

7) Meeting Processes

The legal requirements for Council meetings are set down in the Local Government Act 2002 and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA).

All Council and committee meetings must be open to the public unless there is reason to consider some item in a 'public excluded' session of the committee or Council. Although meetings are open to the public, members of the public do not have speaking rights unless prior arrangements are made with council. This can be arranged by speaking with Democratic Services at least one full working day before the meeting.

LGOIMA contains a list of the circumstances where councils may consider items with members of the public excluded from the meeting (these circumstances generally relate to protection of personal privacy, professionally privileged or commercially sensitive information, and the maintenance of public health, safety and order). The council agenda is a public document, although parts may be withheld if the public excluded circumstances apply to those parts.

The Mayor or committee chair is responsible for maintaining order at meetings and may, at his or her discretion, order the removal of any member of the public for disorderly conduct, or remove any member of Council who does not comply with standing orders.

Minutes of meetings must be kept as evidence of the proceedings of the meeting. These must be made publicly available, subject to the provisions of LGOIMA.

For an ordinary meeting of Council, at least 14 days notice of the time and place of the meeting must be given. Extraordinary meetings generally can be called on 3 working days notice or 24 hours notice in some circumstances.

During meetings the Mayor and councillors must follow standing orders (a set of procedures for conducting meetings). The Council may suspend standing orders by a vote of 75 per cent of the members present.

(LGOIMA 1987; LGA 2002)