



Public Participation at Meetings Policy

Full Council Approved: December 2012
Last Reviewed: October 2025
Due for Review: October 2028

1. Purpose

Fleet Town Council encourages public participation at its meetings as an important means of consulting with the community and promoting transparency.

This policy sets out how members of the public may take part in meetings of the Council and its committees, in line with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and the Local Government Act 1972.

2. Principles

The Council welcomes questions and comments from members of the public.

Public participation helps inform decision-making while ensuring meetings remain orderly, respectful, and efficient.

3. Opportunities to Ask Questions

Public participation at meetings is one means by which residents may raise matters with the Council.

Questions may also be submitted outside meetings by telephone, email, or in person at The Harlington during normal office hours.

4. Rules for Public Participation

- a) Public participation will be permitted at every meeting of the Town Council and its committees.
- b) Public participation will normally take place at the beginning of the meeting and will last for up to **15 minutes**, unless the Chair exercises discretion to extend or curtail this period.
- c) Each person may make representations or ask questions on any subject included on the meeting agenda.
- d) The Chair will decide the order in which speakers are heard and may ask a speaker to conclude if necessary to maintain fairness and order.
- e) Questions may be asked verbally. Where possible, members of the public are encouraged (but not required) to provide a brief written note or email of their question before or immediately following the meeting to assist with accurate recording in the minutes.
- f) The substance of each question, together with any reply given, will be included in the minutes of the meeting.
- g) Questions will be answered in one of the following ways:

- **Immediate answer:** If information is readily available, the Chair or relevant councillor/officer may respond at the meeting, and the answer will be recorded in the draft minutes.
- **Deferred answer:** If further research or consultation is required, the response will normally be provided within **four weeks** and recorded in the next available draft minutes and published version.
- **Ongoing matters:** If the question cannot be resolved within that timeframe, an update will appear under the public participation item on subsequent agendas until a final response can be given.

5. Conduct

All participants are expected to act respectfully and not interrupt proceedings.

The Chair may ask a person to withdraw or may suspend public participation if behaviour becomes inappropriate or disruptive.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislative or best-practice guidance changes.