

Henley-on-Thames Town Council

Public Participation Scheme

The Council will set aside a period at the commencement of each meeting when members of the public can ask questions or make statements. The following rules shall apply:

1. This scheme applies to meetings of the Council, the Planning Committee, Finance, Strategy and Management Committee, Recreation and Amenities Committee and Town and Community Committee and any other committee or sub-committee of the Council.
2. There will be a Public Participation Session at the start of every meeting to which this scheme applies. At Full Council, members of the public, including Councillors who may have a personal and prejudicial interest on any item included on the agenda, may ask questions or make a statement on any matter which affects the town. The session will last for a period of up to 20 minutes.
3. At Committee or sub-committee meetings members of the public may ask questions or make a statement on any item included on the agenda. The session, which is also open to Councillors who may have a personal and prejudicial interest on any item included on the agenda, will last for a period of up to 10 minutes (but capable of being extended at the Chairman's discretion).
4. Questions from the town's residents will take priority, followed by property owners, businesses and then non-residents.
5. All speeches shall last for no more than 2 to 3 minutes.
6. If there are no statements or questions, or if all statements have been made or questions asked before the period of time allotted, the meeting will start to consider the remainder of its business. No further public questions or statements will be entertained at that meeting.
7. If an answer to a question cannot be given at the meeting the Chairman may, at his/her discretion, arrange for a written answer to be given.
8. The Chairman of the meeting will have complete discretion as to the order in which questions are taken and statements made. Supplementary questions may be asked at the Chairman's discretion.
9. The Chairman of the meeting may rule that any public remarks are not appropriate and will not be accepted; for example if they are defamatory, frivolous or offensive. In such an instance the Chairman may disallow a question or statement or cut short a statement or discussion, or disqualify any member of the public from continuing to speak.
10. Questions which require the disclosure of exempt or confidential information will not be answered.
11. The Chairman of the meeting's interpretation of this procedure shall not be questioned and his/her ruling on any questions relating to this procedure shall be final.