



# SCRUTINY

## Public Participation Guide



## Public Speaking at a Scrutiny Committee Meeting

The Vale of Glamorgan Council recognises that members of the public can make an important contribution and be a valuable source of information. The Council therefore encourages the active participation of all residents within the Scrutiny process in the Vale.

This Guide provides information on what members of the public can expect when attending a Scrutiny Committee meeting.

**Please note this Guide only covers general business items under consideration by the Scrutiny Committees.**

**Where an issue of major public concern/interest arises, separate arrangements will apply.**



## Contents

1	What is Scrutiny?	1
2	Where and when do the Committees meet?	2
3	How do I get my “voice” heard?	2
4	Who can speak?	2
5	How long do I have to speak?	3
6	What can I speak on at the meeting?	3
7	What can’t I speak on at the meeting?	3
8	Attendance at the meeting	4
9	Where do I sit?	4
10	When will I speak?	5
11	Can I hand out supporting documents or use visual aids?	5
12	Once I have spoken.	5
13	How do I register to speak?	6
14	Written representations	7
15	Additional information	7



## What is Scrutiny?

- 1.1 The Council's Scrutiny process provides an opportunity for Elected Members ("Councillors") to examine the services that the Council provides and to ask questions on how decisions have been made. Scrutiny Committees must also make arrangements to listen to the views of the public and the community. One of the roles of the Scrutiny Committee is to take account of those views when considering the relevant issue and, if considered appropriate, to pass those views on to the Council's Cabinet for their consideration.
- 1.2 It is important to be aware that the Scrutiny Committees do not deal with individual queries, concerns or complaints. You should also bear in mind that a Scrutiny Committee meeting is a meeting held in public but it is not a Public Meeting.

- 1.3 The Council has five Scrutiny Committees:

### **Corporate Performance and Resources**

This Scrutiny Committee deals with the internal working of the Council and its finances and the Public Services Board.

### **Environment and Regeneration**

This Scrutiny Committee deals with Waste Management, Highway Maintenance, Planning (but not matters such as planning applications), Transportation and Economic Development.

### **Homes and Safe Communities**

This Scrutiny Committee deals with Council Housing and related maintenance, Private Sector Housing, Community Safety, Crime and Disorder (including Youth Offending Services) and Shared Regulatory Services functions.

### **Learning and Culture**

This Scrutiny Committee deals with all School matters, (which includes School Improvement, Post-16 Education, Community Education), Youth Services, the Library Service, Equalities, Welsh Language and Arts Development.

### **Healthy Living and Social Care**

This Scrutiny Committee deals with Adult Services, such as Care Homes, Children and Young People Services (e.g. Adoption Service), Leisure, Parks, Sport and Play.



## 2 Where and when do the Committees meet?

- 2.1 Each of the Council's five Scrutiny Committees meet approximately 10-12 times a year. Meetings usually commence at 6:00pm and are normally held in the Council Chamber of the Civic Offices in Barry. However, on occasions, an alternative venue may be used (e.g. the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee may meet at a school). A schedule of all the Scrutiny Committee meetings for the current Municipal Year is available on the Council website at the following link: <http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/meetingsandagendas>

## 3 How do I get my "voice" heard?

- 3.1 Your "voice" at a Scrutiny Committee can be heard via two ways. If you choose, you can request to speak at a Scrutiny Committee or alternatively, you can send in your written representations. The procedure for submitting written representations can be found in paragraph 14 on page 7 of this Guide.

## 4 Who can speak?

- 4.1 Anyone who lives or works in the Vale of Glamorgan and who has registered, is entitled to speak at a scheduled meeting of one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees.
- 4.2 The meeting is not a question and answer session and speakers will be asked to make statements relevant to the topic and to avoid repetition.
- 4.3 The number of public speakers will be limited and this will be dependent on the number of requests made.
- 4.4 In the event that a person aged under 16 years of age wishes to speak at a Scrutiny Committee meeting, they must be accompanied by an adult.



## 5 How long do I have to speak?

- 5.1 For each agenda item, there will be a **maximum of 15 minutes** speaking time **in total** for members of the public (provided they have registered to speak). In the event of multiple requests to speak, the Chairman will usually allow up to a maximum of 5 individual speakers per agenda item (i.e. 3 minutes per speaker). Individual speakers who have registered to speak will be limited to 3 minutes in respect of an agenda item.

This Guide does not apply to Vale of Glamorgan Elected Members, as they are subject to the procedures of the Council's Constitution, which entitles them to speak with the permission of the Committee.

## 6 What can I speak on at the meeting?

- 6.1 A member of the public, speaking on an agenda item must address their speech to the item they have registered to speak upon on the agenda and cannot address other agenda items or unrelated business. You should ensure that:
- Your comments are clear and concise and are directly related to the report on which you have requested to speak;
  - You avoid repeating points made previously by any earlier public speakers;
  - Your views are limited to the advantages or disadvantages of the report and that you highlight how the report could affect the delivery of services to specific user groups of citizens in the Vale; and
  - Your comments are not defamatory, discriminatory or contain offensive language.

## 7 What can't I speak on at the meeting?

- 7.1 The right of the public to speak applies to all items on the agenda with the exception of the following:
- Apologies; Declarations of Interest and Minutes;
  - If an agenda item has been withdrawn;



- Any agenda item that is not accompanied by a written report or any agenda item for which the Chairman has exercised her or his discretion to withdraw the right of public speaking, e.g. a presentation; and
  - When confidential items are under consideration by the Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman will ask all members of the public and the press to vacate the meeting room.
- 7.2 The right to speak does not include the right to ask any questions of any Elected Member, Officer of the Council, invited attendees or any other speaker.
- 7.3 The Chairman of the Committee will have the discretion to stop a speaker before their allotted time has concluded if, in the Chairman's view, the speaker is making any comments that are, or appear to be, defamatory, discriminatory, contain offensive language, are contrary to the procedures laid out in the public speaking protocol, are unrelated to the agenda item under consideration, or constitute behaviour otherwise not appropriate for a Scrutiny Committee meeting.

## 8 Attendance at the Meeting

- 8.1 Members of the public who have registered to speak, are asked to arrive 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of the meeting and should inform the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer of their arrival.

## 9 Where do I sit?

- 9.1 The Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer will seat you accordingly and, at the appropriate time, the Chairman will ask you to move to a particular place within the Council Chamber where you can be clearly seen and heard.



## 10 When will I speak during the Meeting?

- 10.1 Normally, agenda items with public speaking will usually be considered first and will take the following format:
- 1 Responsible Officer from the Council to present the report;
  - 2 If applicable, the Cabinet Member portfolio holder to address the Scrutiny Committee;
  - 3 Members of the public who have registered to speak;
  - 4 Other Elected Members (i.e. not members of the Scrutiny Committee); and
  - 5 Scrutiny Committee Members.

## 11 Can I hand out supporting documents or use visual aids?

- 11.1 You cannot hand out any supporting documents at the meeting or use any form of visual aid, such as photographs or diagrams. The deadline for registering to speak or to make written submissions is designed to provide information to the Scrutiny Committee in advance of the meeting in order to allow Members to give full consideration to the points raised.

## 12 Once I have spoken

- 12.1 After you have finished speaking, please be aware that you may be asked questions by the Committee Chairman and /or Committee Members to clarify some of your comments. You must not enter into a debate with the Committee Members, as this is not a public inquiry; but rather a meeting of the Council. You will then be asked to return to your seat.
- 12.2 The Committee will then discuss the issue further before making any recommendation(s) to the Cabinet (or Senior Officer with delegated responsibility) they deem appropriate.
- 12.3 If the Chairman advises that there are no further queries and if you wish, you are free to leave the meeting.

**N.B. While a Scrutiny Committee will consider the comments made by public speakers and other elected Members when considering matters and forming recommendations, it has a duty to form its own conclusion as it sees appropriate.**



## 13 How do I register to speak?

- 13.1 The agendas for Scrutiny Committee meetings are published on the Council's website, 5 clear days before the date of the meeting. Hard copies are also available for public inspection at the Civic Offices.
- 13.2 The appropriate application form to register to speak will be available on the Council's website from 8:30am the following day. Members of the public who wish to register to speak at a meeting of one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees should apply by completing the appropriate application form by no later than 4.00pm on the working day preceding the meeting.  
*(For example, if the meeting falls on a Monday, requests to speak should be received by 4.00pm on the preceding Friday. If the meeting falls on a Tuesday, requests to speak should be received by 4.00pm on the Monday.)*
- 13.3 To register your interest you should complete the appropriate application form, which can be found at the following web link:  
[http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our\\_council/council/scrutiny/more\\_about\\_scrutiny.aspx](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/our_council/council/scrutiny/more_about_scrutiny.aspx)
- However, should you not have access to the internet, you can telephone Democratic and Scrutiny Services on 01446 709413 to register your interest or ask to inspect the papers.
- 13.4 Requests must include details of the agenda item and the relevant Scrutiny Committee at which you would like to speak.
- 13.5 Accepted applications will normally be dealt with in the order that they have been received.
- 13.6 All those registered to speak will be advised prior to the meeting, either by e-mail or through their contact telephone number, if their request to speak has been accepted.



## 14 Written representations

- 14.1 We appreciate that you may find it difficult to address the Committee in person. If this is the case, we welcome written submissions of your views/opinions and these can be sent to:

**Via Email:** [Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

**Or to the following postal address:**

Democratic and Scrutiny Services  
The Vale of Glamorgan Council  
Civic Offices  
Holton Road  
BARRY  
CF63 4RU

Written representations should be received by Democratic and Scrutiny Services by no later than 4.00pm on the working day prior to the Scrutiny Committee meeting.

*(For example, if the meeting falls on a Monday, representations should be received by 4.00pm on the preceding Friday. If the meeting falls on a Tuesday, representations should be received by 4.00pm on the Monday.)*

## 15 Additional information

- 15.1 Filming and recording of meetings will only be allowed if prior permission is sought in writing from, and granted by, the Managing Director in advance of the meeting.
- 15.2 Speakers should advise Democratic and Scrutiny Services in advance if they have any special needs or requirements.
- 15.3 If you have any questions concerning public speaking at a meeting of one of the Council's Scrutiny Committees, or the submission of written representations, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Democratic and Scrutiny Services Team on the telephone number or e-mail address below.

**Democratic Services telephone:** 01446-709413

**Email:** [Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:Democratic@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)

[www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)





**Democratic and Scrutiny Services**  
**The Vale of Glamorgan Council**  
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