

# **PROCEDURE FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING**

**Agreed by Council  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2004**

**N.B. The Procedure for Public Speaking at the Development Control Committee was agreed by  
the Audit Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2005**

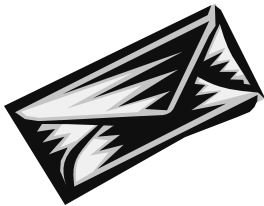


Members of the public have the right to speak or ask questions at many of the meetings of the Borough Council on issues listed on the agenda for the particular meeting. Time is also set aside at the beginning of most meetings for the public to ask questions.

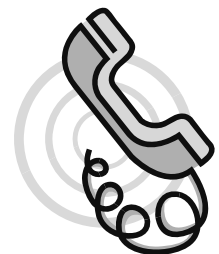
This leaflet explains the rights of the public to speak at meetings of the Council and other Committees of the Council.

A separate leaflet explains the procedure for speaking at meetings of the Development Control Committee.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION  
OR HAVE ANY QUERIES, PLEASE CONTACT:**



**Democratic Services Section  
P.O. Box 74 Kingfisher Business Centre  
Futures Park  
Bacup  
Lancashire  
Tel: 01706 252422  
Email: [democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@rossendalebc.gov.uk)**



## DETAILS OF MEETINGS

Meetings are usually held in the Council Chamber, Hardman Mill, New Hall Hey, Rawtenstall and usually start at 6.30pm, with the exception of Full Council and Neighbourhood Forum meetings which start at 7pm. Details of meeting dates, times and venues are publicised on the Council's website [www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/meetings) ; outside the One Stop Shop in Rawtenstall and at Rawtenstall Library, or they can be obtained from the Democratic Services Section.

## AGENDA PAPERS

Agendas are usually published on the Council's website 5 clear days before the meeting. For a meeting on a Wednesday the agenda should be available for inspection at the One Stop Shop, Rawtenstall on the preceding Tuesday. Public copies of the agenda are available at the meeting. Please contact Democratic Services if you require information before the meeting or a copy of the agenda. Some items of Council business are confidential and the information is not available to the public.

## PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

At certain Committee meetings, members of the public have a right to ask questions.

Question time will normally last up to half an hour.

Please note that you will have to attend the meeting in order to put your question and that you should attend the Committee which is responsible for the issue you are interested in. If you are unsure which meeting you should attend please contact Democratic Services.

The Public Question Time does not apply to meetings of the Development Control and Licensing Committees.

## PUBLIC RIGHT OF ADDRESS

In addition to Public Question Time the public also have a right to speak at meetings on items which appear on the published agenda and guidance is given below.

## MEETINGS OF COUNCIL AND THE CABINET

At these meetings members of the public will only be entitled to speak at the Public Question Time item on the Agenda.

## **GUIDANCE**

### **WHO CAN ASK A QUESTION?**

**A**ny person who lives or works in the Borough.

### **DO I NEED TO GIVE NOTICE THAT I WANT TO SPEAK OR ASK A QUESTION?**

**N**o, but it will help the Council prepare an answer to your question if you do submit it in writing. Normally, only one speaker will be allowed to address the meeting on an item. One person should act as spokesperson for a group with a common interest.

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?**

**Y**ou should arrive at the meeting at least 10 minutes before the start of the meeting. Please make yourself known to the Committee Administrator. This allows time for an explanation of the procedures. It is usual for items for which members of the public are attending to be taken early in the proceedings.

### **CONSIDERATION OF AN ITEM ON THE AGENDA WILL NORMALLY RUN THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STAGES:-**

- First, the Chair will call for a report to be made (a Council Officer will normally have submitted a written report with the agenda and he or she will be called upon to speak upon the report).
- Second, the members of the public will be invited to speak.
- Next, members will debate the item.
- Following the debate, a decision will be made.

### **HOW LONG MAY I SPEAK FOR?**

**A** time limit of 3 minutes applies to each speaker, though this may be extended if the meeting agrees. Please note that a speaker can only usually only address Members once, unless it is in response to a question from a member, or the Chair allows you to address members again.

## HOW SHOULD I ASK A QUESTION OR GIVE A STATEMENT?

**B**egin by giving your name and address and whether you are speaking as an individual member of the public or as a representative of a group.

**I**t is useful to prepare notes in advance to ensure that all the important points are covered. Try and be brief and to the point.

**D**o not make derogatory or defamatory statements.

**B**ring an extra copy of any prepared statement for the Chair's information.

## SOME QUESTIONS ARE NOT ALLOWED

**Y**ou may not ask a question in furtherance of your own particular circumstances. These should be taken up with officers or Councillors outside of the meeting. Nor may people ask about a matter where there is a right of appeal to the courts, tribunal or to a Government minister. You may not ask a question about the service of any person employed by the Council.

**T**he Chair may disallow any question that, in his or her opinion, is improper, vexatious irrelevant or otherwise objectionable. The Chair can also limit the number of questions that a person may ask. The answer may be given verbally or in writing.

**A**ny question not dealt with at the meeting will normally be answered within 10 working days.