

Appendix C – Public Speaking at Council Meetings at Other Local Authorities

This appendix provides an overview of some of the main provisions that exist for public speaking at (a) ordinary and (b) extraordinary meetings of Council at the other district and borough councils within West Sussex.

(a) Ordinary meetings of Council

Council	Who can ask questions?	Who can be asked questions?	Notice of questions	Scope of questions	Max. total time for questions	Max. time per question	Supplementary questions	Responses to questions
Adur	'Members of the public, who live, work or own property in the District'.	Cabinet Members	Midday 2 clear working days before meeting (can be asked without notice but Cabinet Member then has the option to respond in writing within 3 working days)	Must 'relate to a matter for which the Council has responsibility and/or which specifically affects the District'.	30 minutes	5 minutes (max. 2 questions per person or organisation)	1 supplementary question Max. 2 minutes Must be within 30 minutes allowed for questions	Response to a question on notice to be given at meeting if questioner and Cabinet Member both present and sufficient time. Otherwise, response to be given in writing within 3 working days.
Arun <i>(NB. Committee model of governance – not Leader and Cabinet)</i>	Members of the public	Committee Chairs (or Vice-Chair if Committee Chair is absent)	5 working days before meeting	Must 'be relevant to matters for which the council has powers or duties' and 'should be limited to obtaining information or pressing for action'.	15 minutes (Chair may extend)	1 minute	1 supplementary question Max. 1 minute	Response to be given at meeting. Where this is not possible, response to be given in writing within 10 working days.
Chichester	'Questions can be asked by residents or non-domestic ratepayers of the district.'	Constitution infers Cabinet Members or Committee Chairmen	Noon 2 working days before meeting	Questions may be asked 'on issues of local concern'.	15 minutes (Chairman may extend)	3 minutes (Chairman may extend)	1 supplementary question (at Chairman's discretion)	Response may be given orally at the meeting or in writing. Other options include declining to respond or asking a senior officer to respond.

								If questioner or their representative is not present at the meeting, a response will be given in writing within 10 working days.
Crawley	Members of the public, who must confirm which ward they live in when submitting or asking a question.	The Mayor, Cabinet Members or Chairs of Committees	Noon 1 week before meeting for written questions (can also ask oral questions without notice)	May be rejected on a number of grounds, including if it is 'a statement and not a question' or does not 'relate to an issue for which the Council holds responsibility, or which specifically affects the Borough'.	30 minutes	No time limit but written questions may be rejected if more than 100 words	1 supplementary question	Written question on notice: Written response to be given on evening of meeting. Oral question without notice: Oral response to be given at meeting, unless there is insufficient time or information 'is not readily available', in which case a written response will be given.
Mid Sussex	Members of the public	Members of the Council	1pm 2 days before meeting	May be rejected on a number of grounds, including if it 'is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility, or which affects the District' or 'is not in the format of a question'	15 minutes	No time limit but questions are limited to 100 words	1 supplementary question	If a full response is expected to exceed 2 minutes, an oral summary will be given at the meeting and a full response will be given in writing. If there is insufficient time to respond or the relevant Member is absent from the meeting, a response will be given in writing.
Worthing	'Members of the public, who live work or own	Cabinet Members	Midday 2 clear working days before meeting (can be asked	Must 'relate to a matter for which the Council has responsibility	30 minutes	5 minutes (max. 2 questions per	1 supplementary question Max. 2 minutes	Response to a question on notice to be given at meeting if

	property in the District’.		without notice but Cabinet Member then has the option to respond in writing within 3 working days)	and/or which specifically affects the Borough’.		person or organisation)	Must be within 30 minutes allowed for questions	questioner and Cabinet Member both present and sufficient time. Otherwise, response to be given in writing within 3 working days.
--	----------------------------	--	--	---	--	-------------------------	---	---

(b) Extraordinary meetings of Council

Council	Is public speaking permitted at extraordinary meetings of Council?
Adur	Yes. ‘Extraordinary meetings of Full Council will ... [in] accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.0, receive questions from, and provide answers to, the public’.
Arun	Public speaking at extraordinary meetings of Council is not expressly excluded in the Council’s Constitution.
Chichester	No, unless the Chairman of the Council directs that it shall be. ‘A special meeting of the Council shall not include Public Question Time, Questions to the Executive and Late Items unless the Chairman of the Council so directs.’
Crawley	No, except ‘the Mayor has the discretion to hold public questions if they consider it to be beneficial to the business specified in the request to hold the Extraordinary Meeting.’
Mid Sussex	Public speaking at extraordinary meetings of Council is not expressly excluded in the Council’s Constitution.
Worthing	Yes. ‘Extraordinary Meetings will ... [in] accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.0, receive questions from, and provide answers to, the public’.

Sources:

Adur District Council Constitution, 17 August 2023, Available at:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media,168761,smxx.pdf>

Arun District Council Constitution, Version 2.2, 27 January 2023, Available at:

<https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/documents/g1747/Public%20reports%20pack%2027th-Jan-2023%20Constitution.pdf?T=10&Info=1>

Chichester District Council Constitution, 2 June 2023, Available at:

<https://chichester.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g1081/Public%20reports%20pack%20Friday%2002-Jun-2023%2009.00%20The%20Constitution.pdf?T=10&Info=1>

Crawley Borough Council Constitution, 25 July 2023, Available at:

<https://democracy.crawley.gov.uk/documents/g2905/Public%20reports%20pack%2025th-Jul-2023%20Constitution.pdf?T=10&Info=1>

Mid Sussex District Council Constitution, 25 August 2023, Available at:

<https://midsussex.moderngov.co.uk/documents/g3216/Public%20reports%20pack%2025th-Aug-2023%2012.00%20Constitution.pdf?T=10&Info=1>

Worthing Borough Council Constitution, 17 August 2023, Available at:

<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/Media,168762,smxx.pdf>