



Overview & Scrutiny Public Engagement Protocol

Purpose of the Protocol

This protocol has been established to provide a clear understanding and provide guidance on the procedure by which members of the public can engage with the work of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The aim of the protocol is to manage public expectations in terms of setting out how any information submitted to the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committees will be used and detailing how and when feedback will be provided.

Application of the Protocol

This protocol applies to members of the public who live or work in the County Borough of Conwy, and local businesses, schools, colleges, and voluntary or community groups.

This protocol does not apply to Conwy County Borough Councillors as there are other processes in place by which they can submit items for consideration and make representation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

How to get involved

There are a number of ways in which the public can engage in the Overview and Scrutiny process.

The [Forward Work Plan](#) for all of our Overview & Scrutiny Committees is regularly updated and published on the Council's website. Similarly, the [agendas](#) for Overview & Scrutiny Committee meetings are published on our website at least three clear working days before the meeting is due to take place.

Register an Interest in certain Topics or Electoral Divisions

The Council's website enables anyone to [register their interest](#) in either certain topic(s) or electoral division(s) and to receive e-mail notification when their chosen item is included on an agenda.

Attend a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There are four Overview & Scrutiny Committees:

- [Finance and Resources](#)
- [Economy and Place](#)
- [Social Care and Health](#)
- [Education and Skills](#)

Together, these committees cover all of the County Borough Council's functions and also those services provided by other public service providers in the area.

All Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings are held in public and anyone is welcome to attend to listen to the proceedings. The majority of the Overview and Scrutiny meetings are held in the Council Chamber at Bodlondeb, Conwy. Seats are available at the back of the Council Chamber for members of the public and times and dates of [forthcoming meetings](#) are published on the Council's website.

Only on rare occasions, when certain types of information are being discussed, are members of the public not allowed to attend Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings.

As well as wanting to keep people informed about Overview and Scrutiny the Council is keen to hear your views on the topics they are looking at. There are a number of ways in which your views can be heard by the Councillors.

Write in or submit a comment on-line

If you have a particular interest in a topic being discussed you can write to or e-mail the [Scrutiny & Committee Services Officer](#) who will make sure your views are passed on to the Chairman and the Committee (if appropriate).

Alternatively, you can [submit a comment](#) via the Council's website. At the Chair's discretion, such contributions can be circulated to members of the committee at the start of the meeting.

Suggest a topic for consideration

Our Overview and Scrutiny Committees welcome suggestions for topics for review and will consider issues put forward by anyone who lives, works or studies in the County Borough of Conwy.

This can be done by writing in to the Council's Scrutiny Support Officer or by completing the [Overview and Scrutiny suggestion form](#) on the council's website.

To qualify, requests must:

- affect a group or community of people (scrutiny will not usually look at individual service complaints)

- relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake
- not be an issue which scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months
- not be a matter dealt with by another County Borough Council Committee (e.g. planning issues) except where the issue relates to the Council's decision-making process

Receipt of your request will be acknowledged within 5 working days. Your suggestion form will be considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the relevant Overview & Scrutiny Committee, together with the Head of Service responsible for the subject matter you have raised.

There are three possible outcomes for issues raised through Scrutiny referral forms:

- Accepted for immediate scrutiny – the issue will be programmed into the Scrutiny Committee's work schedule.
- Defer the issue to a later date – the issue will be addressed when Committee time permits.
- Decline issue for scrutiny – the issue will not be considered at the present time, however the issue will be logged and may be addressed at a later date.

If it is decided that an issue is not appropriate for discussion, or is too similar to a topic which has recently been considered, the Scrutiny Support Officer will contact the member of the public to explain why it has not been accepted.

The topics which Overview & Scrutiny Committees are due to consider form part of the Council's [Forward Work Plan](#).

We cannot accept topics which relate to the following: judicial or quasi-judicial matters or which are currently being investigated; individual planning, licensing or grant applications or appeals; named members or employees of the Council; confidential or exempt information (as described in the Council's Access to Information procedure rules) or which requires its disclosure; party political matters or defamatory material.

Petitions

Creating or taking part in a petition is one way individuals, community groups and organisations can get involved in what the Council does. It allows people to raise issues of public concern, giving Councillors the opportunity to consider the need for change.

In general, a petition should include a brief title and a short statement covering the subject matter of the petition. The petition should clearly state what action the petitioner wishes the Council to take and display the following:

- The name of the petitioner
- The contact address of the principal petitioner to which all communications concerning the petition should be sent
- The name and address of any person supporting the petition
- Paper petitions should also include a signature

Petitions can be presented at a meeting of the Council, the Cabinet or an Overview and Scrutiny Committee (depending on the subject matter and advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer). The rules relating to the presentation of petitions are included in the Council's [Constitution](#).

Further information on preparing a petition is available on the Council's website.

Become a Witness

One of the main ways in which the Overview and Scrutiny Committees (and any Task and Finish Groups that they set up) can gather the evidence they need to inform their deliberations is through inviting individuals with a particular knowledge of the topic to attend their meetings. This enables the Councillors to make better informed recommendations but it also gives individuals and organisations from outside the Council a way of having their voice heard.

In the main, these will be representatives from recognised community networks and representative groups, the third sector, Town and Community Councils, public sector agencies.

Contributions put forward by witnesses will be summarised in the minutes of the meeting and appropriately recognised in any final report.

The outcome will be promptly fed back to all contributors along with an invitation to attend the meeting to which the final report will be submitted. Contributors will be given the same right to speak, but not vote, at the meeting as a member of the committee.

Further [information](#) on being a witness is available on the Council's website.

Public speaking arrangements at Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Anyone who lives or works within the County Borough of Conwy can request to speak at a meeting of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee to contribute to a subject under discussion. To do this, they must register to speak by completing the appropriate [application form](#) which must be received by the [Scrutiny & Committee Services Officer](#) at least 24 hours before the meeting. Any requests received after this time will automatically be rejected.

The application form requests information on the nature of the interest and the contribution which they think that they could make. The Committee Services Officer, together with the Scrutiny Support Officer, will discuss the approach with the Committee's Chair and/or Vice-Chair, explaining the nature of the contribution. If the Chair is of the opinion that a member of the public in such circumstances could make a valid contribution to the committee's understanding of the issue, s/he will give their agreement. Bearing in mind that there are likely to be other items on the agenda which should also be afforded an appropriate amount of time for discussion, the Chair will limit the number of public contributors to two. Members of the public who attend a committee meeting to speak will be limited to three minutes each.

The Chair's decision as to whether or not a member of the public is able to make a contribution is final.

A member of the public attending and speaking at an Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting will be bound by the rules of conduct and procedure contained within the Council's Constitution and will be expected to respect the rulings of the Chair.

Potential contributors should be aware that the Council cannot accept topics which relate to the following: judicial or quasi-judicial matters or which are currently being investigated; individual planning, licensing or grant applications or appeals; named members or employees of the Council; confidential or exempt information (as described in the Council's Access to Information procedure rules) or which requires its disclosure; party political matters or defamatory material.

Further [guidance](#) on public speaking arrangements is available on the Council's website.

Contact details:

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