

Guidance on the 'Public Question Time' scheme

Under the 'Public Question Time' scheme, any member of the public may ask a question, present a petition or make a statement on any matter relating to the business of the Broads Authority or its committees. This guidance explains how to do it.

Please note that if you want to speak to our Planning Committee as an applicant or objector to a development proposal, you will need to refer to our separate 'Public speaking at Planning Committee' arrangements. For more information, visit our planning pages at www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/committees/planning-committee.

How do I submit a question, petition or statement?

The Authority allows time at the beginning of its committee meetings (other than Planning Committee) to deal with public questions, petitions and statements.

Please submit your question, petition or statement in writing to the Chief Executive, giving notice of at least four working days before the committee meeting date. Your submission should include the subject matter and the address and contact number of the person(s) asking the question, presenting the petition or making the statement.

Petitions should include the nature and aim of your request. If you want to make a statement to support your question or petition, include this in your submission.

You will be allowed a maximum of five minutes at the meeting to make your statement, so bear this in mind when preparing your statement.

Any question, petition or statement that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair, considers to be vexatious or defamatory, or that relates to a specific Authority officer or member, will not be included and you will be informed of this. In making such a decision, we will refer to the guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) on vexatious requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. In consultation with you, and following consultation with the Chair, the Chief Executive may edit your submission to summarise the content or to remove defamatory remarks.

For more on the ICO guidance, visit <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/refusing-a-request/>

What happens at the meeting?

Asking a question

Public question time is included in the meeting agenda. The Chair will invite you to read your question and, where included within the written notice, your supporting statement. The Chair will then read out a prepared response from the Authority.

You may then be allowed to ask a supplementary question, which the Chair or an officer may answer at the meeting if the information is available. If not, we will provide you with a written answer within 20 working days of the meeting date.

Presenting a petition

Following any questions, the Chair will invite you to deliver your petition and, where included within the written notice, to make a supporting statement.

Except at the Chair's discretion, there will be no debate during Public Question Time on questions and the responses provided, or on presented petitions and statements. However, members at the meeting may agree to refer the matter to the next appropriate meeting and ask for an officer's report.

If you are unable to attend the meeting to ask a question, present a petition or make a statement, these will still be read to the meeting by the Chair, together with officer responses to questions.

A record of questions and officer responses, petitions delivered and statements made will be included in the formal minutes of the meeting.

Visit <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/committees> to see our committee agenda papers, including minutes.

Contact information

Please submit your question, petition or statement in writing to:

Chief Executive
Broads Authority
Yare House
62-64 Thorpe Road
Norwich NR1 1RY

Send any enquiries about the Public Question Time scheme to the Governance team at the above address, email committees@broads-authority.gov.uk or phone 01603 610734.

December 2020