

GUIDE TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS

This guide explains what happens at Council and Committee Meetings. It is not a full statement of all the rules and regulations but should give you an insight into what happens at these meetings.

Our Committee year runs from August until the end of June the following year. The Council operates an eight-weekly cycle of Committee meetings and there are approximately six Committee cycles per year.

http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/council_government/council_and_government.asp



ABERDEEN
CITY COUNCIL

When and where do the Committees meet?

Meetings of the main Committees are held on an eight weekly cycle. There is a timetable of meetings available to view on our website. Most meetings are held in the Council Chamber, or Committee Room 2 at the Town House, Broad Street, Aberdeen. Meetings such as Sub Committees are normally held in the Committee Rooms (2, 3, 4 and 5) in the Town House. Generally meetings start at 2pm, apart from Licensing Committee and the Planning Development Management Committee which each start at 10am, and Council which starts at 10.30am.

What is the Committee structure?

The Council has set up the undernoted Committees to carry out its business. Information on the remit of each Committee is available on the Council website.

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee
Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee
Education and Children's Services Committee
Finance, Policy and Resources Committee
Licensing Committee
Pensions Committee
Petitions Committee
Planning Development Management Committee
Urgent Business Committee
Full Council - meets as a body of 43 members (all Councillors) at the end of the eight week cycle

Can the public come to Committee meetings and where do they sit?

In most cases, Committee meetings are open to the public and press, and they are very welcome to sit in and follow the proceedings. Occasionally, meetings sit in private for part of the agenda. This is because a

report may contain confidential information, and the reason for this will be detailed on the agenda.

For meetings held in the Council Chamber, members of the public are required to sit in the public gallery which is located on the 3rd floor of the Town House. Meetings of Committees are usually held in Committee Room 2, and there is public seating at the back of the room. Disabled access is available for the public gallery and the Committee rooms.

Who comes to Committee meetings?

The Councillors who are members of the Committee and any external members who have been appointed. For example, the Council's Education and Children's Services Committee has 7 external members. For the full Council meeting, all Councillors are expected to attend and the Lord Provost is the Chair. At Committee, the chairperson is known as the Convener, and there will also be a vice chairperson known as the Vice Convener.

What happens at Committee meetings?

The Committee will deal with the items of business that have been put forward as they appear on the agenda.

Questions – members are allowed to ask questions, through the Convener, about the report. The Convener may answer but it is more likely that Council officers will provide a response. It is up to the Convener how many questions members can ask. If you would like copies of the agenda and related reports (not including any that are confidential) these can all be found on the Council's website.

Motions and amendments – the written reports contain recommendations from Council officers, but a member may have additional proposals to make, or

alternative proposals. Members do not have to follow recommendations made by officers. Their proposals will normally be circulated as motions and amendments and can either be verbal or in writing. Each must have a proposer and a seconder. Sometimes all the members will agree on what should happen and so motions and amendments are not needed.

Debate – members then debate the motions and amendments. The proposer and seconder are allowed to speak about their proposals for 10 minutes and 5 minutes respectively at Council. At Committee meetings, the timing of speeches is more informal. At Council, each member then has 5 minutes to speak during debate and can only speak once during consideration of that item. Again, at Committee meetings, members are not timed.

Voting and Decisions – a vote then takes place on the motions and amendments by way of roll call. Councillors are allowed to abstain from voting, and will vote 'Motion', 'Amendment' or 'No Vote'. If there are two or more amendments, the amendments are voted for against each other and the successful amendment then goes forward to be voted for against the motion. The outcome of the vote is announced and the meeting moves on to the next item of business. If a decision cannot be reached at Committee meetings, it can be referred to the full Council meeting for decision, provided that is supported by a third of the membership of the Committee.

What is a deputation?

A deputation is an individual or in some cases a group (maximum of 3) of people, who want to have the opportunity to speak on an item of business before Committee. The deputation must relate to a report on the agenda.

Why ask for a deputation?

From time to time, individuals or a group may wish to speak to a Committee meeting on a report on the agenda. This allows the Councillors to hear, at first hand, the views of people who may be affected by a decision the Councillors are about to take.

What is the procedure?

If you want to speak as a deputation, you must submit your application in writing to committeeservices@aberdeencity.gov.uk at least one clear working day prior to the date of the meeting at which the subject may be considered. You can also submit it by letter to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Town House, Broad Street, Aberdeen.

- An officer will meet you 15 minutes prior to the meeting and will advise you of the process
- You must say what subject you want to speak about and what action, if any you wish the Committee to take
- Your request to speak will be put to the members of the Committee at the beginning of the meeting
- If the request is granted (which could be after a vote), the deputation made up of no more than 3 people, will be called by the Lord Provost/Convener to the Committee table to address the Committee.
- The group of 3 may speak in total for no more than 10 minutes
- After the deputation has spoken to the Committee, members may ask the deputation questions
- No debate or discussion is allowed to take place among the Committee members whilst the deputation is speaking
- You need to ensure that you have timed your presentation to last no longer than 10 minutes.

What happens after a Committee meeting?

Except where a Committee decision is referred to Council, the decision taken by a Committee can be implemented immediately. Decision sheets which record the decisions taken at a meeting are published on the Council website following the Committee meeting. If you wish to query or clarify any decisions taken, you can contact the report author, or a member of the Committee Services team.

Is a record taken of the meetings?

The official record of Committee meetings is contained in the minutes. This is not a word-for-word record but sets out report recommendations, advice from officers and declarations of interest decisions for legal and other purposes. The minute is submitted for approval to the next meeting, and at that point the final minute will be published on the Council's website.

Who can help me?

If you have any questions or would like more information on Committee meetings, please contact:-

Committee Services Team
First Floor
Town House
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AQ

Phone (01224) 523054

Email committeeservices@aberdeencity.gov.uk

**COUNCIL CHAMBER
SEATING PLAN**

PUBLIC GALLERY

Con - Scottish Conservative & Unionist
 IAG - Independent Alliance Group
 Lab - Labour
 Lib Dem - Liberal Democrat
 SNP - Scottish Nationalist Party

(Used for Full Council)

