



scrutiny

City and County of Cardiff

Public Speaking at Scrutiny Committee Meetings

**Draft Guidance Note
July 2015**

Introduction

Scrutiny is one of the most challenging and interesting aspects of the democratic process in Cardiff. Scrutiny plays a vital role in service improvement, promoting the well being of local communities and championing public concerns.

Scrutiny is conducted in an open and transparent way, focusing on the needs and concerns of the public.

In the past, members of the public have not generally been invited to take part in discussions or debates during Cardiff's Scrutiny committees. However, to reflect the Committee's work in seeking information on issues relating to the people who live and work in Cardiff, the Council wants to introduce public participation during Scrutiny Committee meetings.

The following information provides guidance to members of the public who wish to speak at Scrutiny Committee meetings.

Guidance on Asking Questions

The question must be relevant to the business of the Scrutiny Committee to which it is put. If it is not possible to answer the question at the meeting, a response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting.

The chairman of the Committee will decide whether the question is appropriate and whether the question will be taken at the meeting.

Members of the public will be invited to raise questions at the beginning of each meeting. A maximum of 30 minutes will be allocated for this purpose.

To allow each member of the public wishing to participate at the meeting to speak, an allocated time limit of 5 minutes per speaker will be given.

Assistance on how to present questions is available upon request from Scrutiny Services. Please phone 02920 872953 or email scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk.

How to Suggest Topics for Scrutiny

Members of the public may suggest items for consideration by submitting their question **at least two working days before** the meeting to Democratic Services, City & County of Cardiff Council, County Hall, Cardiff. Tel 02920 872953 or email scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

Alternatively, they can use the form provided on the Council's website, or ask their Ward Councillor to forward the request to Scrutiny Services.

Providing Evidence to a Scrutiny Committee

Before the Meeting

The Scrutiny Committee may invite members of the public to provide evidence or to discuss issues of local concern as part of their investigation. It may, for example, wish to hear from residents, stakeholders or members and officers in other parts of the public sector.

Where a person is invited to attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting, an initial telephone call will be made to enquire whether the person is able to attend the meeting, followed by a letter or e-mail, giving the maximum possible notice in writing.

The letter will state the nature of the item on which the person is invited to give evidence and whether any papers are required to be produced for the Committee.

The letter will inform the person of the subject being scrutinised, and where appropriate, a list of questions to be answered.

Where the Committee requires the person to provide a written report, sufficient time will be given to allow for the preparation of the document.

At the Meeting

At the meeting, the Chairman of the Committee will provide a brief introduction to the members of the Committee and the persons invited to give evidence. The Chairman will also provide an overview of the item under investigation, including the aims, objectives and timescale.

The Chairman will remind those people invited to give evidence why the Committee has invited them to attend the meeting and request that they give a brief statement regarding the item under scrutiny.

Once the statement has been made, the Committee will be given an opportunity to ask questions in a concise, jargon free manner. The person providing the evidence will be allowed to summarise the information.

The Committee will then be given an opportunity to discuss and review the evidence that has been presented before providing feedback on how they viewed the information and any actions they feel might be appropriate.

The person providing evidence will be formally thanked for their contribution.

After the Meeting

The person providing evidence will receive a letter or e-mail advising them of the outcome of the investigation. They will also be given the opportunity to provide written feedback on the scrutiny process they have been involved in.

Conduct at a Scrutiny Committee

Members of the public must not abuse the privilege of participation by personal attacks on Elected Members, other participants or members of the public.

Speakers will be required to respond politely to any question from the Chairman and Elected Members of the Committee.

Any speaker who makes a statement, which, in the opinion of the Chairman, is defamatory, abusive, racially motivated or discriminatory, will be required to stop speaking and leave the meeting. The Committee will be advised to disregard such comments.

Where a number of speakers share the same viewpoint, a spokesperson may be required.

The Chairman will have complete discretion on how public participation is conducted. If the above principles are not adhered to, the Chairman may close that part of the meeting.

Media Access to Public Meetings

The media will be invited to attend all public meetings and offered interview, filming and reporting opportunities, whenever possible.

The Council supports the Ofcom Code and Guidelines on broadcasting standards. All arrangements for filming will be expected to adhere to these provisions, in particular those relating to the 'obligations of fairness and respect for truth' and 'fairness and impartiality' in the editing and transmission of interviews.

Agenda, Reports and Minutes

Copies of Committee agendas, reports and minutes will be available upon request from Democratic Services or by visiting the City & County of Cardiff Council website at www.cardiff.gov.uk.

Where to Send Scrutiny Questions

Please submit to Scrutiny Services, City & County of Cardiff Council, County Hall, Cardiff CF10 4UW (or scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk) **at least two working days before** the meeting. In exceptional circumstances, the Committee Chairman, at his or her discretion, may accept questions submitted up to one hour before the meeting.

Please write the question out in full, stating the name, time and date of the Committee you wish to speak at. Please ensure that your full name and address, including a contact telephone number, are entered on the letter of submission.

9. Enquiries and Assistance

For any further guidance on procedures at meetings, please contact Scrutiny Services on telephone: 029 2087 2953 or email scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk.