

COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND LIBRARIES COMMITTEE
Wednesday 9th June 2021

ITEM 5 – PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Note

A resident may ask one question per agenda item. A maximum of two questions from residents may be asked per agenda item. Written responses to public questions will be circulated to the questioner in advance or at the meeting. Residents can ask the committee chairman one supplementary question per question asked at the committee meeting, which will be answered without discussion. The supplementary question must be relevant to the original question put to the chairman.

Agenda Item	Public Comment	Response
7 – Community Participation Strategy	<p>Mr John Dix</p> <p>The challenge for the Council and its partners is how to engage productively with residents to develop a balanced dialogue using new channels" but then changed the rules on the operation of Residents Forums which severely curtailed questions that could be asked with a lasting impact on forum attendance. Barnet consistently ignores consultation feedback, especially about libraries, has forbidden residents from addressing committees and dramatically limited the ability to ask questions. Given that you are asking a great deal from residents but giving nothing back in return, what makes you think this strategy will succeed? (99 words)</p>	<p>Changes to the Council’s Public Participation Rules were considered by the Constitution & General Purposes Committee on 25 June 2019. The detailed rationale and amendments agreed by the Committee are as set out in the report and minutes of that meeting:</p> <p>https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=174&MID=9854#A128654 These changes were subsequently approved by Council on 30 July 2019:</p> <p>https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=162&MId=9952&Ver=4</p> <p>The council takes its duty to consult on its decisions very seriously. Not only do we publish the results of our consultations but we also report back on the actions we have taken in response to each one. You can find this on the ‘We asked, you said, we did’ page of Engage Barnet, our online engagement portal.</p> <p>On your point about “giving nothing back in return” for what we ask of residents: We usually do offer a small payment for taking part in consultation events such as focus groups. However, we do not view resident participation simply as a demand on residents. We see it as enabling residents who want to become more involved in the life of their borough to do so. What they will receive in return for this involvement are services and facilities that are more aligned to their needs.</p>