



Public Speaking Arrangements Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Guidance and information for members of the public who want to speak at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Conwy County Borough Council encourages the active participation of its citizens whenever possible and an opportunity exists for members of the public to speak at Overview and Scrutiny Committees in respect of an item on an agenda.

The committee members receive written reports on all issues being discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These reports are available to the public at least three working days before the day of the meeting.

Members of the public can make an important contribution and be an additional source of information for the Committee to consider, and ultimately aid the decision making process.

The following information is provided to ensure that, as far as possible, members of the public have a positive and stress-free experience, as in many instances this will be a new experience.

To speak at a Committee

It is important that anyone wishing to speak at an Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting should do so in a responsible and respectful manner in order to maximise the benefit of their contribution.

In order to speak you must have submitted written representations in relation to the relevant issue to the [Scrutiny Support Officer](#). You must do this as soon as possible and at the very latest 24 hours prior to the committee meeting (electronic submissions are encouraged).

Any requests received after this time will automatically be rejected. Contact details together with a copy of the relevant application form, can be found on the [Council's website](#).

Normally only one person can speak 'for' and one person can speak 'against' an item. The Chair of the Committee will only allow a second speaker in exceptional cases, where there are clearly different arguments to be heard for the same 'side'.

If more than one person contacts us to speak for or against an item you must choose one person to speak for your group and let us know. We will give your contact details to anyone who has the same view, so that you can decide between you who will speak. If you can't agree, only the first person to tell us they want to speak will be allowed to.

The Day of the Meeting

The Scrutiny Support Officer will give speakers as much notice as possible of the time, date and place of the meeting at which you are to speak.

Meetings of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are held in public, they are open to the press and all reports are public documents unless they contain exempt or confidential information.

Prior to the start of the meeting introduce yourself to the Scrutiny Support Officer or the Committee Support Officer and they will arrange for you to be introduced to the Chair. Allow enough time for this to happen; aim to arrive about 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.

When will I speak in the Meeting?

Agenda items where there will be speakers from the public will normally be considered first. The Chair will introduce you to the Committee when it is your turn to speak.

You will be asked to move to a particular place within the Council Chamber where you can be seen and heard. You will be allowed three minutes to put your case.

- Ensure your comments are clear and concise, directly related to the report on which you have requested to speak;
- Avoid repeating points made by any earlier public speakers;
- Limit your views to the advantages or disadvantages of the report, highlighting how the report could affect the delivery of services to specific user groups of citizens.
- You may speak to the Committee in either Welsh or English (translation facilities are available).

If a speaker is still talking after three minutes the Chair will usually wait for them to finish their sentence and then will let them know that their time is up. We do not let speakers go over time to be fair to the other speakers. But in exceptional circumstances, the Chair may allow them a few seconds more and then allow the speaker for the 'other side' to have the same amount of extra time.

Once you've spoken the Chair may allow Councillors to ask you questions to make clear any facts. You must not enter into a debate with the Committee members.

You will then return to your seat in the public gallery. The committee will then discuss the issue in detail before making a recommendation to the Cabinet (or Senior Officer if they have delegated authority to take action).

The Chair will refuse to hear you if you behave improperly, offensively or try to prevent the committee from doing their work. The Chair will ensure that all speakers are treated with courtesy and respect.

Can I hand out supporting documents or use visual aids?

You can't hand out supporting documents at the meeting or use visual aids (such as photographs or diagrams). You may send information direct to Councillors and the Scrutiny Support Officer before the start of the meeting. There is a list of Council Members on our website (www.conwy.gov.uk/councillors) or you can get one from the Member Services office (tel 01492 576069). Please do not send documents to us to hand out.

When can I leave the meeting?

You can leave the meeting at any time after you have spoken.

Exemptions

Public speaking will not be permitted on:

- Agenda items such as Apologies for Absence, Declarations of Interest and Minutes.
- Business on the agenda in respect of a resolution to exclude the press and public, due to the confidential nature of the business to be carried out.
- The right to speak does not include the right to ask any questions of any County Borough Councillor, Officer of the Council, invited attendees, or any other speaker.

How to contact us

Scrutiny Support Officer
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Committee Services Officer
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