

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Public Participation in Council Meetings Policy



Public participation

As Council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement, we warmly invite members of the public, the press, the police and district, borough or county councillors to attend our meetings and contribute during the public forum.

Rules must control the manner of participation in order that Council meetings may proceed effectively and have sufficient time to cover all matters contained in the agenda. Public participation is an opportunity to ask question not to make statements. Interjections during proceedings are not permitted and if business is disrupted individuals may be asked to leave.

The following must be observed:

- The agenda will indicate when the public forum participation will take place, usually near to the beginning of a meeting and it will last for a maximum period of 15 minutes.
- Each member of the public will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes to ask a question.
- The Chair will determine in what order members of the public will be allowed to ask their questions, having regard to who has given prior notice to the Clerk or Chair that they wish to ask a question, previously record of asking questions at meetings, who arrived at the meeting first, and whether questions to be asked are the same or similar to other questions already asked.
- At the sole discretion of the Chair, the time allowed for an member of the public to speak may be extended, the maximum period of the public participation session may also be extended), and contributions may be allowed at other points in the agenda. This will be only in exceptional circumstances and where it would help Councillor debate by being able to ask questions of a member of public or an expert adviser.

In allowing the public forum, Council is aware that this forms only one means of consultation with the public. No decisions other than undertaking further research or writing to relevant bodies can be taken at the meeting where a matter is raised. In answer to questions about its services Council provides answers where possible at the meeting. If this is not possible a written/email response will be given to the questioner within 14 days of the meeting, the contents of which will be relayed to the next appropriate meeting.

Reports in the public forum

Council provides an opportunity for the police and district or county councillors to present reports. An opportunity will be given to ask questions, at Council's discretion, subject to the relevant conditions above and within an overall time limit of 15 minutes.

Recording of meetings

Meetings may be recorded by Council to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings as they take place to do so later, and to enable the reporting of those proceedings.

Members of the public may also record Council meetings, committee and sub-committee meetings. Following amendments made to the law in 2014, any person attending such meetings may report on their proceedings. 'Reporting' is defined as filming, photographing, audio recording, written reporting (e.g. blogging) or oral commentary (not during the meeting).

Filming of other members of the public in attendance is not permitted.

Use of recordings by third parties - code of practice

1. Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.
2. Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point.

Please also refer to Council's current Standing Orders available on the web site.

Last reviewed: 26 June 2023

Next review due: 26 June 2025