



Exeter City Council

Exeter City Council's Committees and how they work

Councillors are elected from 13 wards in Exeter to represent you and take decisions on your behalf on all kinds of important issues affecting the everyday life of the City, including how to provide homes and car parks; sports, art and leisure facilities; how to care for Exeter's environment and ensure the Council has enough funds to provide essential services. Councillors (also known as Members) meet to set priorities for the present and plan for the future.

The Council, comprising 39 Members, meets several times each year at Guildhall in the High Street to decide the Council's overall policies and set the budget.

In addition to recommending major strategies to the Council, the Executive is responsible for the most significant and day to day decisions which are not delegated to officers.

There are three Scrutiny Committees which support the work of the Executive and the Council as a whole. They consider issues and review services within their remit and make recommendations to the Executive and the Council on its policies, budget and service delivery issues. Scrutiny Committees also monitor the decisions of the Executive and can in certain circumstances "call-in" a decision which has been made but not yet implemented.

In addition the Council has Planning, Audit and Governance and Licensing Committees.

Members of the public are welcome to attend Council, Executive, Scrutiny and other Committee meetings to listen to the debate. On some occasions, where confidential information is to be discussed, you will not be able to stay for the whole meeting.

There is also a facility to allow you to ask a question at a Scrutiny Committee (see section headed *How you can ask a question at Scrutiny Committee*).

You may also be able to speak either for or against planning applications at Planning Committee. Further details can be obtained from the Democratic Services Officer (Committees) on 01392 265107 or email committee.services@exeter.gov.uk.

Citizens' rights

Citizens have the following rights:

Elections and referenda

Citizens on the electoral role for the area have the right to vote and sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected Lord Mayor form of constitution.

Petitions

Any person who lives, works or studies in Exeter, including under-18s, can present or sign a petition to the City Council. Full details of the Council's Petition Scheme can be found on the Council's website at www.exeter.gov.uk/petitions

Information

Citizens have the right to:

- Attend meetings of the Council and its committees, including the Executive, except for items where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed and the meeting is therefore held in private;
- Find out from the Forward Plan what key decisions will be taken by the Executive and when;
- See reports and background papers, and any records of decision made by the Council and the Executive (excluding confidential or 'exempt' information); and
- Inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.

Participation

Citizens have the right to ask questions at a Scrutiny Committee and speak at Planning Committee on any application or Tree Preservation Order being considered by that Committee, subject to the agreed procedure.

Complaints

Citizens have the right to complain to:

- The Council itself under its complaints scheme;
- The Ombudsman, after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
- The Councils' Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

Citizens' responsibilities

Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to Councillors or Officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, councillors or officers.