



# Protocol for Public Participation in Council Meetings

The Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way decisions are made and welcomes public attendance at Council meetings. The following protocols enable the Council to conduct its business whilst ensuring that there is an opportunity to engage with the electorate and for them to duly bring matters to the Council's attention. Please note that Council meetings are not the only opportunity for you to engage with your Council. Please contact the Council by phoning 0330 053 6019 or email [admin@lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@lowestofttowncouncil.gov.uk)

## 1) Participation in the public forum

**A council meeting is not a public meeting**, it is a meeting conducted in public. There is no requirement in law to provide a public forum.

As the council meets and makes its decisions in public and is committed to community engagement, we warmly invite members of the public, the press, the police and district and county councillors to attend our meetings and contribute **during the public forum**.

Please respect that this is a meeting to conduct council business. Interjections are not permitted and if you disrupt business in any way you may be asked to leave. If you feel that you do not wish to take part in the public forum or if your problem is complex, you might wish to provide information to the council prior to the meeting (at least seven days if possible).

Following amendments made to the law in 2014, any person attending a council (or committee) meeting can report on the proceedings of the meeting. 'Reporting' is defined as filming, photographing, audio recording, written reporting (e.g. blogging) or oral commentary (not during the meeting).

The following rules will apply to the public forum:-

- The agenda will indicate when the forum will take place, which will generally be early on the agenda so that councillors can take account of any views expressed. The public participation session will normally be for a maximum period of 15 minutes.
- Questions and comments should relate to business on the agenda and only one question on a topic will generally be received from each person and supplementary questions will be at the Chairman's discretion. No question shall be repeated within a six month period. The Chairman may direct that a written or oral response be given.
- A person shall raise their hand when requesting to speak. Questions must be addressed to the Chairman and a member of the public must not speak for more than three minutes.

## 2) Reports in the public forum

The Council provides an opportunity for the police and district or county councillors to present reports. An opportunity will be given to ask questions, at the council's discretion, subject to the relevant conditions above and within an overall time limit of 15 minutes.