

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd



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## **SECTION 3 - GETTING INFORMATION AND GETTING INVOLVED**

### **3.1 Getting Information**

#### **3.1.1 Information Available to Members of the Public**

- (a) **When Meetings of the Member Bodies Will Take Place**  
A programme of meetings is available by contacting the Council direct or via the website.
- (b) **Forward Work Programme**  
From the Forward Work Programme, see what decisions will be taken by the Cabinet or Council and what issues the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be considering and when these matters will be discussed.
- (c) **Information Available Prior to a Meeting**  
3 clear days before a meeting, the agenda and any report likely to be discussed should be available for inspection at the offices of the Council and on the website. If an item is added to the agenda later, the revised agenda will be open to inspection from the time when the item is added to the agenda and any report will be made available to the public as soon as it is available and sent to Councillors.
- (d) **Information Available at a Meeting**  
The Council will make available to members of the public who are physically present at a meeting a reasonable number of copies of the Agenda and of the Reports for the meeting (save during any part of the meeting to which the public are excluded).
- (e) **Information Available After a Meeting**  
For a period of six years the agenda, reports and the minutes of the meeting shall be available for inspection. The background papers shall remain open for inspection for a period of four years.
- (f) **Council Accounts**  
The public may inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor (sections 29 and 30 Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004). Under the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, the accounts will be available for public inspection for twenty (20) working days after the date appointed by the auditor.

Information which is confidential or exempt (as defined in Section 15 – Access to Information) will not be disclosed to members of the public at any time.

### 3.1.2. Information Available to Members of the Council

- a) Members can see any information, which is available to a member of the public.
- b) In addition, a Member may see any information which he or she needs to know in order to fulfil his or her role as a Member of the Council (otherwise known as “need to know”). A Member will not make public information which is confidential or exempt (*as defined in Section 15*) without the consent of the Council or divulge information given in confidence to anyone other than a Councillor or person(s) or organisation(s) entitled to know it.

### 3.1.3. Members of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A Member of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee may also see any document containing material relating to:

- a) any business transacted at a meeting of the Cabinet;
- b) any decision taken by an individual Member of the Cabinet.

An Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member is not entitled to:

- c) any document in draft form;
- d) any part of a document which contains confidential or exempt information unless that information is relevant to an action or decision they are reviewing or scrutinising or intending to scrutinise and which is included in the Committee’s Forward Work Programme.

### 3.1.4. Information Available to Officers

The Monitoring Officer, the Section 151 Officer and the Chief Executive may see any papers or records held by any part of the Council or its Officers. Other Officers may see any information held by the Council provided:

- a) they need to see the information to do their job; and
- b) that information is processed lawfully in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation.

## 3.2 **Getting Involved**

3.2.1 The Council must encourage local people to participate in the making of decisions by the Council. See the Council’s public participation strategy for more information.

### 3.2.2 Members of the Public

Members of the public can get involved in the following ways:

- a) Voting for Councillors  
If they are over 16 years and registered as a local elector with the Council.
- b) Suggesting Items of Business for Meetings  
Overview and Scrutiny Committees welcome suggestions for topics for review and will consider issues put forward by anyone who lives, works or studies in the County Borough of Conwy.

This can be done by writing in to the Council's Scrutiny Support Officer or by completing the Overview and Scrutiny suggestion form on the council's website.

To qualify, requests must:

- affect a group or community of people (scrutiny will not usually look at individual service complaints)
  - relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake
  - not be an issue which scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months
  - not be a matter dealt with by another County Borough Council Committee (e.g. planning issues) except where the issue relates to the Council's decision-making process
- c) Submitting Petitions  
A member of the public can seek to raise a matter with the Council by submitting a petition in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.
- d) Taking Part in Meetings  
Members of the public can come to and speak at any meeting, which the Council has resolved should include participation by members of the public. The rules on when you may speak and for how long are contained in Section 7 - Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Section 20 - Planning Protocol.
- e) Views of the Public  
Under the arrangements put in place by the Council under section 62 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, members of the public may bring to the attention of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee their views on any matter under consideration by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee must take into account any views brought to their attention under these arrangements if appropriate.
- f) When are Meetings Open to the Public?  
Meetings will be open to the public wherever possible. The public must be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that confidential information will be disclosed.

The public may be excluded from meetings where it is likely that exempt information will be disclosed. (See Section 15.9 for definition of exempt information and Paragraph 15.11 for definition of public interest.)

g) Making Comments/Complaints

A member of the public may comment or complain about Council services by:

- (i) contacting their local Councillor;
- (ii) contacting the Member of the Cabinet responsible for the service;
- (iii) contacting the Officer responsible for delivering the service or their manager;
- (iv) using the Council's complaints procedure;
- (v) contacting the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales at 1 Ffordd Yr Hen Gae, Pencoed, CF35 5LJ. Telephone: 0300 790 0203 or via the website [www.ombudsman.wales](http://www.ombudsman.wales).

Comments or complaints can be made about an Officer or Member by:

- (vi) Officer  
Contacting the Officer or the Officer's manager.
- (vii) Members  
If the complaint is against a Member then the complaint should be referred to the Monitoring Officer or the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (contact details above).

### **3.3 Getting Involved – Members**

Members can get involved by:

#### **3.3.1 Suggesting Items of Business for the Council and/or Cabinet Agenda**

As a Member of the Council, you have the same rights as members of the public. In addition to these rights you also have the following rights:

- a) Any Member can submit a Notice of Motion to Council (Section 4) and also ask questions (Section 4).
- b) Any member of the Council may require an item on the agenda of an Cabinet meeting for consideration. The item will be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet. Section 5 provides more details on this matter.

### 3.3.2 Participating in Meetings

Members of the Council are entitled to attend any formal meeting of the Council, its committees or sub-committees or the Cabinet.

- a) Members of the Council may attend and speak at any meetings where they are a Member of that body. Where they are not a Member of that body, their attendance and right to speak is at the discretion of the Chair of the body.
- b) Members of the Cabinet have a special role to play within the Council. They are entitled to exercise any Cabinet Function provided the Cabinet Function has been delegated to them by the Leader of the Council.

### 3.3.3 Comments and Complaints

- a) Members may comment, subject to restrictions in the Code of Conduct for Members (Section 19) on any aspect of Council business by:
  - (i) talking to Officers;
  - (ii) talking to the Leader or Member of the Cabinet;
  - (iii) talking to the Chair of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- b) If a Member wishes to complain about an:
  - (i) *Officer*  
The procedure set out in the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations may be used (Section 22).
  - (ii) *Member*  
The procedure set out in Appendix 1 to Section 19 may be followed.