



Exeter City Council

How a member of the public can ask a question at a Scrutiny Committee

Members of the public may put questions directly to one of the three Scrutiny Committees – People, Place and Corporate Services. These will usually be taken at the beginning of each Scrutiny Committee.

General

Members of the public who are registered electors within the city may ask questions which will be answered by the councillor who is responsible for that particular service area (known as the portfolio holder) or the Chair of the committee.

Order of questions

Questions will be asked in the order in which notice was received but the Chair may group together similar questions.

Notice of questions

A question may only be asked if notice has been given by submitting it to the Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support no later than 10:00am, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner. You may send your question to the Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support, Exeter City Council, Paris Street, Exeter, EX1 1JN. Alternatively, if you prefer to use email, please send your question to committee.services@exeter.gov.uk. Questions can be accepted verbally but we will need to confirm these to you in writing.

Scope of questions

The question must relate to a matter to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the city.

The Corporate Manager Democratic & Civic Support in consultation with the Chair of the Committee may reject a question if it:

- Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the city;
- Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- Is substantially the same question which has been put to a meeting of a Scrutiny Committee in the past six months; or
- Requires the disclosure of confidential information.

Record of questions

When a question is submitted a copy will be sent to the Chair and the councillor to whom it is put if that is not the Chair. The person submitting the question will be advised that it has been accepted and when and where it may be asked. If the question is rejected the reasons for this will be given.

Copies of all questions will be circulated to all members of the Scrutiny Committee and will be made available to the public attending the meeting.

Asking the question at the meeting

The Chair will invite the questioner to put the question to the member named in the notice. The questioner must not deviate from the wording of the question submitted. The Chair has the right to refuse the question if it has been changed in any way.

If a questioner who has submitted a written question is unable to be present, they may ask the Chair to put the question on their behalf. The Chair may ask the question on the questioner's behalf and indicate how it will be dealt with.

If a questioner submits a question of a similar nature to one previously asked in the previous six months, they will be sent a copy of the answer to that earlier question.

Response to questions

The committee may debate the issue for up to 10 minutes and may respond in one of the following ways:

- A verbal response made at the meeting; **or**
- An officer will be asked to respond to the questioner in writing with a copy being sent to all Scrutiny Committee members; **or**
- The committee may decide to place the item on the agenda for a future meeting for further consideration and request a written report on the matter.

Right to respond

No supplementary question(s) may be asked. However, the member of the public asking the question shall have the opportunity to respond for a maximum of two minutes. No further debate will be permitted.

After the meeting

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 requires us to publically publish Council meeting agendas and minutes and accompanying documentation in which names of Public Speakers at Committee meetings will be recorded. We have a duty to look after the information we hold about you. Council meetings may also be broadcast live through social media and the press and other members of the public may be present at the meetings. Names of Public Speakers at Committee meetings are recorded in minutes. For more details on how we use your information please visit <https://exeter.gov.uk/media/3973/democratic-services-privacy-notice.pdf>