



# Protocol for Questions and Statements from Members of the Public at Scrutiny Meetings



## **Protocol for questions and statements from members of the Public at Scrutiny Committees**

1. Members of the public are defined as any individuals living or working within Cornwall.
2. All questions/statements must be notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services at County Hall by midday at least 2 clear working days before the meeting. The person's name and address should be provided, but shall not be published in the minutes.
3. Normally, a total of 10 minutes shall be allocated at the start of the meeting for public questions or statements.
4. Questions and statements must relate to the business of the Committee, although not necessarily to an item on the agenda for the meeting.
5. One follow up question or statement may be allowed at the discretion of the Chairman of the Committee.
6. Each person may attend the relevant meeting to put their question or statement and shall be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes speaking time.
7. Each person shall be asked in advance if they require a response if they make a statement. Questions and statements shall be responded to by the Chairman of the Committee unless they nominate another Member or an officer to respond. If a response cannot be given at the meeting, a written response shall be provided within 7 working days and circulated to all Members of the Committee.
8. Where more than one person wishes to raise the same issue or question, they shall be asked to agree a spokesperson to speak on that issue. If they cannot reach such an agreement, the Chairman may restrict the number of statements or questions on that issue.
9. It is not intended that the same or similar question or statement should be put to a future meeting of the same committee and where there is an overlap between the remit of committees the same or similar question shall not be put to any other of those committees once dealt with or rejected.
10. No member of the public may have more than two questions and/or statements put to a Committee in a financial year.

11. If questions or statements are unsuitable in form, frivolous, defamatory, derogatory, otherwise offensive, confidential in nature or relating to a matter being investigated under the Council's formal complaints and/or appeals procedures, the Head of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services shall have the right to rule the question or statement out of order and the matter be reported to the relevant Chairman.
12. If there is any dispute as to the admissibility of any question or statement under this Protocol, the matter shall be determined by the Head of Legal, Democratic and Procurement Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.
13. The ruling of the Chairman of the relevant Committee regarding the application of this Protocol at any meeting shall be final.