

ABINGDON-ON-THAMES TOWN COUNCIL
CODE OF PRACTICE IN RELATION TO
THE PUBLIC SPEAKING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

Admission of the Public and Press to Meetings

The public and press shall be admitted to all meetings of the Council and its committees, which may, however, temporarily exclude the public or the press or both by means of the following resolution, viz.:

That in accordance with section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Rules of Public Speaking and Asking Questions at the Council Meetings

- a. The Council shall set aside a maximum of 15 minutes prior to the start of the Full Council Meeting and of its Standing Committees to allow residents of Abingdon or owners/managers of businesses in Abingdon to ask questions of the Mayor (for Council) and Chairman of the Standing Committees (for Council or at the meeting of the relevant Standing Committee) or to express views.
- b. Members of the public shall submit written questions not later than 48 hours before the meeting to the Town Clerk.
- c. Members of the public may give notice in writing or submit a statement of the subject on which they wish to speak to the Town Clerk 48 hours beforehand.
- d. At the meeting, the Mayor or Chairman (as appropriate) shall call on members of the public in the order in which questions or statements have been submitted.

- e. Members of the public may not speak for more than 3 minutes and may not speak without the express consent of the Mayor or Chairman (as appropriate), or speak more than once per meeting. When addressing the Council they shall stand, and give their name and address, before speaking.

- f. Whilst every effort will be made to answer the questions raised, the Mayor or Committee Chairman, may express themselves unable to do so or may state their intention of replying in writing.

- g. A record shall be kept of questions raised and the answers given, both orally and in writing. This record will be circulated to members but will not form part of the minutes.

- h. Questions and statements should be related to general issues including general planning matters within the competence of the Town Council and shall not include private or personal issues.

- i. The Mayor shall close the period of public consultation after 15 minutes.