
Public Participation at Council Committee Meetings

Consultation Findings Report

14 December 2022 – 25 January 2023

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the consultation findings from the 'Public Participation at Council Committee Meetings' consultation. Findings from this consultation have been used to inform amendments to the Council's Constitution being reported to Full Council on 28 February 2023 as part of the Governance Review.

1.1 Response to the consultation

- a total of 53 questionnaires were completed.
- the total number of times the [consultation webpage](#) was visited was 2,621
- all responses were either from residents or from a resident and business.
- one written response was received via post.

1.2 Summary of consultation approach

- the consultation ran from 14 December 2022 - 25 January 2023.
- the consultation consisted of a summary consultation document and online questionnaire which was published on [Engage Barnet](#).
- paper copies and other alternative formats of the consultation were available on request.
- the consultation was widely promoted via the council's resident's e-newsletter, Barnet First magazine, the council's website, School Circulate newsletter, posters in public buildings, Twitter, and Facebook adverts.

1.3 Summary of key findings

1.3.1 Views on current arrangements for public participation

- two-thirds of respondents were aware of the council's current committee model of governance arrangements in operation.
- for each aspect of the current council's decision-making process, more respondents felt that the ease of understanding was difficult compared to those who felt it was easy, or that they didn't know enough to give a view.
- the six most common themes, accounting for over 80% of the comments, include:
 - not convinced the council is committed to listening and acting on public participation
 - the Council being proactive in information sharing and civic education
 - difficulty of finding things online
 - complexity of submitting a question
 - lack of remote attendance options
 - the high petition threshold
- almost two-thirds of respondents had not attended a council committee meeting in the previous twelve months
- reasons given for why respondents had not attended a council committee meeting in the previous twelve months include:
 - half of respondents did not know when and where the meetings were held
 - a third of respondents did not know they could attend a council meeting
 - one in seven respondents felt the meetings were at an inconvenient time, they lacked the time, and the meeting was in an inconvenient location

- barriers that make it difficult to participate in council Committee Meetings include:
 - a third of respondents experienced a problem hearing committee members at council meetings
 - one fifth of respondents experienced rude council staff
 - one eighth of respondents felt the over formality of the meetings was a barrier to participation

1.3.2 Preference for finding out about council committee meetings

- respondents' preference for finding out about council committee meetings:
 - almost two-thirds of respondents preferred to be informed by email with almost half wanting to subscribe to Committee email updates, and a similar proportion via Barnet first Resident Council e-newsletter
 - almost half of respondents had a preference to find out via the Council website, and half via social media
 - a quarter of respondents had a preference to find out via Barnet First Paper Resident Council Magazine

1.3.3 Level of awareness and future intention to use method of participation

- level of awareness and future intention to use method of participation:
 - almost three quarters of respondents were aware of submitting or signing a Petition and almost half intend to use this method in the future
 - just under half of respondents were aware of being able to participate by submitting Public Questions or Comments at committee meetings, and around half plan to use this method of participation in the future.
 - over two-fifths of respondents were aware of raising an issue at Area Committees as a method and almost half intend to use in the future
 - two-fifths of respondents were aware of Speaking at Planning Committees as a method of participation, and almost half intend to use in the future
 - less than a third of respondents were aware of Speaking on Asset of Community Value listings as a method of participation and almost half intend to use in the future
 - over a third of respondents were aware of speaking on applications for Area Committee Funding as a method and over a third intend to in the future
- whether respondents had previously engaged with committees:
 - over a quarter (of respondents) had previously raised an issue at an Area Committee
 - half of respondents had either submitted or signed a petition
 - a third of respondents had submitted a public question to a Council Committee
 - a fifth of respondents had submitted public comment to a Council Committee
 - whilst five respondents had previously spoken at Planning Committee meetings, and three respondents had spoken at Funding Applications at Area Committee meetings, only one had spoken at Assets of Community Value Listings at council meetings
 - of those respondents who had attended or submitted to any of these above committees, whilst a third felt the processes were easy to follow, transparent and in an accessible format that meets their needs, over half did not.

2 DETAILED FINDINGS

2.1 Introduction

This section sets out the full findings from the council's consultation on Public Participation at Council Committee Meetings from which recommendations will be put to Full Council on 24 February 2023.

2.2 Summary of consultation approach

The Public Participation at Council Committee Meetings consultation began on 14 December 2022 and closed on 25 January 2023.

2.3 Technical details and method

2.3.1 In summary, the consultation was administered as follows:

- the consultation consisted of an online questionnaire published on [Engage Barnet](#) together with a summary consultation document which provided background information about both the current and proposed additional ways that Barnet residents, visitors and organisations can participate in council decision-making meetings. Paper copies and an easy-read version of the consultation were also made available on request
- the consultation was widely promoted via the council's residents e-newsletter magazine, Barnet First; the council's website; School Circular newsletter; posters in public places; Twitter; Facebook adverts.

2.3.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was developed to ascertain residents' views on the current and proposed ways that Barnet residents, visitors and organisations can participate in council decision-making meetings.

The consultation document was split into two parts, the first focused on the current arrangements for public participation. The second part set out the proposed new approach for public participation at Council Committee meetings. In particular the consultation invited views on the:

- public questions at council meetings
- public comments at council meetings
- raising issues at Area Committees
- petitions
- speaking at Planning Committee meeting
- speaking on Assets of Community Value Listings at committee meetings
- speaking on Funding Applications at Area Committee meetings
- deputations
- participation in Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings
- enabling more people to get involved with the Council decision-making process

Those respondents who elected to receive a paper copy were sent both the consultation document and questionnaire.

2.4 Response to the consultation

A total of 53 questionnaires have been completed - with one being posted in which was incorporated into the following analysis with the responses submitted online. The number of visits to the consultation webpage on Engage Barnet was 2,621.

2.4.1 Response profile

The table below shows the profile of those who responded to the questionnaire.

Table 1: Profile of those who responded to the Consultation

Stakeholder	%	#
Barnet resident	88.6%	39
Barnet business and a resident	11.4%	5
Barnet business	0.0%	0
Representing a voluntary/community organisation	0.0%	0
Representing a public-sector organisation	0.0%	0
Representing a school	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0
Prefer not to say	0.0%	0
Total who answered this question	100%	44
Not Answered		9
Total response to the consultation		53

There was also one written response which arrived by letter. This response has been incorporated into the findings and further details are provided in section 4.4 of this report.

2.4.2 Profile of protected characteristics

The council is required by law (the Equality Act 2010) to pay due regard to equalities in eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between people from different groups.

The protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

To assist us in complying with the duty under the Equality Act 2010 we asked the respondents to provide equalities monitoring data and explained that collecting this information will help us understand the needs of our different communities and that all the information provided will be treated in the strictest confidence and will be stored securely in accordance with our responsibilities under data protection legislation (such as the General Data Protection Regulation or the Data Protection Act 2018).

Table 2 below shows the profile of these who answered these questions. However, as the total number of responses is relatively low (53), we have not undertaken any demographic analysis on the consultation findings.

Table 2: Protected Characteristic, profile of those that completed the questionnaire

Protected Characteristic	Response	
	#	%
Age		
16-17	1	2%
18-24	2	4%
25-34	1	2%
35-44	9	17%
45-54	8	15%
55-64	9	17%
65-74	6	11%
75+	4	8%
Prefer not to say	3	6%
Not answered	10	19%
Total	53	100%

Gender		
Female	15	28%
Male	21	40%
If you prefer your own term	1	2%
Prefer not to say	5	9%
Not answered	11	21%
Total	53	100%

Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?		
Yes, it's the same	30	57%
No, it's different	4	8%
Prefer not to say	5	9%
Not answered	14	26%
Total	53	100%

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Disability		
Yes	5	9%
No	32	60%
Prefer not to say	3	6%
Not answered	13	25%
Total	53	100%

If responded 'yes' to the question on disability: Please select the definition/s from the list below that best describes your disability/disabilities:	(Please tick all that apply)
Hearing (e.g. deaf, partially deaf or hard of hearing)	2
Vision (e.g. blind or fractional/partial sight. Does not include people whose visual problems can be corrected by glasses/contact lenses)	1
Speech (e.g. impairments that can cause communication problems)	1
Mobility (e.g. wheelchair user, artificial lower limb(s), walking aids, rheumatism or arthritis)	3
Physical co-ordination (e.g. manual dexterity, muscular control, cerebral palsy)	1
Reduced physical capacity (e.g. inability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects, debilitating pain& lack of strength, breath, energy or stamina, asthma, angina or diabetes)	1
Severe disfigurement	0
Learning difficulties (such as dyslexia)	2
Mental illness (substantial & lasting more than a year, e.g. severe depression or psychosis)	3
Prefer not to say	1
Total respondents	6

Faith		
Buddhist	1	2%
Christian	17	32%
Hindu	1	2%
Jewish	6	11%
Muslim	1	2%
Sikh	0	0%
No religion	6	11%
Other Faith	0	0%
Prefer not to say	10	19%
Not answered	11	21%
Total	53	100%

Pregnancy and maternity		
Pregnant	0	0%
On maternity leave	0	0%
Neither	15	28%
Prefer not to say	5	9%
Not answered	33	62%
Total	53	100%

Sexual orientation		
Bisexual	2	4%
Gay or Lesbian	2	4%
Straight or heterosexual	26	49%
Other sexual orientation	0	0%
Prefer not to say	9	17%
Not answered	14	26%
Total	53	100%

Marital Status		
Never married and never registered a civil partnership	7	13%
Married/ in a registered civil partnership	18	34%
Separated, but still legally married/ in a civil partnership	2	4%
Divorced/ legally dissolved civil partnership	4	8%
Widowed/ surviving partner from civil partnership	2	4%
Prefer not to say	9	17%
Not answered	11	21%
Total	53	100%

2.5 Calculating and reporting on results

- the results for each question are based on “valid responses”, i.e., all those providing an answer (this may or may not be the same as the total sample) unless otherwise specified. The base size may therefore vary from question to question.
- where percentages do not add up to 100, this may be due to rounding, or the question is multi-coded - i.e., respondents could give more than one answer. The open-ended questions are multi-coded, as respondents could write in more than one comment, and therefore the tables on verbatim comments add up to more than 100%.
- all open-ended responses have been classified based on the main themes arising from the comments, so that they can be summarised. It should also be noted that the responses were very varied. However, there were several common themes that were evident, and the most common themes have been summarised in this report.

3. RESULTS IN DETAIL:

3.1 Awareness of council's current committee model of governance arrangements

Respondents were asked 'Before today, were you aware of the council's current committee model of governance arrangements that are in operation?'

Table 3 below shows that:

- two-thirds of respondents (66%) were either fully (23%) or partly (43%) aware of the council's current committee model of governance arrangements in operation.
- a third (34%) of respondents were not aware of the council's current committee model of governance arrangements that are in operation.

Table 3: Awareness of current committee arrangements

Before today, were you aware of the council's current committee model of governance arrangements that are in operation?	%	#
Yes, fully	23%	12
Yes, partly	43%	23
No	34%	18
Number of respondents who completed this question		53

3.2 Ease to understand each aspect of the current council's decision-making process

Respondents were asked to indicate how easy it is to understand each aspect of the current council's decision-making process:

Table 4 below shows that:

- for each aspect of the current council's decision-making process, more respondents felt that the ease of understanding was difficult compared to those who felt it was easy, or that they didn't know enough to give a view.

Table 4: Respondents level of understanding of the council's decision-making process

	Very easy		Fairly easy		Fairly difficult		Very difficult		Don't know enough to give a view	
How to get involved with the Council's decision-making meetings (for example Council, Committee or Planning meetings)	9%	5	20%	11	26%	14	30%	16	13%	7
How current decisions are made	13%	7	13%	7	37%	20	22%	12	13%	7
How residents' views and input are taken into account in the council decision making process	13%	7	11%	6	22%	12	39%	21	13%	7
How to submit a Petition	14%	7	28%	14	22%	11	24%	12	12%	6
How to submit a request to speak at a decision-making meeting	11%	6	18%	10	24%	13	32%	17	13%	7

3.3 Further comments on Ease to understand each aspect of the council's current decision-making process

Respondents were also asked if they had any comments to make about the ease to understand each aspect of the council's current decision-making process. Of those who responded to the consultation, 27 out of 53 gave a response to this question.

The responses to this question were varied and the most common themes, with a response of four comments or more, have been summarised below. Percentages are based on those who answered this question. Further details of the type comments received are provided in table 5.

The six most common themes, accounting for over 80% of the comments, include:

- not being convinced the council is committed to listening and acting on public participation (7/26%)
- the Council being proactive in information sharing and civic education (6/22%)
- difficulty of finding things online (5/19%)
- complexity of submitting a question (4/15%)
- lack of remote attendance options (2/7%)
- the high petition threshold (2/7%)

Table 5: Comments on the Ease to understand each aspect of the council’s current decision-making process

Theme and verbatim comments received	Number of comments
Number of respondents who completed this question	27
Number of respondents who did not answer this question	26
Total Base	53
Total number of comments	31
	Number of comments
Comments about the need for the council to be more proactive in information sharing and civic education: no communications at all about the process/ not enough information shared with residents, the council has duty to educate its residents rather than make it difficult, lots of rather complex processes/ not enough information on what’s happening/ nobody makes it clear what the council does, or how they do it. There is little publicity of any petitions to the council, and it's hard to find out how to even start one/ I put ‘fairly difficult’ because I feel it should be more in our face as residents.	6
Comments about not being convinced the council is committed to listening and acting on public participation: My neighbours and I try to engage with the Council on the problems on our road for years. They smile and nod and let Capita make irrational decisions on highways and other infrastructure. It is an insult to the democratic process/ The feeling is that the Council is just ticking boxes and does not really care what residents think. It makes people wonder why they should bother is there input and their time and their investment in the process is ignored so many times/ There is no clarity about how views and input are taken into account/ Decisions have already been made so what is the point, resident views don't count/ I have been trying to get the council to put a new policy into effect on Play Streets but it is proving very difficult to get answers	5
Comments about the difficulty of finding things online: When I tried to contact the council it was difficult to find/ it is not easy to find information, & any information is long winded and complex/ the website is pretty poor and the language used is jargon ridden/ I can never find anything on Barnet website. I always ask my councillor, who is helpful & always has time for people/ I have only ever found out about committees etc if I’ve gone on a bit of a research-a-thon on the council website	5
Comments about complexity of submitting a question: submitting a question is hard /It's not easy to understand how to ask a question at a committee meeting. In the documents for the committee agendas it explains you can ask a question, but it doesn't explain everything. It doesn't mention that the question must relate to an agenda item and you need to provide a street address. There is no forum for members of the public to raise issues that the council may not have thought about / the council website is fairly vague on how to get involved, and there are difficult rules to work around when submitting a petition or question (e.g. incl a postcode) / in the consultation document there is no detail on how to actually do any of the current working practices or how it will be done in the future	4

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Theme and verbatim comments received	Number of comments
Comments about the previous administrations' lack of commitment to listening and acting on public participation: As public had previously not been allowed to participate in council's decision-making processes so we are not aware of how to lodge a petition for example. The previous council ignored any of our comments as well and we were shut out of the process/ It is all "fairly easy" because whatever procedure exists, the Tories ignored those	2
Comments about lack of remote attendance options: Having to be in person is not convenient / no opportunities for online participation	2
Comments about the high petition threshold: number of people for a petition is quite high/ I was previously involved with a petition which collected around 1,000 signatures but the time elapsed and we were never allowed to present the petition. Wish we could have been allowed with a lower threshold and the petition not deleted after a time limit.	2
Comments about speaking time in planning meetings: Applicant can talk for 3 minutes, supporter has 3 minutes, and objector has 3 minutes. If there isn't a supporter, objectors can use the supporter's time. This position is written differently and in conflicting ways in two different places online here & here , and the consultation document. It is unfair, undemocratic, and partial to allow those in favour to have double the time of the objectors. Other boroughs give equal time to both sides, e.g. Camden & Hackney	1
Comments about notice time: Insufficient time for a notice to be posted to enable a person who wishes to speak at a meeting	1
Comments about data protection concerns: all surveys ask for either DOB, or post code or other personal data- people who are frightened to give data because they are worried about scams, are victims of domestic violence, are homeless or worried about other safety issues cannot take part. You can ask for age range, you can ask for the Ward rather than post code or nearest landmark - or 'don't want to answer this - you need is email address or of an 'email buddy'	1
Comments about being newly interested: now that Mill Hill is being overdeveloped esp. the Ridgeway where I live, I need to know more	1
Comments about time commitment to participate: The amount of time required to invest in any participation is a barrier. We have lives and families and jobs and care responsibilities, etc, etc and we have very little time to invest, never mind time to waste.	1

3.4 Recent attendance of council committee meetings

Respondents were asked 'Have you attended a council committee meeting in the last twelve months?'

Table 6 below shows that:

- over a third of respondents (37%) had attended a council committee meeting in the previous twelve months
- almost two-thirds (62%) of respondents had not attended a council committee meeting in the previous twelve months

Table 6: Proportion of respondents who have attended a council meeting recently

Have you attended a council committee meeting in the last twelve months?	%	Base
Yes	37%	20
No	62%	33
Number of respondents who completed this question		53

3.5 The main reasons why you have not attended a council committee meeting?

Respondents who answered 'no' to the were asked 'Looking at the list below, please indicate the main reasons why you have not attended a council committee meeting?'

Table 7 below shows that:

- almost half of respondents (42%) did not know when and where the meetings were held
- a third of respondents (33%) did not know they could attend a council meeting
- 15% of respondents felt the meetings were at an Inconvenient time,
- 15% of respondents felt they lacked time
- 12% of respondents felt it was an inconvenient location

Table 7: Respondents reasons for not attending a council meeting

Looking at the list below, please indicate the main reasons why you have not attended a council committee meeting?	Base
I did not know when and where the meetings were held	14
I did not know I could attend a council meeting	11
Inconvenient time	5
Lack of time	5
Inconvenient location	4
Issues considered not relevant to me	2
The meetings are not in an accessible format that suits my needs	2
Not interested	0
Other (please explain why you have not attended a council meeting))	6
You have to trawl site to find details	1
Meetings I wanted to go to were adjourned	1
my age, health and effort needed	1
Nervous about public speaking	1
So few residents are permitted to speak, then why bother showing up?	1
Personal circumstances	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	33

3.6 Barriers that make it difficult to participate in council Committee Meetings

Respondents were asked 'When you attended are there any barriers that make it difficult to participate in council Committee Meetings?'

Table 8 below shows that the top these barriers were hearing, rude staff and formality:

- a third (33%) of respondents experienced a problem hearing committee members at council committee meetings
- one fifth (20%) of respondents experienced rude council staff
- 13% of respondents felt the over formality of the meetings was a barrier to participation

Table 8: Barriers to participation in council Committee Meetings

When you attended are there any barriers that make it difficult to participate in council Committee Meetings?	#
Cannot hear the remarks of Committee members or the Chairman/ Since in-person meetings resumed it has become very difficult to hear what is said on-line, let alone participate/ It was sometimes difficult to hear some members as we were in a different part of the room and microphones weren't sufficiently working. Microphone didn't work, was passed a member's/ Video is available now but unreliable and the sound did not work. Microphones are unreliable and my friend is hard of hearing and was unable to hear anything going on in the meeting.	5
Rude council staff/ Council staff were rude & dismissive of resident views / Rude council staff denied my views	3
There is too much formality & hierarchy in the process/ Committee formality can make it feel difficult for some to participate - a warm welcome and support from an officer might help more do it	2
We sit at the other end of a meeting room and are not allowed to say anything unless we have a question submitted. We have to listen to councillors talking at length and are not allowed to express opinions. Councill officers make replies to councillor questions which we cannot comment on. It is very poor-quality engagement & not participatory.	1
No opportunity to speak	1
Activists in the audience shouting and heckling	1
Not knowing when the agenda will be published. (Could we register to be emailed when an agenda for a certain committee is available?) Very short timeframe to see the agenda of each meeting& submit a question means deadline missed. (Could agenda be published earlier?) Submission rules are not obvious and could be linked more clearly. Needing to attend the meeting to get an answer. I would like to submit a question& receive a written answer on the meeting minutes.	1
Not enough time to submit questions, not enough time for comments	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	15

3.7 Current ways respondents find out about council committee meetings

Respondents were asked ‘How do you CURRENTLY find out about council committee meetings that are happening and what decisions are being made at those meetings?’

Table 9 below shows that:

- over three-quarters (80%) of respondents used the Council website to find out about council committee meetings
- half (50%) of respondents found out about council committee meetings via word of mouth, including via neighbours and local councillors
- a quarter of respondents received notification by email (10%), or Barnet First Resident Council e-newsletter (15%)
- one (5%) respondent had subscribed to Committee Email updates whilst one (5%) was informed via Barnet First Paper Resident Council Magazine
- no respondent indicated that they saw either a press release or Hendon Town Hall Noticeboard.
- of other ways respondents found out about council committee meetings, two respondents (10%) indicated they were informed via Barnet Together Alliance emails

Table 9: How respondents find out about council committee meetings

How do you CURRENTLY find out about council committee meetings that are happening and what decisions are being made at those meetings?	#
Council website	16
Word of Mouth (incl. Local councillors and neighbours)	10
Social media	3
Barnet First Resident Council E Newsletter	3
E mail	2
Barnet First Paper Resident Council Magazine	1
Subscribe to Committee Email updates	1
Press release	0
Hendon Townhall Notice board	0
Other (please specify)	2
Barnet Together Alliance emails	2
Number of respondents who completed this question	20

3.8 Respondents preference for finding out about council committee meetings

Respondents were asked 'How would you PREFER to find out what council committee meetings are happening and what decisions are being made at those meetings?'

Table 10 below shows that:

- almost two-thirds of respondents preferred to be informed by email with almost half (42%) wanting to subscribe to Committee email updates, and a similar proportion (40%) via Barnet First Resident Council E Newsletter
- almost half of respondents (48%) had a preference to find out via the Council website, and (44%) via social media
- a quarter (25%) of respondents had a preference to find out what committee meetings are happening& what decisions via Barnet First Paper Resident Council Magazine
- a few had a preference to be informed via press release (15%), word of mouth (12%) or Hendon Town Hall notice board (8%)
- there were also additional preferences of via GP surgeries and public libraires, and the local press.
- one respondent had a preference that anyone who has commented on an application should be automatically notified, and that applicant, objectors and supporters should be notified on the same day about forthcoming meetings.

Table 10: Respondents preference to find out about council committee meetings

How would you PREFER to find out what council committee meetings are happening and what decisions are being made at those meetings?	#
Email	31
Council website	25
Social media	23
Subscribe to Committee Email updates	22
Barnet First Resident Council E Newsletter	21
Barnet First Paper Resident Council Magazine	13
Press release	8
Word of Mouth (incl. Local councillors and neighbours)	6
Hendon Townhall Notice board	4
Other (please specify)	4
Everyone who has commented on an application should be notified come to committee unless you untick a box not to be. Applicant, objectors & supporters should be told on same day about forthcoming meetings.	1
Local press	1
Noticeboards in Town Hall, GP Surgeries and Public Libraries	1
The average resident does not have time to look around all the various online platforms looking for information every few days. Anything where interested residents can subscribe and get information about upcoming meetings and topics to be discussed, would really help	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	52

4 EXPERIENCE OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE PARTICIPATION

4.1 Experience of different methods of participation

4.1.1 Level of awareness and future intention to use method of participation

Respondents were asked ‘Looking at the ways that you can currently get involved, please indicate if: a) before today you are aware of these types of ways to participate. b) you think you will use these methods in the future to participate’

Table 11 below shows that:

- almost three quarters of respondents (58%) were aware of Submitting or signing a Petition and almost half (44%) intend to use this method in the future
- just under half of respondents (46%) were aware of being able to participate by submitting Public Questions or Comments at committee meetings, and around half (48% and 54% respectively) plan to use this method of participation in the future.
- over two-fifths (42%) of respondents were aware of raising an issues at Area Committees as a method and almost half (48%) intend to use in the future
- two-fifths (40%) of respondents were aware Speaking at Planning Committees as a method of participation, and almost half (44%) intend to use in the future
- less than a third of respondents (29%) were aware of Speaking on Asset of Community Value listings as a method of participation, and almost half (44%) intend to use in the future
- over a third (35%) of respondents were aware of Speaking on Applications for Area Committee Funding as a method, and over a third (38%) intend to in the future
- 15 % of respondents were not aware of any of these methods of participation, and only three respondents (6%) do not intend to participate in in the future

Table 11: Level of awareness and future intention to use method of participation

Looking at the ways that you can currently get involved, please indicate if: a) before today you are aware of these types of ways to participate. b) you think you will use these methods in the future to participate	I am already aware of this way to participate in the council decision making process	I will use this method in the future
Submitting or signing a Petition	58% 28	44% 21
Submitting Public Questions at committee meetings	46% 22	54% 26
Submitting Public Comments at committee meetings	46% 22	48% 23
Raising an issue at Area Committees	42% 20	48% 23
Speaking at Planning Committees	40% 19	44% 21
Speaking on Asset of Community Value listings	29% 14	44% 21
Speaking on Applications for Area Committee Funding	35% 17	38% 18
Not aware of any of these	15% 7	10% 5
Do not intend to participate in any of these methods in the future	10% 5	6% 3

4.1.2 Reasons why respondents do not intend to use any of these methods to participate in the future:

Respondents were asked ‘If you do not intend to use any of these methods to participate in the future, please say why:’

Table 12 below shows that:

- Two respondents felt that whilst the methods of participation seemed sensible, at this moment they did not have intention to participate, but felt the opportunity should be advertised more and communication better via a regular email update.
- Three other respondents who did not feel they would use these methods in the future had also tried to use in the past and had not had positive experiences.
- One respondent felt it was better to contact their councillor directly

Table 12: Why respondents do not intend to use these methods in the future

If you do not intend to use any of these methods to participate in the future, please say why:	Base
I was not aware that the general public was/is able to participate and ask to speak at many of the above options. It would be great if these opportunities were advertised more/ They all seem eminently sensible. My challenge has been partly not having anything that I really wanted to say, and partly not knowing of the systems in place. If I had regular email updates (rather than post) it would make a big difference.	2
I have used all these methods. The Council doesn't listen, so why do you think it will change in the future?	1
It is bureaucratic and cumbersome	1
Better to contact councillors directly	1
Submitted comments go to officers but are not presented at the meetings. They may be effective but I prefer to ask a question and face them and let them respond before the business of the meeting. I do not intend to submit petitions soon because it is a lot of work and the council do not engage with them in my experience, even when we got 300,000 to save Sweets Way. Area committees are in my experience very difficult and not worth the effort.	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	6

4.2 Experience with area committees

4.2.1 Whether respondents had previously raised an issue at an Area Committee

Respondents were asked ‘Have you previously raised an issue at an Area Committee?’

Table 13 below shows that:

- Over a quarter (13) of respondents had previously raised an issue at an Area Committee, almost three-quarters (36) hadn’t

Table 13: Have respondents previously raised an issue at an Area Committee

Have you previously raised an issue at an Area Committee?	#
Yes	13
No	36
Number of respondents who completed this question	49

4.2.2 Views on current arrangements on how to raise an issue at an Area Committee

Respondents who had previously raised an issue at an Area Committee were then asked, ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the current arrangements the current arrangements on how to raise an issue at an Area Committee?’

Table 14 below shows that:

- Almost a third of respondents (31%) agreed that area committees’ current rules on raising an issue make it easy to participate, are easy to follow, are in an accessible format, and are transparent
- However, over two-third (69%) disagreed that they were easy to follow and transparent, and almost two-thirds (62%) that the current rules make it easy to participate.
- A third of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the current arrangements are in an accessible format that meets my needs, with over a third (38%) disagreeing.

Table 14: Respondents level of agreement or disagree on Area committee access

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the current arrangements the current arrangements on how to raise an issue at an Area Committee?	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Not sure/ Don’t know
The current rules on raising an issue at Area Committees make it easy to participate	4	1	8	0
The current arrangements on raising an issue at Area Committees are easy to follow	4	0	9	0
The current arrangements on raising an issue at Area Committees are in an accessible format that meets my needs	4	4	5	0
The current arrangements on raising an issue at Area Committees are transparent	4	0	9	0
Number of respondents who completed this question				13

4.2.3 Why respondents disagree with any of the previous statements on Area Committees and what improvements they would like to see:

Respondents were asked 'If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'

Table 15 below shows that:

- All those who responded felt it was a challenge

Table 15: Why respondents disagree with the statements on Area Committees

If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see	#
It's a farce. No one has done anything about the issues my neighbours and I have raised in this format repeatedly.	1
It is possible to understand but not easy	1
I once tried to raise something at area committee and it was out of the remit so was not allowed, so I never tried again. I have more constructive things to do with my time, in the local community.	1
I believe the responsiveness of council officers is a concern. As is the dominance of a few individuals who talk loudest and therefore no one else wants to talk. There needs more outreach. Stop making it all about us coming to you. Actually engage residents in schools and towns and public spaces. Let's see you other than at election time.	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	4

4.3 Experience of submitting a petition

4.3.1 Whether respondents previously submitted a petition

Respondents were asked 'Have you previously submitted or signed a Petition that has been submitted to the council?'

Table 16 below shows that:

- Half of respondents (50%) had not submitted a Petition or signed a petition that was submitted to the council.
- A third of respondents (35%) had signed a petition only
- A seventh of respondents (15%) had submitted a Petition to the council

Table 16: Proportion of respondents who submitted or signed a Petition

Have you previously submitted or signed a Petition that has been submitted to the council?	#
Yes, submitted a Petition to the council	7
Yes, submitted a Petition, and signed a petition that was submitted to the council	3
Yes, signed a Petition only that was submitted to the council	17
No, not submitted a Petition or signed a petition that was submitted to the council	24
Number of respondents who completed this question	48

4.3.2 Respondents level of satisfaction from their experience of petitions

Respondents were asked 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your experience of petitions?'

Table 17 below shows that:

- Whilst over a third of respondents felt the current arrangements on petitions are easy to follow, almost half (43%) did not.
- Similarly, less than a third (30%) of respondents agreed that the current arrangements are transparent and that they are in an accessible format that meets the respondents needs, almost half (43% and 39%) respectively disagree.
- Less than a quarter (22%) of respondents agreed that signed submitted petitions to the council, are adequately considered and decided on, with almost a third (30%) disagreeing and almost a third (30%) neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Table 17: Respondents satisfaction from their experience submitting a petition

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the current arrangements the current arrangements on how to raise an issue at an Area Committee?	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Not sure/ Don't know
Current arrangements on petitions are easy to follow	8	2	10	3
Current arrangements on petitions are transparent	7	2	10	4
The current arrangements on petitions are in an accessible format that meets my needs	7	4	9	3
Signed submitted petitions to the council, are adequately considered and decided on	5	7	7	4
Number of respondents who completed this question				23

4.3.3 Why respondents disagree with the previous statements on submitting a petition

Respondents were asked 'If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'

Table 18 below shows that:

- Two of the respondents did not feel the Council took petitions seriously
- One respondent felt they could not participate as it had to be signed online
- One respondent suggested results should be declared in Barnet's publicity media
- One respondent felt that for planning decisions the was a bias to the developer
- One respondent ask that the word limit be extended for the text of petitions

Table 18: Why respondents disagree with the statements on Petitions

If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'	#
The Council doesn't take petition's seriously/ Petitions are always ignored	2
I signed a petition that was organised by a group. They too needed me to be "DIGITAL" to the point that I am not.	1
For planning decisions, it seems the only consideration is the developer	1
Petition's results should be declared in Barnet's publicity media	1
Not sure what happens when petitions are received and if they make any difference	1
Could I ask that the word limit be extended for the text of petitions	1

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Number of respondents who completed this question	7
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4.4 Experience of submitting a question to a Council Committee

4.4.1 Whether respondents have previously submitted a question to a Council Committee

Respondents were asked 'Have you previously submitted a public question to a Council Committee?'

Table 19 below shows that:

- A third of respondents had submitted a public question to a Council Committee whilst two-thirds hadn't.

Table 19: Respondents who have submitted a question to a Council Committee

Have you attended a council committee meeting in the last twelve months?	#
Yes	16
No	33
Number of respondents who completed this question	49

4.4.2 Respondents satisfaction from their experience submitting a question to a Council Committee

Respondents were asked 'To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the current arrangements on how to submit a public question?'

Table 20 below shows that:

- Whilst around a quarter (27%) of respondents felt that the current arrangements for submitting public questions are transparent, in an accessible format that met their needs and adequately considered and decided on, over half (at least 53%) disagreed.
- Only a fifth (20%) of respondents agreed that the current arrangements on petitions are easy to follow, two-thirds of respondents (67%) disagreed.

Table 20: Respondents satisfaction from their experience submitting a question

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the current arrangements on how to submit a public question?	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Not sure/ Don't know
The current rules for public questions make it easy to participate at Committee Meetings	3	1	10	1
The current arrangements for submitting public questions are easy to follow	4	1	9	1
Current arrangements for submitting public questions are in an accessible format that meets my needs	4	2	8	1
The current arrangements for submitting public questions are transparent	4	2	8	1
Number of respondents who completed this question				15

4.4.3 Why respondents disagree with statements on submitting a question to a Council Committee

Respondents were asked 'If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'

Table 21 below provide the details that show that Respondents felt:

- Nobody listens and there is too much cronyism towards affluent parts of the Borough

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- The council's response to feedback has to be better designed.
- Finding the rules about submitting a question is not easy
- it is easy to send too many words or miss your postcode so the question gets rejected.
- Having to be at a council meeting is not convenient
- Only possible with the help of local councillor
- The deadlines are too strict.
- It's a rather untransparent and unclear

Table 21: Why respondents disagree with the statements on Petitions

If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'	#
Nobody listens and there is too much cronyism towards affluent parts of the Borough	1
How you collect data and how you evaluate data is political. If you want to know of wider opinions, the council's response to feedback has to be better designed.	1
Finding the rules about submitting a question is not easy and it is easy to send too many words or miss something out like postcode so the question gets rejected. Having to be at a council meeting is not convenient as I live in New Barnet and are reliant on public transport to get to meetings in Hendon.	1
These are the main problems for me: - The 'Ask a public question' page on Barnet's website is poorly written and has grammatical errors - In the documents for the committee agendas it explains you can ask a question and how to do this but it doesn't explain everything. For example, it doesn't mention that the question must relate to an agenda item and you need to provide a street address. This makes it very hard to understand how to ask questions at committee meetings. - You have to download and read a pdf that explains how to ask questions at council meetings. This makes it difficult to understand how to ask a question. The process should be clearly explained on the council website without needing to download a document	1
Only possible with the help of local councillor	1
The deadlines are too strict. I once met a member of the public who showed up to ask a question but did not realise he had missed a deadline, over a week earlier. The deadline is a few moments after masses of agenda papers are to be published and read over. All questions must relate to the agenda which means council can avoid answering questions by not having it included in the agenda.	1
It's a rather un transparent and unclear	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	7

4.5 Experience of submitting a comment to a Council Committee

4.5.1 Whether respondents have previously submitted a comment to a Council Committee

Respondents were asked 'Have you previously submitted a public comment to a Council Committee?'

Table 22 below shows that:

- Less than a fifth (19%) of respondents had submitted a comment to a Council Committee, with over 80% hadn't.

Table 22: Respondents who have submitted a question to a Council Committee

Have you attended a council committee meeting in the last twelve months?	#
Yes	9
No	38
Number of respondents who completed this question	47

4.5.2 Respondents satisfaction from their experience submitting a comment to a Council Committee

Respondents were asked ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the current arrangements on how to submit a public question?’

Table 23 below shows that:

- Whilst around a quarter (27%) of respondents felt that the current arrangements for submitting public comment are transparent and in an accessible format that met their needs over a third (36%) disagreed.
- With around a quarter (27%) of respondent feeling current arrangements on petitions are easy to follow, almost two-thirds (64%) disagreed
- Less than a fifth (18%) of respondents agreed that the current rules for public comment make it easy to participate at Committee Meetings, over half (55%) disagreed.

Table 23: Respondents satisfaction from their experience submitting a comment

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the current arrangements on how to submit a public question?	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree		
The current rules for public comment make it easy to participate at Committee Meetings	2	2	6		1
The current arrangements for submitting public comments are easy to follow	3	0	7		1
Current arrangements for submitting public comments are in an accessible format that meets my needs	3	3	4		1
The current arrangements for submitting public comments are transparent	3	2	4		2
Number of respondents who completed this question					15

4.5.3 Why respondents disagree with statements on submitting a comment to a Council Committee

Respondents were asked ‘If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see’

Table 24 below provide the details that show that Respondents felt:

- The time given to applicant plus supporter is unfair as not matched for objector
- Councillors do (not) treat all parts of the borough equally
- Their comment didn’t get considered
- no idea of how a member of the public could participate

Table 24: Why respondents disagree with the statements on submitting a comment to a Council Committee

If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'	#
the actual position on speaking at planning meetings seems to be that Applicant can talk for three minutes, supporter has three minutes and objector has three minutes (thus allowing those in support to have double the time of those objecting). If there isn't a supporter, objectors can use the supporter's time. This position is written differently and in conflicting ways in two different places online	
It is clearly unfair, undemocratic and impartial to allow those in favour of the application (the applicant and supporter) to have double the time of the objectors and overly favours the applicant. It is clearly also very different from how other boroughs run their meetings, see attached re Camden and Hackney by way of example, both are clear that equal time is given to both sides of the debate,	1
Like I said your councillors do (not) treat all parts of the borough equally	1
The comment I submitted went to officers and did not get considered by the councillors and public in the meeting or on the website.	1
I have had no idea of any way that a member of the public could participate	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	4

4.6 Experience of previously speaking at a Council Committee

4.6.1 Whether respondents have previously spoken Committee meetings

Respondents were asked 'Have you previously spoken at any of these types of committee meetings?'

Table 25 below shows that:

- Whilst five respondents had previously spoken at Planning Committee meetings, and three respondents had spoken at Funding Applications at Area Committee meetings, only one had spoken at Assets of Community Value Listings at council meetings.

Table 25: Council Committee meetings respondents have you previously spoken at

Have you previously spoken at any of these types of committee meetings?	Yes
Planning Committee meetings	5
Assets of Community Value Listings at council meetings	1
Funding Applications at Area Committee meetings	3
Number of respondents who completed this question	7

4.6.2 Respondents satisfaction from their experience speaking at Committee meetings

Respondents were asked ‘To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about speaking at these committees?’

Table 26 below shows that:

- Only two respondents agreed that it is easy to get an opportunity to speak at Planning Committee meetings, with 6 disagreeing.
- Only one respondent (10%) agreed that it is easy to get an opportunity to speak at Assets of Community meetings, with 40% disagreeing, and half (50%) not sure
- No respondents (0%) agreed that it is easy to get an opportunity to speak at Funding Applications at Area Committee meetings, with 30% disagreeing and 60% not sure

Table 26: Respondents satisfaction from their experience submitting a comment

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements on the current arrangements on how to submit a public question?	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Not sure/ Don't know
It is easy to get an opportunity to speak at Planning Committee meetings	2	0	6	2
It is easy to get an opportunity to speak at Assets of Community meetings	1	0	4	5
It is easy to get an opportunity speak at Funding Applications at Area Committee meetings	0	1	3	6
Number of respondents who completed this question				10

4.6.3 Why respondents disagree with statements on submitting a comment to a Council Committee

Respondents were asked ‘If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see’

Table 27 below provide the details that show that Respondents felt:

- The time given to applicant plus supporter is unfair as not matched for objector
- Councillors do (not) treat all parts of the borough equally
- Their comment didn't get considered
- no idea of how a member of the public could participate

Table 27: Why respondents disagree with the statements on submitting a comment to a Council Committee

If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'	#
<p>the actual position on speaking at planning meetings seems to be that Applicant can talk for three minutes, supporter has three minutes and objector has three minutes (thus allowing those in support to have double the time of those objecting). If there isn't a supporter, objectors can use the supporter's time. This position is written differently and in conflicting ways in two different places online</p> <p>It is clearly unfair, undemocratic and impartial to allow those in favour of the application (the applicant and supporter) to have double the time of the objectors and overly favours the applicant. It is clearly also very different from how other boroughs run their meetings, see attached re Camden and Hackney by way of example, both are clear that equal time is given to both sides of the debate,</p>	1
Too much bureaucracy and elitism in the process. You need to educate some of your privately educated Councillors to respect people from all walks of life	1
Restriction of speakers against an application to one if there is anyone speaking in favour is unfair, in that the Council officer and the applicant him/herself have a separate opportunity to put their case	1
No prior knowledge of how anyone could participate	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	4

4.7 Any other comments about accessibility and speaking at these types of committee meetings?
 Respondents were asked ‘Do you have any other comments about accessibility and speaking at these types of committee meetings?’

Table 28 below provide the details that show that Respondents felt:

Table 28: Why respondents disagree with the statements on submitting a comment to a Council Committee

If you disagree with any of these statements, please say why and what improvements you would like to see'	#
You need a major overhaul of your processes. It is not transparent or democratic	1
Very rule bound	1
I attended a lively planning committee meeting considering the Colindale regeneration latest phase and North London Business Park site. Colindale is a working-class community under-represented by Labour. Brunswick Park residents packed the meeting and would not shut up. They booed the speaker in favour of the application, a priest, and heckled him. Their behaviour suggested had the councillors, any of them, not done exactly what they want, there would have been possible civil unrest in the council committee room. As it happened, security were not called and the chair took no action to call out this entitled and rude behaviour. This shows that the polite Colindale resident was not able to make his voice heard effectively, while those with the loudest voices, due to their privilege, do get heard in Barnet. Colindale residents work. They have children and caring responsibilities. So the bone idle residents of middle class areas get their way while Colindale gets xxxx on.	1
Number of respondents who completed this question	3