

How to have your say



A quick reference guide to council meetings (This document last updated on: 28 November 2017)



www.bristol.gov.uk

How to have your say

Involving local people in local decisions is the cornerstone of democracy. There are many ways you can contribute and get your voice heard at public meetings.

This quick reference guide explains the different public meetings, what they are for and how you can have your say. There are guidelines for presenting a petition, statement or question at a meeting and how you will get a response.

For those unable to attend the public meetings in person, we webcast some of them live and make the recording available after the meeting.

<https://bristol.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

Note: questions/statements to meetings will not be permitted if they are about topics/issues which are not within the council's areas of responsibility or which do not directly affect the city.



Full Council

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| Who goes? | Elected Mayor plus all 70 councillors. Meetings of Full Council are held in public and chaired by the Lord Mayor. |
| What's the meeting for? | <p>The Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sets the budget and policy framework proposed by the elected Mayor including the level of council tax• Appoints committees to deal with the scrutiny function, regulatory committees (e.g. development control committees) and other committees• Has powers to adopt byelaws, appointment of Aldermen and giving Freedom of the City.• At the Annual General Meeting in May, the Lord Mayor is appointed. |
| When do they occur? | <p>Full Council meets eight times a year.</p> <p>For the remainder of 2017-18, these meetings will be held in the Council Chamber at City Hall, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 December 2017 - 2.00 pm• 15 January 2018 – 2.00 pm• 20 February 2018 – 2.00 pm (budget meeting)• 20 March 2018 – 6.00 pm |
| Is it webcast? | Yes - https://bristol.public-i.tv/core/portal/home |

Full Council – having a say

| For Councillors: | Details | Deadlines | What happens at the meetings | What happens after the meeting |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Member Forum – one hour prior to the start of the meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions and statements from council members on any issue. • There will be a maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions per councillor. • One statement per councillor | Questions and statements must be submitted by 12 noon on the working day before the meeting. | <p>The Mayor will respond to questions and supplementary questions from councillors.</p> <p>A maximum of one minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement and they will be referred to the Mayor for information/consideration.</p> | A written response to statements will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested. |
| Councillor petitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions on any topic | 12 noon on the working day before the meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be 10 minutes to receive petitions from councillors. • Petitions will not be discussed at the meeting. | A written reply will be provided to the councillor/lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting. |

| For the public: | Details | Deadlines | What happens at the meetings | What happens after the meeting |
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| Statements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statements can be submitted on any topic. • One statement per person. | 12 noon on the working day before the meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes are set aside to deal with petitions, statements and questions. • One minute to present statements. • Statements will not be discussed at the meeting. | Statements will be referred to the Mayor for information /consideration. A written reply will be sent within 10 working days of the meeting if requested. |
| Petitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions can be submitted on any topic. • One petition per person. | 12 noon on the working day before the meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead petitioner to present the petition if they wish (one minute allowed). • Petitions will not be discussed at the meeting. | A written reply will be provided to the lead petitioner within 10 working days of the meeting. |

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| <p>Questions</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• On any issue for which the Council has responsibility or which directly affects the city.• A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions may be asked per member of the public. <p>Questions should be addressed to the elected Mayor or relevant Cabinet member.</p> | <p>Three clear working days before the meeting. i.e. by 5.00 pm on the relevant working day. e.g. If Full Council is held on a Tuesday, the deadline for questions will be 5.00 pm on the previous Wednesday. Details of the specific deadline will be included on the agenda for the meeting.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 minutes are set aside to deal with petitions, statements and questions.• Replies to questions will be given verbally. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written confirmation of the verbal response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested, or if a response could not be given at the meeting, e.g. due to time constraints. |
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Cabinet

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| Who goes? | Meetings of Cabinet are held in public and chaired by the Mayor. Cabinet members each have a portfolio of services to oversee and advise the Mayor on. |
| What's the meeting for? | This is where key decisions notified in the Mayor's Forward Plan are made. |
| When do they occur? | Cabinet meets monthly. For the remainder of 2017-18, these meetings will be held at City Hall, as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 December 2017 at 4.00 pm• 9 January 2018 at 4.00 pm• 23 January 2018 (Budget) at 4.00 pm• 6 February 2018 at 4.00 pm• 6 March 2018 at 4.00 pm• 3 April 2018 at 4.00 pm |
| Is it webcast? | Yes - https://bristol.public-i.tv/core/portal/home |

Cabinet – having a say

| For Councillors: | Details | Deadlines | What happens at the meetings | What happens after the meeting |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Councillor Statements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One statement per councillor on agenda items only. | 12 noon on the working day before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One minute to present statement. The content of the statement will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. | Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested. |
| Councillor Petitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One petition per councillor on agenda items only. | 12 noon on the working day before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One minute to present petition. The content of the petition will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. | Petitions will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting. |
| Councillor Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions on agenda items only. Two questions per councillor maximum. | Three clear working days before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions per councillor. Replies to questions will be given verbally. | Written confirmation of the response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested. |
| For the public: | Details | Deadlines | What happens at the meetings | What happens after the meeting |
| Statements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements must be about agenda items. One statement per person. | 12 noon on the working day before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One hour for petitions, statements and questions. One minute to present statement. The content of the statement will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. | Statements will receive a written reply within 10 working days of the meeting if requested. |
| Petitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Petitions must be about agenda items. One petition per person. | 12 noon on the working day before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One minute for lead petitioner to present petition, The content of the petition will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. | Petitions will receive a written reply to the lead petitioner within 10 working days. |
| Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions submitted must be about agenda items. Two questions per person maximum. | Three clear working days before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One hour for petitions, statements and questions. A maximum of two questions and two supplementary questions may be asked per member of the public Replies to questions will be given verbally. | Written confirmation of the verbal response will be provided within 10 working days of the meeting if requested. |

Scrutiny meetings

Changes for 2017

In 2017 the [Overview and Scrutiny Management Board](#) (OSMB) reviewed how Scrutiny was working to find new and better ways of working. New proposals are being tested and a mission statement has been agreed:

"To make a positive difference for the citizens of Bristol and deliver the right outcomes, by helping Bristol City Council make better decisions."

Until the trial has finished the existing commission structure and terms of reference will continue, as set out in the Constitution.

There will be 11 priority topics for Scrutiny to focus on:

- Parks becoming cost neutral
- Council commissioning and contracts, including social value
- Demand on adults and children's social services
- Council assets
- Cribbs Patchway new neighbourhood
- Air quality and pollution
- Children's centres
- Libraries
- Tower block fire safety
- Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)
- Bristol City Youth Council

Each topic will be scrutinised by a [task and finish group](#), or working group.

Each group will be led by a member of the OSMB, or a previous Scrutiny Commission Chair or Vice Chair, and a Scrutiny Officer will help to ensure the groups aims and objectives are met. All reports and recommendations from the groups are published and heard in a public forum. This may be an OSMB meeting or a separate public or commission meeting.

Monthly updates from each of the groups will be published on the [OSMB meetings page](#).

The OSMB meets in public every month and there is a public forum item on every agenda for members of the public to submit a question or statement to the committee. There is more information in the public information sheet on every meeting agenda.

For more information about Scrutiny email scrutiny@bristol.gov.uk.

Development Control meetings

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| Who goes? | Each committee is made up of councillors, reflecting the political proportionality of the council. |
| What's the meeting for? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determination of significant planning applications |
| When do they occur? | There are 2 committees – Development Control A and Development Control B These dates are available on the website https://www.bristol.gov.uk/council-meetings |
| Is it webcast? | Some are – please refer to the website for which meetings will be webcast. https://bristol.public-i.tv/core/portal/home |

Development Control meetings – having a say

| For Councillors: | Details | Deadlines | What happens at the meetings | What happens after the meeting |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Councillor Statements and Petitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement and petitions are about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. Statements will be copied and circulated to all members of the committee. | 12 noon the working day before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Petitions and statements will be received prior to the item being discussed and noted / considered as the item is debated. | Copies held on the public Minute Book. |
| Councillor Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions should be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. | Three clear working days before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting. A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or the reply. | Questions and answers are included in the minutes. |
| For the public: | Details | Deadlines | What happens at the meetings | What happens after the meeting |
| Statements and Petitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statements and petitions must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. | 12 noon the working day before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Petitions and statements will be received prior to the item being discussed and noted / considered as the item is debated. | Copies held on the public Minute Book. |
| Questions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions submitted must be about a matter for which the committee has responsibility. | Three clear working days before the meeting. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions. This may be extended for major applications. Questions will be circulated to all members of the relevant committee and replies made available in the committee room one hour before the meeting A supplementary question is permitted arising directly out of the original question or reply. | Questions and answers are included in the minutes. |

Further information

What's a statement?

- Statements should be short and limited to one side of A4 paper. Statements will be circulated before the meeting and will have been read by councillors by the time the meeting starts.
- You'll be invited to present your statement to the meeting. You should focus on the main points and avoid reading it out word for word.
- Groups can nominate a representative to speak on their behalf.
- All statements are compiled in the order they're received.

For copyright reasons, we're unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles attached to statements as supporting documentation.

Questions

- Full Council or Cabinet meetings – questions should be addressed to the Mayor or Cabinet Member.
- Committee meetings – questions are normally addressed to the chair.

What happens to your personal information received with representations

By taking part in public forum business, it's assumed that your consent is given to the recording of your name and the details of your submission in the documents circulated to committee and made available at the meeting.

The information will also be placed in the official minute book as a public record.

Where appropriate, we'll try to remove other personal details like contact details. However, we cannot guarantee this and you may wish to consider what your statement contains.

Webcasting of meetings

Full Council, Cabinet meetings and some other committee meetings are filmed for live or later broadcast via our webcasting pages.

The whole of the meeting is filmed (except where there are confidential or exempt items). The footage will be available for two years.

If you ask a question or make a representation, then you're likely to be filmed. It will be assumed that you've given your consent.

Where to send your questions, statements and petitions.

Please send them to:
democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

