

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION RULES

The views of the Committee are requested on whether any changes are required to Public Participation Rules. Barnet's rules give the public substantial opportunities to participate- greater for example than in the Model Constitution- and it is clear from consultation on the Governance system that those who have responded have an appetite to be further involved.

At the same time, the rationale behind moving to a committee system is to give all Members from different parties the opportunity to debate matters for decision through a committee. There needs to be a balance between offering opportunities for participation and building in sufficient meeting time for the Committee to debate its business.

The following suggestions have been canvassed during the process of developing options and a steer is required from the Committee on whether to pursue further:

- To allow 30 minutes in total for public questions and comments (at present 30 minutes, or 20 questions if that occurs first is allowed for questions, with no specific time allocated for comments);
- To reduce the time for each individual comment from 5 minutes to 3 to allow as wide a range of people as possible to participate;
- To allow a facility for members of the public to submit written comments (within the same deadlines as for questions and comments) which would be published as an addendum to a report;
- To allow questions or comments at Full Councilⁱ;

Three other points should be noted:

1. It is envisaged that the improvements already made by the Committee to Resident Forums, together with the ability of the Forums to refer matters to Area Committees which will now have a wider remit, will provide additional opportunities for participation through the Forums.
2. In any event, the Governance Service will seek to promote the available participation opportunities as widely as possible to residents who may be interested.
3. The rules for public speaking on planning matters are separate and are proposed to remain unchanged at this stage.

ⁱ In addition, where there had previously been public questions/comments on an item considered by committee which is later referred up to Council, those questions and comments will appear in the minutes.