

Guidance on asking questions at Council meetings

Council meetings take place roughly every 2 months and the public have an opportunity to ask questions of the Executive on any matters that the Council is responsible for or matters which affect the District.

Council meetings are usually held at 10am on Wednesday mornings.

Public questions can only be asked at an ordinary meeting of Council, so this guidance does not apply to extraordinary meetings of the Council if they are called, or to the Annual Council meeting in May.

Who may ask questions at Council?

Any member of the public may submit a question to the Council. Questions may be submitted by organisations, but the same rules apply as they do to individuals.

How many questions can I submit?

You may only submit one question per meeting. Once you have received a reply to your question at the meeting, you may ask one supplementary question.

Who must my question be addressed to?

You must address your question to one of the members of the Executive. Each Executive Member holds different portfolios. You can read about the Executive Members and their roles [here](#).

How do I submit a question for Council?

You must submit your question in writing or by email to the Monitoring Officer no later than midday, seven clear working days before the day of the meeting. The deadline for each meeting in this municipal year are provided below.

You must provide your name and address and the name of the Executive Member (or their title) to whom your question is to be put.

You can submit your question to the Monitoring Officer:

By writing to: Monitoring Officer, Bolsover District Council, The Arc, Clowne, S43 4JY

By email to: sarah.sternberg@bolsover.gov.uk

What are the deadlines?

The following are the dates of the Council meetings for the municipal year 2019/20 and the deadlines by which questions must be submitted. Dates for meetings in 2020/21 will follow shortly.

Council Meeting Dates	Deadline for Submission of Questions
Wednesday 17 th July 2019	Friday 5 th July 2019
Wednesday 11 th September 2019	Friday 30 th August 2019
Wednesday 13 th November 2019	Friday 1 st November 2019
Wednesday 15 th January 2020	Friday 3 January 2020
Wednesday 19 th February 2020	Friday 7 th February 2020
Wednesday 4 th March 2020	Friday 21 st February 2020
Wednesday 22 nd April 2020 - cancelled	-

Will my question be answered at the meeting?

A question will not be dealt with if it:

- is not about a matter the Council has responsibility for, or a matter which affects the District.
- is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- is substantially the same as a question submitted in the last 6 months
- requires the disclosure of confidential information
- breaches any procedure rule
- relates to an item on the agenda for that meeting
- relates to a District Council planning application that is in the process of being determined.

If your question is rejected, you will be notified in writing giving the reasons.

Your question will not be dealt with at the meeting if you do not attend.

You will not necessarily receive an oral response at the meeting, see below on how questions may be answered.

Do I have to attend and read out my question?

If you do not attend the meeting, your question will not be dealt with. You may not ask anyone else to attend on your behalf. You do not have to read your question in full as it will be printed in the agenda papers. The Chair will invite you to come to the lectern to read your question, however you may simply ask for a response to your question as it appears on the agenda if you prefer.

How will be question be answered?

If your question is accepted and you are present at the meeting to ask it, you will either receive an oral answer at the meeting or you will be provided with a written answer as soon as possible after the meeting. If the information is contained in a document that is publically available, you may be referred to that document.

Can I ask a follow up question?

You may ask one supplementary question, which must be brief and arise out of your original question or the response.

Questions and response are not open to debate.

Is there a time limit for public questions?

There is a limit of 15 minutes in total for the public question section of the meeting, however if there is only one questioner, there is a limit of 5 minutes.

What should I do on the day of the meeting?

Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting so that you can be shown to the public gallery and where you will be invited to present the question from. You will be sent a copy of the agenda for the meeting about a week in advance. You are welcome to stay for the remainder of the meeting that is open to the public or you may leave after your question has been dealt with.

If you require any special assistance

Will I be recorded or videoed when presenting my question?

Members of the public or journalists attending any public meetings may record the meeting, including either audio or video recordings. This will include any public questions. The Council cannot prevent the recording taking place so please consider this possibility before submitting your question.

The Council also records the audio of the meeting for the purposes of preparing the minutes and the recording is not published.

How will my question and personal information be record?

Your name will be included in the agenda with your question, which will be publically available information. It will also be included in a log of questions submitted which is also open to the public.

Your address and contact details will not be given out but will be stored by the Governance Team at the Council for up to one year.

How are the rules about public questions determined and where can I find them?

The procedure rules are part of the Council's Constitution. This is agreed by the Council at a full Council meeting in May every year. The procedure rules can be found in Part 4 of the Constitution, which you can find [here](#) under Constitution.

Who can I contact for more information?

You can contact the Governance Manager if you would like to discuss submitting questions to the Council. You can contact the Governance Manager by phone on 01246 217753 or by email: nicola.calver@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk