

Questions/Petitions/Speaking at Council Meetings

The aim of this process is to give members of the public the opportunity to raise issues of concern in the Lancaster District or to speak about an item on the Council agenda.

Who can you ask?

At ordinary meetings of the Council, you may ask questions of Members of the Cabinet, the Chairman of a Committee or the Chairman of an Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

What can you ask?

You can ask any question as long as it relates to local issues and affects the Lancaster District.

What can't you ask?

The Chief Executive may reject a question if it:

- a) Is not about a matter that Lancaster City Council is responsible for or doesn't affect the District;
- b) Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
- c) Refers to applications for or objections to planning permission or any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council.
- d) Is substantially the same question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past 6 months; or
- e) Concerns confidential or exempt information.

If your question is rejected you will be told and given the reason why.

Addressing the Council

A registered elector or council tax payer living within the area of Lancaster City Council may present a petition or address if it is

- about a item on the agenda for the meeting; or
- relevant to matters that the City Council is responsible for: or
- it affects the Lancaster District

This excludes petitions regarding planning permission and any licence, notice or order issued, served or made by the Council.

Giving Notice

If you want to ask a question at a meeting, to address Council or to present a petition, you will need to give notice. You can do this by delivering the question or wording of your address in writing or by e-mail to the Chief Executive (contact details below) no later than 12 noon, 3 working days before the day of the meeting. If you are presenting a petition you must also submit the wording of your petition.

**Chief Executive
Lancaster City Council
Town Hall
Dalton Square
Lancaster
LA1 1JP**

Email: chiefexecutive@lancaster.gov.uk

In each case, please give your name and address and, if you want to ask a question, you must name

the Member of Cabinet or Chairman you want to ask the question of.

Late requests to speak will not be considered.

If you are unable to be present at the meeting to ask your question, you may request that the Chairman ask the question on your behalf. The Chairman may ask the question on your behalf, indicate that a written reply will be given or decide, in your absence, that the question will not be dealt with.

At any one meeting no person may submit more than **one** question and no more than two questions may be asked on behalf of one organisation.

All questions received are recorded and are open to public inspection and the question is immediately sent to the Member to whom it is to be put.

On the day of the meeting - Questions

1. You must arrive at the meeting at least 15 minutes before the start, and make yourself known to the Democratic Support Officer present.
2. Questions will be asked in the order that they were received, although the Chairman may group similar questions together.
3. When it is time to ask your question, the Chairman will invite you to put the question to the Member. There is a time limit of 2 minutes to ask your question.
4. Unless the Chairman decides otherwise, no discussion will take place on any question.

Supplementary Question

5. You may also ask one supplementary question without notice to the Member that has answered your original question.
6. The supplementary question also has a time limit of 2 minutes and must arise directly from the original question.

Response

7. The response to your question will have a time limit of 3 minutes.
8. Some questions can not be answered during the meeting, either because of lack of time or non-attendance of the Member to whom the question was asked. These questions will be answered in writing.

Public question time at Council meetings should not exceed 30 minutes in duration.

On the day of the meeting – Petition/Address

1. Petitions and addresses will also be presented in the order they are received.
2. You will be given the opportunity to present your petition or address. You will have a 5 minute time limit to do so. What is said must relate to the matter indicated when requesting to speak.
3. Following your address/petition the appropriate Councillor will be given the opportunity to respond for no more than 5 minutes.

4. Your address may be referred to the next convenient meeting of the relevant Council body if deemed necessary.
5. Your petition may trigger a debate at Council, depending on the number of signatures. Please contact the Democratic Service Manager on 01524 582057 for further details of the Council's Petitions Scheme.

Copies of this leaflet can be obtained by calling at Lancaster and Morecambe Town Halls, or by telephoning Democratic Services on (01524) 582096.

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and in other languages. Please contact Democratic Services on 01524 582096 for more details or if you have any particular needs to allow you to participate in the event.



Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Democratic Services
Lancaster Town Hall
Lancaster LA1 1PJ

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A Guide for the Public

Democratic Services
Lancaster City Council