

How to have your say



A quick reference guide to council meetings (This document last updated on: 1 April 2022)



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 on our [YouTube channel](#).

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

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>Usually, these meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, City Hall.</p> <p>Please see the following link to all Council Committee dates;</p> <p>BCC Calendar of Committees</p> <p>BCC Committee List</p>
Is it webcast?	Yes, on our YouTube channel

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Full Council – having a say

For Councillors:	Details	Deadlines	What happens at the meetings	What happens after the meeting
Member Forum	<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 must be submitted by 5pm five clear working days before the meeting. Statements must be submitted by 12 noon on the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.• The Mayor's response will be published the day before the meeting. The Mayor will respond to supplementary questions from Councillors at the meeting.	The Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for consideration.
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
Statements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Statements can be submitted on any topic.• One statement per person.	12 noon two working days before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to the meeting, statements and petitions will be published and sent to Councillors and the Mayor.• 30 minutes are set aside for 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 two working days before the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to the meeting, statements and petitions will be published and sent to Councillors and the Mayor.• 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 may be asked per member of the public (no supplementary questions currently invited) <p>Questions should be addressed to the elected Mayor or relevant Cabinet member.</p>	<p>Three clear working days before the meeting.</p> <p>By 5.00 pm on the relevant working day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to the meeting, statements and petitions will be published and sent to Councillors and the Mayor.• 30 minutes are set aside for petitions, statements and questions.• One minute to present statements.• Within the time allowed, replies to questions submitted will be given verbally and an opportunity to ask supplementary questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written responses will be published on the website within 10 working days.
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Cabinet

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?	Meetings usually take place in the Council Chamber, City Hall. Please see the following link to all Council Committee dates; BCC Calendar of Committees BCC Committee List
Is it webcast?	Yes, on our YouTube channel

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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"> The content of the statement will be published on the website and available to the Mayor and Cabinet Members in advance. The content will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. One minute to present statement. 	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"> The content of the petition will be published on the website and available to the Mayor and Cabinet Members in advance. The content will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. One minute to present petition. 	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"> The content of the petition will be published on the website and available to the Mayor and Cabinet Members in advance. The content will be noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated. A maximum of two questions per Councillor and an opportunity for a supplementary question per question asked. Replies to questions will be provided in writing. 	Written responses will be published on the website.
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 published on the website and available Mayor and Cabinet Members in advance, 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.

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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 published on the website and available Mayor and Cabinet Members in advance, 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 may be asked per member of the public.• Replies to questions will be provided in writing.	Written responses will be published on the website.

Scrutiny meetings

Who goes?	Each commission is made up of Councillors, reflecting the political proportionality of the council.
What's the meeting for?	Scrutiny is a function that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures that Councillors play a pivotal role in influencing council policy and service improvements.• Delivers local accountability, transparency and involvement in decision-making and improving outcomes for the people of Bristol.• Acts as a 'critical friend', providing support to ensure decisions are carried out correctly and sometimes recommending alternative or additional courses of action.
When do they occur?	For Scrutiny meeting dates please see BCC Calendar of Committees or email scrutiny@bristol.gov.uk Scrutiny in Bristol - bristol.gov.uk
Is it webcast?	Some are – please refer to the website and YouTube channel for which meetings will be webcast.

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Scrutiny 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.	12 noon the working day before the meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">30 minutes to deal with all petitions, statements and questions.One minute to present statement.The content of the petition/ statement will be published/circulated to the Committee in advance, noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated or referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) as appropriate.	Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) where appropriate.
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.Questions will be published/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 saved on file.
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.One minute to present statement/petition.The content of the petition/ statement will be published/circulated to the Committee in advance, noted and taken into consideration when the item is debated or referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) as appropriate.	Petitions and statements will be referred on (e.g. for the Mayor's consideration) where appropriate.

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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.• Questions will be published/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 saved on file.
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Development Control meetings

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?	<p>There are 2 committees – Development Control A and Development Control B</p> <p>Please see the following link to all Council Committee dates;</p> <p>BCC Calendar of Committees</p> <p>BCC Committee List</p>
Is it webcast?	Some Development Control meetings are streamed on our YouTube channel YouTube channel .

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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.	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 circulated to the Committee in advance and noted / considered as the item is debated.	Copies are saved on file.
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 in advance 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 published/ circulated to the Committee in advance and noted / considered as the item is debated.	Copies are saved on file.

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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 published/ circulated to all members of the relevant committee in advance 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.
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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 will 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 are received.

For copyright reasons, we are 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, made available at the meeting and published on the website.

The information may also be placed in the official minute book as a public record, and your name may be listed in the minutes.

Where appropriate, we will try to remove other personal details like contact details. However, you may wish to consider what your statement contains as we cannot guarantee that you won't be identified through other information contained therein.

Webcasting of meetings

Full Council, Cabinet meetings and other committee meetings may be streamed live on our YouTube channel.

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 are likely to be filmed. It will be assumed that you have given your consent.

Where to send your questions, statements and petitions.

Please send them to:

democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk

