting.

Each May Council meets to appoint the members of the Council's various committees, forums and other groups, as well as appointing councillors to represent the Council on external organisations.

If you would like to ask a question at a meeting of the Full Council please read the guidance that starts at page 13 of this booklet. There is also a question form in the centre of this booklet and further forms can be downloaded from the website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/democraticservices or contact the Democratic Services Team on 01429 523568

The Leader of the Council

Each year, the Full Council appoints a Leader of the Council. This person is normally the leader of the majority political group on the Council. At the same time, the Full Council also normally appoints a Deputy Leader of the Council.

The Leader is the political leader of the Council and acts as the Council's principal public spokesperson. The Leader gives the overall policy direction to the Council and leads, together with the Chairs of the Council's committees, the implementation of policies, budgets and strategies approved by the Council.

The Ceremonial Mayor

At its Annual Meeting the Full Council appoints a councillor to serve for a year as the Ceremonial Mayor and one to serve as the Deputy Ceremonial Mayor. The Ceremonial Mayor chairs the meetings of the Full Council with the Deputy as Vice-Chair.

The Ceremonial Mayor is the first Citizen of the Borough, upholding and promoting the purposes of the Council's Constitution and promoting public involvement in the Council's activities.

The Ceremonial Mayor, together with his/her consort, attends a range of civic and ceremonial functions and wears the appropriate chains of office. The Ceremonial Mayor also represents the Council at a range of events, including royal visits and official openings.

The Council's Main Committees

The Council's main day-to-day decision-making is carried out by a number of committees of councillors which reflect the Council's main services. These committees meet regularly, usually each calendar month.

There are five main policy committees –

- Finance and Policy Committee
- Adult Services Committee
- Children's Services Committee
- Neighbourhood Services Committee
- Regeneration Services Committee

The Finance and Policy Committee is chaired by the Leader of the Council and consists of 11 councillors. The other Policy Committees are made up of 7 councillors.

The Children's Services Committee also has a number of Members who are not Councillors these include school heads, school parent governors and young people. The young people provide the Committee with a fresh perspective on children's services.

Details of the role, remit and membership of the committees are set out in the Council's constitution.

Members of the public can attend the meetings of all these committees to hear the discussions and see how the decisions are made. However, if the meeting is going to deal with confidential matters, the public may be asked to leave. The reasons for this will be set out on the agenda for the meeting. For further information on all these meetings go to www.hartlepool.gov.uk/democraticservices.

Other Committees

The Council has a number of other committees. These include the following: -

Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit and Governance Committee promotes the Council's internal governance and financial control and approves the Council's annual Statement of Accounts and Treasury Management Strategy. The Committee is made up of 7 councillors and is chaired by a councillor who is not from the majority political group on the Council. The Audit and Governance Committee is there to make sure that the Council manages its budget and finances in a proper and prudent way. It looks at the work of the Council's internal auditors and reviews the plans of the external auditor and the internal audit team to ensure that audit work is co-ordinated.

The Committee promotes the maintenance of high standards of conduct by councillors and additional independent members are included when standards issues are considered.

The Audit and Governance Committee also acts as the scrutiny committee of the Council in relation to the provision and operation of health services and is also designated as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee'. These roles and responsibilities are detailed more fully in 'Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions' of the Council's Constitution.

The Audit and Governance Committee also has a Personnel Sub Committee which deals with staffing matters.

Other Committees

Planning Committee

The Planning Committee manages the Council's planning services. It meets every four weeks to consider any significant planning applications or to examine and resolve objections to planning applications which have been received.

People affected by the planning applications can ask to speak at these meetings. For more information, contact the Development Control Team on 01429 284317 or e-mail developmentcontrol@hartlepool.gov.uk

You can also view the most up-to-date planning matters on the Council's website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/planning



Other Committees

Licensing Committee

The Licensing Committee meets every three months and manages the Council's licensing services and licensing policy including alcohol licences (for pubs, clubs and retail outlets) and taxi and private hire drivers' licences. Much of the committee's work is done by the Licensing Sub-Committees. The Licensing Sub-Committees are responsible for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire driver licensing and the consideration of alcohol licensing matters as set out in the Licensing Act 2003. These sub committees meet as and when they are required.

People affected by licensing applications can ask to speak at these meetings. For more information contact the Public Protection Team on 01429 523354 or e-mail: licensing@hartlepool.gov.uk

Members of the public can attend the meetings of all these committees to hear the discussions and see how the decisions are made. However, if the meeting is going to deal with confidential matters, the public may be asked to leave. The reasons for this will be set out on the agenda for the meeting.

To find out more about which meetings are being held and when, visit the Council's website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/democraticservices or see the notices which are posted outside the Civic Centre, in the Central Library and publicised monthly in the local press.

Partnership Boards

Health and Wellbeing Board

Following the transfer of public health duties to the Council under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, the Health and Wellbeing Board was set up to advise the Council, local health organisations and Clinical Commissioning Groups on improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Hartlepool through integrated health and social care services. The Board is responsible for preparing a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

The Board is a partnership involving the Council, the National Health Service and a range of public and voluntary partner organisations.

Safer Hartlepool Partnership

The Safer Hartlepool Partnership is a partnership of the Council and a range of other public and voluntary agencies which aims to create a confident and safe local community by working together to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in Hartlepool. The partnership is responsible for the development and implementation of a range of plans including the Community Safety Plan and the Youth Justice Strategic Plan.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Your question (Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Please indicate the Council meeting date that the question is to be considered

.....

This question will be put to the Chair of the Committee which is responsible for the particular function as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

Name

Address

.....

Postcode Contact telephone number

E-mail address

Signed Date

If under 16 years of age:

Name

Address

Signature of Parent or Guardian

For office use only

Date received	Checking in by	Accepted	Y / N
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ER number:	PW
------------	----

Accepted

Ballot result	Attended Council	Y / N	Written response sent
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Check by

Rejected

Reasons:

Written response sent

Checked by

Community Forums

There are two Community Forums covering the borough:

North and Coastal – covering the Council wards of Hart, De Bruce, Jesmond, Headland & Harbour and Seaton.

South and Central – covering the Council wards of Victoria, Burn Valley, Foggy Furze, Fens & Rossmere, Manor House and Rural West.

The forums meet throughout the year at the Civic Centre and are open to everyone to attend.

The Forums are a focal point for local consultation on the provision of Council services through 'Face the Public' and other events.

Residents are actively encouraged to attend these meetings to ask questions on any aspects of the Council's services. In tandem with the Community Forums there will also be a separate opportunity to pose questions to the Council's Policy Committee Chairs.

For more information on the Community Forums and the Policy Chairs Question Time please contact the Democratic Services Team
democratic.services@hartlepool.gov.uk or 01429 523568.

The Democratic Services Team

The Democratic Services Team is based in the Chief Executive's Department of the Council.

It is responsible for producing the agendas and minutes of all the Council's official meetings.

The team also provides advice to councillors and Council staff on the Council's Constitution and matters relating to meetings.

The agendas for all the Council's meetings are published and are available for inspection five working days before the meeting, and can be seen either at the Civic Centre, the Central Library or on the Council's website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/democraticservices or follow the 'Agendas, Meetings and Minutes' link on the front page of the council's website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk

Hartlepool Borough Council Public Questions at Meetings

Introduction

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Council, its Committees, Sub-Committees and Neighbourhood Forums, except when the meetings are considering items classed as 'confidential' or 'exempt'. Those matters that may be considered as confidential or exempt are set out in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution. If you would like to attend a meeting, or would like further details of a meeting, you are advised to contact our Democratic Services Team. To confirm details of the meeting call 01429 523568 or e-mail democratic.services@hartlepool.gov.uk

Council Meetings

The Council's Constitution states that during a period of 30 minutes, or a longer period at the discretion of the Chair, residents of Hartlepool may ask questions of Chairs of Committees at ordinary meetings of the Full Council in accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules.

You can ask a question by completing a Public Question Time form attached to this centre of this guide. The completed form must be delivered or sent by e-mail to the Chief Executive no later than noon on the Thursday of the week before the meeting (or in the case of a meeting held on a day other than a Thursday, on the expiry of the fifth clear working day before the meeting). Alternatively, if you would prefer to send your question by e-mail, please send it to democratic.services@hartlepool.gov.uk You must include the name and address of the questioner.

If the questioner is under 16 years of age, the notice must include the name, address and signature of the parent or guardian of the questioner.

The day before the meeting, the order in which the questions will be asked will be determined randomly by the Chief Executive. The determination of the order will take place at the Civic Centre and will be open to the public.

At any one meeting no person may submit no more than two questions but a question may consist of a number of parts.

A question should fulfil the following criteria:-

- (i) The name of the person wishing to ask the question should be on the Hartlepool Register of Electors;
- (ii) The question should be concise (both in length and number of parts), direct and should be about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the borough;
- (iii) The question should not be the same as one asked at a meeting of the Full Council in the last six months (unless there has been a significant change in circumstances)

The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Council, may reject a question if it

- is considered to be defamatory, frivolous or offensive,
- seeks the disclosure of confidential or exempt information,
- is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Full Council in the past six months and since when there has been no change of circumstances justifying the resubmission of the question,
- is unreasonably excessive because of its length or its number of parts,
- the name of the person wishing to ask the question is not on the Register of Electors.

Copies of all questions will be circulated to all councillors and will be made available at the meeting. At the Council meeting the question will be put by the Chief Executive to the Committee Chair named in the notice.

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 Chair to whom it was to be put, will be dealt with by way of a written answer.

Council meetings are usually held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool. Dates of Council Meetings and any further information can be obtained from the Democratic Services Team on 01429 523568 or from the Council's website at www.hartlepool.gov.uk

Committees and Sub Committees

All meetings of the Council's committees and sub committees are open to the public to attend except when the meetings are considering items classed as 'confidential' or 'exempt'. These meetings may consider issues that will be of interest to residents who may wish to ask questions or express their views on the matters being considered. On such occasions anyone wishing to speak at a committee or sub committee meeting should seek the permission of the Chair in advance of the meeting. This can be done directly with the Chair or via the Democratic Services Team by calling 01429 523568 or e-mailing democratic.services@hartlepool.gov.uk

Planning Committee

There are different rules applying to public speaking at the Planning and Licensing Committees. 'A Guide to Public Speaking at Planning Committee' is available on the Council's website. Essentially, only applicants and registered objectors to planning applications can speak at these meetings. For more guidance contact the Development Control Team on 01429 523280 or e-mail developmentcontrol@hartlepool.gov.uk

Licensing Committee

Licensing Committee considers licensing and other applications in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 and other matters, i.e. gambling etc. Individual licensing applications are dealt with by the Licensing Act Sub-Committee and if you wish to speak at a meeting of the Sub-Committee in relation to an application that affects you, contact the Public Protection Team on 01429 523354 or e-mail licensing@hartlepool.gov.uk



Useful Contacts

The best starting point for any information about the Council is its website - www.hartlepool.gov.uk
If you don't have internet access at home, it is available free of charge in your local library.

You can also phone the Council's Contact Centre, Hartlepool Connect, on 01429 523333 or e-mail customer.service@hartlepool.gov.uk

For more specific queries in relation to issues raised in this leaflet you may find the following numbers and e-mail addresses useful.

The Democratic Services Team

01429 523568 democratic.services@hartlepool.gov.uk

The Scrutiny Team

01429 523087 scrutiny@hartlepool.gov.uk

Electoral Registration

01429 523017 elections@hartlepool.gov.uk

Useful Contacts

Development Control (Planning)

01429 284317 developmentcontrol@hartlepool.gov.uk

Licensing

01429 523354 licensing@hartlepool.gov.uk

North and Coastal Neighbourhood Area

01429 523100 clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk

South and Central Neighbourhood Area

01429 523100 clare.clark@hartlepool.gov.uk

**If you don't understand this leaflet, the Council
can provide information in other languages or
alternative formats.**

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**Follow us on Twitter
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www.hartlepool.gov.uk

**www.hartlepoolnow.gov.uk
Information for local help and support**

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Draft of Public Participation Guide

Based on research, a draft booklet has been put together to help the public understand how they can ask a question at Council and Committee meetings. This guide also gives details on how the public can have their say and get involved in petitions and call-ins.

Participating in Council and Committee Meetings

Your guide to on how to get involved



History of Public Questions at Thurrock Council Committee Meetings

The vision of Thurrock Council has always been 'a place of opportunity, enterprise and excellence, where individuals, communities and businesses flourish'. To bring this vision to light, we need the people of Thurrock to bring their statements and questions forward to us.

Every month, we hold several Committee meetings in a wide variety of subjects which are:

- Full Council Committee
- Cabinet Committee
- Planning Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Sub-Licensing Committee
- Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee



The public are welcome to attend any of these meetings and ask a question. In the Council year which ran from May 2015 to May 2016, we had a total of 64 questions and statements from the public which had helped us to make more informed decisions to suit the needs of the people within Thurrock. In the last Council year from May 2016 to May 2017, we had 47 questions and statements.

In some circumstances where confidential or exempt matters are discussed, the public and press would not be able to attend that part of the meeting.

How to Get Involved

The Council encourages all members of the public to get involved in our Committee meetings which are widely advertised through:

- our website under Council and Democracy – How We Work and How You Can Have Your Say;
- our Task and Finish groups where we direct our consultation directly to the public affected;
- our Forward Plans which are published 28 days in advance to highlight key decisions to be made in upcoming meetings;
- our agenda publications that can be found in our Main Reception at the Civic Offices; and
- our Public Notice board located at the entrance to the Civic Offices.

Your question should be delivered in writing to the Monitoring Officer who would ensure the question:

- is clearly worded and concise without extending into a statement;
- is not defamatory or offensive;
- does not disclose any confidential information or identify an employee of the Council;
- is not similar to a question that has already been asked within the past year; and
- does not give an answer that will disclose confidential or exempt information.

Only one question should be submitted for any one meeting. Once the question is accepted, the Monitoring Officer would then put the question in the agenda for the meeting.

In cases where more than one person wishes to ask a similar question, one would be chosen through a fair draw to speak. This can often be the case in Planning Committee meetings.

It's easy to get involved in any of our Committee meetings but asking a question in a Council meeting will differ slightly to asking one in an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.



Participating in Full Council

What's the meeting about?	<p>The Council meets most months to discuss a number of items which can include any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend the Constitution if required; • Approve and adopt the Budget and Policy framework; • Make, amend, revoke, re-enact or adopt bylaws; or • Any other matters which, by law, are reserved to Council. <p>An annual council is held in May every year for re-elections.</p>
Number of Members involved	All 49 elected Councillors

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens next	At the meeting
Questions without notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members can ask any question without notice in regards to a report or recommendation after it's presented. This is also known as the general debate that follows each report. 	None	N/A	N/A
Questions on notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A maximum of 2 questions can be submitted and addressed to the Leader, a Member of the Cabinet, a Chair of any Committee or Sub-Committee. • Questions cannot extend into another part. • The Leader of the opposition party can ask 4 questions in total. 	By 5pm, six working days before the meeting e.g. If a meeting takes place on Wednesday, questions will need to be in by Monday 5pm the week before.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Monitoring Officer will place the question to the addressed Member onto the agenda. • Questions will be placed on the agenda in the order that they are received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor will give permission for the Member to ask their question(s). • An additional 2 supplementary questions can be asked which relate to the answer given or initial question.

For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens next	At the meeting
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions can be submitted relating to any issue that affects Thurrock or its residents. • The question can be addressed to the Leader, a Member of the Cabinet or a Chair of any Committee or Sub-Committee. • Only one question can be submitted and must not extend into another part. 	<p>By 5pm, six working days before the meeting e.g. If a meeting takes place on Wednesday, questions will need to be in by Monday 5pm the week before.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will respond to let you know if your question has been accepted with notification of any suggested amendments. • The Monitoring Officer will place the question to the addressed Member onto the agenda. • Questions will be placed on the agenda in the order that they are received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of Democratic Services will guide you to your seat when the relevant agenda item is presented. • You verbally ask your question but cannot make any further statements or questions. • You will be allowed to ask 1 supplementary question relating to the answer you was given or your initial question.

Participating in Planning Committee

What's the meeting about?	The Planning Committee meets in a 5 week cycle to decide on planning and other similar related applications.
Number of Members involved	Nine elected Members and two non-voting co-opted Members.

For Councillors not on the Committee:	Details	Deadlines	What happens next	At the meeting
Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement must relate to an issue or application to be considered on the agenda of the meeting. Can be in support or opposition to the matter. 	By 12 noon, two working days before the meeting starts, not including the day of the meeting e.g. If the meeting takes place on Thursday, questions will need to be in by Monday 12 noon of the same week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will respond to let you know if your question has been accepted with notification of any suggested amendments. If there is more than one speaker on an application, a ballot will be held at 4pm, two working days before the meeting, with all the relevant parties present. Your question or statement will be placed on the agenda in the relevant section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You verbally ask your question but cannot make any further statements or questions. You will be allowed to ask 1 supplementary question relating to the answer you was given or your initial question.

For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens next	At the meeting
Questions and Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One question or statement can be made. • Can be in support of or opposition to a matter or application that is to be considered at the meeting. • Speakers can speak for themselves or on behalf of others. 	<p>By 12 noon, two working days before the meeting starts, not including the day of the meeting e.g. If the meeting takes place on Thursday, questions will need to be in by Monday 12 noon of the same week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will respond to let you know if your question has been accepted with notification of any suggested amendments. • If there is more than one speaker on an application, a ballot will be held at 4pm, two working days before the meeting, with all the relevant parties present. • Your question or statement will be placed on the agenda in the relevant section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of Democratic Services will guide you to your seat when the relevant agenda item is presented. • You verbally ask your question but cannot make any further statements or questions. • You will be allowed to ask 1 supplementary question relating to the answer you was given or your initial question.

Participating in Overview and Scrutiny Committees

<p>What's the meeting about?</p>	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Committees are appointed to look into matters relating to their subject committee and most of them usually meet every other month. Thurrock Council has six Overview and Scrutiny Committees which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services – child protection, health, welfare, education and youth services. • Cleaner, Greener and Safer – waste and recycling, community safety, trading standards and environmental protection. • Corporate – performance of the Council, corporate and cross cutting services, value for money and related matters. • Health and Wellbeing – adult social care and health services related matters. • Housing – all housing services related matters. • Planning, Transport and Regeneration – physical and economic development and services provided by the planning and highways services.
<p>Number of Members involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services – Six (no Cabinet Members) and four co-opted Members with voting rights in educational matters only. • Cleaner, Greener and Safer – Six (no Cabinet Members). • Corporate – Six (no Cabinet Members). • Health and Wellbeing – Six (no Cabinet or Health and Wellbeing Board Members) and two non-voting co-opted Members. • Housing – Six (no Cabinet Members) and one non-voting co-opted Member. • Planning, Transport and Regeneration – Six (no Cabinet Members).

For Councillors not on the Committee:	Details	Deadlines	What happens next	At the meeting
Questions and Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members can speak with the permission of the Chair. Further speaking may be permitted at the discretion of the Chair. 	None.	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a 3 minute time limit for asking questions or making a statement.

For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens next	At the meeting
Questions and Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One question or statement can be made. The question must relate to an item on the agenda. The question must not be in more than one part. 	By 5pm, three working days before the meeting e.g. If the meeting takes place on Thursday, questions will need to be in by 5pm Monday of the same week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will respond to let you know if your question has been accepted with notification of any suggested amendments. Your question or statement will be placed on the agenda in the relevant section. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A member of Democratic Services will guide you to your seat when the relevant agenda item is presented. You verbally ask your question but cannot make any further statements or questions. You will be allowed to ask 1 supplementary question relating to the answer you were given or your question.

Co-opted Members

A co-opted Member is someone who represents a specific subject of interest but they are not elected by Council Members. The Council may appoint co-opted Members to sit on any committee or Task and Finish group because of their specialised area of interest or experience.

Co-opted Members can contribute to discussions with their knowledge but largely have no voting rights unless there is legislation to support voting rights. Instead, their expertise can help Members to make better informed decisions.

For co-opted Members to ask questions, the process is the same as Members of the Council.

Petitions

A petition is a formal document signed by a number of people requesting another form of action or solution from the government or another authority. In addition to asking questions, members of the public can also participate in petitions which are a way for residents to let us know of their concerns.

Residents can sign petitions or present a petition at any of the following meetings:

- Full Council
- The Cabinet

Petitions can also be handed in to any Officer or Member. A Member can present the petition on behalf of residents. Alternatively, petitions can be posted in to Democratic Services.

There are several guidelines to follow for petitions which are:

- There must be at least 10 local government electors within Thurrock to support the petition along with their names, valid addresses and signatures to be included.
- A clear and concise statement on the nature of the petition with recommendations on what the petitioners would like the Council to do.
- The issue must be related to a responsibility within Thurrock's authority and will affect Thurrock.
- The petition must not be seen as trivial, defamatory, offensive, disclose exempt or confidential information and not be the same as a previous petition in the last 12 months.

Any petitions that do not reach the required 10 signatures, the Council would seek alternative solutions to ensure residents' views are considered. Petitions which have received over 1500 signatures would be taken to a Full Council meeting for debate.

There are some petitions which do not follow this process above because there is already an established process in place. These are:

- Any issue that relates to an individual or entity which already has an existing review process or right of appeal e.g. Council tax banding.

- A statutory petition e.g. demanding a referendum on having an elected mayor.
- Council staff petitions which would be dealt with through the Council's relevant Human Resources Policy.
- Any petitions relating to the daily operation of a certain school which would be referred to the relevant Governing Body of the school.
- Any issues that are outside of Thurrock Council's direct control e.g. issues governed by another borough or by national or EU legislation.
- Any petitions that relate to a matter that is already in legal proceedings or if the Council is in a legal dispute with.

The Procedure for Presenting a Petition at a Meeting

Your petition relates to an item on the agenda of a meeting.



Inform Democratic Services by midday the day before the meeting that you wish to present a petition by email:
direct.democracy@thurrock.gov.uk



You must give details of:

- what the petition is about,
- the number of signatures for your petition, and
- your contact details.



At the meeting, you will be given 2 minutes to present your petition and inform Councillors what it's about.

Your petition relates to:

- something the Council does,
- something that affects the Council as an organisation; or
- something that affects the borough.



Create your petition online at
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/petitions/online-petitions> detailing:

- your name, postal address and email, and
- how long your petition will be open for people to sign.

A petition can remain open for up to 12 months.



Within 5 working days, we will check if your petition is suitable before publishing it online. You will be contacted if amendments need to be made.

Getting Involved With Call-Ins

A call-in asks for a decision made by the Cabinet to be looked at again. Decisions can be called-in if there is evidence showing the decision maker did not follow the principles of decision making as outlined in the Constitution. Decision making should be made under the following principles:

- In the interests of the individuals and communities within the Thurrock Borough Council
- The decision to be similar to the desired outcome
- Follow the Council's consultation strategy
- Respect for human rights
- With an open-mind
- With clear aims and desired outcomes
- Be in line with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

For members of the public to make a call-in, there needs to be 10 members of the public living, working or studying within Thurrock.

Not all decisions can be called-in. These include:

- recommendations on the Budget and Policy framework made by the Cabinet, which can only be reviewed by Council;
- decisions to be immediately enforced under the Access to Information Procedure Rules;
- urgent decisions outside of the Budget and Policy framework; and
- decisions to award a contract after a lawful procurement process.

How to Make a Call-In

Within 5 working days of the publication of the decisions notice, you could call-in a decision via post, email or via our online form at <https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/challenging-decisions/how-to-call-in-decision>

The written notice must state:

- why the decision needs to be sent back for review
- an alternative recommendation to be considered instead

Please ensure the written notice contains:

- Names and addresses of the 10 or more members of public who live, work or study in Thurrock
- the required signatures or separate emails/letters from each individual

Once received, an Overview and Scrutiny Committee will either:

- Reject the call-in or
- Accept it and refer the decision back to the Cabinet to be reconsidered

Useful Information

Questions, petitions and statements can be sent in via post to:

Democratic Services,
Thurrock Council,
Civic Offices,
New Road,
Grays,
Essex,
RM17 6SL.

Email:

direct.democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

For any help or assistance, we can be contacted by phone on 01375 652831

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APPENDIX E

Submit a Question to be asked at Full Council Meetings

NAME:
ADDRESS:
.....
.....
TELEPHONE NUMBER:
EMAIL ADDRESS:
DATE OF THE COUNCIL MEETING:
WHO IS YOUR QUESTION TO:
YOUR QUESTION:
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

FOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES TEAM USE ONLY	
DATE QUESTION RECEIVED:	APPROVED? YES / NO
CHECKED BY:	
IF NOT APPROVED, STATE REASON:	
.....	
.....	
DATE WRITTEN RESPONSE SENT:	

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**Constitution Working Group
Work Programme
2017/18**

Dates of Meetings: TBC (Monthly)

Topic	Lead Officer	Requested by Officer/Member
November 2017		
December 2017		
January 2018		

February 2018		
March 2018		
April 2018		