

## Comparison of How Other Councils Operate in Public Participation

Council	Asking Public Questions	Petitions	Call-Ins	Ease of Use
Thurrock	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; How We Work and How You Can Have Your Say &gt; Asking questions at full council meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One question can be asked per person but a supplementary question can be asked relating to the initial question or answer given.</li> <li>• Questions must be submitted by 5pm, six working days before the meeting.</li> <li>• For committee meetings, a question or statement can be made but must be submitted by 5pm, three working days before the meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; How We Work and How You Can Have Your Say &gt; Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules for submitting a petition.</li> <li>• Can start petitions online but have to register.</li> <li>• No petition template online but an example is shown in the Constitution.</li> <li>• Explains how petitions will be dealt with.</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; How We Work and How You Can Have Your Say &gt; Challenging Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How and when to make a call-in</li> <li>• Explains what can't be called-in.</li> </ul>	<p>Easy to follow links. Each section was broken down in sub-categories making it easier to follow. However, some sections could be further divided to give a clearer definition of sections.</p>
Swindon	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; Document Library &gt; Guidance for those attending public meetings &gt; Public Question Time document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15 minutes time limit for all questions</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; Constitution &gt; Part 4 Rules of Procedure &gt; Petitions Scheme document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum of 10 signatures are required with names and postal</li> </ul>	<p>Unable to find the procedure for call-in.</p>	<p>Confusing as the sections were not clearly linked. Everything was in the Constitution but in separate documents that weren't clearly named. No dedicated page to how public can get</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written questions, including questions sent by email, must be received by the Proper Officer no later than 3pm two clear working days before the meeting.</li> <li>• Written notice of questions will go first and if there is enough time, other questions can be taken</li> <li>• Someone else can ask on behalf of the questioner</li> <li>• 1 supplementary question is allowed.</li> </ul>	<p>addresses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has 5 different types of petitions – Consultation, Statutory, for Debate, Ordinary and to Hold an Officer to Account.</li> <li>• Petitions are acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt.</li> <li>• Can submit petitions online but have to register as a user.</li> </ul>		involved.
Bristol	<p>Council &amp; Mayor tab &gt; Council Decision Making &gt; Council Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘How to have your say’ document (attached as appendix A) sets out clear guidelines for public participation in Bristol’s council meetings.</li> <li>• A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions can be asked per person.</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Mayor tab &gt; Consultations and Petitions &gt; link to petition guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can start online petition</li> <li>• ‘How to have your say’ document (attached) sets out when petitions can be presented and at what meetings.</li> <li>• Petitions can be presented at Full Council meetings but must be submitted by 12 noon, the working day before the meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Mayor tab &gt; can be found in Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outlines the process of call-ins but does not specify who can make a call-in or how to.</li> </ul>	Links are clearly marked but no dedicated page to how the public can get involved.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions must be submitted three clear working days before the meeting.</li> <li>• Statements are accepted but only one per person on any topic.</li> <li>• Statements must be submitted by 12 noon, the working day before the meeting.</li> <li>• The time limit for public questions is 30 minutes which also includes presenting petitions and making statements. In Cabinet, it's a one hour time limit.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions are given priority in Full Council Meetings.</li> </ul>		
Wiltshire	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; Councillors, committees and decisions &gt; public participation link:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 3 speakers can speak for 3 minutes each for statements.</li> <li>• The public can register to make a statement 10 minutes before a meeting via the Democratic Services Officer listed on the</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; Have Your Say &gt; Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions are acknowledged within 10 working days of receipt.</li> <li>• Signatures are accepted from ages 13 and up provided they work, live or study in Wiltshire.</li> <li>• 25 signatures in a petition can be presented to Full Council and a minimum of 10 to</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; Overview &amp; Scrutiny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A call-in must be received by 5pm on the final working day of the 5 clear working day period.</li> <li>• Does not state if public can call-in decisions but 10 or more non-executive councillors can request the call-in.</li> </ul>	<p>Easy to follow links. There were lots of information.</p>

	<p>agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two related questions per person can be asked.</li> <li>• A supplementary question relating to the original question or answer can be asked.</li> <li>• Questions must be submitted by 5pm four clear working days before the meeting to guarantee a written response before the meeting.</li> <li>• Any question received after the 4 day deadline and no later than 5pm two clear working days before the meeting, may receive a verbal response at the meeting. Any questions received after this date will be received at the next meeting.</li> <li>• 15 minutes is set aside for questions and answers.</li> </ul>	<p>be presented to the Area Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A petition with signatures equivalent to 1% of the total Wiltshire population would trigger a council debate.</li> <li>• Full guidelines found in Wiltshire Council Petitions Scheme document.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A form must be filled in by the councillor calling for the call-in.</li> </ul>	
Milton Keynes	Your Council & Elections > Councillors and Committees > Have your say at Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings:	Your Council & Elections > Councillors and Committees > Have your say at Council, Cabinet and Committee Meetings:	Call-in form found in public documents but no guidelines on call-in.	Links were not easy to follow and sections on the site was too vague. It wasn't straightforward as I had to click on different

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions need to be submitted in writing 15 minutes before the start of a meeting</li> <li>• The time limit for questions from the Public is 30 minutes</li> <li>• The public can speak on up to 2 items at most Council, Cabinet or committee meetings with consent from Council or Committee. Democratic services should be notified in advance but the Chair would usually ask at the beginning of each meeting or item whether anyone wishes to speak.</li> <li>• The speech should not exceed 4 minutes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The public can present a petition before the start of a meeting by notifying Democratic Services before it starts.</li> <li>• The person will be allowed to outline the aims of the petition but has a time limit of 1 minute to do so.</li> </ul>		sections to find the required information. There was an A-Z section.
Reading	<p>Council &gt; Democracy &gt; How We Make Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full Council and Committees – up to 3 questions to be submitted by 6pm 4 clear working days before the meeting. Total for questions and</li> </ul>	<p>Council &gt; Democracy &gt; How We Make Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follows same timescale as Full Council and Committee questions.</li> </ul>	<p>Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading has adopted a committee system form of governance so has resolved not to appoint any separate Overview and Scrutiny committees, therefore the call-in</li> </ul>	Links are easy to follow although there wasn't much of a section dedicated to the public.

	petitions is 30 minutes for all.		function has ended.	
Essex (County Council but Thurrock is part of Essex).	<p>Your Council tab:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One question can be asked at Full Council which has to be received by 10.30am, seven calendar days before the meeting.</li> <li>• No supplementary questions can be asked.</li> <li>• A petition can be presented.</li> <li>• The time limit for questions is 30 minutes, 3 minutes limit for each speaker and any questions not dealt with in the meeting will receive a written response.</li> <li>• For Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings, the public can register to speak up to 15 minutes before the meeting starts. There is a 3 minute time limit.</li> </ul>	<p>Home &gt; Your Council &gt; Consultations and feedback &gt; Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be submitted directly to the relevant service, as part of a formal consultation exercises or to democratic services.</li> <li>• Residents can ask their local County Councillor to submit on their behalf.</li> <li>• Epetition available.</li> <li>• Petitions can be started on another website but Essex Council can only act upon it when it is closed and submitted but must still conform to the petitions policy.</li> </ul>	<p>Home &gt; How we do scrutiny in Essex:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After a decision is made by Cabinet, a member of the scrutiny committee has a 3 day window where they can call-in the decision.</li> <li>• The decision is halted for up to 10 days until it is either withdrawn or dealt with.</li> </ul>	<p>The sections were nicely separated with information in the relevant sections. The information provided was detailed. There was an A-Z section.</p>
Medway	Home > The Council and democracy > How to have your say:	Home > The Council and democracy > Councillors and decisions > How to have your say:	No procedure found for call-ins.	Easy to follow the links as sections were well separated. The information provided was

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Ask a Question at Council' guide (attached as appendix B) outlines how the public can ask a question at Full Council.</li> <li>• Write, email or telephone your local councillor to consider a matter you would like to speak about.</li> <li>• One question is allowed per person.</li> <li>• The public can ask a question at Full Council but must submit questions 7 working days before the day of the meeting. A guide on this is available on the website.</li> <li>• There are dates of Full Council meetings on 'ask a question' with submission deadlines.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions can be sent in by post or created online.</li> <li>• Detailed guide on presenting a petition at a meeting – can ask a councillor to present on behalf and has dates and times of upcoming meetings.</li> <li>• A template is provided which includes information on what to do.</li> <li>• Petitions are acknowledged within 5 working days.</li> <li>• Details how the council will respond to petitions and what you can do if you feel your petition has not been dealt with properly.</li> </ul>		<p>brief but detailed. There was an A-Z section.</p>
Luton	<p>Unable to find how a member of the public can ask a question at Full Council or committee meetings.</p> <p>The Constitution states members of the public could attend council meetings and</p>	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; Local Democracy &gt; Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A PDF guide on the Council's petition scheme is provided which includes the process and</li> </ul>	<p>Council &amp; Democracy &gt; Local Democracy &gt; Overview &amp; Scrutiny:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brief section is provided on who can make a call-in which states 'any two</li> </ul>	<p>The sections were separated well but it wasn't so easy to follow. There were some sections missing which related to how to ask a question in Council and committee meetings.</p>

	<p>the Mayor was 'to ensure that the Full Council meeting is a forum for the debate of matters of concern to the local community'.</p>	<p>requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 signatures are required for a petition to be valid.</li> <li>• The page states online petitions are not yet available and only paper based petitions are currently accepted. However, an epetition link can be found through clicking on council meeting dates in the local democracy section.</li> </ul>	<p>members of the council'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call-ins must be made within set deadlines and criteria although it is not stated on the website of what they are.</li> <li>• No indication of whether the public can make a call-in.</li> </ul>	<p>There was an A-Z section.</p>
<p>Southend-on-Sea</p>	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two periods of time for questions with 30 minute time limit for each period.</li> <li>• First period is for questions from the public.</li> <li>• Questions must be submitted 5 clear working days before the date of the meeting.</li> <li>• The Chief Executive and Town Clerk selects the questions to be asked and may edit them to bring them into a proper form.</li> <li>• There is a maximum of 2 questions per person.</li> </ul>	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions must be received at least 12 clear working days before a council or committee meeting.</li> <li>• The petition scheme accepts signatures of anyone who lives, works or studies in the borough and includes under 18's.</li> <li>• Epetitions are available on the website.</li> </ul>	<p>No procedure found for call-ins.</p>	<p>There were a lot of clearly titled sections but none of them linked to public participation. The information given in the Constitution was brief and not very detailed. There was an A-Z services bar.</p>

<p>Herefordshire</p>	<p>Your Council &gt; Get Involved &gt; Ask a public question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the public can ask questions at any public meetings.</li> <li>• Only one question can be asked per meeting and up to a maximum of six in any municipal year.</li> <li>• Questions must be submitted two clear working days before the day of the meeting.</li> </ul>	<p>Your Council &gt; Get Involved &gt; File a petition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions must have the support of 15 people to be accepted.</li> <li>• Petitions can be submitted online, by post, by email or handed in to the chairman of the council.</li> <li>• Epetitions can be created but requires registration.</li> <li>• A detail guide on the petition procedure is available via a link on the epetitions page.</li> </ul>	<p>No call-in procedure found.</p>	<p>There wasn't a lot of sections on public participation or democracy but what there was, was easy to find and detailed in information. There was no constitution to be found.</p>
<p>Warrington (currently looking into public questions public at Full Council meetings due to increased interest from the public)</p>	<p>The Council &gt; Council committees and meetings &gt; Access to council meetings for journalists, bloggers and the public &gt; PDF files:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One question may be submitted by person and must be received by 12 noon, five working days before the day of the meeting.</li> <li>• 5 minutes is allocated per question to cover the response and any supplementary questions.</li> </ul>	<p>The Council &gt; Council committees and meetings &gt; Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions can be created online as an epetition or submitted to the Council in the traditional paper based format.</li> <li>• For a petition to be considered, there must be 100 valid signatures (includes children as long as they have signed free from coercion), otherwise the Council would not respond.</li> </ul>	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call-ins need to be made within 5 days of the decision publication date.</li> <li>• Members or co-opted voting Members can call-in decisions but requires three to call-in.</li> <li>• Detailed flowcharts for call-in procedures for council and committees but does not state whether members of the public</li> </ul>	<p>There were separate PDF documents on asking a question at council, a guide to committee meetings and public participation in meetings. The information was short but detailed and clear to understand. It also gave dates of deadlines for question submission. There was an A-Z services bar.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A maximum of three questions can be asked per meeting as the time allowed for public questions is 15 minutes.</li> </ul>		can call-in.	
Middlesbrough	<p>The Mayor, council and councillors &gt; Councillors and council meetings &gt; Council meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the public must book a place online to attend Council meetings to ensure the meeting runs smoothly.</li> <li>• The public can ask questions and can submit their question by phone, email or post.</li> <li>• Does not state when questions have to be submitted by.</li> </ul>	<p>Open data, FOI and have your say &gt; Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paper or petitions via the Council website can be submitted.</li> <li>• Petitions with over 100 signatures will be invited to be presented to Full Council.</li> <li>• A petition containing more than 750 signatures can request a senior council officer to give evidence at a Scrutiny meeting.</li> <li>• If a petition contains more than 1,500 signatures it will be debated at a meeting of the full council. The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the council meeting and it will then be discussed by councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes.</li> </ul>	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions can be called-in within 5 working days of publication.</li> <li>• An elected or co-opted voting Member must request the call-in form and it has to be signed by five Members.</li> <li>• No indication of whether the public can call-in decisions.</li> </ul>	<p>The sections were well separated but was not easy to find the required information. There wasn't much dedicated to public participation and the information provided was brief. There was an A-Z services bar which helped to locate certain sections.</p>

Hartlepool	<p>Council and democracy &gt; Democratic Services &gt; It's Your Council booklet (attached as appendix C):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions must be completed on the Public Question Time form attached to the booklet and submitted by 12 noon on the Thursday of the week before the meeting.</li> <li>• Under 16's must include the name, address and signature of their parent or guardian.</li> <li>• A maximum of two questions can be submitted per person per meeting.</li> <li>• For a period of 30 minutes or longer (at the discretion of the Chair), residents can ask questions at Full Council meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>There was no information found on petitions on the website. In the Constitution, it's stated that residents have the right to sign a petition.</p>	<p>No information was found on the procedure for call-ins.</p>	<p>A handy and detailed guide on called 'It's Your Council' gives information on 'How does Hartlepool Council work and how you can get involved'. It provides in depth information about the types of committees in the council and how to ask a question. A form is attached for members of the public to fill in if they wished to ask a question at Council meetings.</p>
Slough	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One question can be asked per person and a supplementary can be asked relating to the</li> </ul>	<p>Council information &gt; Democratic services &gt; Petitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Petitions can be submitted via epetition or paper.</li> </ul>	<p>Found in the Constitution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decisions can be called-in within 5 working days of publication.</li> </ul>	<p>There was no specific links to provide the public with information on democratic services. Most information was in the Constitution but this</p>

	<p>original question or answer given.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions must be received by 5pm, five working days before the day of the meeting.</li> <li>• There is no time limit stated for questions but no more than five questions can be asked at the Council meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a petition to be accepted, a minimum of 10 valid signatures is required.</li> <li>• 750 signatures will require a senior officer to give evidence at a public meeting.</li> <li>• 1500 signatures leads to a debate at Council.</li> <li>• Petitions are acknowledged within 10 working days or receipt.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There needs to be three elected Members to call-in a decision.</li> <li>• No indication of whether the public can call-in decisions.</li> </ul>	<p>was available in separate documents. Although sections were titled well, it did not indicate what kind of information was in each section.</p>
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