

# How to have your say



A quick reference guide  
to council meetings



# How to have your say

Involving local people in local decisions is the cornerstone of democracy. There are many ways you can contribute and get your voice heard at public meetings.

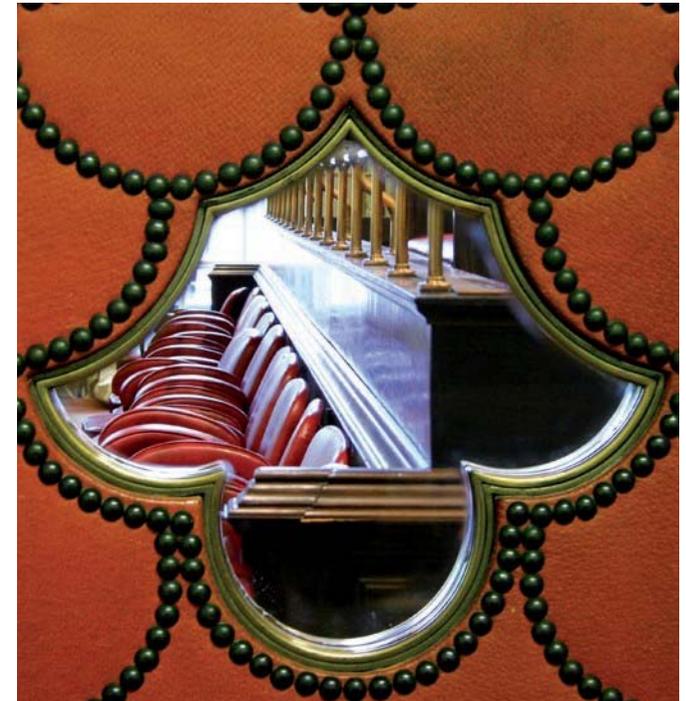
This quick reference guide explains the different public meetings, what they are for and how you can have your say. There are guidelines for presenting a petition, statement or question at a meeting and how you will get a response.

For those unable to attend the public meetings in person, we webcast some of them live and make the recording available after the meeting.

In addition to the public meetings, the Mayor takes part in a number of public question time events – radio phone ins, Mayor’s Question Time events and web chats – with the opportunity for people to ask him any question.

For more information about how the council works and the various meetings [www.bristol.gov.uk/council](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/council) and [www.bristol.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/meetings)

Note: questions/statements to meetings will not be permitted if they are about topics/issues which are not within the council’s areas of responsibility or which do not directly affect the city.



# Full Council

Who goes?	Mayor plus all 70 councillors. Meetings of Full Council are held in public and chaired by the Lord Mayor
What's the meeting for?	<p>The Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sets the budget and policy framework proposed by the elected Mayor including the level of council tax</li> <li>• Appoints committees to deal with the scrutiny function, regulatory committees (e.g. development control committees) and other committees</li> <li>• Has powers to adopt byelaws, appointment of Aldermen and giving Freedom of the City.</li> <li>• At the Annual General Meeting in May, the Lord Mayor is appointed.</li> </ul>
When do they occur?	<p>Full Council meets eight times a year. For 2016/17 these dates are Tuesdays @ 6pm unless indicated otherwise at The City Hall.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31 May 2016, City Hall (Annual Meeting) @ 2pm</li> <li>• 19 July 2016</li> <li>• 13 September 2016</li> <li>• 8 November 2016</li> <li>• 13 December 2016</li> <li>• 17 January 2017</li> <li>• 21 February 2017, (budget meeting) @ 2pm</li> <li>• 7 March 2017, (budget reserve)</li> <li>• 14 March 2017</li> </ul> <p>Before each Council meeting (except the Annual and Budget meetings) there is a Member Forum @5pm where councillors can put questions to the Mayor</p> <p>Please note: there is no public forum at the annual meeting and the budget meeting.</p>
Is it webcast?	<a href="#">Yes View here</a>

## Full Council – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Member Forum – one hour prior to the start of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions and statements on any issue.</li> <li>• There will be a maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions per councillor.</li> <li>• One statement per councillor (one topic per statement).</li> </ul>	Questions and statements must be submitted by 12 noon on the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A maximum of one statement per member and one minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement and they will be referred to the Mayor for consideration.</li> <li>• Replies to questions will be given verbally.</li> <li>• Statements will not be discussed at the meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A written reply to questions will be provided within 10 working days.</li> <li>• A written response to statements will be provided within 10 working days if requested.</li> <li>• Answers to questions will be published on the website within 10 working days of the meeting.</li> </ul>
Councillor petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions on any topic</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be 10 minutes to receive petitions from Councillors.</li> <li>• Petitions will not be discussed at the meeting.</li> </ul>	A written reply will be provided to the Councillor/lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting.

For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statements can be submitted on any topic.</li> <li>• One statement per person (one topic per statement).</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 minutes are set aside to deal with petitions, statements and questions. Priority is given to petitions.</li> <li>• One minute to present statements.</li> <li>• Statements will not be discussed at the meeting.</li> </ul>	Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions can be submitted on any topic.</li> <li>• One petition per person.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead petitioner to present the petition if they wish (one minute allowed).</li> <li>• Petitions will not be discussed at the meeting.</li> </ul>	A written reply will be provided to the lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting.

## How to have your say

### A quick reference guide to council meetings

Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On any issue for which the Council has responsibility or which directly affects the city</li><li>• A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions may be asked per member of the public.</li></ul>	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 30 minutes are set aside to deal with petitions, statements and questions. Priority is given to petitions.</li><li>• Replies to questions will be given verbally.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written confirmation of the verbal response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested, or if a response could not be given at the meeting.</li><li>• Answers to questions will be published on the website within 10 working days of the meeting</li></ul>
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# Cabinet

Who goes?	<p><u>Mayor plus 5 Assistant Mayors – his Cabinet.</u></p> <p>Meetings of Full Cabinet are held in public and chaired by the Mayor.</p> <p>Assistant Mayors each have a portfolio of services to oversee and advise the Mayor on.</p>
What's the meeting for?	<p>The Mayor assumes ultimate responsibility for all major policy decisions at Cabinet following consultation with his Assistant Mayors.</p>
When do they occur?	<p>Cabinet meets monthly. For 2016/17 the regular dates are (Tuesdays @6pm unless indicated otherwise):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 7 June 2016 @ 4.00pm</li><li>• 4 July 2016</li><li>• 11 August 2016</li><li>• 6 September 2016</li><li>• 4 October 2016</li><li>• 1 November 2016</li><li>• 6 December 2016</li><li>• 17 January 2017</li><li>• 7 February 2017</li><li>• 7 March 2017</li><li>• 4 April 2017</li></ul>
Is it webcast?	<p><u>Yes – View here</u></p>

## Cabinet – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Councillor Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One statement per councillor on agenda items only.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One minute to present statement</li> <li>The content of the statement will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated.</li> </ul>	Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
Councillor petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One petition per councillor on agenda items only.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One minute to present petition</li> <li>The content of the petition will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated.</li> </ul>	Petitions will receive a written reply provided to the Councillor / lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting.
Councillor Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions on agenda items only. Two questions per councillor maximum.</li> </ul>	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions per councillor.</li> <li>Replies to questions will be given verbally.</li> </ul>	Written confirmation of the response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statements must be about agenda items.</li> <li>One statement per person.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One hour for petitions, statements and question.</li> <li>One minute to present statement</li> <li>The content of the statement will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated.</li> </ul>	Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.
Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Petitions must be about agenda items.</li> <li>One petition per person.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One minute for lead petitioner to present petition</li> <li>The content of the petition will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated.</li> </ul>	Petitions will receive a written reply to the lead petitioner within 10 working days.
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions submitted must be about agenda items.</li> <li>Two questions per person maximum.</li> </ul>	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One hour for petitions, statements and question.</li> <li>A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions may be asked per member of the public</li> <li>Replies to questions will be given verbally.</li> </ul>	Written confirmation of the verbal response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested.

# Scrutiny meetings

Who goes?	Each committee is made up of councillors, reflecting the political proportionality of the council.
What's the meeting for?	Scrutiny is a function that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensures that Councillors play a pivotal role in influencing council policy and service improvements.</li><li>• Delivers local accountability, transparency and involvement in decision-making and improving outcomes for the people of Bristol.</li><li>• Acts as a 'critical friend', providing support to ensure decisions are carried out correctly and sometimes recommending alternative or additional courses of action.</li></ul>
When do they occur?	There are five committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB)</li><li>• Place Scrutiny Commission</li><li>• People Scrutiny Commission</li><li>• Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission</li><li>• Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission</li></ul> For 2016/17 these dates are available <a href="http://www.bristol.gov.uk/scrutiny">www.bristol.gov.uk/scrutiny</a>
Is it webcast?	Some are – please refer to the <a href="#">website</a> for which meetings will be webcast.

## Scrutiny meetings – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Councillor Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement and petitions are about a matter for which the committee has responsibility.</li> <li>Statements will be copied and circulated to all members of the committee.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions.</li> <li>Petitions and statements will be noted/considered when the item is debated or referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) as appropriate.</li> </ul>	Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) where appropriate.
Councillor Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions should be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility.</li> </ul>	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions.</li> <li>Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting.</li> <li>A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or the reply.</li> </ul>	Questions and answers are included on the official minute book which is available for public inspection
For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statements and petitions must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions.</li> <li>Statements will be copied and circulated to all members of the committee.</li> <li>Petitions and statements will be noted / considered when the item is debated or referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) as appropriate.</li> </ul>	Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) where appropriate.
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions submitted must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility.</li> </ul>	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions.</li> <li>Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting</li> <li>A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or reply.</li> </ul>	Questions and answers are included on the official minute book which is available for public inspection

# Development Control meetings

Who goes?	Each committee is made up of councillors, reflecting the political proportionality of the council.
What's the meeting for?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Determination of significant planning applications</li></ul>
When do they occur?	There are two committees – Development Control A and Development Control B For 2016/17 these dates are available on the <a href="#">website</a>
Is it webcast?	Some are – please refer to the <a href="#">website</a> for which meetings will be webcast.

## Development Control meetings – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Councillor Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement and petitions are about a matter for which the committee has responsibility</li> <li>Statements will be copied and circulated to all members of the committee.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications.</li> <li>Petitions and statements will be received prior to the item being discussed and noted / considered as the item is debated.</li> </ul>	Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor’s consideration) where appropriate.
Councillor Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions should be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility.</li> </ul>	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications.</li> <li>Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting.</li> <li>A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or the reply.</li> </ul>	Questions and answers are included in the minutes.
For the public:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Statements and Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statements and petitions must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility.</li> </ul>	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications.</li> <li>Petitions and statements will be received prior to the item being discussed and noted / considered as the item is debated.</li> </ul>	Copies held on the public Minute Book.
Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions submitted must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility.</li> </ul>	Three clear working days before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications.</li> <li>Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting</li> <li>A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or reply.</li> </ul>	Questions and answers are included in the minutes.

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# Further information

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## What's a statement?

- Statements should be short and limited to one side of A4 paper. Statements will be circulated before the meeting and will have been read by councillors by the time the meeting starts.
- You'll be invited to present your statement to the meeting. You should focus on the main points and avoid reading it out word for word.
- Groups can nominate a representative to speak on their behalf.
- All statements are compiled in the order they're received.

For copyright reasons, we're unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles attached to statements as supporting documentation.

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## Questions

- Full Council or Cabinet meetings – questions should be addressed to the Mayor or an Assistant Mayor who has responsibility for responding.
- Committee meetings – questions are normally addressed to the chair.

See our [councillor finder](#) for the names and roles of councillors or contact Democratic Services.

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## What happens to your personal information received with representations

By taking part in public forum business, it's assumed that your consent is given to the recording of your name and the details of your submission in the documents circulated to committee and made available at the meeting and on the Council website.

The information will also be placed in the official minute book as a public record. This is available for inspection on request with the other documents for the meeting concerned.

Where appropriate, we'll try to remove other personal details like contact details. However, we cannot guarantee this and you may wish to consider what your statement contains.

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## Webcasting of meetings

Full Council, Cabinet meetings and some other committee meetings are filmed for live or later broadcast via our webcasting pages.

The whole of the meeting is filmed (except where there are confidential or exempt items). The footage will be available for two years.

If you ask a question or make a representation, then you're likely to be filmed. It will be assumed that you've given your consent.

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## Where to send your questions, statements and petitions.

Please send them to:  
[democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk)