



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Public Participation at Meetings Policy

History of Policy Changes

Date	Version	Author	Origin of change e.g. change in legislation	Changed by

This policy applies to Weston-super-Mare Town Council.

Date policy adopted	18 th August 2025
Approved by	Finance and General Purposes Committee (18.08.25)
Review cycle	Bi-Annually
Review date	August 2027

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1. Overview

This policy aims to give practical information about the public attending meetings of the council and how to obtain relevant meeting documents such as Agendas, Minutes and Reports. This policy is designed to help the public know when they can attend meetings and what documents and information are available to them. We want to ensure the council is transparent and accountable to the community of Weston-super-Mare.

This policy should be read in conjunction with and an awareness of:

- a. Press Policy
- b. Recording and Filming Meetings Policy
- c. GDPR Data Protection Policy
- d. Standing Orders

2. Attending Meetings

Town Councillors make all significant decisions in Council and Committee meetings which are open to the public to attend. Details of all meetings of Weston super- Mare Town Council can be found on [this section of the website](#).

As long as you live or work in Weston, you may have your say at Town Council meetings, which take place in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Walliscote Grove Road, Weston-super-Mare BS23 1UJ and also Committee meetings of the Council, which take place at in the Council Chamber at the Town Council offices, 32 Waterloo Street, BS23 1LN.

The rules require a meeting to be closed to the public in two circumstances:

1. If the presence of the public is likely to result in the council breaching a legal obligation to third parties about the keeping of confidential information.
2. A lawful power is used to exclude the public in order to maintain orderly conduct or prevent misbehaviour at a meeting.

The descriptions of exempt information are set out in the Schedule 12A to the [Local Government Act 1972](#). These are as follows:

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes –
 - a. to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person.
 - b. to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Speaking at Meetings

If you wish to speak at a meeting please notify us of the subject matter before 5pm on the last working day before the day of the meeting (e.g. for a Monday meeting this means the Friday before).

Before the commencement of the meeting, the Chair will invite members of the public to address the Council under the public participation section. This allows a total of 15 minutes for members of the public to speak, present a petition or ask a question. The time will be split depending on how many people wish to speak, which in some cases isn't long, so you have to be very clear on your leading point and deliver that first.

All decisions are made by Councillors only and members of the public cannot take part in Council or Committee debate, nor in voting on issues.

Read the following documents to understand more about our Committee system and our Councillors participation in them:

[Calendar of Meetings 2025-26](#)

[Committee Membership 2025 – APPROVED June 2025](#)

[Committee Structure – Approved June 2025](#)

[Committee Terms of Reference – Approved June 2025](#)

Normally all significant decisions, for example those involving expenditure above £7,500, are made during a Council or committee meeting which is open to the public. Sometimes, for reasons such as urgency or a delicate negotiation a significant decision cannot be made during a meeting and needs to be delegated to an officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee or other specific councillors. Details of significant Delegated Decisions are available to [download here](#).

3. Agendas, Minutes and Reports

WSMTC Agendas are normally publicised 7 days in advance of the meeting and you can find them, along with all committee meeting minutes and reports, by clicking on the relevant Committee on the above linked page. The minimum statutory requirement to publicise and issue the Agenda summons is:

Legal Requirements Under the Local Government Act 1972

1. Three clear days' notice

- **Schedule 12, Paragraph 10**, of the Local Government Act 1972 mandates that a **public notice** of the *time, place, and agenda* for a **full council meeting** must be given **at least three clear days** in advance.
- “Clear days” exclude: the day the notice is issued, the day of the meeting, Sundays, bank holidays, or days of public thanksgiving or mourning.
- This notice must be **fixed** typically on a notice board—and the **summons**, signed by the Proper Officer, must include the agenda and

be sent to each councillor by an appropriate method (e.g. post or email, if consented)

Where an item is added to the agenda within the legal requirement the meeting is scheduled to take place, a revised agenda and reports will be published as soon as the item is added to the agenda. In some circumstances, the whole or part of a report may not be available for public inspection because it contains either confidential or exempt information. In this case, the report will say 'Confidential – Members only' and state that it contains confidential information or set out the description of the exempt information.

4. Policy Review

The working of this policy will be reviewed by Weston-super-Mare Town Council bi - annually. As well as examining the specific review data, the policy statement will be checked for continuing relevance against any changed statutory requirements.